

Birkenshaw Church of England Voluntary Controlled First and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107730
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	336941
Inspection dates	6–7 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Kathleen McArthur

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	372
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Neil Auty
Headteacher	Mrs Angela Holt
Date of previous school inspection	27 November 2006
School address	Station Lane Birkenshaw Bradford BD11 2JE
Telephone number	01274 335400
Fax number	01274 335400
Email address	office@birkenshawfirst.co.uk

Age group	3–9
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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 three additional inspectors. They observed 16 lessons, 15 teachers were seen and meetings held with groups of pupils, governors, and staff. Inspectors did not hold meetings with parents and carers. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documents relating to pupils' progress and the management of the school. They considered the responses in 86 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- whether there is any difference in the progress children make in Nursery and Reception classes
- the effectiveness of arrangements to promote community cohesion
- how school leaders are planning future developments and managing change.

Information about the school

The school is larger than most and occupies three buildings on an extensive, landscaped site. The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than average, as is the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The school offers before- and after-school clubs. It holds numerous awards, including Investor in People and Investor in Pupils, International and Healthy School awards, an Activemark and the Eco Schools Green Flag.

In 2012, the school will become a primary school when the local authority moves from a three-tier to a two-tier system.

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This good school provides outstanding care, guidance and support. Pupils thrive in their personal, social and academic development because they feel safe and secure in the happy, harmonious atmosphere. Parents and carers are pleased with the school, and agree that their children enjoy attending.

Achievement is good and attainment is above average. Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils make good progress through the school, supported by their good behaviour and attitudes to learning, and enthusiasm for all the additional activities they meet. Good arrangements for equality of opportunity ensure boys and girls progress equally well, as do pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities; any small differences are quickly tackled, for example, successfully ensuring that more boys reach higher levels in reading and writing. Teaching is good overall and provides well planned, challenging activities. However, there are some inconsistencies in the application of agreed school policies for teaching and learning. This leads to some inconsistencies in the quality of marking, an over emphasis on the use of worksheets in mathematics and some weakness in matching of work to different abilities. A wide range of popular additional experiences enrich the curriculum well. Outstanding care, guidance and support demonstrate very strong commitment to inclusion. All pupils are fully included in all activities, with especially sensitive and skilled support for those with a statement of special educational needs.

Dedicated leadership, with the support of staff and governors, has embedded a clear, ambitious vision for school improvement. Thorough self-evaluation identifies immediate priorities, seen in challenging targets. Rigorous actions have successfully tackled issues from the previous inspection and raised the quality of provision in all areas, giving the school good capacity for further improvement. However, the governing body has yet to set out a clear, strategic plan for the immediate and future management of forthcoming major changes.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Remove inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, by:
 - ensuring work is always matched to pupils' different abilities
 - extending the use of the marking policy
 - reducing the use of worksheets, especially in mathematics.
- Ensuring robust strategic plans for managing change are securely and rapidly put into place.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

A typical pupil comment was, 'Every day, in every lesson, my class learns something new'. Pupils enjoy their lessons, and good behaviour makes a strong contribution to their good progress. Good relationships were observed throughout the school; pupils co-operate well with staff and with each other, and take a pride in presenting their work carefully and neatly.

All pupils achieve well in relation to their capabilities. Well organised and targeted support, often from skilled teaching assistants, enables those with special educational needs and/or disabilities to progress well. Since the previous inspection, standards attained by Year 2 pupils have risen. Standards are significantly above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Good progress continues through Key Stage 2, and school data show that standards are above average at the end of Year 4. Inspection evidence, including work in pupils' books, shows that those currently in Year 2 and Year 4 are on course to meet challenging targets and attain above average standards. A major focus on raising attainment in reading and writing has been particularly successful; pupils make good use of their reading and writing skills to support their work across the curriculum in other subjects, such as history.

Pupils say the school doors are secure, different badges identify visitors, and there are frequent fire drills so that they feel safe. Bullying is not seen as a problem, and pupils are sure that staff would quickly sort out any difficulties. Rules and rewards are considered fair; there is a sense of keen anticipation during assemblies, as pupils eagerly await awards and certificates. Pupils know how to care for their health through diet and exercise, enjoy daily 'Wake up, Shake up' sessions and commented that school meals are 'tasty and healthy'. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are proud to serve their school and look after each other as playground 'Buddies'. They help others through charity work; for example, buns are sold every Friday to raise funds for the children they sponsor in Africa. Eco-councillors show genuine concern for the environment and have devised a travel plan to encourage pupils to walk to school. Good academic and personal skills and good attendance prepare pupils well for their future economic well-being.

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.

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

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

How effective is the provision?

Good relationships feature strongly in all lessons and support pupils' good progress. Teachers ensure pupils know what they will be learning in each lesson and use their good subject knowledge to plan interesting activities. Open questions extend pupils' thinking effectively. Information and communication technology (ICT) skills are above average and pupils have good awareness of internet safety protocols, due to specialist teaching. Progress is slower when tasks are not matched appropriately to pupils' different abilities. The marking policy is not always followed and applied consistently and sometimes, too many worksheets are used. Regular, rigorous assessment enables teachers to check progress and step in with extra help where needed. Pupils know their targets in reading, writing and mathematics and have opportunities to 'self-assess', for example, thumbs up, down or 'in between'.

The well-balanced curriculum equips pupils with good academic, personal and social skills. Links between subjects, particularly literacy and numeracy, are gradually developing. For example, a Year 4 drama lesson on World War 2 evacuees successfully linked history, geography and contributed to pupils' personal and social education. At the beginning of each new topic, pupils commence a 'Learning journey' and plan what they want to discover. This captures their natural curiosity, builds their investigational skills and often involves parents and carers in research at home. Pupils appreciate the additional activities provided through visits, visitors, themed weeks and special days, for example, themed weeks that focus on religious festivals and health issues, Spanish lessons and opportunities to learn musical instruments. These enrich the curriculum and contribute strongly to cultural awareness. Pupils also appreciate the very wide range of

popular clubs including Latin, drama, cricket, recorders and art.

The very caring atmosphere ensures that pupils feel very safe and secure in an attractive and well maintained learning environment. Parents and carers agree their children are kept safe and are well prepared for the future. Pupils are encouraged to discuss any concerns in circle time. High quality induction and transition procedures ensure pupils move confidently between classes and on to the next stage of their education. Strong partnerships with external health and support agencies are used to benefit pupils and their families where needed. The school can show striking examples of how pupils with particular additional needs have flourished in this very caring ethos.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders set high expectations for the school and lead by example. The monitoring of teaching is rigorous and areas for improvement are tackled through mentoring, performance management and professional development. Satisfactory governance ensures training is in place to extend governors' skills and knowledge, in preparation for imminent changes in the character of the school. However, strategic plans have yet to be formalised.

Activities, including 'Stay and Play' in the Nursery class, reach out to parents and carers who may be less confident about becoming involved with their child's learning and contribute to positive home/school relationships. Good partnerships with outside agencies bring additional experiences that the school alone cannot provide, and contribute effectively to pupils' good outcomes. Good arrangements ensure there is no discrimination and all pupils are fully included in all activities. Safeguarding pupils is clearly a priority. All members of staff are trained in child protection procedures and well aware of procedures.

Good community cohesion procedures ensure the school runs harmoniously and pupils have good understanding of global contexts. A broader religious education curriculum is extending pupils' awareness of the local context. The school gives good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

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	3
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills typical for their age. Excellent attention to their care and welfare ensure children feel secure, safe and happy. Warm, friendly relationships boost confidence so they become increasingly independent, behave well and are caring towards others. They are eager to learn and keen to explore and investigate the exciting practical activities on offer; nursery children were thrilled as they learned to program the small robot.

Teaching is good overall, with some variations when activities are not accurately matched closely to children's different abilities. Most teaching is lively and provides a well-planned blend of child-chosen and adult-led activities. Nursery children loved moving about, forming long lines, little lines and licking long lollies when they learned the sound for letter 'l'. Reception children confidently spoke Spanish in front of the class in an imaginary shopping activity. Greater use of the attractive outdoor areas is extending learning effectively; children love working outside and staff use every opportunity to engage them in discussions and extend language development.

Good leadership, firmly based on secure knowledge of the developmental needs of young children, involves all staff in ambitious plans to review and enhance provision. Academic and personal/social progress is carefully tracked and extra help provided where needed. Children make good progress, and by the end of their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the great majority reach the expected goals for their age and are working into the next level.

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

Just under a quarter of parents and carers returned the inspection questionnaire.

An overwhelming majority agree that their child enjoys school and is kept safe there. A very large majority expressed satisfaction with their child's experience and the quality of teaching, and feel their child is well prepared for the future.

Opinions were mixed about learning and progress, the way the school deals with unacceptable behaviour and how information is communicated.

Inspectors found that:

- pupils make good progress as they move through the school
- pupils behave well and feel secure because there is a fair system of rules and punishments
- the school makes good provision to provide information, and is always willing to arrange to meet with parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Birkenshaw Church of England Voluntary Controlled First and Nursery 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 86 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 372 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	58	67	27	31	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	44	51	40	47	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	32	37	45	52	9	10	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	35	41	43	50	7	8	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	38	44	44	51	1	1	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	34	40	46	53	6	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	31	36	50	58	3	3	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)	33	38	47	55	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	39	45	41	48	3	3	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	33	38	44	51	4	5	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	28	49	57	5	6	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	30	35	48	56	4	5	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	44	51	39	45	2	2	0	0

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.

6-7 May 2010

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.



8 May 2010

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Birkenshaw Church of England Voluntary Controlled First and Nursery School, Bradford, BD11 2JE

Thank you for welcoming the inspection team when we visited your school. We were impressed by your good behaviour, by your knowledge of healthy living and by all the jobs you do to help in school. We met very friendly, polite and helpful children everywhere we went; you are a credit to your school and to your families!

We would especially like to thank the School Council, the Eco Council and the pupils from Years 3 and 4 who gave up their time to talk to us about your school.

We judged your school to be good.

- You are cared for exceptionally well and you told us this makes you feel very safe.
- You make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. You work hard and progress well as you move through the school and reach standards higher than in most schools.
- Teaching is good and provides you with interesting lessons and extra things like Spanish, ICT, drama, trips and lots of after-school clubs.

The leaders do a good job and are always seeking ways to make school even better.

We have asked them to:

- make sure you are always taught well
- complete their plans for the future of the school.

We know you enjoy school and will want to help in any way you can.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Kathleen McArthur

Lead inspector

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