

Birchfield Primary School

Birchfield Avenue, Gildersome, Leeds, LS27 7HU

Inspection dates 5–6 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teaching is not always well planned so that, in some lessons, some pupils are not stretched enough and others find the work too difficult.
- In some lessons teachers spend too long on complex instructions and explanations and fail to allow pupils the time to explore for themselves and investigate individually or in groups.
- When marking pupils' work, teachers do not give clear enough guidance on how pupils can improve their work. This means, in some classes, that pupils do not aim high enough and tend to present mediocre work.
- While pupils at the end of Year 6 reach standards in reading that are above national expectations, standards in writing are not as high. Fewer pupils attain above-average levels because recent changes the school has made to bring about improvement, especially in writing, have not yet had sufficient time to take effect on pupils' achievement.
- Although school leaders and governors regularly check the school's performance, there is a lack of rigour and focus in this on pupils' progress. This results in some pupils making no better than satisfactory progress overall.

The school has the following strengths

- There is some good teaching in the school and in these classes pupils achieve well.
- The teaching of reading is good: pupils develop a love of reading and good skills in tackling text. As a result, they are making good progress in this subject.
- The vast majority of parents are positive about the school
- The behaviour of pupils is good. They say they feel safe. Pupils are enthusiastic about activities such as sports and their English work on Shakespeare.
- Leaders foster good relationships with the local community and are committed to making the improvements required to raise achievement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with half a day's notice by three inspectors.
- Inspectors observed eight teachers and many teaching assistants teaching 20 lessons, of which two were joint observations with the headteacher.
- The inspection team made short visits to a series of phonics lessons (in which pupils learn letter patterns and the sounds they represent) and listened to a number of pupils read.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' books, the school's policies and plans, including the school development plan, the data tracking of pupils' progress, safeguarding and attendance records.
- Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body, staff leaders at all levels and a representative from the local authority.
- The views of parents were sought throughout the inspection. The inspectors also considered questionnaires from parents by the school and the 26 responses from the online questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

Michael Wintle, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Peter Harrison

Additional Inspector

Mark Randall

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average. (This is funding given to schools by the government to support pupils who are eligible for free school meals, children of armed forces families or who are looked after by the local authority.)
- The proportions of pupils supported at school action and school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has recently been awarded the Inclusion Charter Mark.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - making sure that all lessons are planned and delivered at the right level so that pupils of all abilities are challenged to make good progress, especially in writing
 - clearly identifying through marking how pupils can improve their work quickly and progress to the next step in their learning, particularly in writing
 - teachers spending less time talking about what pupils are going to do and giving them more time to get on with tasks and practise their skills independently or in groups.
- Increase still further the impact of leadership and management and governance on pupils' achievement by:
 - focusing more robustly on the quality of teachers' work and the effect of this on pupils' learning and progress
 - developing the system for tracking pupils' progress so that leaders can accurately show the rates of progress for all groups of pupils and then share this information for use by all staff and governors
 - ensuring subject leaders gain the skills they need to evaluate their actions better so that the effects of these actions are clearly understood and then shared with teachers.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement is not good because teaching is not consistently good. In some lessons work is not matched accurately to pupils' abilities and, as a result, some pupils do not achieve as well as they might.
- Children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge typically expected of children at that age. However, the number of children entering school with communication difficulties is growing. By the time they leave the Early Years Foundation Stage children have made good progress and any gaps in achievement have narrowed.
- In previous years pupils have left Birchfield Primary School with standards that have been falling over time when compared nationally. The school has worked hard recently to ensure that standards in all subjects have risen. In this they need to be congratulated, but progress from pupils' starting points has been slower than it should be. In English and mathematics pupils have not advanced as quickly as they should. The senior leaders have worked hard to rectify this and now improvement is steadily being seen.
- Achievement in reading is consistently good because pupils' reading skills are built on from year to year. Phonics teaching (linking letters to sounds) is very well taught and especially in Nursery, Reception and Key Stage 1. By the end of Year 2 most pupils can tackle unfamiliar words confidently and the more able readers are progressing well.
- Overall, pupils make the expected progress through school. The level of challenge is not always high enough in every class for pupils to achieve more, particularly in writing. The more able pupils in all key stages make satisfactory progress from their starting points.
- In the best lessons pupils make most progress because they are fully involved in their own learning by taking part in group work and discussions and start to learn on their own or with a partner. They respond with good behaviour. In one Key Stage 2 English lesson based around reporting a crime scene, pupils made rapid progress because they were being encouraged to set challenges for themselves that showed their knowledge of technical subject language. It also provided good opportunities for speaking and listening and working together. The teacher had high expectations and constantly challenged their thinking. As a result, pupils used complex subject vocabulary well and made good progress.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve as well as their classmates because they receive the support they need in order to do so. Actions recently initiated by leaders are likely to ensure faster progress in all areas of learning, but these actions have not yet had enough time to take effect.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The overall quality of teaching requires improvement because too few lessons are good or better. The senior leadership team have recognised this and over the last two years have striven to eradicate weak teaching. As a result, the quality of teaching is improving but not fast enough. There are examples of good teaching in all key stages but there is not enough consistently good and outstanding teaching to ensure that pupils across the school make quicker progress.
- Where teaching is good, teachers make lessons interesting and fun by involving pupils in discussions that help them to extend their thinking. In an Early Years Foundation Stage lesson children were being encouraged to link their learning to Father Christmas. Children were writing letters and name-tags, reading books and discussing how presents would arrive. Children were totally immersed in their learning and cooperated very well with each other, showing good attitudes to learning.
- Relationships are strong and this has a good impact on behaviour. Teachers and other adults know their pupils well and provide consistently good role models for all pupils. This is a strength seen across the school.

- The school's ongoing pupil assessment tracking systems are effective and underachievement is quickly identified by leaders. However, this information is not always shared with teachers to help them to plan their lessons sufficiently well to match the different ability needs of their pupils. On a number of occasions inspectors saw the same work being attempted by all the class, which resulted in some pupils either finding the work too easy or too hard.
- During lessons, teachers and other adults regularly praise pupils and suggest points to bear in mind. Teachers' marking of pupils' work in all subjects is less helpful. For example, teachers regularly congratulate pupils for their work but often they do not give specific written comments on what pupils need to do to improve their work and meet their targets.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good and is a strength of the school. Pupils are keen to learn. They have a high regard for the staff and these positive relationships encourage pupils to try hard.
- Pupils are well aware of the different types of bullying and say that occasions when this occurs are rare. Pupils have a good understanding about how to stay safe and say that they fully understand issues such as safety when using the internet. All pupils said that they were proud of their school.
- Pupils say that they are happy coming to school and feel safe. They demonstrate this through their attendance, which has improved over time and is now above average. Leaders and governors of the school give clear messages to pupils and parents about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- The reason why behaviour is not yet outstanding is that pupils' good behaviour typically seen in and around school is not yet contributing sufficiently well in attitudes to learning in lessons and, in turn, helping pupils to make quicker progress.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because the school's performance is not consistently good.
- Staff have good opportunities to develop their skills through working alongside other colleagues but, because leaders do not check the quality of teaching sufficiently rigorously, classroom practice is too variable to ensure consistently good achievement.
- The leadership of teaching requires improvement because:
 - the monitoring and evaluation of teachers' performance lacks rigour, particularly in checking the effect of teaching on pupils' learning
 - subject leaders have increased their role since the last inspection and now need to develop their skills further so that actions and impact are better shared with teachers
 - although progress data indicate many pupils make good progress, this is often not the case for all pupils. A number could make even better progress by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Procedures for ensuring pupils' safety and well-being are thorough. Safeguarding policies and practice is good and meets government requirements. A careful watch is kept over pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. The funding provided to support pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium is used satisfactorily and there is evidence that progress for these pupils is now starting to accelerate.
- Curricular enrichment is good and pupils talk excitedly about their sports clubs and their visits to places of interest. Members of the leadership team have succeeded in developing a broad and balanced curriculum that matches the interests of pupils. The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- The school has a good relationship with parents, who say they find the school staff approachable and helpful. The school promotes equal opportunities well and is effective in tackling all forms of

bullying.

- The local authority has an accurate view of the school and provides 'light-touch' support for the school. Support for teaching has been welcomed by the school and has resulted in better standards in reading and mathematics, especially for the more able pupils.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance has improved since the school's previous inspection. The governing body is very committed to seeing the school improve further and now has a good understanding of what the school needs to do to achieve this. Governors know how the pupil premium grant is spent and how this has helped eligible pupils as well as those whose circumstances make them vulnerable. The governing body ensures that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities; all staff and governors are trained appropriately including in how to keep pupils safe and free from harm. The Chair of the Governing Body is a familiar and supportive figure in school and governors have been good at supporting school functions. Under the leadership of the headteacher they are starting to play a more central role in identifying and eradicating teaching that is less than good.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	107863
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	405128

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs T Taylor
Headteacher	Mr P Turner
Date of previous school inspection	19 October 2010
Telephone number	0113 2533009
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