

# Birdwell Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106595
<b>Local Authority</b>	Barnsley
<b>Inspection number</b>	336702
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 May 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Kathryn Dodd

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>	157
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Alan Schofield
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms J Gilmour
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 November 2006
<b>School address</b>	Sheffield Road Birdwell Barnsley S70 5XB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01226 742957
<b>Fax number</b>	01226 742597
<b>Email address</b>	j.gilmour@barnsley.org

---

<b>Age group</b>	5–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 May 2010
<b>Inspection number</b>	336702

---

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

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

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2010

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons or part-lessons and seven teachers were observed. The inspectors held discussions with staff, groups of pupils, governors and with parents and carers. The inspectors observed the school's work, including a review of improvement plans, the systems for tracking pupils' progress and monitoring the quality of teaching, records demonstrating arrangements for safeguarding and a sample of pupils' work. The inspectors analysed 69 questionnaires from parents and carers, 80 questionnaires from pupils and 20 from staff.

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

- the rate of progress of the more able pupils, particularly in writing in Years 1 and 2 and in mathematics in Years 3 to 6
- how well teachers use assessment information to plan work that effectively matches pupils' varying abilities
- how well the curriculum meets the needs of the more able pupils, particularly in mathematics and in writing
- how effectively leaders and governors contribute to evaluating the school's performance and monitoring its provision.

## Information about the school

Almost all the pupils at this smaller than average size school are White British. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. A below average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. Since the previous inspection, the number of pupils on roll has increased. This is, in part, due to the closure of a school nearby. Pupils are taught in a mix of single and mixed-aged classes. Since July 2009, an extensive buildings refurbishment programme has taken place and is now almost complete. A pre- school, managed by a private provider, operates on the school site, which is inspected separately and the report can be found on the Ofsted website. The school has been accredited with a number of awards, which include, Artsmark Gold, Eco- School, Activemark and Sportsmark. It also holds Healthy School status.

**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?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Birdwell Primary is a good school. Pupils achieve well to reach average and, sometimes above average attainment by Year 6. In this harmonious, very friendly, extremely safe and welcoming setting, pupils demonstrate wonderful attitudes to learning and behave exceptionally well. They are consistently polite, courteous and respectful to adults and to one another. Their knowledge about how to keep themselves healthy is impressive. They agree that they feel very safe. Pupils are very keen to contribute positively to their vibrant school community. Parents and carers are highly supportive and are very confident that 'This very positive-thinking school promotes a real love of learning within which their children flourish'.

Children make outstanding progress in Reception and, after this extremely successful start, continue to learn well until the end of Year 6. In English, between Years 3 to 6, teachers make good use of assessment information to provide well matched activities and to direct their questions so that pupils, including the more able, are challenged. Older pupils are clear about what they need to do to reach their challenging learning targets in writing. As a result, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment in English is above average in reading and has improved significantly this year in writing. These good practices however, are not consistently well embedded in mathematics or, for younger pupils. The achievement of the more able pupils in mathematics, for example, is sometimes held back because there are not enough opportunities for them to apply their skills through solving problems. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are not always provided with opportunities to practise and consolidate their skills in writing in other subjects.

Leaders and managers work seamlessly together to drive forward improvement. The rigour with which they track and analyse pupils' performance ensures that improvement priorities are identified swiftly and precisely. This results in a shared and accurate evaluation of the school's effectiveness. Their successes are highly evident. A number of aspects of leadership, the quality of provision and outcomes for pupils have all strengthened since the previous inspection. This demonstrates there is a good capacity to continue to improve. Although governance has also improved, governors do not play a fully effective role in influencing school improvement planning and self-evaluation processes. This is because their skills in reviewing the school's performance information and monitoring the quality of provision are still developing.

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

- Increase the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment,

**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

particularly in mathematics by the end Year 6 and in writing by the end of Year 2, by:

- ensuring that teachers make consistently good use of assessment information to plan activities and tailor questions to challenge pupils' thinking
  - providing more opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to apply their mathematical problem solving skills and to practise their writing skills
  - making sure pupils of all ages are clear about their precise learning targets and what they still have to do if they are to reach them.
- Improve the effectiveness with which governors review the school's performance information and monitor the quality of provision in order for them to be able to contribute more fully to improvement planning and self-evaluation processes.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****1**

Achievement is good. In lessons, pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are very attentive, keen to learn and respond enthusiastically to teachers' questions. Pupils work at a good pace, both when working independently or collaboratively. Their sustained concentration enables them to produce work of a good standard. Between Years 1 and 6, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress. Pupils' attainment can vary from year-to-year, due to both the small numbers in each year group and the arrival of new pupils partway through the year. Attainment in English is rising. This reflects the increasing proportion of pupils reaching beyond the nationally expected Level 4, especially in writing. Although attainment in mathematics is average, fewer pupils reach the higher Level 5. By Year 2, attainment is average. This reflects good progress from pupils' lower starting points. Even so, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 is below average, particularly in writing.

Pupils' enjoyment is reflected in their good attendance and the enthusiasm with which they participate in and talk about all that is on offer. Pupils are very proud of their school and contribute extremely positively towards it. They relish opportunities to take on responsibilities, for example, as school councillors, who influence school decision making at many levels. Pupils participate enthusiastically in activities aimed at improving their local environment, such as with the local residents' association. Opportunities for pupils to mix with others from ethnically and religiously diverse groups within British society are still developing. Pupils' outstanding understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle shows in their eagerness to take part in a wonderful range of sporting activities, karate and inter-school sporting competitions, for example. Pupils talk knowledgeably about how to keep safe, such as during the recent building work in school. They show their maturity by encouraging one another to act safely and responsibly. The confidence and ease with which pupils discuss their learning together and with adults and visitors and the maturity with which they work independently and collaboratively, demonstrate that they are well prepared for the future.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

**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

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

### How effective is the provision?

Teachers' enthusiasm, good organisation, very positive relationships, effective use of praise and the careful deployment of very skilled support staff and student teachers, all make a strong contribution to pupils' good progress. In English, good quality marking, along with ongoing dialogue throughout lessons, ensure that pupils are clear of how they can improve their work, particularly between Years 3 to 6. In the best lessons, high expectations of the pace of learning, along with tailored individual questioning and activities that challenge pupils' thinking ensure pupils are kept on their toes. These best practices are not seen consistently across all classes.

The curriculum places a strong emphasis on broadening and enriching pupils' experiences. Excellent partnerships forged within the locality and with parents and carers extend the curriculum significantly. The weekly 'University' session for example, provides excellent opportunities for pupils to tailor learning to their particular interests and to develop life skills in areas ranging from sewing and photography to environmental sustainability. Such activities contribute significantly to pupils' enjoyment. Successful adaptations to the writing curriculum, particularly in Key Stage 2, are providing more exciting opportunities to write creatively and at length and are helping to raise attainment. Further adaptations, however, are still needed to boost pupils' ability to use and apply their skills through problem solving in mathematics and for pupils in Year 1 and 2 to consolidate their developing skills in writing.

---

<sup>1</sup> 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**

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

Making sure that every child is nurtured and cared for is at the very heart of the school. Extremely high quality pastoral support is evident in day-to-day practice. Parents and carers praise the dedication and commitment of staff and appreciate the opportunities they have to discuss welfare matters at the start of each day. Pupils are confident that they feel very safe and that someone is always on hand to help. Excellent partnerships fostered with parents and carers and with external support agencies, reflect the school's unrelenting commitment to helping pupils with additional needs.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Despite the recent challenges arising from major building works, the school continues to move forward successfully. Pupils achieve well in a very bright, clean, well resourced learning environment. The headteacher values highly the contribution of everyone. Widespread consultation with parents and carers, with pupils and with the community, successfully influences school decision making. Staff agree that they feel 'very proud and privileged to work here'. Their professional development is a high priority, with many undertaking additional research projects, which, in turn drive improvement. As a result, leadership responsibilities are distributed very effectively amongst staff at many levels. These factors, combined with shrewd financial management and overall outstanding pupils' outcomes, are reasons why the school provides outstanding value for money.

A strong emphasis is placed on the inclusion of all pupils in everything the school has to offer. Children's welfare is kept in firm view and permeates school life. Procedures to monitor pupils' progress serve to identify quickly and precisely any variances in pupil performance and participation in school life. This demonstrates the school's good commitment to providing equality of opportunity. Safeguarding procedures are good and meet current requirements, contributing to the confidence that parents and carers have in the very high quality of care.

Governance is satisfactory. Although governors offer effective support in areas such as financial management and health and safety matters, they do not make a full contribution to evaluating the schools effectiveness.

The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. Very effective links are established within the local community. Extending opportunities for pupils to engage with ethnically and religiously diverse groups further afield is already identified as an

**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

improvement priority and is developing at a good rate.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

When children start in the Reception classes, their skills are usually below those typical for their age. The very warm and caring relationships between adults and children, along with the bright, lively and well resourced learning environment and the many exciting theme-based activities, such as `minibeasts, ensure that children quickly develop a real thirst for learning. Children's personal, social and emotional development is outstanding. Adults make the most of opportunities, such as through `Dinosaur school', to encourage children to develop their independence, take on responsibilities and understand routines and boundaries. As a result, they become eager young learners who behave extremely well. Adults, including student teachers, work very well together to assess children's progress. They record carefully their daily achievements and plan the future based on this knowledge. Consequently, learning builds very effectively on what children can already do. In recent times, children's rate of progress and level of skills reached by the start of Year 1 have risen dramatically. Many children now are working beyond the level expected nationally. Children's outstanding progress reflects outstanding leadership and management. Ensuring that adults provide a highly effective balance of opportunities for children to learn both independently and under the direct guidance of adults, along with the excellent partnerships fostered with the adjoining pre-school setting and with parents and carers has contributed significantly to improvement.



**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

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

## Views of parents and carers

Parents who returned questionnaires and those that talked with inspectors are extremely supportive of the school's work. They overwhelmingly agree that their children enjoy school, are kept safe and overall are happy with their children's experience at school. They particularly appreciate the extensive opportunities they have to get involved in their children's education and to influence school decision making, such as, developing school policies through the Parent Council. A very small minority of parents and carers indicated that they would appreciate further opportunity to be consulted about arrangements for safeguarding pupils. Advanced plans are in place to do so. Again, a small minority parents and carers believes that the school does not prepare pupils sufficiently well for the future. Inspectors found no evidence of this and judge that careful arrangements to ease the transition of pupils as they move through the school and onward to secondary school prepare pupils well for the next stage in their education.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Birdwell 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 69 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 157 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	48	70	20	29	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	37	54	30	43	2	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	37	54	29	42	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	54	27	39	4	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	41	59	26	38	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	33	48	31	45	2	3	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	30	43	38	55	1	1	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)	31	45	28	41	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	45	31	45	4	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	41	32	46	6	9	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	41	34	49	4	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	33	48	32	46	3	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	41	59	26	38	1	1	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](http://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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



19 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Birdwell Primary School, Barnsley, S70 5XB

Thank you so much for the very warm and friendly welcome you gave us when we inspected your school. We really enjoyed being part of your wonderful school community and finding out your views. I am writing to let you know what we thought. You go to a good school. By the time you leave at the end of Year 6, the standards that you reach are similar to those expected and you make good progress. We were particularly pleased to:

- see your excellent behaviour and wonderful attitudes to learning
- hear how very safe you feel and how you keep one another safe
- find out just how much you know about how you can keep yourself healthy
- find out how much you help your school improve, such as, by influencing what you will learn, particularly during the 'University' sessions on Fridays.
- see you discussing your learning together so sensibly and working as a team.

These are some of the reasons why you are prepared well for going to secondary school. So that your school becomes even better, we have asked that some further improvements be made. These are to:

- make sure you are always given work which makes you all think really hard
- give you more chances to practise your problem solving skills
- give you more chances to practise your writing in other subjects
- make sure that you are all clear about what your targets are in mathematics and in writing
- make sure that the governors improve the way in which they check how well you are getting on so that they can give even more help to other adults to decide how things might get even better for you.

You can help by making sure that you tell your teacher if your work is too easy and by always checking what you still have to do to reach your learning targets. I send my very best wishes to you all for a very bright and successful future.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Kathryn Dodd

Lead inspector

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**