

Birdsedge First School

Penistone Road, Birdsedge, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire HD8 8XR

Inspection dates

18–19 December 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- School leaders have not acted effectively and quickly enough to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good.
- The management of staff performance and professional development has not had a sufficient or sustained impact on bringing about improvement.
- Self-evaluation is not sharp enough and does not accurately identify key weaknesses and the necessary actions to tackle them.
- Teachers' planning and management of learning activities are not consistently good. This hinders pupils' progress in lessons and over time, particularly the most able.
- The use of assessment is not consistently effective in giving pupils precise feedback or for identifying and overcoming gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- The quality, length and frequency of writing is too variable between classes. Occasionally, teachers give pupils with weaker phonic skills books that are too difficult for them to read.
- In the early years, too few children have exceeded the early learning goals, especially in writing and mathematics.
- A minority of parents and carers do not have confidence in the school. Procedures for making complaints have not been clear enough.

The school has the following strengths

- The trust has acted effectively to provide support and challenge for leadership and teaching.
- Teaching and assessment sometimes result in effective learning by children and pupils, including in phonics.
- Staff use their knowledge of individual pupils well to promote their learning, development and welfare.
- Pupils behave and attend well. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the leadership and management of teaching and learning results in consistently good or better teaching across the school by ensuring that:
 - performance management and professional development are effective in bringing about sustained improvement
 - school self-evaluation accurately identifies school priorities and necessary areas for improvement
 - accurate assessment and analysis of pupils' progress and attainment promptly identify actions to overcome gaps in learning
 - the trust and the local governing body check closely the impact of leaders' improvement actions.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, and increase the progress made by the most able, by ensuring that:
 - teachers' planning and management of learning activities are consistently effective in engaging pupils and enable them to meet the learning objectives
 - pupils in all classes have consistent opportunities to write regularly and at length
 - precise feedback enables pupils to improve aspects of their work more consistently
 - teachers match pupils' reading materials to the phonic ability of pupils with weaker phonic knowledge.
- In the early years, ensure that high expectations and planned curriculum opportunities enable the most able children in Reception to exceed the early learning goals, especially in writing and mathematics.
- The trust and the local governing body should ensure that:
 - leaders work with parents so that they develop and maintain a high level of confidence in the school
 - procedures for making complaints to the headteacher, local governing body and trust are clear.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- School leaders' actions to improve the quality of teaching have had limited impact over time. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning do not specify weaknesses and actions for improvement with sufficient detail and precision. Professional development has not had sufficient impact on the quality of teaching. Staff do not always get precise enough critical feedback about what they need to do to improve pupils' learning. Leaders' checks on the effect of and follow-up actions have not been rigorous enough to bring about sustained improvements in teaching.
- School leaders' self-evaluation does not focus sharply on the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. It does not analyse assessment information at key stage 2. It does not identify the weaknesses in early years outcomes. As a result, leaders' plans lack strategic focus, and actions have had insufficient impact on weaker aspects of teaching and learning.
- Leaders have several tools for assessing pupils' progress and attainment. Some of these are time-consuming and do not always provide accurate or precise enough information about the gaps in pupils' learning. As a result, teaching does not always meet the learning needs of individual pupils precisely enough, particularly the most able.
- A majority of parents are satisfied with the school. However, a significant minority are not satisfied. School leaders, the trust and the local governing body need to do more to win parents' full confidence.
- The special educational needs coordinator ensures that the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified appropriately. Individual plans for pupils ensure that staff know what to do to support pupils' learning and personal development. The school makes effective use of funding and external agencies to identify and meet pupils' special educational needs.
- The well-managed programme of daily reading promotes and assesses pupils' reading comprehension closely and ensures that most pupils reach the standards expected for their age by the end of Year 5. However, too few of the most able reach the higher standards.
- The curriculum includes a broad and balanced range of subjects. Pupils talked confidently about the interesting science experiments they had done. The curriculum has followed the same themes for several years. Leaders have correctly decided to review the curriculum to ensure that it is tailored more closely to pupils' needs and interests and prepares them effectively for transition to middle school.
- Leaders have used the small amount of pupil premium funding appropriately. Leaders' deployment of funding for physical education (PE) and sports is effective. Trained lunchtime supervisors and pupil play leaders organise a range of physical activities at lunchtime. Pupils take part in after-school clubs, including girls' football, and in a wide range of competitive sports and physical activities with other schools.
- Pupils display an appropriate understanding of British values in their respectful social interaction with other children and adults. The programme of assemblies and personal, social and health education promotes pupils' moral and social development well. Pupils

enjoy the art club and the opportunities to play musical instruments. The school council link with a multicultural school contributes to pupils' understanding of diversity in modern Britain.

Governance of the school

- The trust's formal support and challenge from local headteachers are having an impact on improving leadership, management, governance and teaching. However, some weaknesses remain.
- The local governing body and the trust have acted constructively to address parental complaints. The new chair of the local governing body improved the formality of its procedures for acknowledging complaints, investigating issues and communicating in writing the steps taken. The trust has also taken effective action to investigate and respond to complaints. However, the trust's complaint procedure is not clear enough about the circumstances in which parents can take a complaint straight to the trust rather than through the headteacher and local governing body.
- New procedures to strengthen the local governing body's delegated responsibilities for monitoring and evaluating school improvement are at an early stage of implementation. The local governing body regularly checks that leaders are taking appropriate action to implement safeguarding procedures.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The whole staff and those with safeguarding responsibilities are up to date with the required safeguarding training. Staff know what to do if they have concerns about a pupil and act promptly. Pupils know how to communicate any concerns they may have through the 'worry box'. Leaders ensure that staff respond to these worries. Leaders take appropriate action to follow up any serious concerns and liaise well with parents and other agencies. Staff document serious incidents and accidents in detail, with a clear record of action taken, including contact with parents. Adults know children well, and good communication and caring relationships promote a positive culture for safeguarding.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is too variable between year groups.
- Teaching does not always make clear the learning objectives for different ages and abilities. Pupils do not always understand how well they have succeeded or the next steps in their learning.
- In some teaching, the sequence of learning activities is not well enough planned. As a result, pupils do not always understand the purpose and connection between activities.
- Teachers do not always spot when pupils have finished their work and do not redirect pupils' learning quickly enough. As a result, a few pupils become restless or distracted.
- Assessment does not identify precisely or quickly enough the gaps in pupils' learning and does not enable teachers to personalise the teaching closely enough to meet identified needs.

- In some year groups, pupils' writing is too brief and pupils do not write often enough. In other year groups, pupils write frequently and at length and learn to systematically draft, edit and improve their writing.
- A few pupils do not work with enough independence and resilience and are too dependent on adult guidance.
- The best teaching is authoritative and inspiring. Teachers use their deep subject knowledge to engage pupils in stimulating and constructive dialogue. Well-structured activities, clear learning objectives and effective guidance enable pupils to learn productively.
- The daily guided reading programme provides a coherent approach to the development of pupils' comprehension skills. By the end of Year 5, the great majority reached the standards expected for their age. However, few reached the higher standards in 2018.
- Teachers do not always ensure that pupils with weaker phonic knowledge read books that are matched to their phonic ability.
- Experienced support staff use their good knowledge of pupils effectively to guide pupils' learning. The teaching of phonics by teaching and support staff is effective.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Most pupils take part keenly in learning activities and concentrate well. They have positive attitudes to learning. Pupils respond quickly to adult guidance. Many pupils speak confidently in class. Pupils listen well to other pupils in class and show respect for other pupils' ideas. On occasion, pupils lack the resilience and independence to sustain work on their own.
- Staff know pupils and their families well. This makes a significant contribution to the good care and welfare of pupils.
- Older pupils have good opportunities to take responsibility to help younger ones, act as play leaders, be librarians and take leadership roles in after-school activities such as gardening.
- Bullying is rare. Pupils trust that adults will help them deal with any concerns they have about life in school or at home.
- The school is an orderly environment. Pupils feel safe and are secure in school. They can explain the dangers of the internet and what to do if they find inappropriate content.
- Staff understand the needs of pupils with SEND, and extra support promotes their development well.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils conduct themselves responsibly around school and play sensibly in the playground. They line up cooperatively to return to class.

- Staff understand the needs of pupils with SEND and with challenging behaviour. They take effective steps to help pupils in managing their own behaviour. Staff have been trained in how to safely restrain a pupil, if necessary. Leaders took effective action to increase levels of supervision at playtime following feedback from parents.
- Pupils respond well to the school's restorative approach to behaviour. They comply with the school's expectations for behaviour, conduct and relationships.
- Attendance has been above average, and persistent absence below average, for several years. In the last year, persistent absence has risen, in part due to long-term illness but also because a few parents have taken their children on holiday in term time.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes are not good because the quality of learning and progress in reading, writing and mathematics are inconsistent across year groups. This is due to variability in the quality of teaching. Uneven progress hinders pupils' preparation for Year 6 in middle school.
- In 2018, at the end of key stage 1, the proportions that attained the expected standards or above in reading, writing and mathematics were in line with national averages. A school in this socio-economic context could do better.
- In 2018, the proportion of Year 1 pupils that met the expected standard in phonics increased and rose above the national average.
- Some pupils do not master the basics of capital letters and punctuation early enough, which slows their progress in later years.
- Pupils with dyslexia make good progress due to the effective support from teaching assistants and the good provision of resources which help them read.
- At the end of Year 5, teacher assessment shows that more pupils than predicted reached the expected standards or above in 2018. However, fewer than predicted attained higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The most able did not make consistently good progress. An external test at the end of Year 5 showed that a higher than average proportion of pupils attained the higher standards in English. However, fewer than average attained the higher standard in mathematics.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children's outcomes at the end of Reception have not been high enough.
- The proportion that reached a good level of development was below the national average in 2016 and was broadly average in the last two years.
- The attainment of the most able children has been inconsistent. No children exceeded the early learning goals in writing for the past four years, and in mathematics for the last two years. In addition, in 2018, no children exceeded the expected standard in most of the early learning goals. However, the proportion that exceeded the early learning goals in reading has been consistently above national averages.

- Leaders' improvement plans have not used this information to raise standards in the early years. Leaders' expectations have not been high enough. The early years curriculum has not given the most able children the opportunity to show evidence of higher levels of development across the early learning goals, especially in writing and mathematics.
- Teachers and support staff are promoting the development of current children well. Staff communicate high aspirations for the Reception children. Staff assess children's development in accurate detail and evaluate children's progress thoughtfully.
- The teaching of phonics in the early years engages children well. Reception children enjoyed learning the sound and letter 'x' through songs. They quickly consolidated their knowledge by learning how to correctly form the letter 'x' in writing.
- Teaching and support staff work together effectively to share the teaching of Reception and Year 1 children. The team-teaching of this mixed-age group assists children's preparation for Year 1.
- Staff have formed good relationships with parents. They liaise well with nursery providers.
- The early years meets safeguarding and welfare requirements.

School details

Unique reference number	143790
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	10068003

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	First
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	63
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Martyn Jones
Headteacher	John Simmons
Telephone number	01484 605441
Website	www.birdsedgefirst.org
Email address	head@birdsedgefirst.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is very low.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is average.
- When the predecessor school was inspected in 2006, it was judged to be outstanding.
- The school converted to an academy in December 2016. It is a member of the Mast Academy Trust. The board of trustees has a chief executive officer who leads the trust. The trust delegates responsibility for school strategy, management and operations to the local governing body.
- A local leader of education commissioned by the trust provided formal support for school leadership. A peer review by trustees and headteachers was conducted in September 2018.

- The headteacher has resigned and an interim, part-time headteacher will take up post in January 2019.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in all classes with the headteacher.
- The inspector looked at pupils' work in lessons and reviewed samples of pupils' books with leaders and teachers.
- He met with pupils, heard pupils read and observed and talked with pupils around school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and subject leaders. He also met the chief executive officer of the trust and representatives of the local governing body. He spoke by telephone with a local leader of education commissioned by the trust to support the school and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector evaluated a wide range of school, governing body and trust documents, including records of complaints, the school and the trust's monitoring and evaluation, information about pupils' progress, and records of behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- The inspector spoke to several parents before school. The inspection took account of 57 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- The inspection was carried out following a complaint made to Ofsted which raised serious concerns. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector decided that an inspection of the school should take place to follow up the whole-school issues that were raised. Inspectors sought to establish whether leaders, governors and the trust have been effective in addressing parental complaints.

Inspection team

Bernard Campbell, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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