



Birkby Infant and Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 107601
Local Authority Kirklees
Inspection number 287864
Inspection date 28 February 2007
Reporting inspector Ann Sharpe

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Blacker Road
School category	Community		Birkby, Huddersfield
Age range of pupils	3-7		West Yorkshire HD1 5HQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01484 223969
Number on roll (school)	363	Fax number	01484 223971
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Ms Ali Stopher
		Headteacher	Mrs Diana Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Pupils attending this large urban school are from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, although about three quarters are of Pakistani heritage. The proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals and with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are above average. Many pupils speak English as an additional language, and a few pupils, who have recently arrived in the country, speak little or no English. A greater than average proportion of pupils join or leave the school at times other than the beginning or end of this stage of their education. Not all children in Nursery transfer to this school's Reception classes. The school is part of the Excellence in Cities project. In the last year or so, there have been an unusually high number of staff changes, including a new headteacher in September 2006, and a new deputy headteacher in January 2007.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school's view of itself as a good school with outstanding features is correct, and it has earned its good reputation within the community. Parents, rightly, think very highly of all aspects of the school's work, particularly their children's enjoyment of school and the good progress they make. As a result of outstanding leadership by senior staff, the school has not allowed the recent significant changes of staff to disrupt pupils' learning or to take attention away from ensuring their happiness at school. The new headteacher has very quickly got to grips with the varying needs of the pupils and their parents. She is supported very well by the assistant headteacher, the new deputy headteacher and by staff who are equally determined to do the best they can for the pupils. Everyone works together as a united team, and relationships are very good. The school has forged outstanding partnerships with others, so that no stone is left unturned in efforts to improve the quality of pupils' education and to raise standards even further.

A major reason for pupils' good academic achievement is their good personal development and well-being. The school's strong commitment to demonstrating that 'every child matters' is evident in pupils' growing knowledge and understanding of how to stay healthy and safe. It is also seen in pupils' enjoyment of the outstandingly well enriched curriculum and in their good behaviour and attitudes to learning. The school council gives pupils a good start with learning to play an active part in the school and wider community, and with learning the skills they will need to become citizens of the future. The degree of care, guidance and support given to pupils is outstanding because, as the headteacher commented, 'Nobody, but nobody, lets barriers to learning get in the way.'

Good teaching and learning enables girls and boys of all ethnic backgrounds, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are still learning to speak English, to make good progress. Although standards by Year 2 are below average, this is quite an achievement, considering that the starting point for many pupils is well below average, and sometimes low.

Quality and standards in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception classes) are good. Efforts to raise children's attainment in reading, so that they can do better in all other areas of their work, have already shown clear signs of success. The school now, rightly, wants to build on the good progress in the Foundation Stage by raising standards in reading in Years 1 and 2, so that pupils' progress in other areas is not held back by lack of reading skills.

Although pupils' attendance is well below average, it is improving because of the school's outstanding efforts to tackle the problem. This level of dedication to the pupils, along with the school's very good track record, demonstrate a good capacity for the school to continue to improve in the future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in reading in Years 1 and 2, so that pupils are better placed to reach the standards expected for their ages in reading, writing and mathematics.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement, from well below average attainment when they start Nursery, is good. By Year 2, standards are below average, but this represents good progress, especially in speaking and in personal and social development. In 2005, the school's national assessments were close to the national average. The 2006 assessments dipped significantly, however, reflecting the higher proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and pupils who had only recently joined the school. Nevertheless, pupils in Year 2 are on track to reach the challenging targets that the school has set for them. There is a strong sense of determination to raise standards in reading, because good reading skills hold the key to success in writing and in mathematics. Efforts are paying dividends, as seen in the good progress of girls and boys in the Foundation Stage. Nevertheless, this has not fully extended into Years 1 and 2 to ensure that pupils' general achievement is not hindered.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' good attitudes and behaviour and their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development help them to achieve well. Pupils from all ethnic backgrounds work and play together happily and get involved in the many enjoyable activities open to them. Pupils know how to stay healthy by eating lots of fruit and vegetables and by taking regular exercise. Their play outdoors is varied and energetic. One pupil explained how this keeps his blood pumping and gives him a healthy heart. Pupils also know how to stay safe, for example by not wandering away from adults and by finding a first aider if they are accidentally hurt in the playground. Members of the school council are proud of the fact that they have raised funds to buy new outdoor equipment and consulted with other pupils about what to buy. Although attendance is well below the national average, it is improving. Pupils take cameras on extended holidays to Pakistan, and love to share their experiences with other pupils when they return to school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Despite staff changes, including the appointment of newly qualified teachers, good quality teaching and learning enables pupils to achieve well. A major reason for this is the teamwork of teachers and support staff, who are dedicated to providing a safe

and stimulating place for the pupils. Positive and well organised teachers prepare carefully to ensure that pupils want to learn. Teachers have adapted well to using new technological equipment to enhance their teaching and to further pupils' learning. Although teachers are knowledgeable, they are keen to extend their skills. In the Foundation Stage, for example, teachers are raising standards in reading by placing increased emphasis on helping children to use letter sounds to read new words. There is further work to do to build on this success in Years 1 and 2, where lack of reading skills sometimes restricts pupils' progress in other areas of their work. Pupils like the 'traffic lights' system for telling teachers how well they understand their work, and teachers use the information well for planning what to teach next.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and achieve well because the curriculum takes careful account of their diverse backgrounds and learning needs. It is planned carefully to ensure that pupils extend their understanding of the school and wider communities, and to increase their chances of doing well in their next stages of education. This is why there is a strong focus on improving pupils' reading skills in the Foundation Stage. There are plans to build on the success so far by providing more opportunities for pupils in Years 1 and 2 to apply their knowledge of letter sounds to their work across other subjects. Regular opportunities to use information and communication technology increase pupils' confidence, and this results in very good achievement in this subject. The enrichment of the curriculum, especially through extra-curricular activities, visits out of school and visitors, is outstanding. Pupils say how much they enjoy special days, such as Australia Day and when they re-enacted a wedding celebration.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The priority that the school gives to this aspect of its work is seen in the well thought out procedures for safeguarding, protecting and supporting all pupils. A key member of staff manages the arrangements very well, and the school ensures that the specific and individual needs of pupils, including those related to the induction of pupils new to the school, are catered for. Consequently, as part of pupils' work in lessons, and through activities such as the early morning multi-skills club, pupils benefit from support that is tailor-made just for them. The school's many productive partnerships with others, including links with parents and the community, are a major part of the continuous striving for pupils' higher attainment. Links with the Excellence in Cities project, for example, help the school to meet the learning needs of gifted and talented pupils. Similarly, because parents are becoming more involved in their children's education, pupils' attendance and their achievement at school are improving. Teachers give pupils good academic guidance by talking to them about how they can improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management ensure that pupils achieve well. The new headteacher and new deputy headteacher benefit from the stability provided by the assistant headteacher. Together, their outstanding leadership has ensured that pupils' education has not suffered because of changes of staff. They are building well on the school's previous successes, with a strong commitment to 'every child matters'. The school has a mainly accurate understanding of its effectiveness, with appropriate plans to tackle important problems such as poor attendance. Governors include several new members. They use resources well: for example, they have made the most of an old building by updating and maintaining it internally to a very high standard. Similarly, they make good use of specific grants, such as the grant to support pupils learning to speak English and a grant to encourage the community served by the school to use local libraries. Everything is done with a view to raising the achievement of pupils. Consequently, improvement since the previous inspection is good, and the school provides good value for money.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for talking to me and for answering all my questions so thoughtfully when I visited your school. I really enjoyed my day with you, especially looking around your beautiful building and seeing your work. Your behaviour was good all the time, and I could see how much you enjoy your lessons and all the other exciting things you can do at school.

Your school is a good school because all the adults care a lot about you and work very hard to make sure that you do as well as you can. They ask other adults to help you too, such as your parents and all the visitors that you told me about. The school council members told me how much you learn about keeping healthy and safe. I was pleased to hear how they helped you to raise money for extra equipment for the playground, and it was lovely to see you enjoying doing so many energetic things when you played outside.

Teachers are doing a good job with helping you to learn more and more. They know how important it is for you to learn to read well because you need to read things in all your lessons. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make a very good start with learning to read and, although you all do well, teachers want children in Years 1 and 2 to do even better, especially in reading.

You can help your teachers by continuing to improve your attendance and by reading books by yourselves and with other adults as often as you can.