

Beechwood Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109936
Local Authority	Wokingham
Inspection number	356655
Inspection dates	16–17 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Eileen Chadwick

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	275
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rod Hawkins
Headteacher	Gordon Davies
Date of previous school inspection	11 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Sixteen lessons were visited and 11 teachers were observed. Inspectors also held meetings with pupils, staff with key responsibilities, representatives of the governing body and representatives from the local authority. In addition to observing the school's work and evaluating documentation such as policies, the school improvement plan, pupils' work and records of their learning and progress, inspectors analysed 92 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, 15 from members of staff and 99 completed by pupils.

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

- How well children in the Early Years Foundation Stage progress and the evenness of their attainment on entry to Year 1.
- Pupils' attainment in Year 6 and whether this is continuing to improve for those in the present Year 6. ♦
- The consistency of teaching and learning across the school to enable all pupils to make good progress, particularly the lower and higher attainers. ♦
- The effectiveness of systems for managing the school now that it has grown in size.
- How effectively leaders at all levels evaluate the quality of the school's work and use this information to plan for future improvements.

Information about the school

This above average size primary school serves the immediate residential area in which it is based as well as the surrounding area. Most pupils are of White British background, although the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average. These pupils are from a range of ethnic heritages, although very few are at early stages of learning English as an additional language. ♦ A below average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average, including those with a statement of educational needs. Their range of difficulties includes literacy, numeracy, behavioural and emotional problems. The Early Years Foundation Stage children are taught in the two Reception classes.

The school has expanded by one third since it was last inspected and the proportion of pupils entering the school other than in the Early Years Foundation Stage is above average, particularly in Key Stage 2. The school has gained a Healthy School award. It runs a daily breakfast club. A Children's Centre and pre-school provision are situated on the same site but these are separately managed and were not included in this inspection.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Beechwood Primary School provides a satisfactory quality of education. The strong ethos of care and consideration for others leads to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and good behaviour. Pupils are kept, and feel, very safe and they contribute well to the community in which the school plays an important part. Strong provision in sport helps to promote pupils' good knowledge of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Excellent-extra curricular activities enrich learning opportunities and pupils' personal development. Pupils really enjoy school and this is shown by their good attendance.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and, at the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in English and mathematics is average, with a picture of improvement for the current Year 6. Progress is satisfactory overall. Pupils make good progress in Years 2, 5 and 6 and satisfactory progress in other years. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make a satisfactory start. Their attainment on entry to Year 1 is improving but there is more to do to improve the consistency of their learning and to lift their phonics, writing and calculation skills to match other areas of learning. ♦Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils from different minority ethnic groups make progress in line with their peers.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory but variable. Although about half of the teaching is good, a few lessons are inadequate. Teachers have excellent relationships with their pupils and manage their behaviour well. However, at times teachers make insufficient use of assessment information in their planning and then the challenge for higher attainers slows or work is too hard for lower attainers. ♦Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are given opportunities to make choices and learn independently but the activities provided, indoors and outside, are not always challenging and this limits their progress. Good partnerships with parents support pupils' learning well and these include systematic programmes for parents to help in school and at home with reading. ♦♦

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Good pastoral leadership by the headteacher, well supported by senior leaders, has sustained a calm and purposeful ethos during the period of expansion. Pupils' progress is tracked and assessment systems enable leaders and staff to pinpoint how well different groups are achieving. However, arrangements for senior staff to evaluate the impact of initiatives are not robust. The school improvement plan does not show enough details about how the school will evaluate the impact of its work on raising attainment. ♦Teaching is checked by senior leaders and middle leaders but this is patchy across the school for English and mathematics. Leaders do not always have enough time to perform their roles. This leads to some variation in the

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quality of teaching and learning. The school's recognition of where action is needed to raise achievement, recent improvements in writing and signs of rising attainment for Year 6 pupils show the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve. Governors are keen, supportive and well organised. There have been significant changes to the governing body, and governors acknowledge that some have not yet had enough training in matters of attainment, which limits their ability to challenge the school's performance. ♦

About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, improve children's attainment in phonics, writing and calculation and provide them with consistently good quality ♦ opportunities when learning independently, including through enriched outdoor play, by July 211. ♦
- Ensure that pupils make consistently good progress by:
 - eliminating the few instances of ♦ inadequate teaching by June 211
 - increasing the proportion of teaching which is good or better by December 211
 - developing teachers' skills in using assessment to plan activities for all abilities so they build on what pupils already know, by September 211
- Ensure that all those with leadership responsibilities focus rigorously on improving the academic outcomes for pupils by :
 - providing training for governors in attainment and achievement.
 - rigorously monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy and increasing leaders' time for checking teaching in these areas
 - ensuring the school improvement plan shows clear monitoring and evaluation criteria, including attainment targets for different years

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils really enjoy school and this, combined with excellent relationships, provides a very positive framework for learning. The quality of learning observed in lessons during the inspection, gleaned from tracking data and pupils' work, was satisfactory overall. Programmes for improving the pace of children's learning in Reception in phonics (sounds and letters), writing and calculation are beginning to impact but a minority still enter Key Stage 1 with weaker skills than they should.

Working in ability sets for mathematics in Years 5 and 6 enables those who need extra challenge to work at higher levels, and those who struggle to be taught with smaller learning steps. In a good mathematics lesson for a higher Year 5 and 6 set, pupils made good progress in identifying and estimating angles and using protractors. Their high levels of accuracy showed that pupils had learned well by watching demonstrations as well as by exploring ideas in small teams. However, there is not enough of this good learning across the school, which limits the consistency of pupils' progress. Observations during the

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inspection showed that extra help accelerates the progress of lower attaining pupils, including those with special education needs and/or disabilities but, as the level of the work is not consistently matched to their needs in lessons in literacy and numeracy, progress sometimes slows. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties are helped well and incidents of poor behaviour are rare. Later entrants are helped to quickly adjust to the school and their progress and learning are similar to their peers'.

Pupils' strong sense of responsibility and maturity underpin their good behaviour and is evident in how well they cooperate and share ideas in lessons. By Year 6, they are keen ambassadors for the school. Throughout the school, they make a good contribution to its work and to their community, for example, through the school council, as play leaders, by fundraising and doing charity work. The strong community ethos enables pupils of all backgrounds to get on well together. Along with demonstrating their responsibility within school, of special note is pupils' respect for each other's backgrounds and other people's religions. Their understanding of the importance of keeping fit and eating healthily is reflected in their enthusiasm for sport and in the school's national award. Pupils develop their economic awareness through enterprise activities, for example when organising and managing stalls for the school fete and in managing budgets. The extent to which pupils apply their basic skills and their good attendance prepares them soundly for the future.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

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How effective is the provision?

Lessons are usually enjoyable and pupils experience an appropriate mix of listening to the teacher, responding to questions, sharing ideas and working independently. Lesson introductions are enlivened through the use of interactive whiteboards. This, along with teachers' effective strategies for managing pupils' behaviour, means that pupils are attentive and interested. Day-to-day assessment is effective in the majority of lessons. However, opportunities for well-focused learning are sometimes missed during lesson introductions because pupils' different starting points are not taken sufficiently into account, especially for lower attaining and higher attaining pupils. In the few inadequate lessons, tasks are insufficiently stimulating and independent learning activities are not managed well enough in Reception. ♦

The curriculum is broad and has been restructured so that subjects are linked and practical subjects such as art and design or design and technology are often used to bring learning alive. However, opportunities for pupils to develop their basic skills are no better than satisfactory across the school. Increasingly, pupils are given opportunities for applying their literacy and numeracy skills to the broader curriculum, for example when Year 4 pupils designed and made purses from textiles. The school extends the provision for physical activities through sports partnerships.

Good induction arrangements when pupils join help them to quickly settle, including later entrants to the school. The school works effectively to support and include pupils whose circumstances make learning difficult. It also draws upon its satisfactory links with outside specialists to help these pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, for example those with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Rigorous procedures have led to an improvement in attendance rates although a few pupils are still late for school. The provision in the breakfast club is good. It provides an interesting and well-organised range of activities and settles pupils well for the day ahead.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

School leaders, staff and governors share a desire to raise pupils' attainment. The headteacher is well supported by other senior leaders, who play an active part in the leadership and management of the school. The school has developed appropriate leadership structures which include dispersed responsibilities for subjects, phases and key aspects across the staff. Professional development, including coaching, has ensured new staff have settled in well. However, systems for leaders to check the impact of initiatives

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on raising attainment are not robust. For example, initiatives such as guided reading and phonics have not been thoroughly evaluated by observations of teaching across the whole school, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils' individual attainment targets are satisfactory but the school improvement plan does not show enough attainment targets for higher attaining pupils. This hampers school leaders, staff and governors in their evaluations of the impact of their work.

The recently appointed Chair of the Governing Body and vice-chair are keen to ensure governors support and challenge in equal measure and they recognise the need to step up their analysis of data in order to provide more challenge. Parents and carers are well informed about their children's achievement and well-being and how they can help their children at home.

Safeguarding arrangements are good. These are prioritised and firmly established in policies, working practices and the ethos of the school. There are well-managed systems for child protection, health and safety across the school. This is affirmed by the high degree of endorsement from parents in the questionnaires returned and pupils' unequivocal view that they feel safe. There was no evidence of discrimination at the time of the inspection and the similar rates of progress of different groups of pupils as they move up through the school mean that equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Community cohesion is good. The school successfully reaches out to the local and wider different national communities and encourages pupils to understand and value people's differences, beliefs and lifestyles. The school is in the process of extending links with different communities in the world. ♦♦♦♦

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

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Early Years Foundation Stage

Until this year, children entered Reception on a termly basis according to their birthday but this was reduced to two entry points. Children settle quickly because of the warm welcome from staff. Their attainment on entry is broadly at the level expected. The quality of provision is satisfactory, ensuring the children make satisfactory progress. By the end of Reception, attainment is average with most children reaching at least the expected levels for their age in most areas. ♦ However, the proportions reaching average levels in sounds and letters, writing and calculation are a little lower than found in most schools. The school has started to address these weaknesses, for example by the daily teaching of phonics. There are increased opportunities for children to learn through play both indoors and out. Some activities are purposeful, for example the 'Vets' provides sound opportunities for role play and developing children's knowledge and understanding of the world. However, learning through play activities is not always challenging, especially for children to learn and apply their literacy and numeracy skills. The school is already working to give children a balance between more focused adult-led tasks and learning through play. Adults do not always intervene well enough to extend children's thinking when children are engaged in independent learning.

The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory. Thorough assessment is made of children's skills on entry and their subsequent progress. However, assessment is not consistently used to plan activities that match children's learning needs. Resources are satisfactory overall although there are not enough for numeracy when children undertake independent activities indoors or outside.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

A large majority of parents and carers are pleased with their children's experiences at the school. They feel their children are kept very safe and their children really enjoy school. Additional comments included appreciation of the hard work of the staff team and the exceptional range of after-school clubs, including sport. Some parents of pupils who were later entrants wrote to say how pleased they were with the way in which their children had settled. A few parents felt pupils did not always behave as well as they should. Inspectors agree with parents' and carers' positive comments. They also find that pupils' behaviour is good around the school, in the playground and in lessons. A few parents and carers expressed concern that the Parent and Teacher Association (PTA) was being dissolved; their views were not always taken into account about how the funds raised by

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the PTA should be spent. School leaders and governors confirmed the PTA is continuing. Inspectors found decisions on spending the funds raised by the PTA involved both the school and parents. ♦

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Beechwood Primary 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 92 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 275 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	57	62	32	35	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	59	64	33	36	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	50	54	40	43	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	43	47	44	48	2	2	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	47	51	43	47	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	43	47	45	49	2	2	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	51	55	40	43	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)	34	37	47	51	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	42	46	43	47	3	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	40	43	44	48	6	7	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	37	49	53	7	8	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	53	58	33	36	4	4	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	59	64	31	34	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.



18 March 211



Dear Pupils



Inspection of Beechwood Primary School, Reading RG5 466



Thank you very much for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed talking with you and your teachers. This letter is to tell you what we found out about your school.



The school provides you with a satisfactory education and here are some of the things your school does well:

- You really enjoy school and this shows in your good attendance.
- You help to make your school a special place because you are very helpful and get on very well with each other.
- Your spiritual, moral and social education is good and you behave well.
- You understand how important it is to keep fit and healthy and really enjoy sport.
- You have some excellent opportunities for clubs, including sport.
- Senior staff, teachers and governors are working hard to make your school better and think carefully about what is best for you.



This is what we are asking your school to do to improve.

- In Reception, make sure more of you reach the skills that are expected of you and give you more interesting learning opportunities when you choose what to do.
- Make all lessons as good as the best ones so that the work is just at the right level and never too easy or too hard for you.
- Ensure school leaders, teachers in charge of subjects and governors keep a closer check on how well you are doing.



We hope you will continue to enjoy school and you can help by working hard in all you do. ◆◆◆



Yours sincerely



Eileen Chadwick

Lead inspector

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