

# Birdwell Primary School

Sheffield Road, Birdwell, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, S70 5XB

**Inspection dates** 11–12 April 2013

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils make outstanding progress from their individual starting points in literacy and mathematics. Attainment is above average.
- Pupils read extremely well. This helps them to make rapid progress in other subjects.
- The school's results in national tests places them in the top 20% of all schools for English.
- Teaching is extremely good in every class. Tasks challenge pupils to think for themselves.
- Some teachers, but not all, mark pupils' writing in a way that helps pupils do better next time. However, the lack of a consistent approach to marking pupils' writing means that some pupils progress less rapidly than others towards acquiring high quality writing skills.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils work very hard and clearly enjoy doing so.
- Pupils feel extremely safe because they are looked after very well.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. Pupils are ambitious as a result. Their achievement improves each year.
- The leadership of teaching is a major strength. All staff are involved in leading aspects of teaching.
- Governors give excellent support to the school and help it to improve further.
- The exciting, varied curriculum, which pupils help to organise, includes high-quality children's university sessions.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 22 lessons or parts of lessons taught by eight teachers and most teaching assistants.
- The inspectors held meetings with staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and three governors, a representative from the local authority and two groups of pupils from Years 2 to 6.
- The inspection took into account the 14 responses in the online questionnaire (Parent View), letters from parents and the views of parents when they talked to inspectors at the start and end of the day.

## Inspection team

Lesley Clark, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Baljinder Khela

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after by the local authority.
- The pre-school nursery group is privately run and inspected separately. The report can be found on the Ofsted website.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Devise a marking and feedback policy to support further the development of all pupils' high quality writing across the school.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is outstanding

- Pupils achieve extremely well. Reception children make rapid progress from starting points that are below those typically expected for their age. They learn early reading, writing and number skills quickly because they practise these every day in highly enjoyable activities.
- The strong emphasis on physical development helps Reception children to learn good pencil control, as well as to become physically confident. For example, within minutes children erected four large-scale dens in the forest area, without prompting, to protect their 'babies' from the rain.
- Standards of attainment in literacy are high across the school. Reading is a notable strength. Pupils read avidly and with huge enjoyment. The library is the focal point of the school and books in class libraries are well thumbed but treated with respect. For instance, a small group of Year 2 pupils carefully turned the pages of a popup book and gasped in wonder as a large dragon slowly unfolded before their eyes.
- Pupils' excellent reading skills enable them to learn with a high degree of independence. They skim read efficiently but they also read carefully for meaning. Over two-thirds of pupils exceed the level expected at the end of Year 6 and a small proportion is nearly three years ahead of the average for this age group.
- Pupils write very well. They soak up new words to use in their writing. Year 3 pupils explained, 'Good openers make my writing interesting.' and 'Punctuation stops you running out of breath.'
- Standards of attainment in mathematics are above average and improving rapidly each year. Year 4 pupils explained, 'We move on to much harder work if we find the first couple of examples too easy. The work is really difficult and makes us think.' Pupils are well used to setting each other problems to check that they have grasped new concepts.
- Disabled pupils and those supported by school action, school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs make outstanding progress. Almost all reach nationally expected standards in literacy and mathematics by the end of Year 6. They do much better than similar groups nationally.
- Pupils who are supported through the pupil premium make excellent progress. Their attainment is as good as that of others in the school. The school's evidence shows how these pupils made up a five-point gap in a year as a result of extra help. Their attainment exceeds that of similar groups nationally. The school clearly promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination successfully.

### The quality of teaching

### is outstanding

- Teaching is very well organised. Pupils start the day on tasks which extend or reinforce their basic skills. In Year 1, for instance, pupils rapidly compiled a list of square objects while in Year 6 different groups worked on aspects of mathematics they found hard.
- The teaching of reading is a strength. After lunch, everyone reads. Pupils curl up in corners with books, read to each other or act out plays. Those who need extra help read in small groups with adults. Everyone strives to fulfil the 'reading challenges'. The school has won the national literacy trust reading champions award twice in recent years.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge. This aids their teaching of writing in particular. Pupils write well because they write in other subjects. The curricular theme, 'archaeology', was chosen by pupils because, 'History is about digging into the past and we want to find out about things.'
- Teachers encourage pupils to set their own challenges. Typically, discussions in pairs and groups are purposeful and productive because pupils are used to making independent choices. Teachers consult pupils about how long they think tasks will take them. Pupils say, 'Teachers just let us

get on with it and ask for help when we need it.'

- Teachers use up-to-date technology confidently both for teaching and assessment purposes. As a result pupils use ipads and computers extensively in all subjects.
- The contribution of teaching assistants is outstanding. Pupils with special educational needs and those supported through the pupil premium make rapid progress as a result of intensive individual support and personal programmes of work.
- Teachers use assessment particularly well to ensure that their teaching enables pupils to build on what they know and understand. They tailor tasks very well to match pupils' different learning needs.
- The way that teachers mark pupils' writing to ensure it is of high quality varies from verbal feedback to detailed written suggestions for improvement, with an example of excellent practice in Year 5. This is because staff have not yet agreed a policy to guide them as to what is the most effective practice.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**

- Behaviour in lessons, around the school and at break times is outstanding. Pupils have so much to do in terms of work and responsible jobs around school that they have no time to spare. The result is a happy, purposeful learning environment for everyone.
- Pupils say that it is hard to explain the best things in their school because, 'There are so many of them!'
- Pupils are proud of their school and are ambitious. They explained that the, 'university sessions help us to focus in depth on a special subject'. This was evident when the drama group, which included pupils from Reception to Year 6, practised scenes from Macbeth, delivering long speeches clearly and confidently.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different forms of bullying and are confident that there is no bullying in their school. They know that, 'You have to say sorry straightaway.' and 'Calling people names is horrible.' The school's incident records confirm pupils' positive views. Their parents agree.
- Pupils feel safe. They trust their teachers and they respect each other. They have a strong sense of fair play. Every pupil has a special adult in school to turn to if they need help or advice.
- 'Mini mentors' are trained to help other pupils: 'If anyone is feeling down, we try to sort it out and make school a better place.' Pupils know that, 'Good behaviour helps you to sort out your life.' The impact is seen in pupils' self-reliance and self-esteem. For example, Year 6 pupils confidently led younger ones in exercise routines, mirroring their teachers' high expectations.

### **The leadership and management are outstanding**

- School leaders show much determination in driving forward improvements to the extent that they tend to underestimate how well the school is doing because they are thinking about the next aspect of the school's work to improve.
- The impact of this highly effective leadership team is evident in the upward trend in pupils' achievements, imaginative teaching and galleries of pupils' work across the curriculum from art to mechanics.
- The leadership of teaching is an especial strength. Every staff member is involved. This means that staff learn from and train each other. They share the strategies that work well, identify the factors that inhibit learning and put into place programmes to break down barriers to learning.
- For example, support staff researched the way that pupils supported through the pupil premium learn. As a result of their findings, teachers increased the opportunities for pupils to use ipads, learn through investigation and work in pairs rather than answering direct questions.
- The school uses performance management very well indeed to motivate and reward good teaching. School leaders use it scrupulously to ensure that all teaching is of high quality, giving

extra training and support as required before teachers are allowed to progress up the pay scale. The success is evident in the highly effective teaching across the school.

- The innovative curriculum underpins the school's success. Pupils are fully involved and because much of their work is linked to aspects that they have chosen to find out about they have a real sense of purpose in using and applying their literacy and mathematical skills in a wide range of contexts.
- Pupils and staff feel safe because safeguarding is efficient and effective.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors play a full part in helping the school to continue to improve. They know how well pupils, including those supported through the pupil premium funding, are progressing and the reasons why. They are closely involved in the management of staff and make very good decisions. Governors know that teaching is extremely well led because they check teaching effectiveness regularly. They recognise that staff are very skilled, commenting that staff from this school support colleagues in other schools because of their expertise.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	106595
<b>Local authority</b>	Barnsley
<b>Inspection number</b>	413083

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	187
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Alan Schofield
<b>Headteacher</b>	J Gilmour
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 May 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01226 742957
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