

Beech Hill Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106399
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	377395
Inspection dates	29–30 May 2012
Lead inspector	Keith Bardon

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	238
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	James Waterworth
Headteacher	Janet Seddon
Date of previous school inspection	17 March 2010
School address	Netherby Road Beech Hill Wigan WN6 7PT
Telephone number	01942 243582
Fax number	01942 824623
Email address	enquiries@admin.beechill.wigan.sch.uk



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



Introduction

Inspection team

Keith Bardon
Christine Addison

Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors visited 14 lessons, observed seven teachers, held meetings with staff, members of the governing body, and pupils, and talked informally with parents and carers. Inspectors observed the school's work, heard pupils read, and looked at a range of evidence, including policies, the school improvement plan, pupils' work, and the school's records indicating pupils' progress and attainment. Also, they analysed 35 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and others completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

Beech Hill is an average-sized primary school, which moved into newly built accommodation a little over a year ago. A very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Although the number of pupils of minority ethnic heritage is relatively small, they speak 15 different home languages and often arrive in school speaking little or no English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average. The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. Breakfast and after-school clubs are available to pupils each school day. The school shares its site with a children's centre, which is managed jointly by the school and another primary school and is the subject of a separate 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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- Beech Hill is a good school which has made substantial improvement since it was last inspected. The move to new premises has been completed with minimal disruption to pupils' learning and their progress has continued to accelerate. The school is not yet outstanding because not enough teaching is of outstanding quality and attainment at the end of Year 6 is average and not higher.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve well. From starting points that are generally below age-related expectations on entry to school, pupils make good and rapid progress in acquiring knowledge, understanding and skills. By the end of Year 6, attainment in reading, writing, mathematics, and information and communication technology (ICT) is average.
- Teaching is good. Lessons are planned well and with careful consideration to pupils' differing needs. Pupils benefit from a broad and creative curriculum. The curriculum has undergone extensive and very successful trials, but development is not yet complete. In the highest-quality lessons, sharply focused tasks in which subjects are combined meaningfully generate much enjoyment and result in rapid learning.
- Most pupils behave well, apply themselves diligently in lessons and follow instructions carefully. Pupils confirm that they feel safe and secure in school and trust the staff to address any concerns they may have. They work and play happily together, show respect for adults and each other and readily help around school.
- The school is led and managed well. Rigorous self-evaluation and sharply focused plans for improvement ensure the school is continually developing. Since the previous inspection, incisive development of the leadership structure has strengthened school management, improved the management of performance and increased staff awareness of how their work is impacting on pupils' achievement and learning. The newly formed governing body has started to ask searching questions of the school, but has yet to establish procedures for gathering its own information about how well the school is performing.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards of attainment and increase the amount of teaching that is consistently outstanding by:
 - building on and extending the creative curriculum
 - ensuring that pupils have sufficient opportunity to discuss among themselves the work they are doing and what they are learning
 - giving pupils the opportunity and encouragement to answer questions fully and in detail
 - helping pupils to develop additional skills, such as the ability to consider what it would be useful to learn next
 - increasing the capacity of the governing body to collect its own information about how well the school is performing and use it to help the school to continue to improve.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

All groups of pupils make good progress and achieve well in lessons. Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are generally below the levels typical for their age, especially in their communication and language skills and in their personal and social development. Staff provide a stimulating learning environment that is matched appropriately to children's needs. As a result, children make good progress during their time in Early Years Foundation Stage.

Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 has risen steadily since the previous inspection and is now in line with national averages. Many Year 6 pupils were low attaining at the end of Key Stage 1 and have, therefore, made substantial progress while in Key Stage 2. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is beginning to rise above average and the trend is sharply upwards. Pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals have not in the past achieved as well as other pupils. The school is successfully targeting those pupils for additional help and the attainment gap between the two groups is closing rapidly.

Attainment in reading at the end of Year 2 is broadly average. In lessons, pupils have a good understanding of what they have read and higher-attaining pupils can predict where they think the story is going. Pupils of different abilities show a good knowledge of sounds and letters and attempt new words with determination. By the end of Year 6, most pupils read confidently and meet or exceed expectations for their age. Pupils of all ages apply their reading skills well. In a Year 4 class, pupils read written questions with complete understanding and were able to carry out the work set with a minimum of additional help from the teacher. Writing is a current focus for school development and standards are rising as a result. The proportion of Year 6 pupils writing at an above-average level has increased and the gap between the highest and lowest attainers has narrowed. Pupils write imaginative stories making good use of vocabulary, grammar, and punctuation to interest the reader. By the end of Year 6, attainment in mathematics is broadly average.

Careful monitoring and well-planned support ensure that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. The needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language are met well and the pupils are included fully in lessons. As a result, the pupils make good progress in their acquisition of English. Although, historically, girls have generally attained higher than boys, stimulating teaching has increased boys' desire to learn and the gap is closing quickly.

Quality of teaching

The curriculum is taught with flair and enthusiasm, with teachers linking subjects together thoughtfully to give context and focus to pupils' learning. In a very effective lesson in Year 1, for example, in which the teacher used music as a stimulus for writing, her infectious enthusiasm and very well-organised series of linked activities generated high-quality work from all pupils. Lessons move along at a good pace and pupils are quick to confirm how much fun they get from them. Teachers are constantly looking for new and innovative ways of stimulating pupils' learning. However, some opportunities to extend pupils' skills as learners, such as the ability to consider and decide what it would be useful to learn next, are not utilised well enough.

Teachers make good use of assessment to set challenging work for pupils of differing abilities and to ensure that the needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are met. As a result, classrooms are busy places, with all pupils on-task and working hard towards the clear targets the teachers have shared with them. Teachers introduce new work carefully and ask well-judged questions that require pupils to think hard and make good use of what they know and can do. At times, teachers step in a little too quickly with the next question and opportunities for pupils to extend an answer or to discuss what they are learning among themselves are not exploited fully to extend learning.

Teachers make excellent use of ICT to enhance and add variety to pupils' learning. Programs are chosen very carefully and link precisely to the other activities taking place in the classroom. Pupils are encouraged to continue their learning out of school. Pupils in Year 2, for example, take considerable pride in the 'Learning Logs' of work they have completed at home, many of which show considerable effort and good progress. Teachers' marking is of a good quality and provides clear guidance for pupils. Teaching assistants understand their roles and responsibilities very well and work in close partnership with class teachers to make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils who need additional help benefit considerably from their skilled support.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' attitudes to school are good. They listen attentively to the teachers, follow instructions carefully and try hard with the work they are set. Pupils take pride in their own achievements and those of others, celebrating a good answer to a question with considerable gusto and genuine pleasure. Although the number of inspection questionnaires returned by parents and carers was low, the overwhelming majority of them show that parents and carers believe firmly that their children are safe in school, a view endorsed by the pupils. 'This school really cares' is typical of the comments parents and carers expressed to inspectors. Bullying is rare and pupils have confidence in the school to deal with any that does occur quickly and effectively. Pupils talk maturely about any incidents of bullying, such as name-calling and cyber-bullying. A small minority of pupils find self-discipline difficult, but their behaviour is managed very well by staff and the school is calm and orderly.

Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and a very close watch is kept over any pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Most pupils attend school regularly and attendance is improving steadily.

Most pupils make good progress in their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development and mature into sensible young people who value the good-quality education the school provides for them. They acquire a strong sense of self-worth, appreciate their friends and show a willingness to help others. Pupils who need additional help with their personal development receive sensitive support in the 'nurture room', which does much for their social and moral development. The well-planned breakfast and after-school clubs provide the pupils who attend with an enjoyable and well-supervised start to the school day.

Leadership and management

The headteacher, supported ably by the deputy headteacher and other leaders and managers, leads the school with vision and determination. Together, they generate a strong sense of purpose and, throughout the school, staff work closely as a team. The management of performance is good. Leaders and managers focus sharply on the raising of standards and monitor pupils' progress rigorously to ensure all have equal opportunities to learn. As a result, gaps in attainment between different groups of pupils are closing quickly. Detailed and frequent evaluations of the school's performance enable leaders and managers to respond quickly and incisively to any change of circumstances and there is clear evidence of the school's capacity to improve.

Management responsibilities are distributed equitably and with careful consideration to the needs of the school. The introduction of the phase leaders, for example, has helped improve the quality of teaching by increasing the support available to class teachers and providing more regular evaluation of pupils' learning. However, this constructive development has yet to have full effect on pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2. Staff are given regular opportunities to undertake professional development training and senior staff utilise the expertise of individuals strategically to improve the skills of others. Working closely with the children's centre, the school is steadily increasing parents' and carers' engagement with school and further, well-judged initiatives are planned for the future.

The curriculum is good and promotes pupils' academic and personal development well. Following a trial period in which different approaches were evaluated carefully, a well-considered whole-school plan has been constructed and a more creative curriculum introduced, but development is not yet complete. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is good and pupils' personal development is promoted continually through the taught curriculum and beyond. A Language of the Month celebrates the range of languages spoken by pupils and does much for their appreciation of different cultures. Staff pay close attention to the needs of the individual and the school does not tolerate any form of discrimination. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements. Staff training in safeguarding is up to date, policies are reviewed systematically and regular checks are made of the building and site. The governing body supports the school well, but recognises that it needs to be more active in monitoring and evaluating the performance of the school.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



31 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Beech Hill Community Primary School, Wigan, WN6 7PT

Thank you very much for the very friendly greeting you gave the inspectors when we visited your school recently. We, thoroughly, enjoyed finding out about the work you do. Special thanks go to those who talked with us about the school and those in Years 1, 2 and 6 who read to us. Yours is a good school and we understand fully why you enjoy it so much. Your behaviour is good and we were pleased to see you working hard in all the lessons we visited. It was nice to hear that you feel well cared for by staff and we know they will be pleased.

The progress you make is good because you are taught well and given interesting things to do. You told us you find lessons fun and that you learn a lot from them and we could see this was true.

By the end of Year 6, most of you are producing work at the level expected for your age. To help you achieve even more we have asked staff to:

- make the quality of lessons as high as possible
- encourage you to think about where your learning is taking you and what you would like to learn next
- give you a little more time to discuss among yourselves the work you are doing and what you are learning
- encourage you to give even better answers to the questions they ask
- continue to add interesting activities to the work they plan for you to do.

We are confident that you will play your part by continuing to do your best in all lessons and joining in with whatever your teachers ask you to do. The school has made good improvement since the last time it was inspected and we have made additional suggestions to help staff and governing body to help this to continue. Thank you once again for a very enjoyable two days and best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Keith Bardon
Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 4234**, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.