

Beech Hill Junior and Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107488
Local Authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	356163
Inspection dates	26–27 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Hemmings

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	494
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ben Lewis
Headteacher	Mr Jonathan Moss
Date of previous school inspection	23 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors who visited 24 lessons or parts of lessons. The inspectors observed 19 teachers and held discussions with members of the governing body, staff, groups of pupils, parents and carers and the School Improvement Partner. They observed the school's work and looked at school policies, records of meetings of the governing body, assessment information and curriculum planning. In addition, 99 responses to parents' and carers' questionnaires were received and analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. Inspectors looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effectively the school is working to raise attainment, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Whether pupils make sufficient progress in Key Stage 1.
- The extent to which pupils' active involvement in learning has been increased.
- How well the remodelled curriculum meets the needs of all pupils.

Information about the school

Beech Hill is much larger than the average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. Most pupils are from minority ethnic heritages and the majority are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. The proportion of pupils who start or leave school other than at the normal time of the year is well above average. A high proportion of pupils are potentially vulnerable because of their circumstances. The school has gained the Activemark and the Investors in Families award and also has Healthy School status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Beech Hill is a good school. It has many strengths and some outstanding features. These include the care, guidance and support of pupils, engagement with parents and carers and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The headteacher's inspirational leadership and the strong teamwork of senior leaders have been central to the good improvement since the last inspection. Standards have risen at Key Stage 2, pupils' progress has accelerated, and the quality of teaching and learning and leadership and management are now good. Accurate self-evaluation ensures leaders have a comprehensive view of the school's strengths and what needs to be done to improve further. This includes extending pupils' thinking skills by providing them with more opportunities to explore ideas for themselves and sufficient time for them to consider how they could improve. The governing body is supportive of staff and pupils but not fully involved in evaluating the school's performance and in encouraging its further development. Leaders promote equality of opportunity and community cohesion in an outstanding way. The track record of leaders in making and sustaining improvements shows that the capacity for taking the school forward is good.

Pupils make good progress throughout the school. As a result, standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 are broadly average. Leaders have worked successfully to improve pupils' reading skills and their ability to form correctly structured sentences. In mathematics, pupils' calculation skills have been developed well and these are secure. Leaders have rightly identified the need to improve pupils' skills in writing creatively across the curriculum and in applying their calculation skills to solve real-life number problems.

Pupils behave well and enjoy coming to school, as is shown by their improving attendance. The extent to which they feel safe and their adoption of a healthy lifestyle are outstanding. Improvements in teaching since the last inspection mean that pupils have increased opportunities to be actively involved in their learning. This is evident in the many occasions when they can participate in group and paired discussions and present their ideas and findings to the rest of the class. The curriculum has been remodelled since the last inspection so that it is more relevant to the needs and aspirations of pupils. A wide variety of high quality enrichment activities effectively extends the curriculum and provides memorable experiences for all pupils. The care and well-being of pupils is at the heart of the school's work and very effectively fosters the development and learning of those pupils who are potentially vulnerable. Parents and carers greatly appreciate the care taken of their children.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment, particularly in English and mathematics, by:

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- providing more opportunities for pupils to write creatively across the curriculum
 - improving pupils' mathematical problem solving skills
 - extending pupils' thinking skills by giving them more opportunities to explore ideas for themselves and time to reflect upon their learning.
- Improve the skills of the governing body in evaluating the performance of the school and in promoting its further improvement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils' achievement is good. They make good progress from their low skill levels on entering school. Their good behaviour and enthusiasm for learning contributes positively to the good progress they make. They take pleasure in their activities and are keen to do well. Pupils have secure reading skills. They enjoy writing stories and writing to express their ideas, but lack creativity in doing so. Pupils are competent in carrying out mathematical calculations, but are not as proficient in their problem solving activities. They confidently use information and communication technology to support their learning. This was evident when pupils in Year 5 were using computers to develop a multi-media presentation of the first moon landing. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English, make the same good progress as other pupils because of the well-targeted support they receive.

Pupils contribute positively to the life of the school by taking on responsibilities, including being a school councillor, prefect or classroom monitor. In the wider locality, pupils support community appeals, such as the Islamic Awareness charity, through fairs and sponsored events. Pupils have a comprehensive understanding of the beliefs and traditions of cultures different to their own. Pupils talk knowledgeably about the need for regular exercise and a balanced diet. One said, 'School lunches are really good, there are lots of vegetables to choose from.' Pupils clearly know how to look after themselves and say that they feel safe in the school all the time. They show a sense of fascination when exploring ideas. This was evident in Year 6 when pupils were using role play to express their emotions about book burning during the Second World War. Pupils' improving attendance, rising attainment and good collaboration skills show they are well prepared for their future lives.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and plan activities carefully to ensure they effectively challenge different ability groups. The pace of lessons is good so that little time is lost, which shows improvement since the last inspection. Teachers manage classrooms well so they are calm and friendly places in which to learn. However, they do not place sufficient emphasis on pupils exploring ideas for themselves or on them reflecting upon their learning to analyse how they could improve. Teaching assistants are generally deployed well to support pupils' learning. Of particular note is the way staff work diligently to ensure that the high numbers of pupils who join classes during the year are supported well, to ensure their progress is the same as other pupils.

Pupils' learning is extended by an outstanding range of extra-curricular activities. They also have opportunity to take part in many educational visits, including Eden Camp in North Yorkshire as part of their studies into the Second World War. Pupils' cultural development is very effectively enhanced by the opportunities for them to work with pupils from schools with ethnic and social backgrounds different from their own. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their creative writing skills across the curriculum. Partnership with others, including local high schools, effectively extend their skills, such as in music and sport. The gaining of Activemark and Healthy School status shows the commitment to encouraging healthy lifestyles.

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The school is an exceptionally welcoming, safe and caring setting in which to learn. Staff are clear of the steps to take if they have any concerns about the well-being of a pupil. Excellently targeted support for all pupils enables them to make the best of opportunities provided for them. Transition arrangements are comprehensive and highly effective throughout the school, which is important when taking into account the high mobility rate of pupils. Links with outside agencies are exemplary and very effectively promote the learning and well-being of pupils facing challenging circumstances. Leaders have worked successfully to raise attendance and it continues to improve.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders successfully inspire those involved in school life to share a common sense of purpose in meeting ambitious targets for all pupils. As a result, morale is high among all staff. The promotion of equality of opportunity is central to the school's work and a major strength. Consequently, all pupils do well and any unevenness between different groups is minimal. There is a thorough awareness of safeguarding issues among all governors and staff. Training for safeguarding is regular and of high quality, particularly in child protection. The governing body is supportive of the school but not fully involved in evaluating its performance and influencing its development.

Partnership activity effectively develops learning opportunities that the school could not provide on its own, such as in sport and music. Leaders promote community cohesion in an outstanding manner. Their actions have a very beneficial impact on cohesion within the school, the local community and beyond. Excellent engagement with parents and carers ensure they are strongly involved in their children's learning and the work of the school. This has been recognised by the school gaining the Investors in Families award.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress and achieve well across the areas of learning. There is a good balance between activities directed by adults and those initiated by children. This makes a positive contribution to their development as independent learners. Relationships are good and children learn within a very friendly and welcoming setting. Adults work well together to plan activities that are practical and often linked to children's personal experiences. As a result, children are interested and engaged in all that they do. They work and play well together in pairs and small groups, taking turns and sharing equipment fairly.

The curriculum is enhanced by opportunities for children to work with a variety of visitors, such as the school nurse, and to go on visits including to the local Madni Mosque. Adults give the highest priority to safeguarding all children. Good leadership and management since the last inspection have improved the assessment procedures to ensure an accurate picture of children's progress and attainment. Despite this success, the leader is not complacent and has rightly identified the need to refine procedures further to highlight the specific next steps in promoting children's learning. Induction procedures are good and help children to settle quickly into everyday routines when they start school. Parents and carers are kept very well informed about their children's progress.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

A below average proportion of parents and carers completed questionnaires. The very large majority of the 99 questionnaires returned were positive about the school's work and the efforts of all staff. One comment is typical: 'The school is a warm and welcoming environment for children and parents.' A very small minority of parents and carers did not agree that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour. A few did not agree that the school took account of their suggestions and concerns. There was no unacceptable behaviour observed during the inspection and pupils say it is dealt with promptly if it occurs. Inspection evidence shows that the school takes excellent account of the suggestions and concerns of parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Beech Hill Junior and Infant School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 99 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 494 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	70	71	28	28	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	61	62	37	37	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	50	51	45	45	4	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	41	41	51	52	5	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	51	52	46	46	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	41	41	55	56	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	48	48	50	51	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	43	43	51	52	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	36	36	60	61	1	1	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	37	37	50	51	8	8	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	40	40	51	52	7	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	48	48	50	51	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	49	49	47	47	1	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



28 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Beech Hill Junior and Infant School, Halifax, HX1 5TN

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave us when we inspected your school. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing the many interesting things you do.

The inspectors judge that your school is good and has some outstanding features, and that:

- you make good progress and your attainment is improving
- staff look after you very well and make sure you are safe
- the way you are adopting a healthy lifestyle is outstanding
- you enjoy school and adults are interested in your views, as you indicated in your questionnaires
- the curriculum is enriched by an outstanding range of extra-curricular activities and educational visits, such as to Eden Camp in North Yorkshire
- the headteacher, staff and governors are working hard to help you do better.

These are what we have asked your school to do now.

- Improve your creative writing and mathematical problem solving skills.
- Extend your thinking skills by giving you more opportunities to explore ideas for yourselves and to consider how you could improve.
- Develop the skills of governors in helping the school to improve.

All of you are a credit to your school and can help it improve further by continuing to try your best in your activities.

Yours sincerely

Melvyn Hemmings

Lead inspector

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