

Birchfield Primary School

Birchfield Avenue, Gildersome, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS27 7HU

Inspection dates 9–10 December 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school has improved since its previous inspection. It is led and managed by an effective and highly focused headteacher and senior leadership team which is well supported by staff and governors.
- Governors know the school well. In close partnership with senior leaders they have helped to improve the quality of teaching and raise standards, especially in Key Stage 2.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are courteous, conscientious, behave well in lessons and say that they feel safe and enjoy learning.
- Teaching is continually improving. Teachers are well trained, make learning fun and work well with teaching assistants to raise standards for pupils.
- Overall standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have continually improved over the last five years and were significantly above average in 2014. Attainment in reading was significantly above average and high in writing, grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- The proportion of pupils attaining the highest possible Level 6 in mathematic was well above average.
- The majority of pupils make at least good progress throughout the school. This includes disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils.
- The teaching of phonics (linking letters and sounds) is good, and has been so for the last two years.
- Parents' views of the school are highly positive. They are well informed, happy that their children are safe and well looked after and appreciative of the opportunities they have to be involved in school activities.
- All aspects of the early years, including leadership, teaching, provision, achievement and work with parents, are good and improving.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has been below average for two years.
- Classroom activities are not always well matched to pupils' varying abilities, particularly in mathematics in Key Stage 1.
- Marking is not of a consistently good quality. Teachers do not always identify how pupils can improve their learning, or check to see if their advice is acted on.
- Newly appointed middle leaders have yet to be fully involved in improving the quality of teaching.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of lessons in all year groups, as well as the teaching of small groups of pupils, and sessions aimed at helping pupils to learn to read. Some lessons were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and held discussions with pupils from across the school. Pupils' work in books was scrutinised during lessons and separately with senior staff.
- A meeting was held with parents. Inspectors considered 45 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's own surveys of parents' views.
- A meeting took place with a representative from the local authority. Responses to a questionnaire completed by 17 members of staff were considered.
- A meeting was held with three governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body.
- A range of school documents was examined. These included the school's review of its own performance, external evaluations of the school's work, data on pupils' progress, records of the school's checks on the quality of teaching, records of pupils' attendance, behaviour records and safeguarding documentation.

Inspection team

Lenford White, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Terry Bond

Additional Inspector

Yvonne Brown

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is well below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding is well below the national average. (The pupil premium is additional government funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.)
- The majority of pupils are White British; very few speak English as an additional language.
- Nursery provision is part time and Reception provision is full time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Since the previous inspection, the senior leadership team has been reorganised. Pre-school and after school services operate from the site; these are managed by the governing body.
- Since the previous inspection the school has employed a number of staff, including two newly qualified teachers. The governing body school leadership teams have been reorganised.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better and in so doing raise levels of attainment, especially in Key Stage 1 by:
 - ensuring that activities in class are always well matched to pupils' varying abilities, particularly in mathematics in Key Stage 1
 - making sure that marking is of a consistently good quality and that teachers always identify how pupils can improve their learning, and check to see if their advice is acted on.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that new middle leaders have a fuller role in improving the quality of teaching.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and senior leadership team are fully focused on implementing the recommendations from the previous inspection and have been very effective in putting into place and monitoring their plans to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- The school's system for tracking the progress of pupils is exceptionally well developed. It enables teachers to identify exactly how much progress pupils are making and triggers any early interventions needed for pupils who are in danger of falling behind their peers.
- The school's new curriculum is well on its way to being fully implemented. Pupils benefit from a range of exciting and interesting learning opportunities and explore a wide variety of topics. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are particularly interested in how people lived in the past. In Key Stage 2 pupils enjoy art and information communication technology (ICT). Pupils learn French, benefit from regular trips to local places of interest, such as theatres and museums, and play various musical instruments. This range of activities promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well and provides them with many opportunities to practice their reading, writing and mathematical skills across the curriculum.
- Pupils' knowledge of life in modern Britain and British values is good. This is enhanced through the curriculum, their learning about major world faiths and their understanding of democracy, the rule of law and individual liberty.
- The school is committed to promoting equal opportunities for all. For instance, in making sure that the curriculum is of equal interest to all pupils and offering a wide variety of after school clubs, including girls' boxing.
- The sports premium is well spent and has had a strong impact on pupils' participation in competitive sports. It is helping to improve the health and well being of all pupils, including children in the early years, and to develop the skills of staff in teaching gymnastics.
- Teachers are subject to regular checks on their performance and are set challenging targets linked to raising standards for pupils. The school's systems for monitoring the overall quality of teaching are highly effective, as are its procedures for mentoring newly qualified teachers.
- Middle managers, including those responsible for Key Stage 1 and 2, are very well trained and have benefited from opportunities to improve their leadership skills. They make a good contribution to raising standards for pupils, especially in Key Stage 2. However, recently appointed middle leaders' role in improving the quality of teaching, through checking on the quality of teachers' marking for example, is yet to be fully developed.
- The school works very well in partnership with the local authority, which has most recently supported it in improving the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 and has carried out a review of the quality of governance.
- The school takes care to ensure that it has effective arrangements for safeguarding its pupils and children in the early years. All statutory requirements in this respect are met.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is good. Governors are skilled, well trained and knowledgeable and are highly supportive of the school, especially since the previous inspection. They have worked well to ensure that good systems are in place to help with tracking pupils' progress and that procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching have improved.
 - Governors know exactly where the school's strengths and weaknesses lie because their grasp of data on pupils' performance is good and their visits to the school are frequent.
 - Governors hold senior leaders fully to account and set them ambitious targets. They know that the quality of teaching is good and are happy to reward teachers for their work, but only if they are satisfied that they have met their targets. Governors fully support action that is taken to tackle weaknesses and know that even more needs to be done to ensure that teaching across the school is consistently good or better.
 - Governors know that the pupil premium funding is well spent and are fully aware of the contribution made by teaching activities, including 'booster' sessions, to disadvantaged pupils' good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are very respectful towards each other and adults and are very proud of their school. They wear their school uniform with pride and come to school prepared and ready to learn. Their above-average attendance and good punctuality reflects their interest in learning.
- Pupils are polite, courteous and exceptionally welcoming to visitors. They are very responsible in their roles as, for example, playground leaders, classroom helpers and 'Birchfield Buddies'. Their behaviour in class is always at least good.
- All pupils, including in the early years, are eager to share their learning and talk about their achievements. They behave sensibly at all times, this includes when moving around the school, during lunchtime, and during breaks.
- Pupils are well motivated. Their conscientious approach to all aspects of school life makes a good contribution to their good achievement. Pupils aim to do well for themselves and their school and enjoy competing to become the 'citizen of the week'.
- Pupils enjoy coming together for collective worship and like to demonstrate their excellent singing. This they did during a Key Stage 1 Christmas concert when they joyfully sang Christmas carols to a packed audience of proud parents.
- The school's behaviour logs show that pupils break the rules infrequently. Pupils are of the opinion that behaviour is good most of the time and say that on the rare occasions that they fall out with their class mates they soon make up and are friends again.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils know what bullying is and say that it rarely if ever happens in school. Their good understanding of bullying comes from events such as Anti-Bullying Week and the school's effective personal, social, health and citizenship education programme. Pupils know that they can talk to any adult in school if they have a concern, or if they prefer they can use the 'worry box' to seek help.
- The majority of parents, including all those who spoke to inspectors, are of the opinion that bullying is rare and always dealt with. Checks of school records and discussions with staff confirm this.
- The school has been awarded for its work to promote cultural diversity and tackle discrimination. As a result of this pupils have a good understanding of most forms of prejudice-based bullying, including racism.
- Pupils know how to stay safe when on-line and have a good understanding of cyber bullying, which they know can take place on mobile phones, hand-held games and 'anything connected to the internet'.
- Various visitors, from the police and fire services help pupils to understand safe and unsafe situations and how to avoid dangers. Pupils know never to talk to strangers, and their cycling proficiency training helps them to stay safe on roads.

The quality of teaching is good

- Through regular monitoring, senior leaders and governors ensure that teachers and teaching assistants are fully accountable for the performance of pupils. As a result of this, most aspects of teaching have improved since the previous inspection. Pupils respond well to the high expectations that their teachers usually have of them, work hard and enjoy their learning.
- Teachers have very good relationships with pupils. They bring the new curriculum to life through educational visits, exploring local history, providing opportunities for pupils to work together and developing their skills in using ICT to find things out for themselves.
- Teachers are very clear about expected standards of behaviour in class. This helps to ensure that pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers have good subject knowledge and effective questioning skills and are not afraid to change their teaching plans when pupils have not fully grasped what is being taught. This was the case in a Year 1 mathematics class where the teacher focused on subtraction because pupils' work revealed that many did not fully understand it, and in a Year 5 class where the teacher focused on different forms of punctuation and grammar to extend pupils' vocabulary.
- Pupils like to be challenged. This was exemplified in a Year 1 English class where pupils showed a well developed understanding of 'bossy language' as they worked together to write instructions for the

snowflakes that they had previously made. One pair wrote 'Fold a piece of paper into quarters, cut the corners, and then open out the paper'. Those who finished quickly were asked to write the instructions for wrapping a Christmas present. However, when classroom activities are not well matched to pupils' varying abilities progress is not as good, particularly in mathematics in Key Stage 1.

- Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills and powers of deduction in a number of subjects. This was the case in a Year 3 science class where pupils were learning about food chains in various habitats. Pupils demonstrated an exceptionally good understanding of the role of 'consumers', 'predators' and 'decomposers' in the food chain and the 'research boys' were able to provide the class with interesting facts such as 'there are 12,000 different species of ant and they eat different things'.
- The quality of the marking of pupils' work has improved since the previous inspection, however it is not yet consistently good across the school because teachers do not always identify how pupils can improve their learning, or check to see whether their advice is acted on. Senior leaders are well aware of this and are focusing on ensuring that all marking is of good quality and that leaders at all levels play a full role in supporting teachers to improve their practice.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Almost all pupils make good and sometimes outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics in most year groups across the school. In 2014 their overall attainment at the end of Key stage 2 was significantly above average and the best that it has been for the last five years. At the end of Year 6 pupils left school very well prepared for their learning at secondary school.
- Pupils overall performance at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2014 was below average in all subjects except writing, which was broadly average. Pupils' poor performance in Key Stage 1 was due to teaching that was not good enough, especially in mathematics. This has been rectified, teaching has improved and those pupils who did not perform well in 2013 and 2014 are well supported and making good progress in all subjects in Year 3 and 4.
- Children start Nursery with the skills and knowledge that are below those typical for their age. Good teaching ensures their good progress through Nursery and Reception. Most enter Year 1 with well developed skills in all areas of learning.
- Pupils achieve well in reading. The results of the Year 1 check on pupils' skills in phonics (linking letters and sounds) have been above average for the last two years. The good support in Year 2 for pupils who did not meet the expected standard ensures that they quickly catch up with their peers and make good progress.
- The detailed records kept by teachers show that any gaps in pupils' reading skills are quickly picked up and addressed. Pupils enjoy books from a wide variety of authors and are skilled at scanning factual books for information.
- Pupils have many opportunities to practise their writing skills across the curriculum. They are highly proficient, especially in Year 6, at writing from different points of view. School data show that pupils are making at least good progress in this subject in most year groups.
- No meaningful comparisons can be made between the performance of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language and their peers, or similar groups of pupils nationally, because there were too few at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014. However, school data show that their progress in all year groups is at least as good as their peers.
- The overall attainment of disadvantaged pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014 was about four terms behind that of their class mates, and two terms behind that of their peers nationally. Their performance was best in reading, and weakest in grammar, punctuation and spelling. However all of these pupils made at least good progress from very low starting points.
- Pupils with disabilities or special educational needs are cared for very well. Good partnerships with specialists and parents and highly effective teaching ensure that their progress in reading, writing and mathematics is good across all years and at least matches that of their peers.
- The most able pupils are challenged in class and are regularly provided with additional tasks to complete as part of their homework. In 2014 the proportion of pupils attaining Level 5 was high in all subjects, particularly in reading, and a much higher than average proportion of pupils attained the highest possible Level 6 in mathematics.

The early years provision**is good**

- The early years provision is well led and managed. Leaders have set themselves realistic targets for children's attainment by the end of the year. Rigorous systems for monitoring how well children are doing, and assessing the impact of teaching, enable staff to focus on developing those areas of learning where children's achievement is weaker, for example in speaking and listening.
- Parents are happy that their children are safe and well cared for and are appreciative of the many opportunities that they have to participate in school activities including, coffee mornings, stay and play sessions and phonics workshops.
- Children enter Nursery with different skills and abilities. However the skills of the majority are below those typical for their age. They get off to good start because they learn in stimulating indoor and outdoor learning areas and their teachers and teaching assistants are very caring and well trained. The high expectations that staff have of children help to ensure that they make good progress through Nursery and Reception. Most enter Year 1 with well developed skills in all areas of learning.
- Children are inquisitive and work exceptionally well together. They enjoy sharing their resources, playing together and talking about their learning. Adults continually monitor children's learning and are careful to ensure that good opportunities are available for them to develop their reading, writing, speaking, artistic, number and information, communication and technology skills.
- Staff help to develop children's sense of wonder, fire their imagination and help them to express their feelings. This was evident during story time in Nursery where children were transfixed in their atmospheric reading area when listening to a story about the baby Jesus waking up and discussing how he might be feeling.
- Children are well supervised at all times. They behave very sensibly when moving around, get on exceptionally well together and use equipment, such as scissors, safely.

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	442222

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	251
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tracey Taylor
Headteacher	Phil Turner
Date of previous school inspection	5 December 2012
Telephone number	0113 2533009
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