

# Inspection of a good school: Birley Primary Academy

Thornbridge Avenue, Birley, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S12 3AB

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Inspection dates:

6–7 November 2019

## Outcome

Birley Primary Academy continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Birley Primary Academy is a warm, welcoming and friendly school. Pupils told us that they enjoy coming to school because they learn a lot, they feel safe and cared for. Pupils respect each other and know that it is important to be kind.

Pupils behave well in lessons and work hard. They play together sensibly during playtimes and lunchtimes. Pupils told us that bullying is rare, and when it happens they trust the adults to sort it out quickly.

The curriculum provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to broaden their horizons. Teachers prepare interesting and fun lessons. A range of trips and visits gives pupils rich experiences and brings their learning to life.

Pupils enjoy taking part in a wide variety of clubs and extra-curricular activities. Pupils talked with excitement about playing competitive matches for a school sports team, playing chess or taking part in musical performances.

## What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school continues to offer pupils a good quality of education. School leaders, including governors, know the school very well. They are ambitious about the school and want every pupil to achieve their best. The headteacher and her senior team know exactly how to improve the school further.

The school curriculum is well planned. Pupils study the full range of subjects of the national curriculum. Pupils build up their knowledge and understanding in each subject as they move through the school. Pupils remember key facts and concepts because they revisit previous learning regularly. Staff have received appropriate training on the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. However, leaders are only beginning to put together training for staff on the foundation subjects, such as history, geography and modern foreign languages.

Nursery and Reception classrooms are vibrant, safe and exciting places to learn. As a result, children achieve well. Adults are caring and welcoming. The curriculum allows children to thrive. There is a strong focus on physical development. Leaders have improved the outdoor area significantly over the last couple of years. Adults use this outside space very creatively and children have fun while learning.

Reading has a high priority within the school from the early years through to Year 6. The school's programme for teaching phonics is well planned and gets pupils off to a good start in reading. Children start to learn phonics from the very start of Nursery Year. They quickly learn how to use their knowledge of letters and sounds to help them to read and write. Leaders continuously review the early years curriculum. For example, this year children are being introduced to tricky words earlier in the year so that they become familiar with them more quickly. Children develop a love for reading which continues as they move through the school. As pupils move through the school, they become fluent readers. Leaders identified specific areas of reading that needed to improve in key stage 2. Teachers now teach reading in a way that increases pupils' vocabulary and improves their understanding of the story. The curriculum for foundation subjects has also been adapted to support the development of reading.

Leaders have high ambitions for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers and skilled teaching assistants receive appropriate training and work closely together. Teachers adapt their planning carefully and as a result, these pupils are well supported.

Staff have worked hard to improve attendance by working more closely with families. The overall attendance of pupils is improving. However, disadvantaged pupils are still more likely to be absent than their peers.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of activities that take place both during and after the school day. Pupils talked about the different clubs they take part in, for example football, yoga, singing, chess and gymnastics. Leaders, supported by the trust, organise exciting events linked to pupils' learning such as the forthcoming visit to Nottingham to learn about forensics. Knowledge is brought to life by trips and visits. For example, pupils talked to us about their visits to Creswell Crags and Manor House and how these trips helped them understand better what they were learning about the Stone Age and the Tudors. Younger pupils were particularly excited about 'Florence Nightingale' coming into school next week.

Leaders, including governors and the trust, show great consideration for the well-being of everyone working in the school. Staff workload is considered in every decision senior leaders make. For example, a new staff well-being committee works closely with the senior leadership team. The trust has also introduced a programme which provides free advice and support to staff on a range of issues, including mental health. Staff, including those new to the school, feel very well supported by leaders and are proud to work at this school.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The headteacher and her senior leaders make sure that there is a strong culture of keeping children safe. Pupils know how to stay safe at school and at home. They also know who to go to if they have any concerns. There is an effective system in place to record any concern, no matter how small. These concerns are followed up thoroughly by those senior leaders responsible for safeguarding. Weekly staff meetings are used to share appropriate information more widely and ensure that staff remain vigilant. Staff have had appropriate safeguarding training. The school carries out all the required recruitment and other checks to ensure that anyone working at the school, or visiting, is safe to work with children.

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

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders must continue to build on subject-specific training for all staff in foundation subjects, so that teachers are confident in leading and teaching the different national curriculum subjects. The trust has already made plans for regional subject-specific networks to come together, led by subject experts, to provide subject-specific professional development.
- Leaders have already started to strengthen the teaching of reading in key stage 2 by extending further pupils' vocabulary and improving the use of inference and comprehension skills. Leaders should build on this work so that the progress of pupils in reading continues to improve by the end of Year 6.
- Leaders must maintain their focus on improving further the attendance of disadvantaged pupils.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Birley Community Primary School, to be good on 16–17 May 2013.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	143964
<b>Local authority</b>	Sheffield
<b>Inspection number</b>	10119938
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	614
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Mark Blois
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dawn McAughey
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://birleyprimaryacademy.co.uk/">http://birleyprimaryacademy.co.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school converted to an academy and joined the L.E.A.D Academy Trust in February 2017. This is the school's first section 8 inspection. When its predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The headteacher was appointed in May 2017.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is just below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs support is also below the national average.

## Information about this inspection

- We met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, subject leaders, SEND coordinator, teachers, and members of the wider body of staff. We also met with two representatives from the trust.
- We undertook deep dives into the following subjects: reading, mathematics, science and history. This involved meetings with subject leaders; joint visits with leaders to a

sample of lessons in these subjects; joint work scrutiny, with leaders, of books and other kinds of work produced by pupils who were part of the classes observed; and discussion with teachers and groups of pupils from the lessons observed.

- We held informal and formal discussions with many pupils and observed interactions during playtime and lunchtime.
- We observed the work of the school and scrutinised a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation, action plans, attendance and behaviour records, safeguarding files, and recruitment checks. We talked to staff about their role in keeping pupils safe.
- We talked to staff about their workload, and about the amount and quality of training and support they receive from leaders.
- We took into account the 38 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. We also took into consideration the 40 staff responses and the 67 pupil responses to Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys.

### **Inspection team**

Dimitris Spiliotis, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Elaine Watson

Ofsted Inspector

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