

# Birkwood Primary School

Darfield Road, Cudworth, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, S72 8HG

**Inspection dates** 7–8 October 2014

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- Leaders, governors and all of the school’s staff have clear aims and high ambition. They work together very hard with firm commitment and deep resolve and ensure all pupils, whatever their circumstances, achieve highly, develop as well-rounded individuals and leave very well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Leaders, managers and governors are determined that standards in reading, writing and mathematics are as high as possible. Improvements in teaching and pupils’ achievement are driven relentlessly and the improvements accomplished have proved very effective.
- The school’s reputation in the community has grown and the school is an increasingly popular choice for parents. Their views of the school and its leadership are extremely positive.
- The headteacher’s outstanding leadership provides an ambitious vision of high academic standards and a culture in which pupils’ personal development and safety flourish.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning and their love of school develops quickly from an early stage. Their behaviour in lessons and around school is outstanding.
- Pupils understand fully the importance of learning, making progress and achieving high standards. It shows clearly in their efforts and commitment to doing as well as they can. This also reflects the excellent moral and social values the leaders very effectively promote.
- Pupils enjoy school and are happy learners. They feel safe and secure. All of the procedures for keeping pupils safe are rigorous and very effectively managed.
- Every teacher and teaching assistant is ambitious for what pupils can achieve. Their expectations are high and, right across the school, they work together with great consistency ensuring that learning has very good pace and challenge.
- Every lesson is planned thoroughly to ensure pupils work at the right level, consolidate what they know, understand and can do, and build on this systematically. From the least able to the most able, there is substantial support to guarantee pupils are always challenged to achieve more.
- The great majority of pupils, whatever differences they have in capabilities, make outstanding progress in their subjects but especially in learning to read and write. The quality of writing is a strength above all other strengths. Pupils have progressed well in mathematics and their results are improving rapidly but these are not at the high level achieved in reading and writing.
- Early years provision is outstanding. Children make rapid progress in all areas of learning. This is the result of excellent teaching and support for learning. Children enjoy and thrive on the vast breadth of activities and the excellent resources supporting these.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 17 lessons and observed all of the school’s 12 teachers. The headteacher and inclusion manager joined inspectors in observing two lessons.
- Meetings were held with senior and other leaders, teachers, representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors asked pupils their views of school, discussed their experience of learning and making progress and about behaviour and safety in the school.
- Inspectors checked the reading skills of a small sample of pupils and talked to them about their reading habits.
- Inspectors looked at information on pupils’ progress and checked samples of the work in their books.
- School documents scrutinised included the school development plan, policies and procedures for safeguarding pupils and the school’s own evaluation of its work.
- The inspectors took account of the views of 47 parents who completed Ofsted’s on-line questionnaire (Parent View), the school’s recent survey of parents and the views of parents contacted during the inspection. Account was also taken of 44 inspection questionnaires completed by staff.

## Inspection team

Alan Lemon, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Christine Millett	Additional Inspector
Paul Spray	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium is well-above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the expected minimum standards for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

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

- Improve the teaching of mathematics even further so that more pupils gain knowledge, understanding and skills more quickly in order to raise standards to an even higher level by:
  - furthering teachers' expertise in mathematics and raising their expectations even higher
  - pupils applying their mathematical skills to even greater mathematical challenges.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are outstanding

- Leadership at all levels is fully committed to, and is extremely effective in, achieving their vision for the school. Many staff are developed as strong middle leaders who drive improvement very effectively in their areas of responsibility, in particular in early years and in managing the provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- As a result of powerful leadership, at senior level and across the school, pupils are offered highly effective experiences that greatly improve their future opportunities and fulfil the leadership's commitment to advancing the ideal of equal opportunities and tackling any form of discrimination.
- Leaders and staff manage rigorously their responsibilities for safeguarding pupils and carry these out outstandingly. This meets the high aspirations of the governing body and the hopes of parents. The local authority rightly sees the strengths of leadership and need only to provide light support to this outstanding school.
- Leaders keep the school firmly on track and performing at its high level by rigorously checking the quality of teaching, pupils' progress and attendance. They have high expectations and a clear view of what teaching and progress should be like. As a result teachers have sharply focused objectives so that they continue to improve their performance and there are challenging targets for pupils' progress. The strong partnership with parents ensures the school is very well supported in its drive to improve attendance.
- Teaching is constantly strengthened through regular professional development and training, leading to consistently good and outstanding teaching. In the recent past, this has been sharply focused on, and has led to a significant improvement in, reading and writing. This is now being followed with a concerted action on raising standards in mathematics and is now bringing this subject up to the same high level as reading and writing.
- Leaders spend the pupil premium and primary school sport funding to very good effect and both premiums are accounted for in considerable detail. The pupil premium has ensured disadvantaged pupils progress as rapidly as other pupils. The physical education and sports premium contributes significantly to pupils' personal development by enabling them to join teams, become members of clubs and pursue interests and discover new talents. The additional physical activities and sports afforded are very popular and taken up with enthusiasm, and these greatly enrich pupils' experiences and benefit their well-being.
- The curriculum is an excellent organisation of work and activities which very effectively achieves the school's aims, promoting academic achievement and preparing pupils extremely well for life in modern Britain. It awakens pupils' enthusiasm and makes school an exciting and hugely enjoyable experience for pupils. The very broad range of learning opportunities is incredibly well enriched by a whole range of activities away from school such as the Year 6 residential visit to North Wales and a trip to London and the Houses of Parliament. There are also very good opportunities for pupils to grow and cook their own food.
- Parents are given detailed information on the curriculum and, through the school's excellent website, find out much about the impact of their children's work and activities on their learning and enjoyment of school.

#### The governance of the school:

- Governors are highly committed to advancing the aims and values of the school and have played a key role in developing the school's aims. The Chair of the Governing Body has, over many years, devoted much time and energy to ensuring the school serves the needs of the community's children as effectively as possible. Governors work hard at ensuring the school responds effectively to the needs and aspirations of the community and maintains a positive working relationship with it.
- Governors are clear about the school's direction and they have a detailed knowledge of its work, developed from visits and careful study of comprehensive reports supplied regularly by school leaders.
- Governors check pupils' progress and their skilled reading of data ensures they see for themselves where strengths and weaknesses may lie. Careful note is taken of a very full report on the pupil premium which explains clearly how the money is spent and the impact this has had on disadvantaged pupils' progress. A report of a similar vein sets out the use of the physical education and primary school sport premium and its impact.
- The headteacher's reports deal with her assessment of the quality of teaching and the extent to which teachers have succeeded in meeting their performance objectives. Governors are rigorous in questioning this and satisfy themselves that teaching is effectively promoted.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. This is also the case for the behaviour of children in the early years. Pupils are very sharply focused and businesslike in meeting the demands of the school day. They settle down extremely quickly to work and manage clearly defined daily routines very well. For example, they organise the books and equipment they will need and move efficiently between areas for different parts of a lesson.
- Lessons are thoroughly enjoyed and pupils are greatly fulfilled by their efforts and progress. They work consistently hard and very enthusiastically contribute in lessons, answering questions or happily working together on a task.
- Parents ensure their children arrive at school each day on time and are well turned out in their school uniforms. Over the year, attendance is average. The school is relentless in ensuring pupils attend regularly and, with the positive support of parents, has succeeded in continually reducing avoidable absences.
- The school is very clear on the high standard of behaviour pupils should achieve and pupils respond very positively to this expectation. There is an atmosphere of quiet calm throughout the school in lessons, at playtimes and in the dining hall. Teachers are alert in checking pupils' attitudes and behaviour and act quickly if these are not up to the very high standard expected, although seldom do they have to remind pupils to pay attention.
- Pupils are very friendly and helpful towards each other. They feel good about themselves and each other. There is a positive team spirit in each year group. Pupils are very welcoming to visitors and spontaneously greet them. Qualities such as good manners and politeness are possessed in good measure by all pupils.
- Pupils' studies and the great many opportunities to go away from school on trips and visits give them excellent experiences and teach them about life in Britain and the diversity of its culture. Together with the school's very effective promotion of understanding and respect for others, pupils' outlook on the world is an extremely positive one.

**Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- The school is secure and high standards of health and safety are maintained through regular checks of the building and grounds. Pupils are very well supervised in school and when they leave school to go on trips and visits.
- Pupils are taught to stay safe and they have a very good understanding of potential risks, how to avoid them and what to do in the event of them. Their knowledge of the internet and social media ensures they know the dangers these can present.
- Pupils also know bullying is wrong and understand the different ways they can feel bullied. Pupils are not bullied in school. They get on with each other extremely well but they know what action to take if they were ever concerned.

**The quality of teaching is outstanding**

- Teaching throughout the school has a very positive impact upon all pupils' learning and progress. A high level of expertise in teaching reading and writing has led to many pupils making exceptional progress and reaching a high standard. Teachers and their classroom assistants are constantly developing their skills and achieving high levels of performance.
- The teaching of reading and writing has been very successfully developed across the school. At an early stage, pupils master basic reading and writing skills. They go on to build on these very effectively, especially in writing, where pupils learn a sophisticated use of language to express themselves. Mathematics teaching is effective in helping pupils to secure knowledge and skills. The most able pupils learn the basics quickly and teaching takes them to the highest levels, although not as many do so as in writing.
- Teachers know pupils and their different needs exceedingly well. They check very carefully that pupils are learning and gaining the knowledge, understanding and skills they need. The assessment of what pupils have learnt and the progress they have made are thoroughly assessed. Teachers know exactly at what point pupils are in their work and use this knowledge very effectively to plan precisely the next steps of learning.
- Pupils' work is marked diligently and teachers make very good use of this opportunity to praise

achievements, encourage pupils' efforts and to tell pupils how they can get to a higher level.

- Every pupil gets the attention they need from the good number of adults supporting learning in classrooms. Pupils frequently work alongside a few others according to their different points in learning and they do this very well. These activities are thoroughly planned and are highly effective in ensuring that pupils are working at the right level of challenge. The most able pupils, disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are each taught according to their needs. They learn systematically as a result and make rapid and consistent progress.
- The very positive relationships in classrooms create excellent conditions for learning. Pupils are engaged, confident and value their lively classroom experiences. They enjoy their lessons and always have a very clear understanding of what they should be learning.

### The achievement of pupils

### is outstanding

- Leaders' high expectations coupled with excellent teaching have a significant impact on the learning and progress of all groups of pupils, leading to their outstanding achievement by the end of Year 6.
- From historically low starting points on entry to Key Stage 1, standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 had been significantly below average for many years. However, from the same low starting points attainment rose in 2013 and rose even further in 2014 with Key Stage 1 pupils attaining average standards in reading and above average in writing and mathematics.
- By the end of Key Stage 2, in 2013, pupils made rapid progress and reached broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Provisional results for 2014 show pupils have also attained broadly average outcomes.
- In 2013, the proportion of Year 6 pupils achieving at least expected rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics was well-above average overall from pupils' different starting points. This has been improved upon in 2014 and the proportions of Year 6 pupils achieving better-than-expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics rose substantially and was well above the 2013 average. Pupils made exceptionally good progress in reading and writing in 2013 and 2014 as school leaders concentrated on raising standards in these subjects as a priority. Pupils' rates of progress and their achievement in mathematics improved in 2014 from the good progress made in 2013.
- The very few most able pupils made the expected progress in 2013 and have improved significantly on this in 2014 with some, for the first year ever, achieving the highest level, Level 6, in the tests in writing and mathematics. The most able pupils read fluently and do not struggle long over new and difficult words. They all enjoy books and have very enthusiastic attitudes to reading which help them read better and understand what they have read. They quickly develop sophisticated styles of writing and produce interesting, exciting writing that is enjoyable to read. In mathematics, they are challenged very effectively to sharpen their problem-solving skills and tackle higher-level mathematics.
- Speaking and listening, letters and sounds, and reading are taught very regularly. In early years, adults model language very well. In Key Stage 1, pupils continue their rapid progress in learning the skills of reading, sounding letters confidently, blending sounds and reading words correctly. The outcome of the Year 1 screening check in 2013, on pupils' skills in linking letters and sounds, was well-above average.
- The least able pupils in Key Stage 1 have mastered reading sufficiently to tackle reading an unfamiliar story with success. The many opportunities and great encouragement to write well ensures the great majority of pupils, by the end of Key Stage 2, make outstanding progress over time. Pupils write neatly, nearly always spelling correctly, and use a good range of punctuation.
- Over time, pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 learn number facts and calculation skills extremely well. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to practise and revise their mathematics and, if extra support is needed, this is given in well-planned support outside lessons. The challenges enjoyed by the most able pupils are beginning to be extended to more pupils in other groups with the aim of very soon getting mathematics to the same high standard most pupils achieve in writing.
- The attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium and other pupils both nationally and in school has closed in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2013, disadvantaged pupils were one year and one term behind all pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics and about one term behind other pupils in the school in all three subjects. Due to the specific characteristics of this cohort, approximately 50% of disadvantaged pupils joined Year 1 with starting points which were well-below average. This also contributed to the sizeable gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils in the school and other pupils nationally. Even so, these pupils make outstanding progress and match the very rapid rate of progress made by other pupils in the school. They also outstrip comprehensively other pupils nationally in their rate of progress.

- Pupils with special educational needs make outstanding progress from their starting points. They are expected to make the same rate of progress as other pupils and their targets are set accordingly. As with all pupils, a very close check is kept on this group so that none falls behind. A wide range of effective support both in and outside the classroom ensures that their communication skills, reading, writing and mathematics are well consolidated and that their individual needs are met well.

### **The early years provision**

### **is outstanding**

- Almost all children's skills when they start in the Nursery are below the level typical for their age in communication and language, literacy, mathematics and personal, social and emotional development. By the end of Reception Year, most children have made rapid progress and are at least meeting the expected level of development in communication and language, literacy, mathematics and in personal, social and emotional development. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception has improved significantly, rising to average in 2014. Children also make excellent progress in their physical development, and their understanding of the world.
- Children enjoy stimulating and attractive areas which reflect their interests and in which they can learn with joy and enthusiasm. There is a very good balance of activities chosen by children and those taught by teachers and their assistants.
- High expectations in regard to behaviour leads to children developing excellent attitudes to learning and a very good capacity to get along with each other and work together well. Children are very well supervised and supported by the many adults in early years. They are kept safe and learn very effectively how to keep themselves safe.
- The quality of teaching in the early years is outstanding. Children are highly absorbed by the wealth and variety of activities both indoors and outside. They make rapid progress in their personal and emotional development and in developing communication, language, literacy and mathematical skills. There is a great deal of stimulus throughout early years provision to interest children, particularly in these areas.
- Nursery and Reception activities are very carefully planned and prepared, with the result that children are highly motivated and active in their learning. Children engage intensively in practising the letters and sounds at their level and learn very quickly. Children frequently work with peers of similar abilities when practising language, reading and counting skills, and do this with outstanding effect.
- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development in 2013 was below average but this reflected those children's starting points. By 2014, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development increased significantly to a broadly average level and children were ready to learn successfully in Year 1.
- The leadership and management of early years is outstanding. Adults share a deep commitment to children's well-being, safety and achievement. They work in a cohesive team encouraging children's learning. Assessment is thorough and rigorously checked for accuracy.

## 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>	106620
<b>Local authority</b>	Barnsley
<b>Inspection number</b>	449140

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	309
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Glenis White
<b>Headteacher</b>	Julie Allen
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 October 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01226 710447
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