

# Birchfield Community Primary School

Birchfield Road, Yeovil, Somerset, BA21 5RL

**Inspection dates** 25–26 June 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The headteacher has secured the necessary changes within school to improve the quality of teaching so that it is now good.
- Senior and middle leaders work alongside the headteacher to review the progress pupils make. Through discussion with class teachers, support is then provided to those pupils who may be making slower progress. Teachers' expectations of how well pupils can achieve have risen.
- Senior leaders have provided one-to-one support to help improve the skills of individual teachers. As a result, teaching is effective and pupils make good progress in their lessons.
- A high proportion of children join the Reception classes with skill levels that are below those seen typically in other children. Through good teaching, the children develop their skills and make good progress from their low starting points.
- Pupils learn sounds linked to groups of letters (phonics skills) promptly. The reading skills of pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2 are good.
- The attainment of pupils has improved in reading, writing and mathematics. Their attainment overall is significantly above national averages.
- Pupils' books indicate they are making good progress in writing and developing a good understanding of spelling and punctuation. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 has improved since the last inspection.
- The proportion achieving Level 5 at the end of Year 6 in 2014 was significantly above national averages in reading, mathematics, spelling and grammar.
- Pupils' behaviour in school is good. They are polite and courteous to visitors. Pupils take care with their work and present it neatly.
- Pupils feel very safe in school and know who to go to should they have a problem.
- Governors have benefitted from the training they have received from the local authority. They understand the role they have as governors more clearly. They hold the school to account for the progress different groups of pupils make more effectively than in the past.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is good. The work of the school prepares the pupils well for the next stage in their education and for life in modern democratic Britain.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of the marking and feedback that teachers provide in pupils' books is too inconsistent. Consequently, pupils do not always know how they could improve their work.
- Not all teachers ensure pupils always make the corrections to their work promptly or check that they have made the improvements suggested.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in 17 lessons, some of which was jointly observed with the headteacher and members of the senior leadership team.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils and senior leaders. The lead inspector met with the Chair of the Governing Body. He also held a telephone conversation with the Senior School Improvement Advisor.
- The inspection team listened to pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read and scrutinised a sample of workbooks from a range of year groups.
- The inspectors examined a wide range of documents, including the school’s information on pupils’ recent progress. They also looked at planning and documentation about checks on teaching, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- There were 48 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors analysed questionnaires from 41 members of staff.

## Inspection team

David Hogg, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Jennifer Cutler	Additional inspector
Patricia Dodds	Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school has two classes in each year group. All pupils attend on a full-time basis, including children in the early years provision.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is higher than the national average. This additional government funding is used to support those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after.
- Most pupils are from a White British background. There are few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion of pupils who do not speak English as their first language is low.
- The school met the government's current floor standards in 2014, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and further raise achievement by making sure that:
  - the marking teachers provide is of a consistently high standard that lets pupils know how they can improve their work
  - teachers provide pupils with opportunities to promptly act on the feedback and guidance they receive.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection because of the determined efforts of the headteacher to bring about the necessary changes within the school. The senior and middle leadership teams have provided able support. Together they work as a very effective team.
  - Training has improved the skills of staff, who now have higher expectations of what the pupils can achieve. When necessary, more targeted mentoring provided by senior staff, who have worked closely alongside some teachers, has ensured the progress pupils made did not falter.
  - Senior and middle leaders monitor the progress made by different groups of pupils. Both the most able pupils and those with special educational needs have received additional support when necessary. This additional help is effective and ensures all pupils, including the most able, have an equal opportunity to succeed from their individual starting points.
  - The school uses pupil premium funding very effectively. There is no discrimination and the progress made by pupils eligible for this funding, and by disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs, is similar to or better than that of others in the school.
  - Senior leaders review the effectiveness of teaching through direct observation of what happens in lessons and by reviewing the quality of pupils' work in their books. Teachers have specific targets to achieve each year and these closely link to how well the pupils they teach achieve. Salary progression and opportunities for promotion link to the teachers' success in achieving the targets.
  - The school has received support from a range of experts, who have been rigorous in their challenge to the school. This has been a key factor in securing the improvements the school has enjoyed. The school now has the capacity for further improvement without the need for significant additional support. The local authority has provided good training to successfully develop and extend the skills of the governing body.
  - The school provides a good curriculum that pupils enjoy. The senior leaders have considered the needs of the pupils in the design of the programme of lessons so there are extra opportunities to develop the experiences of the pupils. The school has used a range of visitors to the school, including a Roman soldier. Visits to places of interest are organised and link to the pupils' work back in school. For example, Year 4 pupils enjoyed a trip to Stonehenge and the follow-up work during 'Stone Age Day'.
  - The school makes very good use of the additional resources it has available through the primary school sports premium funding. A greater proportion of pupils now take part in sports activities, some of which, for example, kayaking for Year 6, are a little unusual. More pupils from a range of year groups enjoy competitive sport against other schools and the school has enjoyed success in netball, soccer and athletics.
  - The school prepares pupils very successfully for life in modern democratic Britain. The school recognises the need to widen the pupils' understanding of the values and beliefs of others. Through topic-based activities, pupils explore the different attitudes of others towards specific issues and dilemmas. The pupils' spiritual, moral and social awareness is well supported and is good. Pupils have a clear understanding of what is right and wrong. They are confident when speaking to adults and good relationships are fostered throughout the school. Pupils enjoy positions of responsibility, such as being members of the school council.
  - The school's links with parents are good. Regular meetings with teachers allow parents to discuss the progress made by the pupils. Monthly newsletters provide regular information about what the pupils are learning in school.
  - All staff undergo the appropriate checks before they begin working in the school. Training provided to all staff ensures they are vigilant and have a clear understanding of their roles in keeping pupils safe in school. The governing body reviews the policies and procedures as part of the annual audit, and these meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
- The governing body has improved the level of challenge it offers to the school and now holds the school leaders to account for the progress pupils make much more rigorously than in the past. Governors check the progress all pupils make carefully but especially that of pupils with special educational needs. They understand that there are now higher expectations within school.
  - The governors review the quality of teaching through the reports that the headteacher provides. Reports from external experts and from their own observations when they visit the school give them an accurate picture of the quality of teaching in the school. They have a clear understanding of how the process of review and support is used to improve teachers' skills, how the school tackles

- underperformance and how teachers' salary improvements link to the achievement of the pupils.
- Governors review the financial position of the school carefully and are beginning to review how effectively the school is using specific additional resources such as the primary sports premium funding.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils try hard in class and enjoy their work. Their attitudes to work are positive and contribute to the progress they make in lessons. Pupils take care with their work, which is very neat and tidy. The pupils' work on display is of high quality.
- Pupils get along well together, and acts of bullying are rare. Occasionally, however, some pupils can be unkind towards each other. If problems do occur and cannot be sorted out by themselves, pupils are confident they will receive good support from the adults around them to help resolve issues.
- Pupils are polite to each other and the adults around them. During breaks and lunchtimes, pupils play well together. Currently, girls enjoy hand-clapping games that they play with each other and members of staff. Boys enjoy showing off the tricks they can perform with yo-yos to each other. Adults and pupils get along well and this fosters good relationships in class and during breaks and lunchtimes.
- Attendance is in line with the national average. The school works hard to encourage good attendance. Holiday absences are not authorised.

**Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and that they are well looked after. The school site is secure. All visitors report to the reception, where their identities are checked and they sign in.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe, for example, when using the internet or playing games online. Younger pupils are very aware of why they should not talk to strangers. Older pupils receive cycling proficiency training.
- Staff receive first aid training and can deal with minor injuries should they occur.
- The breakfast and after-school clubs provide a safe environment in which pupils can relax at the start and end of the school day.

**The quality of teaching****is good**

- The quality of teaching has improved from the last inspection. Teachers have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve and plan activities to challenge them. Middle leaders work closely with teachers if they need to develop a particular skill.
- The school teaching of phonics is good. Pupils learn the sounds linked to letters well. Those who have been slower to gain their skills in the Reception classes quickly catch up in Year 1 as a result of effective teaching and one-to-one support from learning support assistants.
- Teachers develop pupils reading skills effectively through good teaching. Teachers use a range of materials to engage pupils with reading. Boys especially enjoy reading graphic novels and make good progress.
- Teachers generally plan activities that build on what pupils have learned previously. In a Year 4 mathematics lesson the activities set linked to working out lengths of time provided a good level of challenge for the most able. Regular questioning during the lesson helped the teacher check on the progress different groups of pupils made. The teachers could then provide extra support for those who found the tasks tricky.
- Teaching assistants are used to good effect in classroom activities and in small-group work to support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Pupils who need additional support generally make good progress from their starting points.
- There is a strong emphasis on the teaching of spelling, punctuation and grammar skills to develop the pupils' accuracy when writing. This has supported the improvements in the quality of pupils' writing seen

across the school.

- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. In some classes, pupils receive useful guidance on how to improve their work. However, the quality of feedback teachers across the school provide is inconsistent and not always at the standard of the best. Consequently, pupils do not always know how to improve their work. In addition, teachers do not always give pupils opportunities to improve their work promptly and corrections are not always completed.

### The achievement of pupils

**is good**

- The overall attainment of pupils at the end of Year 2 was significantly above the national average in 2014. Their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics all showed improvements and was above national averages. The school's own information shows sustained improvement, and the scrutiny of pupils' work in their books confirms this.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 in reading and mathematics and in grammar, punctuation and spelling was significantly above the national averages. Pupils' attainment in writing also improved but still lagged a little behind that on the other subjects.
- The quality of work seen in the books of those currently in Year 6 shows the improvements have continued, especially in writing. The school's own information indicates pupils have made good progress from their individual starting points in all subject areas.
- The proportion of pupils achieving at the highest Level 6 was above that seen nationally in mathematics and reading in 2014. This year the school has entered more pupils for this level and continues to provide challenge to the most able. The proportions of pupils achieving Level 5 in reading and mathematics was significantly above that seen nationally. In writing, the proportion was in line with the national average.
- Disadvantaged pupils who receive support through the additional funding make good progress from their individual starting points compared with other pupils nationally, and the school uses its resources very effectively. In 2014, the gaps in the skills of disadvantaged pupils compared to other pupils in the school in reading and writing narrowed from the previous year. In reading, disadvantaged pupils were three terms behind other pupils and just over one and a half terms behind in writing. In mathematics, the gap was just over two and a half terms. When compared with other pupils nationally, the gaps in reading were just over half a term, in writing two terms and in mathematics less than half a term.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress from their individual starting points as a result of the effective support they receive from both class teachers and teaching assistants. There is a determination within school that all pupils have the opportunity to achieve as highly as they can.
- Pupils enjoy reading. They read regularly at school and at home. Younger pupils can use their phonics understanding effectively when they come across an unfamiliar word. They can recount what they have read in their words. Older pupils are confident readers who read with fluency and expression.

### The early years provision

**is good**

- Children join the Reception classes with skill levels that are below those seen typically in others their age in a wide range of areas of learning. Over the last two years, the proportion of children attaining a good level of development has improved markedly and the progress they made from their starting points in 2014 was good. However, the proportion was still below the national average, which meant a number of children entered Year 1 needing further support to develop their literacy skills and mathematical understanding. The school provided this and they quickly caught up with the others. The school's own information indicates that the attainment of the children in the current year group will be higher than in previous years and in line with national averages.
- The leadership of the early years is good. The oversight of the classes is good, with staff well deployed. For example, a member of staff has sole responsibility for the children's learning in the outdoor area. Training and mentoring provide support for all members of staff to develop their skills.
- In class, the children can move between activities, freely choosing and exploring their own interests. In one class, the teacher supported the children with a writing task. Some children returned later to write their own version of the story of the Little Red Hen without the help of an adult. They wrote two or three sentences that were legible and their work was quite easy to read.
- The support for children with special educational needs is good. They are supported well by teaching assistants, who balance the support they offer against allowing the children to develop their skills for

themselves.

- The behaviour of the children is good. They happily work alongside each other, sharing resources and talking about what they are doing. They get along well with the adults in the classes, and this builds and fosters good relationships. They are sensible when using equipment and know how to keep themselves safe. The children follow instructions very well.
- Teaching is good in the Reception classes. Teachers use a range of different ideas and resources to catch the imagination of the pupils. In one lesson, children could try samples of different types of bread to look for the 'yum' in them. Others role-played the Little Red Hen story, taking turns as the different characters. While this was happening the room was filled with the smell of baking as a bread maker made a loaf for the children to try later.
- The progress children make is good and evident in their literacy and number workbooks. 'Learning journals' record the activities that the children have enjoyed. The books are available for parents to look through when they want. The school's links with parents are good.
- Adults in the classes make careful records of the children's work. The assessments help to plan the next learning activities for the children. The local authority has reviewed the judgements and has validated them.
- School leaders and governors check all the safeguarding policies and procedures that link to the early years. These are all in place and meet 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	123730
<b>Local authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	462466

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	384
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Matt Merriam
<b>Headteacher</b>	Richard Culham
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4–5 July 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01935 427609
<b>Fax number</b>	01935 411154
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