

Birkenshaw Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Address: Station Lane, Birkenshaw, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD11 2JE

Unique reference number (URN): 107730

Inspection report: 14 April 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	●
Expected standard	● ● ● ● ● ●
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard 

Leaders have established very clear and effective routines and expectations across the school, including in the early years. Pupils make a calm and productive start to the school day. In lessons, pupils demonstrate highly positive learning behaviours and attitudes. In key stage 2, pupils become excellent role models for their younger peers.

Pupils are extremely polite, well mannered and welcoming to visitors. In group discussions, they show high levels of respect for one another as they openly and confidently share their views. The school provides bespoke support and adaptations for pupils who need help to manage their emotions and behaviours. The impact of this is clear as pupils develop their own strategies for regulation. Pupils say that bullying is very rare at their school. They are confident that if any issues of discrimination or unkindness arise, staff would deal with them promptly.

The school has high expectations for attendance. Pupils, with the support of their families, meet these expectations. Attendance at this school is high. Pupils do not want to miss the learning that takes place. Where attendance dips for some pupils or groups, leaders react quickly to put actions in place to address this.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

The school is ambitious for all pupils. Many pupils achieve well. By the time that they leave the school, the majority of pupils have secured the knowledge they need in reading, writing and mathematics to prepare them well for secondary school. This includes pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding.

The school understands the need for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities, to secure foundational knowledge in the core subjects. Staff effectively identify pupils with gaps in their knowledge. However, some younger pupils do not receive the support that they need to close these gaps quickly. As pupils move through the school, support is more effective. Consequently, most pupils catch up to their peers by the time they leave the school.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

There is a well-sequenced curriculum in place across subjects. Since the last inspection, leaders have clearly identified the knowledge that pupils need to learn. In the core subjects of English and mathematics, leaders make well-considered improvements to ensure that the curriculum is ambitious and supports the changing needs of the pupils in school. Staff teach these subjects well. They have secure subject knowledge, enabling pupils to make secure progress from their starting points.

Leaders recognise the strength of some subjects on offer, such as computing. In these subjects, pupils are well prepared for their next steps. In a very small number of subjects, the knowledge set out in curriculum plans does not match the learning that is taking place in the classroom. In these subjects, pupils do not have the opportunities they need to practise and apply their learning.

Staff make adaptations to learning for those pupils who need them. These adaptations are particularly effective in the core subjects, where they support pupils to secure foundational knowledge and skills. However, in some instances, staff do not check the effectiveness of adaptations, which means pupils develop gaps in their knowledge.

The school has established processes for checking pupils' understanding. Teachers generally use this information effectively to design future lesson content.

Early years

Expected standard 

Routines in the early years are well established. Relationships between staff and children, and between peers, are positive. Children come into school keen to see the adults who care for them and to spend time with their friends. Children play cooperatively, sharing resources and confidently explaining their ideas to each other.

Staff establish a love of books and stories from the very early days of children's time in the nursery. They carefully choose stories, songs and rhymes that expose children to a wide range of vocabulary. This inspires children to develop an interest in reading. Adults understand the importance of developing children's physical skills to form firm foundations for writing. Staff promote language effectively through their high-quality interactions with children.

The curriculum for children in the early years outlines some of the key knowledge that children should learn for each of the areas of learning. However, at times, the school does not fully consider children's starting points. This leads to a lack of ambition for some children. Children in the early years are excited and ready to learn. The vast majority of them are well prepared for the next stage of Year 1.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

The school has a culture of inclusion. Staff support pupils well, taking account of any barriers they may face. Pupils develop a sense of belonging. Those in receipt of pupil premium funding, as well as those known to social care, receive effective pastoral support and quality first teaching. This helps them to achieve well.

Staff identify any additional needs quickly. The school works closely with parents and carers to put the necessary support in place. Where appropriate, the school seeks support from external agencies to supplement its offers to pupils. When receipt of this support is not timely, leaders demonstrate tenacity to ensure pupils receive the support that they need.

The school's provision for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs is a strength. Staff carefully consider routines and adaptations to learning for these pupils to enable them to access the curriculum well. While staff receive training that develops their

skills in supporting pupils with other additional needs, the academic interventions for these pupils are not consistently of the same high quality. Sometimes, staff do not adjust interventions or adaptations quickly enough. This means that some pupils have persistent gaps in their knowledge.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders are knowledgeable and demonstrate high levels of professionalism. They are effective role models to all within the school community. They are outward facing and reflective in their approach to the quality of education that the school offers. The local authority uses leaders to support other schools and initiatives in the local area.

Leaders make well-considered decisions about staff deployment across school. They ensure that staff subject knowledge and expertise are used effectively to positively impact on pupils. Leaders identify and prioritise improvement work using a combination of data and their knowledge of individuals, cohorts and staff. Where there is a systematic approach to improvement, positive impact on pupils' learning is evident. For example, leaders' work on developing pupils' writing is clearly making a difference. However, this systematic approach to quality assurance is not securely embedded.

Parents and carers are extremely positive about the school and its staff. They hold leaders in very high regard. Staff report an open culture where leaders routinely consider workload and wellbeing. Staff value the training and professional development opportunities provided, particularly their work with other local partner schools.

Governors ensure they have an appropriate range of skills and experience. They review this regularly and access appropriate training, including safeguarding training. Governors align their experience and expertise to oversee specific committees and take on 'champion' roles. This forms part of their quality assurance process in holding leaders to account.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The school's offer for pastoral support is a strength. Pupils, parents and carers speak favourably about the bespoke and responsive nature of the help they receive and the positive impact that this has on their emotional wellbeing. The wellbeing offer extends to staff and governors. The school is highly committed to this area of its work.

The personal, social and health education curriculum, which includes sex and relationships education, ensures that pupils in the school develop an age-appropriate understanding of a variety of important key themes. Pupils talk confidently about how to keep themselves safe both online and in the wider community. The school enhances this part of the curriculum with visitors. For example, some pupils participate in workshops on knife crime. Assemblies reinforce key messages to ensure that pupils secure an understanding of local and wider issues. Pupils' understanding of the protected characteristics, fundamental British values and different faiths is less secure at times. However, pupils do demonstrate high levels of respect for others. They reflect on difference in a mature way as part of group discussions.

The school nurtures pupils' talents and interests through extra-curricular clubs and opportunities. Pupils talk excitedly about the wide range of clubs on offer. They highlight

their favourites such as LEGO, choir, archery and coding. Pupils can also access music tuition and participate in sporting competitions. These opportunities are available to all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and other barriers to their learning or wellbeing. Leaders oversee participation to ensure equality of opportunity.

The school develops positive links with the local community. Pupils work with the church and take part in events such as the remembrance parade. Visits to other places of worship help to extend their knowledge of diversity in the wider world.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils at Birkenshaw Primary enjoy coming to school. Leaders set high expectations for attendance and behaviour, which pupils proudly rise to meet. Pupils are kind and considerate to one another. They work hard in lessons, are keen to learn and try their best. Positive relationships between staff and pupils, as well as pupils and their peers, underpin the school vision that 'At Birkenshaw Primary School, we care'.

Pupils are proud to take on responsibilities. They are keen to demonstrate how they care for their school and for others. The 'care crew' ensures that even at playtimes, no child is on their own or without a friend. Digital leaders and school councillors make improvements to the school and carry out their roles with purpose. These opportunities allow pupils to develop the wider skills of collaboration, teamwork and respect. This helps to prepare them well for their next steps.

Pupils achieve well at this school. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), as well as those who may have other barriers to their learning. Before moving to secondary school, the majority of pupils are secure in the knowledge they need in English and mathematics.

There is an inclusive ethos at this school. Leaders and staff know pupils well. Pupils with SEND make positive progress from their starting points. The school's work on developing wider life skills ensures pupils have additional opportunities to practise basic skills and self-care through enjoyable activities. For example, pupils learn to use kitchen tools safely while preparing fruit pancakes. At other times, they learn how to keep themselves safe, practising road safety. These tasks are interwoven with further opportunities to develop their communication and social skills.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to develop their strategic oversight of support, including interventions, for pupils with barriers to their learning so that they can successfully review the impact of this work and make more timely adjustments when needed.

- Leaders should further refine quality assurance across all aspects of the school's work so that they can act rapidly to bring about any necessary improvements.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Amanda Mahoney.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMI.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher as well as the wider staff team during the inspection. The lead inspector met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She also met with representatives from the local authority and spoke with a member of the Diocese of Leeds.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character.

It is in the Diocese of Leeds.

Its last section 48 inspection was February 2020.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher: Rebecca Martin

Lead inspector:

Sarah Gordon, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Lynda Florence, Ofsted Inspector

Shameem Hussain, Ofsted Inspector

James Martin McGrath, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 14 April 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

462

Well above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

420

Above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

8.39%

Well below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

1.73%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

13.20%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Well below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	69%	61%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	77%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	67%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	65%	60%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	81%	74%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	87%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	83%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	74%	73%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	84%	72%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	85%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	83%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	82%	71%	Above

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	84%	73%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	89%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	82%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	82%	73%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	56%	46%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	64%	47%	Above
2023/24 (final)	45%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	60%	44%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	75%	62%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	73%	63%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	73%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	80%	60%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	78%	59%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	82%	59%	Above
2023/24 (final)	73%	58%	Above
2022/23 (final)	80%	58%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	72%	60%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	82%	61%	Above
2023/24 (final)	45%	59%	Below
2022/23 (final)	90%	59%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	56%	68%	-11 pp
2024/25 (revised)	64%	69%	-6 pp
2023/24 (final)	45%	67%	-22 pp
2022/23 (final)	60%	66%	-6 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	75%	80%	-5 pp
2024/25 (revised)	73%	81%	-8 pp
2023/24 (final)	73%	80%	-7 pp
2022/23 (final)	80%	78%	2 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	78%	78%	0 pp
2024/25 (revised)	82%	78%	4 pp
2023/24 (final)	73%	78%	-5 pp
2022/23 (final)	80%	77%	3 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	72%	80%	-8 pp
2024/25 (revised)	82%	81%	1 pp
2023/24 (final)	45%	79%	-34 pp
2022/23 (final)	90%	79%	11 pp

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	3.7%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.3%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	4.3%	5.9%	Below

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	7.6%	13.3%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	6.0%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	7.4%	16.2%	Below

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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