

Birley Spa Community Primary School

Jermyn Crescent, Hackenthorpe, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S12 4QE

Inspection dates 5–6 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils' achievement is good. This is because senior leaders have maintained pupils' good levels of achievement since the last inspection.
- Teaching is good overall because lessons are made active and enjoyable. Work in pupils' books shows that the vast majority make good progress.
- Often children start Nursery with levels of skills and understanding below those typically expected nationally. Those that continue through school leave at the end of Year 6 with standards close to and often above those expected nationally. This represents good progress for pupils in all groups.
- Pupils behave well in school. They feel that school is a safe place to which they enjoy coming to learn and this is reflected in the caring and respectful attitudes they display to visitors, staff and each other both inside and outside the classroom.
- The school's senior leadership team and governors continue to maintain good standards in both the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement across the school. This continuous commitment shows their ability to make the school even better in the future.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Overall pupils' attendance is a little below the national average. School leaders have recently put in place a series of measures to improve attendance but they have not yet raised the level of attendance of the most vulnerable groups.
- During lessons and when marking pupils' work some teachers do not give sufficient guidance to pupils on how to improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 22 lessons and parts of lessons taught by 12 teachers. Joint lesson observations were undertaken with the headteacher. The inspection team also listened to pupils from Years 1, 2 and 6 read and examined the quality of work in the books of pupils from across the school.
- The inspection team held meetings and had discussions with pupils, senior leaders, members of the school staff, seven members of the governing body and held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspection team had informal discussions with five parents at the start of the school day. They also took into account the views of 32 parents who made their views known through the on-line questionnaire (Parents' View).
- Thirty-seven members of staff also made their views known to the inspection team.
- The inspection team studied health and safety documentation, teachers' curriculum planning, documents relating to the procedures to check the performance of staff and the quality of teaching as well as the school's system for checking pupils' progress.

Inspection team

Marian Thomas, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sally Hicks

Additional Inspector

Susan Davis

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Birley Spa Community Primary School is a larger than average primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage with a small number from other ethnic backgrounds.
- A slightly higher than average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in the care of the local authority and those from service families).
- There is a smaller than average number of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported through school action.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is higher than the national average.
- The school has on-site a 12-place integrated resource unit which currently supports the needs of 14 pupils who all have a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder (ASD).
- The school meets the current floor standards set by the government for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school runs and manages a before- and after-school club. A before-school facility is also offered to parents who may wish to purchase and eat breakfast with their children.
- The school also operates a weekly playgroup which is run by school staff and is attended by local parents and pre-school children.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by ensuring that during lessons and in the marking of pupils' books teachers consistently give clear guidance to pupils on how to improve further.
- Improve the attendance of pupils, particularly the most vulnerable by:
 - improving the rigour and consistency with which school staff follow up pupils' absence by sending a clear message from the school leadership and governors to parents that holidays taken in school time affect pupils' learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Many pupils start school with skills below those typically expected for their age. The vast majority end Year 6 with attainment that is broadly in line and sometimes a little above that expected nationally in English and mathematics. This represents good achievement overall.
- Progress from Year 1 to Year 6 is equally good in reading, writing and mathematics. Currently, pupils in Year 6 are on course to make similar gains to those seen in last year's national test results in English and mathematics.
- Most children start Nursery with social, numeracy and language development levels below those expected for their age. They make good progress during their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage and leave with skills and knowledge closer to those expected nationally. This good and sometimes outstanding progress is made because of the broad range of activities provided, and the good quality of care and teaching delivered by all staff. This good start is clearly recognised by parents, many of whom choose to continue their child's education in the school.
- Progress in reading is good because it is taught well especially in Key Stage 1. Evidence of this can be seen in the higher than average number of pupils who achieved the expected performance in the phonics screening check (which tests pupils' ability to link letters to sounds).
- The group of Year 6 pupils who read to the inspection team all read with understanding and expressed their enjoyment of reading. One attributed his rapid progress to the extra reading sessions he had undertaken with lunchtime supervisors, commenting: 'Now I am a better reader. I just enjoy reading more.' Younger pupils say they enjoy reading at school and use their knowledge of sounds to tackle new words. Reading at home has increased the progress of the majority of pupils.
- Just under one third of pupils who attend the school are known to be eligible for free school meals. In the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2012, this group attained standards in English and mathematics approximately three terms above those expected nationally for this group and a little above those of other pupils in the school.
- Current tracking information shows the good achievement of this group is continuing because school leaders are effective in their use of pupil premium funding to support the needs of pupils through, for example extra support for reading both inside and outside the classroom.
- Pupils who attend the on-site Key Stage 2 integrated resource unit all have additional behavioural and learning needs linked to ASD. They spend the vast majority of their time with their peers in the classroom and are making equally good progress in English and mathematics. Other disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also make good progress in English and mathematics. This is because school staff are good at identifying and providing for the extra needs of this group.
- Parents spoken to supported the view that school values all its pupils equally. They feel that staff are approachable and supportive of all pupils, including the few from other ethnic groups, and as a result, all groups make equally good progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers make learning fun and enjoyable by offering them a wide range of experiences. For example, visiting artists lead lessons and teach pupils of all ages about different art forms and painting styles.
- Progress in pupils' books and in lessons observed during the inspection confirmed that teaching is good overall. In some lessons observed, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage, teaching was outstanding.
- The majority of teachers are good at using information about how well pupils are doing to plan

future learning. Teaching assistants' time is used effectively to support the least able in lessons. They also lead groups who support pupils who have been identified as falling behind, particularly in reading. As a result, all pupils make equally good progress.

- Parents of children who attend Nursery and Reception classes feel that staff provide a good start to school. One parent's comment summed up the feelings of many: 'My child loves coming to school and I really enjoy staying and sharing the start of the day with her'. Children benefit from teaching which is lively and interesting and includes a wide range of activities which are equally good in both the indoor and outdoor areas.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge as shown in the teaching of mathematics. A Year 5 mathematics lesson focused on teaching pupils to evaluate the 'mean', 'median' and 'mode' from a set of data on visitor numbers to an attraction. This lesson captured pupils' interest because it related directly to a recent visit. Pupils showed good attitudes to learning by working cooperatively and they were very clear about how the data could be used to help increase the numbers of visitors. This use of data in a real context helped pupils to apply mathematics in a real context and extended their understanding well.
- Reading is taught effectively. Letters and sounds are taught through practical activities. Effective extra help increases the progress of those in danger of falling behind.
- Teachers diligently mark pupils' books and pupils themselves are encouraged to evaluate the quality of their own and others work through marking each other's answers and commenting in their books on their own learning. However, teachers' written comments are inconsistent in quality. Marking, at its best, gave clear guidance to pupils on how to improve their work to the next level but this is not always the case. Similarly, examples of less effective feedback were seen during a small number of lessons where comments were positive and encouraging but pupils received little guidance on how to make their work better. As a result, learning was less effective.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Overall pupils' behaviour is good both inside and outside the classroom. Learning is rarely interrupted by incidents of difficult behaviour. Parents and pupils feel that school is a safe and happy place and that incidents of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with effectively by staff.
- Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and feel valued as members of the school community. Those spoken to during the inspection said that they felt listened to and that 'everyone's views counted'. An example of this could be seen in the newly refurbished playground area which pupils proudly explained 'had been designed by them'.
- All pupils spoken to were clear about how to stay safe and knew about the different forms bullying can take. They feel their good levels of understanding is due to information and guidance given to them in lessons, for example, in the internet safety policy delivered in lessons as well as reminders in the corridor of what constitutes bullying behaviour.
- Attendance is lower than it should be. It is currently almost 2% below national expectations for primary schools. This is largely because of the schools lack of rigour in following up pupils' absence with parents. Too many pupils miss school due to taking holidays in term time. A lack of clarity in the information sent to parents from senior leaders and the governing body on the acceptability of holidays taken in term time has contributed significantly to the increased absence levels.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, supported by the senior leadership team, has a clear vision of how to make the school successful. They have an accurate view of the school's strengths and ensure school priorities are linked closely to raising attainment. While these priorities are clearly identified in

school development plans and acted on effectively, systems to improve attendance have not been given sufficient priority and as a result, attendance has been slow to rise.

- Senior leaders monitor teaching robustly across the school and now take effective action through the management of staff's performance to improve areas of weakness. As a result, although the quality of teaching has dipped since the last inspection it is now improving. However, in a small number of classes, further improvement is needed if teaching is to become consistently outstanding.
- The leadership team ensures performance targets for staff link directly to pupils' achievement and are identified within the school's development plan. Checks on the performance of staff are undertaken rigorously and the headteacher uses this information well to make decisions on teachers' pay.
- The school's curriculum is good overall and offers pupils a wide range of experiences away from the classroom. A residential visit undertaken by Year 6 pupils to an Outward Bound centre was described by one pupil as: 'The best experience ever because I learnt a lot and it was fun.' These experiences increase pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well.
- As the school attained an outstanding grading for its effectiveness in its previous inspection report the local authority has offered 'light touch' support to the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - School governors bring a broad range of skills and experience to the governing body. They have undertaken relevant training and have a good understanding of school data relating to pupils' achievement and offer a good level of challenge to leaders. However, they have yet to ensure that systems currently in place to improve the attendance of some pupils are sufficiently robust. Working with senior leaders they have developed an effective system for checking the performance of all staff which rewards good teaching and addresses the underperformance of staff. A consistent and measured approach to the management of pupil premium funding has enabled them to give valuable support to eligible pupils which has increased their levels of attainment and progress. Safeguarding procedures and policies within school are undertaken to a good standard. The health and safety committee carries out regular inspections and has ensured that safeguarding procedures meet current requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	107067
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	412549

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	503
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Couldwell
Headteacher	Mark Young
Date of previous school inspection	25 May 2010
Telephone number	0114 239 9106
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