

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Birley Primary Academy

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

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 March 2025

Outcome

Birley Primary Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

This school is part of L.E.A.D. Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Diana Owen CBE, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andrew Buck.

What is it like to attend this school?

This school embraces learning. Pupils and staff are happy, and together they create magical moments. Learning is a joint enterprise. Staff and pupils work together and trust each other. Pupils behave extremely well.

The published outcomes that pupils achieved in 2024 were disappointing and not typical for the school. The school has high ambitions for all pupils. Staff work hard to understand the needs of individual pupils. The school sweeps individual barriers to learning aside. This helps pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to access the curriculum. Pupils respond to this ambition by working hard. They produce work of high quality, which is reflective of typically stronger outcomes than those recently seen.

Pupils feel empowered to share their feelings. They listen to each other's views respectfully. Enrichment activities are carefully woven into the curriculum. Pupils enjoy taking their classroom learning into the real world through well-considered visits, including residential opportunities.

Pupils have many opportunities to develop existing talents and explore new ones. For example, they can represent the school in sports, learn new crafts or play board games. Pupils are proud of the role they play in the community. Visits to care homes, litter picking and promoting good parking habits near school give them a sense of social responsibility.

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

Reading is integral to all that happens in the school. Corridors, classrooms and outside spaces allow pupils to see reading come alive. As a result, pupils enjoy reading. Displays in school illustrate the books pupils are reading. The books they read help them understand important values. For example, one book helps pupils consider how people deal with prejudice. Pupils learn to read as soon as they start school. They quickly learn the sounds letters make. Staff provide help for those who struggle with reading quickly and effectively. This helps these pupils stay on track with their peers. Pupils become confident readers who develop a love of books and stories. Pupils, including those with SEND, enjoy books from many genres and writing styles. They look at a range of fiction and non-fiction that ties to various subjects in the curriculum.

The school adapts the delivery of the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils, including those with SEND. The school has ensured that important wider knowledge and developing a sense of community are included and celebrated in the curriculum. Staff weave these wider learning aims into the curriculum with great skill. For example, history lessons link important knowledge on protected characteristics when pupils learn about Anne Frank's diary. Staff conduct checks on pupils' learning at regular intervals. However, in some foundation subjects, these checks lack the precision required to accurately determine what pupils know.

Children in early years enjoy a mix of formal teaching and time for free choice. Children quickly learn important classroom routines. This helps children understand and meet the school's high expectations. They take turns, communicate and share well. The inside and outside resources offer children opportunities to develop their understanding of what they have learned in class. Staff engage in deep conversations with children, letting them choose for themselves while developing their language. For example, children produced and explained their own scoring structure for a beanbag throwing game.

Behaviour is well managed in class and at social times. The vast majority of pupils are polite and well behaved. They engage in constructive interactions with other pupils and staff. The resources and outdoor play areas allow pupils to play games and socialise safely. School attendance has improved over time. The school collaborates with families to ensure children attend school regularly. This helps pupils enjoy the rich opportunities that the school provides.

The school's personal development offer is very strong. Pupils have a clear understanding of different faiths and religions. The school has many activities that boost pupils' grasp of social and economic issues. One example is the school's 'Aspire Day'. On this day, pupils come to school dressed as people who work in a profession that they aspire to work in. Adults from over twenty industries visit the school. They talk to pupils about their jobs and what their industries do.

The staff and leaders are united in their efforts to make a positive difference for pupils and the community. They see the value of pupils as individuals. Staff told the inspector they feel lucky to work with Birley's pupils.

Governors have an extensive understanding of the school. They assist the school with its strategic goals and balance support and challenge. The impact of support is evident in the harmonious learning atmosphere enjoyed by staff and pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some foundation subjects, the checks on pupils learning are generic. They do not identify if pupils have learned the key knowledge defined in the curriculum or connect this learning with what pupils already know. This means gaps in pupils' knowledge can go unnoticed and therefore unaddressed. The school must ensure that staff accurately identify and address any gaps in pupils' learning across all subjects.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. The predecessor school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Birley Community Primary School, to be good for overall effectiveness in 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

Further information

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	143964
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	10346676
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	593
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andrew Buck
CEO of the trust	Diana Owen CBE
Headteacher	Dawn McAughey
Website	www.birleyprimaryacademy.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	6 and 7 November 2019, under section 8 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.
- The school uses one unregistered provider of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, senior leaders and spoke to staff.

- The inspector also met with representatives of the academy governing body and the trust's deputy CEO.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. They also spoke to some subject leaders.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and staff. He also reviewed the responses to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View.
- The inspector also considered the views of pupils from meetings with groups of pupils from across the school. He also spoke to pupils informally about the school.

Inspection team

Richard Jones, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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