

Birdwell Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109083
Local Authority	North Somerset
Inspection number	377868
Inspection dates	16–17 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Jill Bavin

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	217
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Geoff Mountjoy
Headteacher	Paul Sainsbury
Date of previous school inspection	10–11 March 2009
School address	Hollis Close Long Ashton Bristol BS41 9AZ
Telephone number	01275 392496
Fax number	01275 394855
Email address	birdwell.pri@n-somerset.gov.uk

Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	16–17 November 2011
Inspection number	377868

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011



Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who observed 13 lessons taught by 11 teachers. Two additional observations focused on younger pupils' phonics learning and two extra visits to classes concentrated on teachers' planning and marking. Additionally the team met with pupils, staff and members of the governing body and analysed work in pupils' books. They observed the school's work, and looked at a variety of documentation, including policies and documentation related to safeguarding, data about pupils' progress, monitoring and evaluation records and school development plans. Questionnaire responses from staff, pupils and 82 parents and carers were also analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The impact of the school's work to improve boys' achievement in writing at Key Stage 1.
- Whether the above-average attainment in end of Key Stage 1 and 2 assessments can be sustained.
- How successfully staff use assessment to meet the various learning needs of all pupils, especially in the mixed-age classes.

Information about the school

In this average-sized and growing school, most pupils are from White British backgrounds. Although the proportion of pupils from a variety of minority ethnic groups has increased recently, it remains below the national average, and very few pupils are new to learning English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is a little lower than is typical nationally. Their needs are mostly related to language and communication. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are taught in three mixed-age classes and pupils in Years 3 and 4 are taught in two mixed-age classes. There is pre-school provision and a children's centre on site. Neither of these is managed by the school's governing body and they did not form part of this inspection.

Since the previous inspection, there have been two substantive and two acting headteachers. Over this period, a major building project has provided new school premises. Pupils moved into new classrooms with new furniture at the beginning of this academic year. The current headteacher took up his post in January 2011. The school is currently working towards gaining International School status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good, well-led school with a good capacity for further development. Several parents and carers commended the resilience, enthusiasm and effectiveness of staff over the recent period of considerable turbulence arising from changes in staffing and accommodation. It is to the credit of staff, pupils and members of the governing body that the school has made significant improvements on several fronts in spite of the potential barriers associated with such extensive change. While most teaching and learning is good rather than outstanding, pupils' attainment has risen. Boys and girls exceed expectations for their age in English and mathematics, and these improvements are set to continue for pupils throughout the school. Different groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, make good progress from their various starting points. Pupils behave well and their attendance is above average.

Teaching has improved and is good throughout the school. There are examples of outstanding teaching and learning in some lessons. The headteacher has modified systems for checking how well each pupil is learning to make them easier to analyse. This contributes to assessment information being used regularly and effectively to meet the varying needs of pupils within classes. As a result, all groups of pupils make equally good progress, including those in mixed-age classes. That said, opportunities for outstanding learning are sometimes missed, because planning does not always identify the highest expectations possible for different groups of pupils. The curriculum has improved and is now good. It provides greater interest and increased opportunities for pupils to use key skills in a variety of contexts. These improvements have contributed to the school's success in raising boys' achievement in writing throughout school and most significantly at Key Stage 1.

The headteacher has rapidly gained an astute understanding of the school's context, strengths and priorities for improvement. His reorganisation of staff into teams with curriculum responsibilities enables them to work more closely together. As a result, there is greater consistency in teachers' planning and pupils' learning. Although the features of the very best teaching evident in the school are not routinely shared with staff, they have more opportunities to contribute to school development than previously. Time for subject leaders to monitor their subjects is better organised and so has greater impact. Staff have embraced these changes and share high expectations of themselves and their pupils. These strengths contribute to a shared and realistic understanding of the school's effectiveness. Frequent dialogue about improving provision between leaders and teachers is informed by senior staff's

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

accurate and helpful monitoring of teaching and learning. Nevertheless, feedback to teachers does not always link the impact of teaching strategies to pupils' learning. The headteacher is ably supported by the Chair of the Governing body and other governors. This is a cohesive school with a strong commitment to continuing school development. This, combined with its substantial track record of significant improvement, indicates that it is well placed to fulfil its ambitions.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring that lesson planning sets out high expectations of all groups of pupils
 - providing staff with feedback that consistently makes a link between their teaching and pupils' learning
 - providing more opportunities for staff to share the features of outstanding teaching evident in the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

In 2011, pupils left Year 6 with attainment in English and mathematics that was above the national average and at an unprecedented level for the school. Typically, all groups of pupils make consistently good progress as they move up through school. Lesson observations endorse this picture of good achievement and indicate that pupils are mostly working at levels above those expected for their age. Girls and boys of all ages, of different abilities and from different backgrounds are equally well motivated, which contributes to their similar rates of progress. In lessons, progress is usually good rather than outstanding. Pupils concentrate well and participate enthusiastically because work is interesting and challenging. For example, pupils across Years 1 and 2 made good progress in describing fictional characters and settings both verbally and on paper, inspired by a Christmas book. All groups of pupils in Year 6 made good progress in creating poetry inspired by issues related to climate change.

On occasion, when expectations are extremely high, pupils' learning is outstanding and their responses are exemplary. This was evident when younger pupils were learning not only to estimate but also to explain how they estimated. Pupils in Year 2 achieved highly, having collaborated impressively in order to explain, for example, that they had estimated there were 44 pieces of pasta in a container because 'it looks like about two rows of 20 pieces, but a bit more.' In a quick starter session, pupils in Year 5 rose magnificently to the challenge of rationalising whether multiples of six are 'sometimes, always or never' double the multiples of three.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their interest in the world around them and their interest in broadening their experience of communities that differ from their own, both in the United Kingdom and beyond, reflect the school's work to gain International School status. Teachers intersperse their

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

directions and feedback with comments in Spanish throughout the day, so pupils accept it as a relevant and useful language. They are thoughtful young people who reflect sensitively on issues such as ‘world peace’. They have a good understanding of how to make safe and healthy choices, but do not yet seek to influence others. They welcome their recently increased responsibilities as members of school ‘houses’ as well as roles such as school councillors, peer mentors and play buddies. Given the strengths in their personal development and their above-average attainment, they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils’ behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Good relationships between adults and pupils underpin positive behaviour management. As a result, lessons proceed smoothly at a good pace. Teachers have good subject knowledge and introduce new ideas clearly. They make good use of technology to add interest for pupils. They make good use of assessment to challenge pupils and meet the needs of all pupils in the class well, although opportunities to plan for outstanding learning are missed. When teaching assistants lead groups, they make a valuable contribution to pupils learning, for example by supporting the younger pupils who are struggling a little with their letters and sounds, or by giving extra support to those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. A particular strength is the use of colour-coded marking, which is especially consistent in writing. The pink ‘WWW’ identifies ‘what worked well’ in their learning, while the green ‘EBI’ identifies that it would be ‘even better if...’. Self- or peer assessment is highlighted in yellow. This system helps pupils to play an active

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

part in maintaining a good understanding of their achievements and next steps. Teaching is outstanding when expectations of all groups of pupils are equally high throughout the lesson. In one lesson observed, this was supported by pupils using their new desks that double as whiteboards to create diagrams to solve a mathematical problem. The use of this innovative learning resource encouraged them to express their ideas freely and supported their learning extremely well.

The development of the curriculum continues to be a key focus for staff. It has developed well, especially in providing more writing opportunities to engage boys. It now serves all groups of pupils well. Teachers are currently developing a tight hierarchy of planned skills progression in every subject. Topics provide an interesting context for pupils to extend knowledge and skills while developing an understanding of wider issues, such as conservation of the environment. Pupils in Year 5 demonstrated their growing understanding of the scarcity of natural resources while discussing fossil fuels and the water cycle. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 harnessed writing and musical skills with historical understanding, to produce songs about their day of '1950s schooling'. Information and communication technology develops well throughout the school. Pupils identify that their multimedia presentations become more complex as they move through Key Stage 2. A closer analysis of the achievements of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has meant that the curriculum is modified or augmented more flexibly and speedily than previously. This contributes to their good rates of progress.

Care, guidance and support are good. The school works closely with other professionals to ensure that it meets the particular needs of individual pupils. Those pupils who face the most significant challenges to their learning and well-being are well supported. Personal, social and health education combine with good pastoral care to help pupils enjoy school, understand its rules and its aims, and feel entirely safe within it. The breakfast club provides a calm and nurturing start to the day for those pupils who attend. Parents and carers appreciate the care that is taken to ease their child's successful transition into school and into secondary school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides a strong steer for school improvement, which is appreciated and supported by the school community. He is well supported by members of the governing body. Improvements to the systems for recording and

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

analysing how well each pupil is doing have increased understanding of how well pupils achieve for teachers and members of the governing body. The resulting analysis has a direct impact on the school’s successful promotion of equality of opportunity. Most notable is the extent to which all groups are making similarly good rates of progress since the school has successfully closed the gap between girls’ and boys’ achievement in writing, especially at Key Stage 1.

With effective support from the governing body, the school adopts recommended good practice for safeguarding pupils. Particularly commendable is the level of staff involvement in formulating policies related to safeguarding. The school is justifiably proud that, supported by thorough risk assessments, the school community was free of accidents during the extensive building project. Some risk assessments now need reviewing and updating to reflect changes in the site since the final completion of the building project, three weeks before the inspection.

The governing body contributes to the school’s good understanding of its local community. They support the school in actively promoting community cohesion and anti-discriminatory attitudes through seeking to extend pupils’ experience, as reflected in the work to gain International School status. As a result, pupils exchange e-mails with pupils in Zaragoza, Spain. The school recognises that while links with a more culturally diverse school than their own in Bristol have been retained, they are not as frequent as they were before the building project. Plans are in place to rectify this. Pupils continue to share arts and sports events with pupils from various schools in the wider community.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Early Years Foundation Stage

Shared team work and leadership have successfully improved children’s progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is now good in all areas of learning. Children’s welfare is paramount. The staff team set a good example to children of how to behave and communicate, and behaviour is managed sensitively. Teachers have a good level of expectation of children and a good understanding of how children at this age learn best. They have become increasingly analytical in their use of assessment and so more proficient in targeting children’s particular areas of need. They make a positive contribution to the whole-school drive to encourage boys to become interested in writing, by providing resources and activities that appeal to boys. During the inspection, a group of boys who had chosen to write about pictures of ‘super-heroes’ concentrated and persevered commendably, made good gains in letter formation, and applied their knowledge of letter sounds well.

Since the previous inspection, children have had far more opportunities to influence the topics that provide a context for their learning. Opportunities for them to select activities for themselves and to opt to work inside or outside now form an established part of the daily routine. On occasion, the pace of child-initiated learning is not as rapid as it might be, because the resources are not sufficiently stimulating and there is no adult circulating to provide sensitive support. Learning is most effective when resources provide children with opportunities to reinforce previous learning. After teacher-led input about writing, boys and girls who had opted to write shopping lists in the imaginative post office area made good gains in their letter formation, their use of letters and sounds, and their understanding of writing for different purposes.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

More parents and carers returned questionnaires than is typical in most primary schools. Most were positive about all aspects of the school’s work. This included how well the school promotes personal development and how well the school is led and managed. A few disagreed that the school took account of their views. Inspection evidence indicated that the school has taken full account of views expressed by parents and carers at the parents’ forums. There were a very few individual concerns, which included disagreement that pupils are kept safe. These were explored anonymously and safeguarding was found to be good. An overwhelming

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

majority of parents and carers are very appreciative of the work of the school, including its communication with them, how well the school met their child's particular needs and their child's rate of progress. There was unanimous agreement that teaching is good in school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Birdwell Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 82 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 217 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	68	83	13	16	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	65	79	16	20	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	34	41	47	57	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	40	49	40	49	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	47	57	35	43	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	34	41	44	54	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	45	55	32	39	2	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	32	39	35	43	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	39	48	41	50	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	41	40	49	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	39	44	54	3	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	37	45	42	51	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	53	65	26	32	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



18 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Birdwell Primary School, Long Ashton, BS41 9AZ

Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming when we visited your school recently. A special thank-you goes to those pupils who met with me or my colleagues and shared your ideas and your work so helpfully with us. We agree with you and your parents and carers that you go to a good school. Here are some of the good things we found.

- You make good progress and reach higher standards in English and mathematics than most children of your age. Well done!
- You come to school more regularly than most children of your age.
- You feel safe in school and have a good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy.
- You enjoy interesting topics, such as 'climate change' or 'the 1950s', which help you to use several different skills.
- Teachers make learning fun and sometimes they challenge you extremely well! On these occasions, your learning is outstanding.
- The governing body, headteacher and all adults in school work well together to keep making the school even better.

We have asked the governing body, headteacher and staff to give you more opportunities to learn outstandingly well by:

- ensuring that lessons always have high expectations of all of you
- making sure that when they watch your lessons, they always give each other clear feedback about the effect the teaching has on your learning
- sharing their very best ideas with each other more often.

You can help by continuing to behave and attend so well. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Jill Bavin
Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.**