



Birchfield Community Primary School

Inspection Report - Amended

Unique Reference Number 123730
Local Authority Somerset
Inspection number 292763
Inspection dates 19–20 September 2006
Reporting inspector Diane Wilkinson

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Birchfield Road
School category	Community		Yeovil
Age range of pupils	4–11		BA21 5RL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01935 427609
Number on roll (school)	370	Fax number	01935 411154
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mike Williams
		Headteacher	Richard Culham
Date of previous school inspection	18 February 2002		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 19–20 September 2006	Inspection number 292763
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Amended Report Addendum

Report updated to resolve formatting inconsistency

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Birchfield is a larger than average primary school. The school serves an area with a high level of social and economic deprivation. Children start school with skills and knowledge that are below the expected levels, particularly in language and literacy. There is an above average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. In some year groups, there is a much higher than average proportion. A small number of pupils speak English as an additional language. Significant, long-term building work is currently being undertaken in the school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Birchfield provides a satisfactory standard of education. In the past three years the school's work has been hampered by lengthy staff absences and difficulty in replacing the significant number of staff who have left. The headteacher has successfully steered the school through this difficult time. Pupils and their parents recognise his commitment to the school; as one pupil commented, 'He gets things done'. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Self-evaluation is accurate and the school has a clear knowledge of what needs to be improved. Over the past year, good new appointments and greater stability in staffing have helped to improve the rate of pupils' progress which is now satisfactory, and improving throughout the school.

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are in line with the national average. Early intervention and good support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities helps these pupils make good progress. The progress of pupils who speak English as an additional language and higher attaining pupils is satisfactory.

Reception children make good progress although standards at the end of the year are below expectations and are still slightly below the national average at the end of Year 2. Standards at the end of Year 6 are broadly average in English and science, but above average in mathematics. Across the school, but most markedly in Years 3 to 6, standards are better in reading than in writing and speaking and listening. Standards in science are limited because some pupils find it difficult to explain their findings.

The good number of well qualified teaching assistants make an important contribution to learning. The teaching of older pupils in ability groups in English and mathematics is well focused on their needs and is helping to raise standards. Effective links with other schools and outside agencies and the good range of extra-curricular activities, particularly for sport, contribute well to pupils' academic and personal development. Provision for children in the Reception Year is satisfactory. The curriculum meets their needs and interests well.

Pupils feel safe and secure and say they enjoy school. Despite a small number of challenging pupils, the good programme to support pupils' personal development ensures most behave well and get on with others. However, there are a small number of occasions when over boisterous play upsets some pupils. Most pupils listen attentively to their teachers, but sometimes they struggle to concentrate when working independently. The school collects a good range of information on how well pupils are doing. This is used effectively to help pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress. However, not all teachers use it well enough to guide pupils in recognising what they need to do to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make better use of information about how well pupils are doing to set clear targets and guide pupils in how to achieve them.
- Improve speaking and listening skills especially in Years 3 to 6.
- Improve progress and raise standards in science.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are generally in line with the national average. Very secure teaching of early basic mathematical and reading skills ensures that children in Reception classes make good progress, although by the time they start Year 1 standards in all areas of learning remain below the expected levels. Steady progress is maintained in Years 1 and 2, although by the time pupils start Year 3, standards remain below average. Increased attention given to improving pupils' speaking and listening and writing skills in these classes is increasing the rate of progress in English. Progress in Years 3 to 6, which has been slow in previous years, is now satisfactory. Standards in Year 6 are broadly average. They are above average in mathematics and reading but below average in speaking and listening. This is because not enough is being done to systematically improve pupils' speaking and listening skills, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Boys' progress in writing is now better than in previous years and higher attaining pupils are sufficiently stretched most of the time. Progress and standards in science are limited by pupils' grasp of scientific ideas, in particular their ability to explain how and why things happen.

The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is good. Early identification of their needs, effective monitoring of their progress and well managed intervention programmes help them to do well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory and their spiritual, moral and social and cultural development is satisfactory.

Nearly all pupils listen well and concentrate on their work although they can be easily distracted when working individually. Adults manage inappropriate behaviour well although instances of over boisterous behaviour concern some pupils. Except for this, pupils feel safe and well cared for and have a satisfactory understanding of how to secure their own safety.

Pupils enjoy school, particularly the many clubs and visits. Attendance is slightly below average but improving. Pupils' understanding of how to achieve a healthy lifestyle is good and the school holds the 'Healthy Schools' award. The development of skills for future life is mainly satisfactory although there are weaknesses in speaking and listening and in the ability to work independently. Older pupils are given a range of responsibilities, but opportunities for younger pupils are limited. The school council enables pupils to contribute to the school community and they arrange fund-raising for a number of charities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Reading and mathematics skills are well taught so progress is good. Recent improvements in the teaching of writing have ensured progress is satisfactory across the school and occasionally good in Years 1 and 2. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well taught and the effective contribution to learning made by classroom assistants also supports their good progress. Science lessons in Years 3 to 6 do not give enough emphasis to pupils' developing scientific vocabulary nor to helping them explain why things happen. In most lessons higher attaining pupils are set appropriate work although they sometimes have to complete the same work as their classmates first and this occasionally slows their progress.

The use of targets and marking of work to help pupils do better, whilst good in some classes, are not consistent throughout the school to give pupils clear guidance on what they need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory although long-term planning does not place enough emphasis on how to develop pupils' skills throughout the school. The good range of activities in the Reception classes engages children's interest well. There is an effective programme in place to help pupils develop their reading skills. A good number of additional programmes for literacy and numeracy help pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress. Arrangements to teach pupils in ability groups in Years 5 and 6 help teachers to closely meet pupils' needs. Extra-curricular activities, including a range of visits, visitors and school clubs, are good.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care guidance and support are satisfactory. Pupils are confident they can confide in adults and that they will respond to their concerns. Support for personal development is good. For example, older pupils explore how they deal with feeling angry or upset. All procedures for ensuring pupils' health and safety are in place and up to date and good arrangements have been made for pupils' health and safety during the current building work. The school has productive links with a range of outside agencies.

Supervision at lunch and playtimes is effective and older pupils help look after the younger ones. The school has good information about pupils' academic progress which helps staff intervene when progress slows. Procedures for setting targets to help pupils improve are at an early stage of development and their use is inconsistent.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The strong leadership of the headteacher is leading to improved standards throughout the school. Subject leaders are increasingly helping to bring about developments and improved progress. The work of governors is satisfactory and they have played a key role in the new building programme. Monitoring and evaluation of performance are helping to raise standards, for example in mathematics. Self-evaluation is thorough and accurate and pupils and their parents are appropriately consulted. Areas of weakness are clearly identified and action is beginning to bring about improvement. Several initiatives are fairly recent and their full effect has yet to be seen. Nevertheless, improvements brought about so far, for instance in improved attendance and better progress in some subjects, indicates the school's capacity to improve further.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
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

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
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

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

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 us to your school. I particularly want to thank the pupils who gave up their lunchtime to talk us. Your school is correct in judging that it gives you a satisfactory standard of education. However, we think it is improving and you are now making better progress.

This is what we thought was good about the school:

- You are making good progress in reading and mathematics where standards are above average by the time you leave.
- The support for pupils who find learning difficult is good and they make good progress.
- The school works well with other schools and organisations in your local area.
- You have a good range of visits, visitors and after school clubs, particularly in sport, which help you enjoy school and get regular exercise.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- Use the information it has about how well you are doing to help you make even better progress. You can help by working hard to improve.
- Help you to develop better speaking and listening skills so that you can explain things clearly and give reasons for your answers.
- Improve progress in science. You can help by trying to do your best.

Thank you again for all your help and good luck for the future.



21 September 2006

Birchfield Community Primary School
Birchfield Road
Yeovil
Somerset
BA21 5RL

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Thank you again for all your help and good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

D Wilkinson
Lead Inspector