

Birley Community Primary School

Thornbridge Avenue, Birley, Sheffield, S12 3AB

Inspection dates 16–17 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Good progress has been made since the previous inspection, largely due to the changes brought in by the new leadership team.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They have excellent attitudes to their work. Pupils relate well to one another and to the adults in school. They say that they feel totally safe in school.
- Pupils achieve well overall and make good progress from the time they start in Nursery to the end of Year 6. Their attainment in mathematics has improved rapidly and is above average.
- The quality of teaching has improved and is consistently good with some that is outstanding. The good quality teaching is the major reason for the good progress made by pupils.
- The vice-principal [primary] (VPP) leads the primary phase very effectively. In the short time since her appointment, she has been the driving force behind many important changes in the school. These have led to rapid improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The school provides a good curriculum for the pupils, which supports the good progress they make.
- Governance is good. Governors challenge the school effectively. They are acutely aware of the school's strengths and where improvements need to be made.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The Early Years Foundation Stage has not yet been developed fully in order to provide a stimulating and challenging environment to support children's learning.
- Pupils' attainment and progress in writing have not improved fast enough. Too few pupils reach above expected levels in writing.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 23 teachers teaching in 24 lessons.
- They observed pupils in lessons, at play, as they moved around the school and in assemblies.
- Discussions were held with the staff, members of the governing body, including the Chair, pupils, some parents and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors heard children read from Years 1, 2 and 6. They analysed in detail pupils' work from Years 2, 4 and 6.
- Inspectors took account of the 26 responses from the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's recent survey of parental views of the school.

Inspection team

John Foster, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Gillian Hunter	Additional Inspector
Jennifer Firth	Additional Inspector
Pamela Hemphill	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is much larger than the average-sized primary school. It is part of a hard federation, linked to the local community college.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. A small proportion of pupils are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Almost all pupils speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is broadly average. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is broadly average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after.)
- In 2012, the school met the government's current floor standards that set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Following a period of instability since the previous inspection, the school has experienced significant changes in senior leadership. A new principal of the Birley Learning Community was appointed in September 2011 and a vice-principal with specific responsibility for the primary school was appointed in September 2012.
- Since the previous inspection, the age range of pupils attending the school has widened with the Early Years Foundation Stage now accepting children from the age of three years.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to raise attainment in English, and particularly in writing, by:
 - ensuring that work planned always meets the need of individual pupils
 - ensuring that the quality of teaching in the subject is consistently good or better
 - fully developing the plans to use staff from the federated college to support learning for the more-able pupils
 - checking that work set is successful in bringing about improvement
 - giving pupils frequent opportunities to use their writing skills in other subjects.
- Implement the action plans for developing the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring that all children are challenged in all areas of their learning
 - developing the learning environment across the Early Years Foundation Stage, and particularly the outdoor learning area in Reception, to provide a range of exciting, stimulating and challenging activities that promote children's learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- When they start in the Nursery there is a wide variation in children's skills and knowledge but overall these are below those expected for their age. Overall, they make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, although the outdoor provision for learning in the Reception classes does not match that to be found in the classroom.
- Throughout the school pupils make good progress overall from their starting points. School data show that the rate of progress is improving rapidly because of the good, and often outstanding, teaching to be found throughout the school. This is particularly the case in mathematics. The close links with the federated college has meant that teachers from the college have supported the learning of the more-able Year 6 pupils in mathematics, enabling some of them to reach standards that are significantly above those expected for their age.
- Progress in English is slower than in mathematics, because the quality of teaching in English does not match that found in mathematics. The result is that, while attainment is broadly average, too few pupils attain higher levels. Secure plans are in place to use college staff to support learning in the primary phase in order to develop pupils' writing skills and increase the rates of progress in their learning. Pupils are not always given opportunities to develop their writing skills in other subjects.
- The small proportion of pupils with disabilities and those who are identified as having special educational needs make similar rates of progress to other groups of pupils. Pupils eligible for pupil-premium funding make good progress, resulting in rapid improvements in attainment. This has the effect of closing the gap in attainment between this group of pupils and the non-free school meals pupils. The school's positive ethos ensures that there is no discrimination and that all pupils are treated equally.
- Pupils are keen readers. The teachers encourage them to read widely for pleasure and for information. As one less-able pupil told an inspector, 'Reading is awesome!' Phonics (letters and the sounds they make) are taught well and help pupils to work out unknown words.
- Pupils' writing skills are developed soundly, although these are not as well developed as their reading and mathematical skills. Recent reviews of the school's work have identified that writing skills need further development.
- The school concentrated its efforts on improving achievement and attainment in mathematics following below average results in 2011. This was highly successful, allowing many pupils to make better than expected progress.
- Pupils are well prepared overall for the next stage of their education because their language and mathematical skills are developing well.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils are consistently taught well. Since the appointment of the VPP in September 2013, rapid improvements have been made in the quality of teaching. Effective monitoring and extensive support have raised the quality of teaching across the school. While there remains some teaching that requires improvement this is more than balanced by the increasing amount of outstanding teaching seen. This high quality teaching supports pupils' learning well.
- Where the teaching is at its best, pupils make excellent progress. This was particularly noticeable in the teaching of mathematics for pupils in Year 6, where meticulously planning for individual pupils' learning needs resulted in all pupils making excellent progress in their learning. The pace of learning in these lessons was rapid and teachers and support staff used questions very well to support pupils' outstanding progress.
- Where teaching is less effective, the pace of lessons is slower. In these lessons, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not as high and tasks are not always appropriate to pupils' needs.

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the quality of teaching is variable across Nursery and Reception classes. At its best, it allows children to make good progress but the learning environment is not always conducive to stimulating and challenging children to learn across all areas. However, children make good progress overall during their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The quality of teaching for disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those supported by the pupil premium, is consistently good and enables these pupils to make similarly good progress to other groups.
- Throughout the school, support staff are used well to support learning. The staff are fully informed of their role and the needs of the individuals they support. Relationships between staff and between staff and pupils are excellent, helping the teaching assistants to give pupils the best help possible.
- The quality of teachers' marking is excellent. It consistently identifies what pupils are doing right and gives clear guidelines about how they can improve their work. The marking is linked closely to pupils' targets for development and improvement. Teachers have high expectations of presentation and this is reflected in the care that pupils take over their work.
- Teaching supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils are encouraged to talk to each other about their work and suggest ways for improvement to their friends. This is done without fear of ridicule and is readily accepted by the pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour in classes and around the school is invariably exemplary. They are welcoming and polite to adults and to each other. They are acutely aware that their actions affect others and act accordingly.
- Pupils told inspectors that theirs was an excellent school where everyone helped each other and there was little disruptive behaviour. A group of Year 5 pupils have been trained as 'peer mediators', who work in the playground to ensure there is harmony in their play. This works extremely well. The mediators know that their role does not extend to sorting out violent behaviour, but they know the procedures to follow on the rare occasions that this occurs.
- Pupils are adamant that very little bullying occurs at their school. They told inspectors that on the rare occasions that it happens, it is dealt with rapidly and effectively by the staff. They are clear about the different kinds of bullying that may take place and know what to do should it ever happen.
- Attendance is broadly average. The school has developed effective procedures to track down and deal with persistent absences and this is beginning to show in the rising attendance rates.

The leadership and management are good

- Since her appointment, the VPP has had a positive impact on the work of the school. Her dynamic leadership has been the catalyst for the rapid improvements. She has a clear vision to move the school forward by improving the quality of teaching and so raise standards. In this she is supported fully by the assistant vice-principal and the senior leadership team. The staff share the VPP's commitment and work together well to make the improvements required.
- The recently appointed leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage leads this area well. Although there has been some disruption in staffing, she has produced a clear action plan for developing this area of the school. This has only been completed recently and has yet to be implemented.
- The school has undertaken a close scrutiny of its performance and has developed effective plans to bring about improvements. The school's assessment of its performance is broadly accurate so that its plans are relevant to its needs.
- The leadership of teaching and learning is good. A planned programme of lesson observations has been introduced, undertaken by the VPP and senior staff. Where improvements are

required, the senior staff work well as a team to support their colleagues in bringing about the improvements. As a result of this effective programme the quality of teaching has risen significantly and pupils' progress is accelerating.

- The school provides a good curriculum for its pupils. Based on a series of themes reflecting pupils' interests, they learn, for example, about how the Second World War has affected Britain today. Linked to this topic they have been celebrating the 70th anniversary of the Dam Busters raid.
- The local authority recognises the rapid improvements that have been made in the school and provide light touch support.
- Safeguarding arrangements are secure and meet all current requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is good. The federation has a joint governing body covering the primary school and the college. The chair of governors and the vice-chair work closely together, each complementing the other's skills. Governors are aware of the strengths of the school and what needs to be done to bring about improvements. They provide good support to the VVP and hold the school to account well. Governors have a secure understanding of the school's finances and ensure that funding is provided for improvements identified. The funding for pupil premium has been used effectively to give further support to this group of pupils so that their rate of progress has improved significantly. Governors and senior leaders are clear about the staff's performance and use funding effectively to reward good and outstanding teaching.

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	107096
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	400363

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	612
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eric Holmes
Principal	Steve Robinson
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2010
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