

# Birchfield Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	107863
<b>Local Authority</b>	Leeds
<b>Inspection number</b>	309521
<b>Inspection date</b>	21 February 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>	3-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	266
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Janice Foster
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Paul Soare
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 March 2004
<b>School address</b>	Birchfield Avenue Gildersome Leeds West Yorkshire LS27 7HU
<b>Telephone number</b>	0113 2533009
<b>Fax number</b>	0113 5237086

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The following issues were investigated: pupils' achievement and standards; the quality of teaching and learning; pupils' personal development and well-being and how well the school's leadership promotes care and high standards. Evidence was gathered from observation of lessons, pupils' work, discussion with pupils, staff, the chair of governors, a scrutiny of school documents and parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, in its self-evaluation form, were not justified. These have been included where appropriate in the report.

## Description of the school

This is an average sized school set in the village of Gildersome, near Leeds. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage and a small number are of minority ethnic heritage. Below average numbers of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school has gained an Activemark for its sports provision and the Stephen Lawrence award for its contribution to community harmony.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Birchfield is a good school with outstanding features. 'The children are happy.' This is the view of the overwhelming majority of parents, staff and governors and reflects the excellent personal development and well-being of pupils. The small minority of pupils of minority ethnic heritage enjoy attending this popular school and make good progress. As a result of the school's efforts to foster respect and value for all races and religions, it has won the Stephen Lawrence award for its contribution to pupils' preparation for life in multicultural Britain. Attendance is well above average because pupils enjoy coming to school. Good behaviour and relationships are founded on mutual respect between pupils and staff. Pupils are tolerant, reflective and have a keen sense of right and wrong. They are articulate and help to manage the school through their work as prefects and 'playground befrienders'. Their hard work in the community is welcomed by local residents who appreciate the improvements made to their environment. Pupils are serious and productive fundraisers for local and international charities. Healthy, balanced food is cooked on the premises and a large number of pupils and staff eat school dinners. Excellent provision for sport both in lessons and after school is much appreciated and reflects the school's outstanding enrichment opportunities that contribute greatly to pupils' excellent personal development. Pupils are exceedingly health conscious and active.

Pupils make good progress from their above average standards when they enter Year 1 to significantly above average standards by the end of Year 2. These standards are maintained in Key Stage 2 and pupils leave school at the end of Year 6 having attained significantly above average standards overall. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds also make good progress because their work is closely monitored. Some pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory rather than good progress because their needs were not identified and supported quickly enough in the past. However, new leadership and prompt action to support pupils' progress is beginning to improve their standards because of appropriate and sensitive support. Standards in mathematics are a considerable strength of the school and pupils make outstanding progress in this subject. Standards in science are close to those in mathematics and pupils describe these two subjects as their favourite lessons.

Good quality teaching and learning underpin pupils' achievement. Lessons are well planned, interesting and enjoyable. Pupils are involved and engaged in learning because of the good subject knowledge of the teachers and support staff and a good curriculum. These are clear features in mathematics and science lessons, but English lessons in Key Stage 2 are sometimes less stimulating. Some outstanding lessons are characterised by teachers' use of a range of stimuli and resources to motivate and inspire. Year 6 pupils wrote a play script, accompanied it with music and used high-order computer skills to present it. The teacher's very high expectations motivated pupils to work largely independently and they were proud of the end result. Teachers' marking is inconsistent and does not clearly inform pupils of how they are doing in their work or what to do to improve it. This is particularly the case in a small number of the boys' writing books, which show that less pride and care is taken in their work.

Visionary leadership and management are at the heart of the school's success. The outstanding headteacher and deputy headteacher understand the school exceptionally well and know exactly why Birchfield is a good school as well as what is needed to make it even better. Self-evaluation is very well used to set challenging targets for improvement. Pupils are cared for to keep them safe and outstanding links with outside helpers support pupils' well-being. Governors are a source of support and challenge. They help the school and are not afraid to state their views

and concerns robustly. They constantly seek ways to keep improving the school's performance. A clear identification of pupils' needs is at the centre of their actions. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection and the school has a good capacity to improve still further.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 3**

Children settle down quickly when they join the Nursery because of good care for their personal development and strong links with parents. Overall, children's skills are above what might be expected for their age although their communication skills are lower. Children make satisfactory progress through the Foundation Stage. Teaching and learning feature effective planning and variety to motivate the children. Issues relating to temporary staffing, limited accommodation and gaps in leadership have now been resolved. Accommodation and resources have been improved, a new leader has been appointed and staffing is more stable. As a result, provision is improving. A dedicated focus on improving children's ability to link sounds and letters is beginning to improve standards in writing. A clearer system for identifying individual needs has resulted in more efficient support and, consequently, better learning for children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities as well as the gifted and talented.

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

- Improve the quality and consistency of marking, in particular of boys' writing, to ensure that pupils understand how they are doing in their work and what to do to make it better.

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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?	2
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<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>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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 very much for the warm welcome you gave me when I came to visit your school. I would especially like to thank the pupils who met with me to talk about their views on the school and the many individual pupils who made a point of talking to me. I learned many of your names because you made me feel so much a part of the school. You are all very polite and enthusiastic and enjoy being at school.

Yours is a good school because you learn well and reach significantly above average standards, especially in mathematics and science. The writing of a small number of boys is not quite as good as it should be. You are happy to be in lessons and enjoy being active and involved. You behave well. You eat very healthy food and take an active part in physical education lessons and sporting activities. You are confident and cared for and your parents are very pleased with the school. This is because of the outstanding way that the school looks after you. The children in the Nursery and Reception classes make satisfactory progress and they are well looked after in their new classrooms. They are beginning to make better progress because they are becoming more excited and interested in lots of enjoyable activities.

An important part of the inspection is to see how your school can get even better. So I have asked your teachers to improve the way your work is marked so that you all understand how to make it even better, especially some of the boys with their writing.

Best wishes for your future.