

Birley Spa Primary Academy

Address: Jermyn Crescent, Hackenthorpe, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S12 4QE

Unique reference number (URN): 143965

Inspection report: 29 September 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 ●

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders swiftly and precisely recognise pupils' additional needs. Staff use their deep understanding of pupils, combined with information from parents and carers, to identify early signs that a pupil may require support. The special educational needs coordinator collaborates closely with families and external professionals, such as speech and language therapists, to tailor effective support plans. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) benefit from these clear, regularly reviewed support plans to help ensure pupils' continuous improvement. Parents are fully involved in the review of support for their children.

Pupils with SEND are encouraged to follow the same curriculum as their peers whenever possible. Teachers implement thoughtful adaptations, consistently, such as visual prompts and practical resources, to enable pupils to access learning well. The school works effectively to ensure all pupils with SEND develop the knowledge they need without falling behind their peers.

The school's resourced provision provides specialised, integrated support for pupils with SEND. Staff combine academic learning with opportunities to develop communication, independence and life skills. As a result, pupils are prepared well for learning and for life beyond school. Pupils participate successfully in mainstream classes and activities, where this is appropriate for their needs.

Leaders make effective use of pupil premium funding to remove barriers to learning and wellbeing for disadvantaged pupils. Initiatives include ensuring disadvantaged pupils can take part in regular clubs, trips and educational visits. These opportunities enrich the educational experience of disadvantaged pupils and further enhance the school's inclusive and supportive environment.

Expected standard ●

Achievement

Expected standard ●

Pupils achieve well. Most pupils read accurately and fluently by the end of key stage 1 and, by the end of Year 6, attainment is broadly in line with national averages. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make appropriate progress from their starting points. Pupils who attend the resourced provision achieve well against the targets in their education, health and care plans. Disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as their peers, particularly in reading.

Pupils' spoken language is developing well. Many pupils explain their reasoning clearly and express their ideas in detail. However, pupils do not consistently communicate their knowledge with precision across all subjects. This means that some pupils do not demonstrate the full extent of what they know and understand. Leaders continue to strengthen opportunities for pupils to discuss and explain their learning. In foundation

subjects, pupils retain important knowledge over time. Most pupils leave the school ready for the next stage of their education.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

The majority of pupils attend school regularly. Leaders track attendance carefully and act quickly when any pupil's attendance starts to fall. Staff work closely with families to understand and remove barriers to attendance. For example, leaders offer places at breakfast club. Pupil 'attendance ambassadors' promote and celebrate positive attendance and run friendly competitions between classes. As a result, attendance continues to improve. The school provides personalised support when pupils and parents and carers need it.

Pupils behave well across the school. Classrooms are calm and orderly and pupils listen attentively to their teachers and to each other. Pupils understand the school's clear routines and rewards. Staff apply the behaviour policy consistently. Occasionally, when learning does not align well enough with their needs, a few pupils lose focus. Staff are alert to this and support pupils to re-focus. Pupils are polite and respectful. They know the difference between falling out and bullying. Pupils say that bullying and unkind language are rare. They also say, if incidents occur, staff deal with them swiftly. Staff make adjustments for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities such as providing calm spaces and visual timetables. These adjustments help pupils to manage their feelings and behaviour well.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum that sets out the important knowledge pupils should learn from the Nursery Year to Year 6. In English and mathematics leaders identify the key content carefully and order it precisely. For example, pupils build secure knowledge of place value before they move on to more complex calculations. All subject curriculums are on a continual cycle of review and refinement. Pupils enjoy learning in all subjects.

Reading is a priority for leaders and pupils. Children learn to read using phonics effectively. Staff teach phonics consistently well. Staff check how well pupils learn new sounds and give extra practice to pupils who struggle to understand some of their learning. Teachers use high-quality books to extend and enhance pupils' vocabulary.

Teachers have detailed subject knowledge. They explain new ideas well and use well-planned resources, such as pictures and practical equipment, to support pupils' learning effectively. Teachers check pupils' understanding carefully and plan opportunities for pupils to talk about their learning in a structured way. However, pupils do not consistently answer in full sentences or use subject-specific vocabulary accurately. As a result, some pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, do not communicate their understanding as clearly as they could.

Early years

Expected standard 

Children in the early years get off to a positive start. Staff identify children with special educational needs and/or disabilities early and put support in place quickly.

Staff in the Nursery and Reception classes create a warm and nurturing environment in which children feel safe and settled. Staff encourage children to explore, ask questions and investigate for themselves. For example, children use natural materials in the woodland area to build dens and hunt for minibeasts.

The curriculum sets out what children should learn in each area of learning well. Staff prioritise communication and language. They model new vocabulary and encourage children to speak in full sentences. In the nursery, staff interactions with children extend children's thinking and vocabulary effectively. Children learn phonics consistently well. Most children use their phonics knowledge to read and write simple words and sentences clearly. Children also develop early mathematical knowledge through well-planned activities, such as counting and comparing objects.

Staff work closely with parents and carers to share information about children's learning and offer ideas to support learning at home. Joint activities between the nursery and Reception classes help children to prepare for the next stage of their education. Most children are ready for Year 1 by the end of Reception.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders provide highly effective strategic school development. They share an ambitious vision that pupils will gain the knowledge and experience to choose their own paths with confidence. Leaders know the school well. They use regular checks, staff feedback and support from the trust to identify what works well and what needs to improve. For example, they rightly prioritise pupils' spoken language and the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. The school improvement plan sets out clear actions and timescales.

Subject leaders and middle leaders are enthusiastic and value the training they receive. In English and mathematics, subject leaders check the quality of teaching regularly and use what they find to make improvements. In other subject areas, leaders are at an earlier stage of developing this expertise. Leaders recognise the need to strengthen further the contribution that some middle leaders make to school improvement. They are developing leaders' knowledge and skills so that they can play a fuller role in improving outcomes across the curriculum.

Those responsible for governance understand and fulfil their statutory duties well. They visit the school regularly and ask challenging questions about pupils' achievement and attendance. They know that leaders use additional funding, such as the pupil premium, effectively.

Staff value the professional learning that leaders provide. Early career teachers receive well-structured support from experienced mentors. Leaders consider staff workload and wellbeing consistently. For example, leaders keep marking procedures simple to reduce unnecessary tasks.

Leaders work well with parents and carers. Most parents speak positively about the care that staff show their children. Leaders use community links, such as visiting speakers on 'Aspire Day', to broaden pupils' horizons.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The school's 'CREATE' values that include resilience, endeavour, and empathy are evident throughout the school. Pupils understand these values and explain how they apply them in school. For example, pupils describe how resilience helps them to keep going when work is difficult.

The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum is well planned. It includes relationships education and health education that suit pupils' ages. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including online. For example older pupils know not to share personal information online. Weekly yoga sessions and a range of sports help pupils to understand how to stay healthy.

Pupils develop their understanding of fundamental British values well. For example, they experience democracy first-hand when they vote for pupil leaders. Visits to museums and places of worship broaden pupils' understanding of different faiths and cultures effectively.

Pupils take on leadership roles with pride. The pupil leaders work with the catering team to design healthy menus. The eco council leads recycling projects across the school. 'Aspire Day' introduces pupils to careers such as nursing, firefighting and catering through talks from visitors. These experiences raise pupils' ambitions for their futures.

Leaders recognise the importance of developing pupils' spoken language and are introducing more opportunities for debate and presentation to build pupils' confidence when speaking aloud.

Staff provide pupils with pastoral support that is caring and effective. Staff notice when pupils are worried. Pupils who need extra help with their emotional wellbeing receive timely support from trained staff.

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

Being a pupil at Birley Spa means belonging to a warm and welcoming community. Pupils are proud of their school. They talk about the school's values, such as resilience and teamwork. Pupils explain how these values help them when learning is challenging. Staff know pupils well. Pupils know that there is always a trusted adult who will listen to them. As a result, pupils feel safe and happy.

Pupils enjoy their learning. From the early years, children learn to read through daily phonics and shared stories. Older pupils read with fluency and talk with enthusiasm about their favourite books. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including those who attend the school's resourced provision, receive effective support. This helps

pupils with SEND to learn alongside their friends well. Staff continue to help build pupils' confidence when speaking aloud in class and in speaking to adults.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. At play times pupils are kind and friendly with each other. Older pupils take care and support younger ones well. Bullying is rare. Pupils trust staff to sort out any of their worries quickly. Most pupils attend school regularly.

Children in the early years settle quickly. They make regular use of the many stimulating and engaging resources staff provide. Children also explore the classroom environment and outside areas with curiosity and growing independence.

Pupils relish the chance to take on school leadership responsibility. For example, attendance ambassadors and house captains contribute to school life with pride. Pupils also work alongside the local community effectively. For example, pupil 'safeguarding stewards' persuaded the local authority to improve road safety outside the school. Weekly 'lifestyle opportunity' clubs such as baking, sewing and athletics help pupils to discover new interests.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that teachers further develop pupils' use of spoken language across the curriculum so that pupils communicate confidently and are well prepared for their next steps in life.
 - Senior leaders should further develop the expertise of middle leaders so that there is a shared responsibility for school improvement, to secure consistently high-quality provision across all subjects.
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About this 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, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andrew Buck.

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

This inspection took place on Tuesday 29 and Wednesday 30 September 2026.

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

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other school leaders. They also spoke to pupils, parents and carers. They also spoke to representatives from the local governing board, trustees, trust leaders and the deputy CEO.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school uses one unregistered alternative provision.

Headteacher: Cathy Patrick

Lead inspector:

Richard Jones, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Adrian Fearn, Ofsted Inspector

Coralie Corrin, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This was the data available at the time of the full inspection, taken from [different sources](#). More recent data may have been published since the full inspection took place.

 The inspector(s) used this data during the full inspection on 29 September 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

291

Close to 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: 268

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)

50.57%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.

National average: 26.5%

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

3.78%

Close to 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: 4.1%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

36.43%

Well above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Above 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)

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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	63%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	34%	61%	Below

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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	65%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	44%	74%	Below

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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	76%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	54%	72%	Below

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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	78%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	46%	73%	Below

The Key Stage 2 data we used for this inspection has not yet been published; therefore, we have not provided it alongside this school's report card. 'R' in the table indicates that the data is not yet available. We will update the table when the Department for Education publishes the data for the latest academic year.

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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	42%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	32%	46%	Below

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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	47%	63%	Below
2023/24 (final)	45%	62%	Below

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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	58%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	45%	58%	Below

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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	58%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	42%	59%	Below

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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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	42%	69%	-27 pp
2023/24 (final)	32%	67%	-35 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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	47%	81%	-33 pp
2023/24 (final)	45%	80%	-35 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	R	R	R

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	58%	78%	-20 pp
2023/24 (final)	45%	78%	-32 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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	58%	81%	-23 pp
2023/24 (final)	42%	79%	-37 pp

The Key Stage 2 data we used for this inspection has not yet been published; therefore, we have not provided it alongside this school's report card. ‘R’ in the table indicates that the data is not yet available. We will update the table when the Department for Education publishes the data for the latest academic year.

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
2025/26 (1 term)	5.7%	5.1%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	7.0%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	7.9%	5.5%	Above

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
2025/26 (1 term)	21.5%	14.4%	Above
2024/25 (3 term)	23.3%	13.0%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	28.0%	14.6%	Above

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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