

Birdwell Primary School

Sheffield Road, Birdwell, Barnsley, South Yorkshire S70 5XB

Inspection dates

19–20 March 2019

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	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not been successful in securing consistently good teaching across the school. As a result, outcomes are not consistently good.
- Plans for improvement do not have measurable success criteria, so leaders are not able to check the impact of their actions.
- Governors do not rigorously challenge leaders to check that their actions are having sufficient impact.
- Pupil premium funding does not have enough impact on the progress and outcomes of the pupils it is designed to support.
- Middle leadership is at an early stage of development. Some of these leaders do not have a clear picture of strengths and weaknesses in their areas of responsibility.
- Although leaders are able to check the progress of individual pupils, they do not use assessment data to effectively check the progress that different groups of pupils make.
- The teaching of phonics, although improving, has not been sufficiently effective over time. Some pupils are unable to use their phonics strategies well enough in reading and writing.
- The small number of pupils who regularly have disagreements and fall out are not supported well enough to understand the consequences of unkind words and actions.
- Expectations for what pupils can achieve are not consistently high. Work is not always pitched at the right level to provide pupils with appropriate challenge to impact on their attainment.

The school has the following strengths

- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils are given lots of opportunities to study a wide range of subjects, often in exciting, innovative ways.
- Pupils are polite and friendly. They enjoy school and have positive attitudes to learning.
- Effective provision in the early years enables children to make good progress from their starting points.
- Pastoral support is a key strength of the school. Most pupils are given the help they need to enable them to focus on their learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - continuing to develop the skills of middle leaders so that they can contribute to school improvement more effectively
 - strengthening improvement planning to make sure that the impact of actions can be measured
 - developing the skills of governors to ensure that they can effectively hold leaders to account for their actions
 - improving the analysis of assessment data so that it can be used to effectively track the progress of groups of pupils.
- Improve the consistency of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - ensuring that pupils receive an appropriate level of challenge in all lessons
 - raising the expectations of what all pupils can achieve, especially disadvantaged pupils and the most able pupils
 - sharing the aspects of good practice in the school with all teachers.
- Improve outcomes by ensuring that:
 - all groups of pupils reach the expected standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science by the end of key stage 1, and more pupils work at greater depth in writing
 - all groups of pupils reach the expected standards in reading, writing, English grammar, punctuation and spelling, mathematics and science by the end of key stage 2, and more pupils work at the higher standard in writing, English grammar, punctuation and spelling, and mathematics
 - a greater proportion of pupils meet the required standard in phonics at the end of Year 1.
- Further strengthen work on personal development, behaviour and welfare by helping the small number of pupils who fall out with each other to understand the consequences of unkind words and actions.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Although leaders have created a warm, caring and nurturing school, they have not done enough to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently good. Pupils do not make enough progress, especially in writing. Therefore, outcomes for pupils are not consistently good.
- Middle leadership is not yet fully developed. Middle leaders are keen and eager to learn, but the quality and impact of their work are mixed.
- The headteacher has not been afraid to tackle staff performance. School improvement has also been disrupted by a number of absences which have affected the progress leaders have made. Senior leaders are continuing to check the quality of teaching regularly using a wide range of information.
- The headteacher leads the school with passion and determination. He carries out regular self-evaluation of the school and uses his findings to identify priorities for improvement. However, plans to address these priorities do not have clear, measurable success criteria. Therefore, the impact of actions is not checked carefully enough.
- Staff morale is high. Leaders have made sure that staff are aware of the key priorities for the school and all are keen to play their part in addressing them.
- Additional funding is used more effectively in some areas than others. Pupil premium funding is not used well enough. Plans do not clearly show the intended impact spending will have on accelerating the progress of the group of pupils it is meant for. This makes it difficult for leaders and governors to judge whether this money has made enough of a difference.
- Leaders have made recent improvements in the use of additional funding to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The range of interventions that are used to help these pupils are now carefully checked so that their impact can be measured. Pupils are given appropriate support to enable them to learn alongside their peers.
- Good use is made of the primary physical education and sport funding. Pupils can try a wide range of different sports in school and at after-school clubs. They have lots of opportunities to take part in competitive sport with other schools. Recent changes to the way swimming teaching is delivered has resulted in all Year 4 pupils being able to swim.
- Pupils study a wide range of subjects. They participate in many activities that support their understanding of fundamental British values and what makes a good citizen. There are wide-ranging opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Pupils are given many opportunities to play musical instruments such as recorders and guitars. Pupils enjoy being able to play in the school's brass band.

Governance of the school

- All governors are very supportive of the school. They know what the school does well and have some understanding about where improvements need to be made. They are rightly proud of the caring and nurturing ethos that exists in the school. They recognise the improvements that have been made since the appointment of the new headteacher and deputy headteacher in September 2017, especially to the learning environment.
- Governors receive lots of information from the school. However, they do not receive enough information about some aspects of the work of the school, such as the use of additional funding. This means that governors are unclear as to the impact this money has had on improving pupils' outcomes. Governors do not hold leaders effectively to account for the impact of their actions.
- The chair of the governing body, who is very new to her role, is very keen to improve the effectiveness of the work of governors. She welcomes the recommendation to carry out an external review of governance to assess how their work may be strengthened.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All safeguarding policies and procedures are fit for purpose. Staff are well trained and fully understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Record-keeping is clear and well organised and shows that, when necessary, actions are taken in a timely manner. Staff have built up strong relationships with families and external agencies. This means that the most vulnerable pupils receive support when they need it.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that staff are caring and kind. They know that they can put a message in the 'worry box' or speak to an adult if they have any concerns. They are confident that they will be given appropriate support.
- Parents and carers say that their children are happy and safe in school. Most are confident that the school will respond to any concerns they raise.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is variable. Although leaders have tackled the underperformance of some individual teachers, teaching in some year groups, and in some subjects, remains less than good. In some classes, the desire to provide pupils with exciting activities detracts from learning rather than enhances it.
- There are inconsistencies in the quality of the sequencing of learning in English and mathematics, and especially in writing. In some classes, work is not structured in a way that allows pupils to build on their prior knowledge, skills and understanding. Many pupils, especially in key stage 2, do not have enough secure phonics knowledge to support their spelling.
- Phonics lessons are generally well structured. Actions are used consistently to help pupils to remember different sounds. Most adults check that pupils understand the meaning of words. However, in some classes, pupils are not able to apply their phonics knowledge in their writing. Some pupils do not use their phonics knowledge to tackle

unfamiliar words when reading.

- In mathematics, pupils have opportunities to develop fluency, reasoning and problem-solving skills. Apparatus and pictures are used well in some classes to support pupils' understanding of different methods and concepts. However, in some classes, basic errors are not picked up and are therefore repeated. Similarly, misconceptions are not always addressed.
- In some classes, time is used very productively. However, in others, lessons do not get off to a prompt start and time is wasted between activities. The depth of teachers' subject knowledge is variable, as is the quality of and effectiveness of questioning. The support given to pupils by some teaching assistants is very effective but, again, this is not always the case.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high. This is especially true in some classes for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. A range of interventions are in place to provide these pupils with additional support, but their effectiveness is not carefully checked. The level of challenge for the most able pupils is not consistently high.
- Work in subjects other than English and mathematics is a strength of the school. Pupils have opportunities to develop subject-specific skills, knowledge and understanding in a wide range of subjects. The way that work is structured allows pupils to make meaningful links between different areas of learning. Pupils have many opportunities to apply and practise English and mathematics skills in different contexts. Although this is heartening, this stronger practice in the teaching of the wider curriculum subjects is inconsistent across the school. Also, in some classes, expectations of the quality of work are not as high in these lessons as they are in English and mathematics.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Staff are well trained to support pupils socially and emotionally. They use a wealth of effective strategies, involving external agencies where appropriate. For example, 18 pupils currently access support from an external agency to develop self-esteem, confidence and anger management strategies. Case studies show the success of this work. After six months' support, one boy said, 'When I feel anxious, I now know how to calm myself down.'
- Pupils have opportunities to take on a range of different responsibilities, including acting as members of the school council. Pupils say that the school council enables them to effectively communicate their views to school leaders. They were able to give examples of changes that have been made as a result of their work, such as music in the library and the red carpet in assembly.
- Where teachers' expectations are high, pupils take great pride in their learning. This is reflected in the way they listen to adults, concentrate in lessons and in the care they take in presenting their work. However, where teachers' expectations are not as high, pupils' attitudes to learning are not as strong.

- Pupils show a secure understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They benefit from lessons about online safety and can explain how to react if someone tries to persuade them to do something that they know is wrong. The school council has worked with catering staff to change some of the foods that are offered at lunchtime. Pupils are encouraged to be active during the school day and many choose to attend after-school sports clubs.
- Pupils say that incidents of bullying are now extremely rare and are dealt with quickly and effectively by staff in school. A small minority of parents do not agree with the pupils' views.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils enjoy each other's company at breaktimes. They engage in a range of different activities and are able to buy healthy snacks. They cooperate well to share equipment and the relatively small playground. Very few pupils engage in rough play and adults provide good supervision.
- Pupils are polite and friendly. They understand the school's behaviour policy and follow the school rules. In lessons, pupils focus on their learning. Lessons are not disrupted by poor behaviour.
- Behaviour logs show that the very few incidents of poor behaviour are dealt with thoroughly. The number of such incidents has reduced over time.
- The school has used a wealth of effective strategies to improve attendance. As a result, current attendance is above the most recent national average. The proportion of pupils disadvantaged by persistent absence has reduced but remains above the most recent national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment have led to slow progress for pupils in some year groups. The resultant decline in outcomes for pupils across the school since the last inspection means that many pupils are not fully equipped for the next stage of their education.
- The proportion reaching the required standard in phonics in Year 1 has been below the national average for three years. However, the proportion of boys meeting the required standard has been above that of all pupils and boys nationally for two years.
- In 2018, the proportions of pupils reaching the expected standards in reading and writing in Year 2 and Year 6 were below the national averages. The proportions reaching the expected standards in mathematics were higher: just below the national average in Year 2 and just above in Year 6. The proportion reaching the greater-depth standard in Year 2 was just below the national average in reading and mathematics and well below in writing. The proportion reaching the higher standard in Year 6 was above the national average in reading but below in writing and mathematics.
- In the same year, progress at the end of key stage 2 was average in reading and

mathematics. Progress in writing was well below average and in the lowest 10% of schools.

- Current in-school data and work in pupils' books show an inconsistent picture. In some year groups, the quality of learning over time is good and pupils are making good progress, especially in reading and mathematics. However, progress is not good in all year groups.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils, like other pupils in the school, is variable. Consequently, by the end of Year 6, the differences between disadvantaged pupils' attainment and that of other pupils nationally are wide and are not diminishing.
- Work in books shows that most pupils with SEND are making small steps of progress. This is as a result of targeted support and additional interventions, which are allowing pupils to access learning alongside their peers.

Early years provision

Good

- Most children start in Reception with skills that are broadly typical for their age. They make good progress, with the proportion of pupils working at age-related expectations in different areas of learning increasing as they move through the year. The proportion achieving a good level of development was above the national average in 2016 and 2018 and at the national average in 2017.
- The school is proactive in its work on induction. School staff have supported staff in the neighbouring nursery in developing children's literacy and numeracy skills. The parent support officer meets with the nursery manager to discuss the needs of the children before they move into school. Nursery children are given lots of opportunities to experience school life in the summer term. This helps children to feel happy and secure when they start school in September.
- Relationships between staff and children are strong. Children are well behaved and cooperate well to work together and to share resources.
- Good relationships are quickly established with parents. For example, they are welcomed into school each morning to work with their children at the start of the school day. Parents are provided with valuable information about the progress their children are making and the next steps they need to take in their learning.
- The teaching of phonics is well structured and enthusiastically delivered. These sessions are constantly adapted to meet the needs of individuals and groups. As a result, children really enjoy their daily phonics lessons and make good progress.
- Both the indoor and outdoor areas are well resourced and organised. Children can independently select resources and tidy them away when they have finished with them. All areas are rich in language. Children have lots of opportunities to apply their developing phonics skills in reading and writing. However, mathematics is not as strongly promoted.
- Staff work well together as a team. They know the children in their care very well. Assessment and record-keeping are used skilfully to identify next steps in learning for individuals and groups. Staff often create exciting activities to engage and motivate different pupils, for example creating a cave to encourage boys to write.

- Most staff use questioning well to extend and challenge children’s thinking. They have plans to provide parent volunteers and students with written prompts to support them in doing the same.
- All statutory welfare requirements are met. Staff share safety reminders with children and support them to recognise and manage risks.

School details

Unique reference number	106595
Local authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	10086826

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	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julie Coultas
Headteacher	Nigel Bailey
Telephone number	01226 742 957
Website	www.birdwellprimary.org.uk/
Email address	n.bailey@birdwellprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	April 2013

Information about this school

- Birdwell Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- There are very few pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average.
- The school runs a number of after-school clubs.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all year groups. Some of the observations were undertaken jointly with leaders.
- Inspectors looked at work in some pupils' books alongside senior and middle leaders.
- An inspector met with members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Various documents were scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation document, the improvement plan, minutes of governing body meetings, records of checks on teaching and learning, and attendance and safeguarding information.
- An inspector met formally with a group of pupils and listened to several pupils read. Inspectors spoke informally to many pupils in lessons and at breaktimes.
- Discussions took place with staff about the support and professional development that they receive.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents by meeting informally at the start of the school day and through the 51 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

Inspection team

Christine Cook, lead inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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