



# Birdwell Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 109083  
**LEA** North Somerset  
**Inspection number** 278116  
**Inspection dates** 30 November 2005 to 1 December 2005  
**Reporting inspector** David Clegg RISP

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Hollis Close
<b>School category</b>	Community		Bristol
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 11		BS41 9AZ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01275 392496
<b>Number on roll</b>	167	<b>Fax number</b>	01275 394855
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr David Atkins
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	7 February 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Nick Shopland

<b>Age group</b> 5 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 30 November 2005 - 1 December 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 278116
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Birdwell is an average sized primary school. Pupils are mainly White British, and there is a below average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals.

The school has experienced significant disruption to the senior management in the past three years. There have been four headteachers since the last inspection in 2000. The current headteacher took up post in September 2005. At the time of the inspection, two out of the six classes were taught by temporary teachers.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Although the school provides a satisfactory quality of education its performance has declined since the last inspection. Up until very recently, the improvement has been inadequate. This is as a result of the significant disruptions to the leadership and management. This unsettled period is behind the school now but there is still some residual impact of weak leadership and management. For example, systematic procedures to track pupils' progress as they move through the school have lapsed. The current capacity for improvement is growing and is satisfactory.

The headteacher and the governing body have an accurate picture of the school's current strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher has set about making the necessary improvements, including strengthening teaching. Other improvements are already evident in the increased provision for sport and imaginative provision for pupils' personal development. The positive comments from pupils and parents demonstrate a new confidence in the work of the school.

Standards are broadly in line with national averages. Pupils achieve satisfactorily but the progress they make varies too much. There is no pattern to this, but it means that some pupils underachieve for some of their time in school. Whilst teaching is meeting the needs of most pupils, lessons are not consistently challenging or demanding enough because some teachers' expectations are too low. There is some very effective use of target setting but this is not consistent in all classes. The standards and quality in the reception class are satisfactory.

The school views its own effectiveness as satisfactory although everyone at the school is fully aware that it could be performing at a higher level. It currently gives sound value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure a consistently good rate of progress through more demanding and livelier teaching.
- Tighten up the procedures to track pupils' progress as they move through the school.
- Adopt a consistent approach to setting targets for pupils; make them fully aware of what they are and give them feedback about progress towards meeting them.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Pupils make sound progress and attain standards at the end of Year 6 that are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. This represents a decline since the last inspection when progress was often good and standards were higher.

Children in the reception class make steady progress and most achieve levels of skills that are expected by the time they start Year 1. Progress is uneven in Years 1 and 2. Expectations of what the pupils can achieve are too low in Year 1. However, the pupils'

progress picks up in Year 2 because the teaching is better and this was the reason for pupils doing particularly well in the 2005 national tests at the end of Year 2.

Currently, steady progress is made as pupils move through Years 3 to 5. Pupils in Year 6, and the pupils in Year 5 who are taught with them, make good progress. Too many of the pupils who left school last year did not make the progress of which they were capable until they reached Year 6. The tracking procedures are used inconsistently so it is not possible to evaluate reliably the pupils' progress in meeting their targets.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

The school successfully helps pupils to develop personally. It is particularly successful in promoting pupils' moral and social development through cooperative working and the recently formed school and class councils. The school takes the work of the school council very seriously and they were recently involved in the appointment of a new deputy headteacher; 'we were a bit nervous but we practiced our questions', said one council member. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.

Attitudes to school work are positive and generally pupils enjoy their lessons. However, whilst pupils speak very enthusiastically about their lessons, one or two are more ambivalent and, with some justification, say their teachers 'talk too much'. The oldest pupils feel that their learning targets are very helpful; as one said 'we know what we are actually working towards'.

Attendance has been consistently good, with above average attendance over several years.

Pupils talk knowledgeably about how to keep themselves healthy and they respond to the school's encouragement to eat fruit and take plenty of exercise. The school positively encourages pupils to be involved with the local community. They, for instance, distribute harvest gifts within the locality and perform an annual concert to the 'Good Companions', a local village group. Pupils are successfully given a good range of personal and academic skills that will stand them in good stead in later life.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The pattern of pupils' progress reflects the quality of teaching. The best teaching is lively and interesting. Lessons move on at a good pace because the teaching is confident and the teacher has a very clear view of what needs to be learnt and explains this to the pupils. This quality of teaching is typical in Years 2 and 6 and explains why pupils make good progress.

The school is trying hard to improve pupils' learning and build on their good attitudes. Teachers' feedback to pupils is inconsistent. At its best it is very helpful; one Year 6 pupil commented 'she tells us what to do to improve'. In Year 4, pupils are taught to

think carefully about how well they are doing and this gives them chance to consider their own progress. However, there is an inconsistent approach to setting targets for pupils; when effective, teachers use the targets to guide marking and successfully motivate pupils.

Occasionally the teaching is too dull and uninspiring. It does not grab the attention of pupils and they sometimes 'switch off'. This happens on those occasions when the teacher talks too much or when the work given to pupils is too easy and does not engage them enough. One pupil commented 'sometimes lessons are boring because we are learning stuff we already know'.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum meets the needs of pupils but does not particularly enthuse or inspire the pupils. One significant, and recent, improvement is the amount and quality of sport that has been offered to pupils. They spoke very enthusiastically about the new opportunities they were being offered through lessons, clubs and sports oriented residential visits.

The most imaginative aspect of the curriculum is the emphasis given to pupils' personal development. They have some very good opportunities to work in pairs to discuss and solve problems and explain to the rest of the class what they have done. This approach is helping pupils to develop key interpersonal skills that will help them in their economic future.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils feel well looked after, safe and secure. They have confidence in the adults and feel able to talk to someone if they have a particular problem. The guidance they are offered about how to improve their work is too variable. Generally teachers take time to respond to pupils' work and give them real insights into what they need to do to get better. In these instances, pupils are very aware of their learning targets and feel motivated by them. However, this is not consistent through the school.

The procedures for ensuring that pupils are kept safe are fully in place, are known to staff and work well.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The decline in performance since the last inspection is a result of the discontinuity of the leadership and management. This has impacted on several aspects of school life including the tracking of pupils' progress and the monitoring and improvement of teaching. An effective system for monitoring pupils' progress was allowed to become redundant and this partly explains the weaker progress and standards since the last

inspection. The disruption also had an impact on how pupils felt about the school; one commented that 'we didn't really know who the headteacher was'.

The school is now on a much firmer footing than it was 12 months ago. The new permanent headteacher has already implemented a number of improvements in response to requests from pupils and parents. This is behind the improved provision for sport and renewed feeling of confidence evident in comments from pupils, staff, governors and parents. The improvement is also evident in the more effective opportunities for pupils' personal development. Changes are managed in a measured and sensible manner.

The renewed sense of direction and purpose is guiding how the school now improves. This is shared by the key senior managers and is leading to improvements particularly in how pupils' work is assessed and in tighter checks and improvements on the quality of teaching.

The headteacher and governors have a sharp grasp of the school's weaknesses and have taken positive steps to address them. The school has a sound capacity to improve.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Birdwell Primary School Hollis Close Long Ashton Bristol BS41 9AZ

2 December 2005

Dear Pupils

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed being with you and found you all very friendly and welcoming. This letter is to tell you what we found out about your school while we were with you.

What we like about your school

- You have a new headteacher that you like and who is making improvements, such as more visits and sporting opportunities.
- The school council has good ideas about what it would like to improve.
- All the pupils often share ideas and work well together in lessons.
- Pupils talked politely and openly to us about their likes and dislikes at school.

What we have asked your school to do now

- Make sure your lessons are more exciting and that teachers do not talk for too long.
- Check that you are making steady progress each year and let you know exactly what you need to do to get better at your work.
- Ensure that your targets are challenging and your work is hard enough.

We wish you all the very best and, once again, thank you for making us feel so welcome in your school.

Yours sincerely

David Clegg Lead Inspector