



# Birkenshaw Church of England Voluntary Controlled First and Nursery School

## Inspection Report

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Better  
education  
and care

**Unique Reference Number** 107730  
**Local Authority** Kirklees  
**Inspection number** 287900  
**Inspection dates** 27–28 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Robert Robinson

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Station Lane
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		Birkenshaw, Bradford
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–9		West Yorkshire BD11 2JE
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01274 335400
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	333	<b>Fax number</b>	01274 335400
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr E Brady
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Angela Holt
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 November 2001		

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<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
3–9	27–28 November 2006	287900

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

This is a larger than average primary school. Almost all pupils are of White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The social and economic circumstances of the area are varied but overall about average. Since the last inspection there has been a significant turnover of staff, including the headteacher and deputy headteacher.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Birkenshaw First and Nursery School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils which agrees with its own evaluation of its effectiveness. The significant turnover in staff, including the senior leadership, has led to difficulties in planning ahead for future improvement and ensuring continuity in pupils' learning. This has meant the school has not been able to move on as fast as it would have liked since the last inspection but, because of recent developments, overall improvement is satisfactory. The success so far of the initiatives to improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement demonstrates that the leadership has a satisfactory capacity to move the school forward. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The governors and headteacher, with the assistance of the local authority, have taken action to deal successfully with a succession of issues during recent years in order to improve the quality of teaching. Following significant staffing changes, the quality of teaching and pupils' progress have improved, particularly in Years 3 and 4 and in the Nursery. However, there is more to be done because the teaching throughout the rest of the school is still variable. Children enter school with standards that are broadly average. Too much inadequate teaching in the past has led to pupils making uneven progress across the school. This is a changing picture and, importantly for the school, an improving one: pupils' achievement is now satisfactory. Standards throughout the school are broadly average.

The curriculum is satisfactory. It has recently been reviewed to add interest and enjoyment through planning imaginative links between subjects to help pupils see that learning in one subject connects with that in others. It is enriched well with a varied range of additional activities to meet the needs and interests of all pupils. Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Improvements in the organisation and planning of more exciting activities in the Nursery are now engaging children well in their learning, both in the classroom and outdoors.

Pupils' attainment is checked regularly. However, the assessment information is not used consistently enough to help teachers plan future learning or set pupils individual targets to challenge them to reach the standards of which they are capable. Furthermore, the system for tracking pupils' progress does not give a clear picture of how well pupils are doing as they move through school to show if they are achieving as well as they should. Improvements in marking successfully highlight to pupils how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve, particularly in writing.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils develop a good understanding of right and wrong and develop harmonious relationships with each other. They enjoy school and behave consistently well both in lessons and around school. As a result the school is a calm and orderly place to be; where pupils say they feel safe and well cared for. Pupils receive a good level of pastoral care: staff are supportive and know pupils well.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The management of the school has been strengthened by the establishment of a senior management team. They work hard and

enthusiastically, with a good team spirit and a shared vision for improving the school. Together with subject coordinators, many of whom are new to their posts, improvements have been made to the curriculum. Self-evaluation is satisfactory and identifies the school's strengths and areas where improvements are needed, but development plans are not sharp enough in terms of improving outcomes for pupils. Although the monitoring of teaching has led to some improvements in pupils' learning and progress, it is not yet rigorous enough to impact fully across the whole school.

Parents' mixed views of the school reflect its current improving position. For example, parents commented that, 'the school is slowly and gradually improving', 'Children are not stretched enough both upper and lower attainers,' and 'My child is happy and eager to attend school.'

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the system for tracking pupils' progress as they move through school to ensure they achieve as well as they should.
- Make better use of assessment information to set individual targets for pupils which challenge them to reach the standards they are capable of.
- Eliminate the inconsistencies in teaching to ensure all pupils throughout school learn at a fast enough pace.
- Ensure that the monitoring of performance by managers at all levels focuses sharply on raising standards and achievement.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Achievement is satisfactory. Children enter the Nursery with standards that are as expected for their age, with strengths in personal, social and emotional development and communication skills. By the end of Reception, standards are above those normally expected. Standards by the end of Year 4 are broadly average. Because of a legacy of inadequate teaching, standards have drifted downwards overtime, particularly in writing by the end of Year 2. The recent focus on writing and the improved quality of teaching throughout the school are proving successful. Throughout the school, progress has been too uneven in the past but it is now satisfactory overall. Inspection evidence shows that pupils are making better progress in Years 3 and 4 and standards are rising because teaching and learning are now better.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and enjoy thoroughly joining in the varied range of interesting activities provided for them. Attendance is average but too many parents take children on holiday during term time and do not appreciate fully the effect this can have on their children's education. Pupils' behaviour is good and they develop high levels of self-confidence

as they move through school. Bullying is rare and pupils say that if it occurs adults take note and it is dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils understand the importance of keeping safe and healthy. They appreciate the improved playground facilities and the opportunity to join in the wide range of physical activities at lunchtime. Pupils gain a good understanding of the needs of others and those less fortunate than themselves through fund raising for worthy causes, such as for a local hospice and African initiatives. However, pupils' understanding of the cultural diversity of local areas is only satisfactory because they have insufficient opportunities to consider the faiths and cultures of different people.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Much has been done to improve the quality of teaching and, as a result, most is now good though some is still inadequate. Lessons are generally planned well, but in some lessons the teaching does not meet the needs of all abilities, particularly when pupils are taught for lengthy periods as a class group. Generous staffing levels and well-trained support staff assist pupils' learning effectively, including those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, enabling them to make satisfactory progress. Relationships between staff and pupils are good and pupils respond by behaving well and working hard. When teaching is good, the pace of learning is brisk and builds effectively upon pupils' prior knowledge. Teachers capture pupils' interest well and present a good level of challenge through well-targeted questions. These good features are lacking in lessons when teaching is weaker and, consequently, pupils learn at a slower pace and the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are not sufficiently met.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum throughout the school is enriched well through the teaching of a modern foreign language and additional opportunities in music. The recent changes to the curriculum to link the learning in different subjects, with an emphasis on developing basic literacy and numeracy skills, are beginning to improve pupils' learning. However, the school has not persuaded parents of the importance of educational visits to enrich purposefully pupils' learning through first hand experiences. For example, a visit to a museum to develop pupils' understanding of Victorian life had to be cancelled because of lack of support from parents. Interactive whiteboards provide a visual stimulus and added interest to learning. Opportunities for pupils to participate in physical and sporting activities are provided through extra-curricular clubs; for example, football and dance and an exciting range of activities at lunchtime.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall; however, the care pupils receive is good. Staff know the pupils well and the pupils know there is someone to turn to if they should need help. Pupils feel safe in school and work in a happy environment. Child protection and health and safety routines are firmly in place and known to staff. Pupils' progress is tracked satisfactorily but not all staff use assessment information well enough to speed up pupils' learning and ensure they achieve as well as they should. Individual education plans for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are detailed but insufficient use is made of them in lessons to guide pupils' learning.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The school has dealt with very difficult staffing issues successfully. The headteacher and senior management team are fully aware that standards should be higher and, in partnership with the local authority, have begun to work effectively to pursue improvement. Evidence of improvements in writing and provision for boys is beginning to show in improved standards of pupils' work and achievement. The good progress pupils are now making in Years 3 and 4 and in the Nursery has also contributed to this improvement.

The school's self-evaluation is satisfactory and leaders know the main strengths and weaknesses of the provision. Most subject leaders are new to their roles and, as such, their involvement in monitoring teaching and learning is at an early stage of development. The school's improvement plan identifies the priorities for development but the criteria for measuring its success are not precisely focused in terms of improving outcomes for pupils. Governors make a satisfactory contribution to monitoring the work of the school and securing improvements: they are keen to hold the school to account and have done much to support the headteacher.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

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

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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

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

Thank you for welcoming Mrs Lambert, Mr Rigby and myself to your school and for being so polite and friendly. We enjoyed our visit and we want to share with you what we thought about your school.

We are pleased that you enjoy school, behave well and all get on so well together. We appreciated that you are cared for well by staff and feel safe at the school as well as having opportunities to take part in activities that will keep you healthy. Currently, the school is giving you a satisfactory education. Good things we noticed in lessons are your positive attitudes to learning and that you all get on well with your teachers. In most lessons seen the teaching was good. However, in a few lessons teaching was not so effective and we have asked the school to make sure the quality of teaching is good at all times so that all of you make good progress and reach higher standards. We have asked the school to use the information it has about your progress better and to set you targets so that you will know what to do to improve your work so that you will make better progress. This will help you to see what you must do to improve in order to achieve higher standards. We also want the headteacher and other senior staff to improve the way they keep a close eye on your progress and check your learning as you move through the school, so you achieve as well as you should.

We appreciated talking to you about your work and watching you learn. We wish you well for the future.