

Birley Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107096
Local Authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	336810
Inspection dates	1–2 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Julie Price Grimshaw

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	581
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Eric Holmes
Headteacher	Mr Harry Wood
Date of previous school inspection	8 May 2007
School address	Hayfield Crescent Birley Sheffield S12 4XF
Telephone number	0114 2399002
Fax number	0114 2644956
Email address	enquiries@birley-pri.sheffield.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 20 lessons taught by 20 teachers and spent approximately one third of inspection time observing learning. Meetings were held with governors, staff, groups of pupils, and the School Improvement Partner. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at pupils' work, improvement planning, a range of policy documents, national published assessment data and the school's own data. They also analysed 77 parental questionnaires as well as questionnaires completed by pupils and staff.

- the impact of recent strategies to raise attainment and to accelerate pupils' progress
- the extent to which a whole-school focus on assessment has led to improvements in teaching
- the effectiveness of new management systems and how these impact upon the school's capacity to improve.

Information about the school

This is a much larger than average school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and very few speak a home language other than English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is just below average, as is the percentage of pupils entitled to a free school meal. There is provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage in the school's three Reception classes.

In September 2009, the school entered into a hard federation arrangement with Birley Community College, which is situated on a neighbouring site. The headteacher of Birley Primary School was appointed as executive headteacher of both schools, with a separate phase leader at each school. At the time of the inspection the primary phase leader had been in post for just over one term.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Birley Primary is a welcoming school; striking displays of pupils' work adorn the walls throughout the building and help to provide an attractive learning environment. The large majority of pupils enjoy their time here, as reflected in comments such as, 'The teachers are great and help us to learn a lot', and, 'Everyone in our school is so kind to us'. Pupils have well-developed social skills, show consideration to one another and have a clear understanding of how to stay safe. They appreciate the good quality care and support provided by staff. Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and consistently make good progress.

Since the last inspection, data show that there has been a decline in pupils' attainment and progress in Key Stages 1 and 2. This downward trend has now been halted and the school has successfully taken action to address underachievement. Although it is too soon to judge the full impact of this work, it is clear that there has been significant improvement since September 2009; attainment is now broadly average and pupils are currently making satisfactory progress.

One of the main reasons for this improving trend is the increased focus on teachers' use of assessment. Careful consideration is given to assessment strategies when planning lessons and teachers are beginning to use information from assessment effectively to plan work that is well matched to pupils' ability levels. However, the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory rather than good, as there remains too much inconsistency in classroom practice. A minority of teachers use questions extremely well to develop pupils' understanding, but this very good practice is not sufficiently widespread. In a high proportion of lessons observed, the pace of learning was too slow. Although teachers often explain tasks well, pupils are not always clear about exactly what they need to complete by the end of a lesson. As a result, many pupils work at a leisurely pace and often fail to complete work. Pupils have good attitudes towards learning and behave well, but a significant proportion, particularly in upper Key Stage 2, have weak independent learning skills and do not take sufficient care in the presentation and completion of their work.

The new primary phase leader, in collaboration with the executive headteacher, has brought about rapid improvements in a short space of time. This is partly due to the introduction of new systems for tracking pupils' progress, resulting in data which are used well. Many exciting initiatives are being introduced through the work of the federation, although managers are aware of the need to develop the school's promotion of community cohesion. Although it is too early to judge the impact of some strategies, there is already evidence of an improving trend. This, combined with generally accurate

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self-evaluation and good quality improvement planning, means that the school has satisfactory capacity for improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching, particularly in relation to accelerating the pace of learning and using questioning effectively.
- Ensure that all pupils, particularly those in upper Key Stage 2, develop their independent learning skills and pay sufficient attention to the presentation and completion of their work.
- Implement plans to improve the promotion of community cohesion.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils are very polite and well mannered. Their smiling faces and keenness to discuss their enjoyment of school make a very good impression on visitors. The large majority find their work interesting and enjoyable; this was evident in a mathematics lesson, where pupils' enthusiasm for solving problems on fractions led to some excellent teamwork. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities in school and make a good contribution to the school community, although their involvement in the wider community is less well developed. Social, moral and spiritual development is good, but pupils' limited awareness of cultural diversity means that their development in this area is no better than satisfactory. Attendance is average, and pupils' satisfactory basic skills mean that they are adequately prepared for the next stage of their education.

Over recent years, attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has been below average in English, mathematics and science, and a significant proportion of pupils, including some with special educational needs, did not always make adequate progress. As a result of recent strategies, the attainment of pupils in Year 6 is now broadly average. The attainment of most pupils in Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2 is securely average, with some pupils working at above average levels. All pupils are now making at least satisfactory progress. The lower achievement of boys compared to girls, particularly in reading, has been identified and successfully tackled.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

No inadequate teaching was observed during the inspection and there are examples of good and outstanding classroom practice. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory rather than good because there is significant variation that prevents pupils from making consistently good progress as they move through school. Relationships between adults and pupils are at least good in all lessons, and support staff make a good contribution to pupils' learning. A recent initiative to involve pupils more in assessing and evaluating their own and their classmates' work is beginning to pay dividends.

The topic-based curriculum is effective in motivating pupils and provides good opportunities for the development of literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. In one lesson, pupils were delighted to see that the teacher had based mathematical problems on the story that formed the basis of their topic work. Since the last inspection, the school has made good progress in developing curricular provision for gifted and talented pupils. There is a good range of enrichment activities for all; pupils' keenness to adopt healthy lifestyles is evident in the high take-up of sporting activities.

Staff work well together to ensure that all pupils, including the most vulnerable, receive tailored support. Good systems for pastoral care ensure that pupils feel confident in sharing concerns with staff. Staff have a good awareness of child protection procedures and are very quick to respond to any concerns regarding welfare and safeguarding. The school has recently started to introduce a good range of new strategies for improving pupils' attendance, although this work is at an early stage.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

School leaders have clearly communicated their vision for the school's future to all staff. Teachers and support staff alike are fully aware of the need to accelerate pupils' progress and the large majority of staff are responding to this challenge with determination and enthusiasm. Monitoring of teaching and learning has led to the clear identification of areas for development and there is already some evidence of improvement, for example, in the use of assessment. The school has made progress in developing the roles of middle managers, but senior leaders recognise that there is further work to be done here, so that these staff can play an even more active part in driving forward improvement.

The recently formed federated governing body is made up of very experienced and knowledgeable governors, who are acutely aware of all main issues affecting the school's ongoing development. They are fully involved in monitoring and evaluating, and carry out their statutory duties well, including those related to the school's effective safeguarding procedures. Staff and governors across the federation have worked together to plan a range of interesting cross-phase initiatives. These include the promotion of community cohesion which is being developed across the federation, although all those involved recognise that this work is in its infancy. Other cross-phase projects, such as those in mathematics and music, are already beginning to have a positive impact on learning.

There is a clear commitment throughout the school to the promotion of equal opportunities. Major improvements to the school's use of data have enabled staff to gain invaluable information on individuals and groups of pupils, so that strategies to address any variation can be introduced. There is already some early evidence of success here, particularly in relation to the difference in progress rates between boys and girls.

The school works well with parents and carers and acts on feedback gained through consultation. There is also some particularly effective work with external agencies, including social and health professionals, to help ensure that the individual needs of pupils are met.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's attainment on entry to the Reception class varies from year to year, but is usually broadly in line with typical age-related expectations. As a result of effective provision, they make good progress in all areas of learning. By the time children enter Year 1 many have skill levels that are higher than average. Attainment over recent years has been on an upward trend. Children make particularly good progress in developing their reading skills as a result of highly effective support programmes.

Children settle quickly into Reception and rapidly start to make good progress in their personal and social development. They enjoy their learning in the caring, safe and supportive environment and are encouraged to play a full and active part in school life by acting as monitors and classroom helpers. Staff foster good relationships with parents.

Children are regularly assessed; adults record small steps in achievement and make sure that activities build on what children know and can do. A wide range of activities is on offer, providing excitement and challenge and fostering an early love of learning. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection in developing the outdoor learning area. Support staff make a strong contribution to children's learning and all adults work very well together as a team.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The large majority of parents are positive about the school. Many parents of children in the Reception class commented that they were pleased that their children had got off to a good start. A small minority of parents expressed some concern about the level of supervision in the playground, both before school and at break times. Inspectors found that during the inspection pupils were well supervised at all times. A few parents of more able pupils felt that the school did not always provide tailored work for their children. Inspectors found that the school has recently increased its focus in this area and that staff are now paying careful attention to providing sufficiently challenging work for the most able pupils.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Birley Community Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 79 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 581 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	33	42	38	48	5	6	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	30	38	40	51	6	8	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	25	32	45	57	6	8	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	35	37	47	10	13	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	38	48	30	38	7	9	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	28	35	41	52	5	6	2	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	44	38	48	5	6	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	26	33	42	53	4	5	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	39	40	51	4	5	2	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	32	33	42	15	19	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	22	43	54	12	15	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	20	25	40	51	11	14	3	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	36	46	32	41	8	10	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



3 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Birley Community Primary School, Sheffield, S12 4XF

As you know, I visited your school recently together with two other inspectors so that we could find out how well you are doing. I would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome and for sharing your views with us. I would also like to share our main findings with you.

We were really impressed with your behaviour. You were so polite, not just to us and to the adults in your school, but also to each other. It's really good that you know so much about how to stay healthy and we are glad that you enjoy getting involved in sports activities. You also contribute well to your school community by taking on responsibilities. We have suggested that the school helps you to become more involved in the local community, and also to learn more about all the different faiths and cultures in this country as well as others.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory education. Over the last few years the test results for Year 6 pupils started to dip, but things are improving now and we can see that you are making progress in your lessons. Children in the Reception class get off to a really good start. You have very good attitudes to learning and it was lovely to see so many of you supporting each other in lessons. However, sometimes you did not always work quickly enough and we noticed that there were unfinished pieces of work in your books. We have asked the staff to help you to work more quickly so that you make faster progress. We also think that some of you, particularly the older pupils, could take more care with the presentation of your work and try a little harder to complete all the tasks you are given.

This is a very exciting time for everyone in your school and Birley Community College as there is some really interesting work planned across the two schools. We know that you will be keen to become involved in this and make the most of your time at Birley Primary. We wish you all the best for your future.

Yours sincerely

Julie Price Grimshaw

Lead inspector

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