

# Birkby Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	107626
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kirklees
<b>Inspection number</b>	309449
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 March 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Marie Cordey

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 category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	285
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Keith Anglesey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Susan Davis
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 November 2005
<b>School address</b>	Mead Street Fartown Huddersfield West Yorkshire HD1 6HE
<b>Telephone number</b>	01484 223975
<b>Fax number</b>	01484 223977

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a large school set in an inner city area close to the centre of Huddersfield in an area of some social and economic disadvantage. A large proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The vast majority of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds; a well above average number are at an early stage of learning English. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. An increasing number of pupils and more than is usual join and leave the school partway through their education. Over the past four years there has been a very high turnover of staff. Staffing is now stable and interruptions to the school's routines caused by building works have come to an end. The school has gained Artsmark Silver status and the Healthy Schools Gold award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Birkby is a satisfactory and improving school. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good because of the school's care, respect and tolerance for each pupil. This care for pupils' well-being is at the heart of the headteacher's vision for each pupil to reach their potential, both in their academic and personal development. In order to do this the school gives a strong focus to pupils' behaviour and raising their confidence and self-esteem. This has been successful and has provided a secure base on which to build and overcome the underachievement of previous years.

Standards are improving although they are still below average overall. Inspection analysis of pupils' work and the school's tracking procedures show that, overall, pupils are now making satisfactory progress. The higher attaining pupils, however, are not always challenged sufficiently to achieve the higher standards of which they are capable. Standards are lowest in mathematics, particularly in pupils' ability to solve problems. A well planned policy for calculation has resulted in marked improvements to pupils' skills in multiplication and division.

Pupils are well behaved and show good attitudes to learning. Harmony and tolerance sum up the caring character of the school. Pupils are motivated by 'doing the right thing' and consciously strive to treat others with respect. Different cultures and religions that reflect life in multicultural Britain are celebrated and respected. As a result, relationships between different races and cultures in the school are outstanding. Pupils respond positively to teachers' high expectations of behaviour and attitudes to learning. Praise and rewards are used well to reward pupils' successes and to boost their confidence.

The quality of teaching and learning is improving but remains satisfactory overall because of inconsistencies across the school. Pupils respond well to the lessons which are carefully planned using practical activities and interactive whiteboards to engage their interest and promote enjoyment in discovering new things. On such occasions pupils' learning is accelerated. Teaching is not, however, always of this good quality. For example, when teachers talk for too long, especially in the introduction to lessons, pupils' involvement and engagement in their learning is reduced. Consequently, they lose interest and the pace of learning slows to a satisfactory level. The use of information to meet pupils' needs and raise achievement is inconsistent and slows improvements, particularly in mathematics and for the higher attaining pupils. Pupils' work is marked regularly although not all teachers give clear guidance for improvement. Consequently, pupils are not sure exactly how they are doing in their work or what to do to improve it.

Good quality displays in classrooms and around the school celebrate and guide pupils' learning. These displays provide a very attractive environment for parents, pupils and staff in this Grade II listed building. The headteacher leads the school well. Her vision for improvement is shared by the senior leadership team who provide effective support to the school's strategy for raising standards and achievement. Teachers newly appointed to coordinate the learning in the core subjects are beginning to track the progress and needs of pupils more effectively. Governors are active and involved in the life of the school. The strong leadership of the chair of governors is instrumental in shaping the plans for the future. Self-evaluation is mainly accurate and gives the senior leaders a good understanding of what the school does well and what it needs to do to improve. The school is in a good position to improve further as demonstrated by the recent rise in standards and improved progress by pupils.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement, especially in mathematics and for the higher attaining pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in ensuring that pupils are fully engaged in lessons and teachers make better use of assessment information to raise achievement.
- Ensure that teachers' marking helps pupils to know how they are doing in their work and what they need to do in order to improve it.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Improvements in the quality of teaching are resulting in pupils making better progress across the school. In recent years pupils have not achieved as well as they should. This is linked to the instability in staffing and disturbances in routines caused by building improvements which have led to interruptions in pupils' learning. Achievement is now satisfactory from pupils' typically below average starting points. Standards in all subjects have begun to improve, particularly in reading and science. A concerted approach to the teaching and learning of speaking and listening skills is beginning to bring the pupils' writing to life and help improve standards. Standards in mathematics although rising remain well below average and the higher attaining pupils are not always challenged sufficiently. Many pupils arrive and leave the school at other than the usual times and this impacts on the end of Year 6 test results. Most of these pupils do not have records of their previous attainment and come from a wide range of different countries. Despite this, the school's commitment to include everybody is evident in the speedy identification of these pupils' needs and the effective support provided for them. Additional, tailored support is provided for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are at an early stage of learning English. Consequently, these pupils make satisfactory progress.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils are aware of themselves as young citizens and are active members of their local community. They are vocal and involved members of the school council, responsible prefects and caring 'befrienders' to younger pupils. Pupils know how to look after their health and enjoy eating and mixing with others in the attractive dining room. They keep themselves fit through participating in a wide range of sporting activities. Attendance is average and improving thanks to pupils' enjoyment of school and to the school's systems to reward and promote the importance of attending regularly. Nevertheless, a small number of families persistently remove pupils from school to take holidays in term time. Strong business links and enterprise activities play an effective part in preparing pupils for the future although this is hampered by the below average standards in basic skills.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and includes a significant proportion that is good and better. Good relationships encourage pupils to ask questions and offer their opinions. When teaching is at its best pupils are engaged by stimulating activities and learn at a good pace. On such occasions pupils are enthusiastic, joyful and delighted to learn. Where teaching is less stimulating pupils lose interest and learn at a slower pace. Teachers do not always use assessment information well enough to meet pupils' needs to raise their achievement. Support assistants are used effectively to guide the learning of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils who are at an early stage of learning English are given specific language support in order to improve their skills in spoken and written English. A clear identification of the training needs of support assistants has resulted in improved collaboration and shared planning of lessons with the teachers. As a result, support assistants are playing an active part in lessons and know how to meet the needs of pupils more effectively.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

Well attended extra-curricular activities range from sewing to playing in the steel band. Extended provision before school includes a nutritious breakfast and is very popular. Many visits and visitors bring pupils' learning to life and pupils look forward to them. Circle time discussions together with personal and religious education teach pupils to value themselves and the community to which they belong. Organised and effective provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English enable them to make appropriate progress. The improvements in the learning of basic skills in English, mathematics, and information and communication technology are beginning to support pupils' learning in other subjects. This is reinforced by the creative arts curriculum which improves pupils' ability to express themselves with confidence. Strong attention to the teaching of reading has led to improvements in pupils' reading skills. This is now being applied to extend pupils' knowledge and use of specialist vocabulary in mathematics and science.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

Pupils are well cared for in a supportive and harmonious learning environment. Procedures to safeguard pupils are secure and meet requirements. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are at an early stage of learning English are swiftly identified and supported by committed and knowledgeable support staff. Skilled learning mentors ensure that vulnerable pupils are fully involved in all that the school has to offer both in lessons and in extra-curricular activities. Parents appreciate the help and guidance provided by learning mentors in their everyday dealings with the school. The success of this has spread and involves a large number of parents who help to support their children's learning and also become involved in school routines. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Teachers' marking is not always helpful in telling pupils how well they are doing or how to improve their work.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Improvement is gathering pace. The headteacher's strong vision is reflected in clear direction and good planning for improvement. She is committed to developing the skills of all leaders as seen in the cohesive, focused senior leadership team. Together they have established a clear tracking system to show how well pupils are doing in their work and highlight where extra help is needed. This has resulted in a sharper focus on pupils' achievement that is beginning to improve standards. The use of assessment systems is inconsistent, however, and slows the improvements for the higher attaining pupils in particular. Strong partnerships with parents and outside agencies nurture pupils' personal development effectively. The monitoring of the school's performance is becoming sharper and actions taken by senior and middle leaders are resulting in improvements in standards and achievement.

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## Annex A

## 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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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

<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.

## Annex A

**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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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**

On behalf of the inspection team I would like to thank you for the warm welcome you gave to us when we visited to inspect your school recently. You are well behaved, keen to show us how you are getting on and excellent ambassadors for respecting people from different religions and backgrounds. Your school provides you with a satisfactory quality of education.

In the last few years you have had many different teachers and there has been lots of building work but everything has settled down now. Like you and your parents, I can see that your school is improving. This is because of your good attitudes to learning and your school's determination to improve your work. You have already improved your work in reading, science and calculation in mathematics.

A large part of my job is to help schools to get better and so I have asked your school to help you to improve the standard of your work. Your work in mathematics needs to be improved the most and those of you who learn quicker than others need to be given more difficult work so that you can reach higher standards. Your headteacher and other adults are working hard to help you to do your best. I have asked the school to make sure all lessons are interesting and to make better use of all the information about how well you are doing in your work to help you learn more. Teachers can help you by using the marking of your work to tell you what it is you need to do to improve.

Very best wishes for your future.