

Beechwood Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	134701
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	395350
Inspection dates	21–22 June 2012
Lead inspector	Marion Wallace

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	792
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Laverne Bennett
Headteacher	Bridget Ann Housden
Date of previous school inspection	12 November 2008
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Marion Wallace Additional Inspector

Sara Wakefield Additional Inspector

Isobel Randall Additional Inspector

Nicholas Rudman Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 27 teachers in 30 lessons and held meetings with parents and carers, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. They took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at improvement plans for the school and for subjects, the governing body minutes, assessment information and curriculum planning. In addition, they carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work, listened to readers and analysed questionnaires from pupils and 220 questionnaires received from parents and carers.

Information about the school

Beechwood is much larger than the average primary school. Most pupils are Asian or British Asian. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average and there are 19 pupils in the early stages of learning English. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well-above average; the proportion of pupils supported at school action plus is above average and the proportion with a statement is average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average.

Mobility has been extremely high, especially in the last two years, and the number of pupils on roll has increased significantly. Over the last two years many pupils from outside the catchment area have also been placed temporarily in the school to help with the rising numbers of primary school pupils in the Luton area.

The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. There is a children's centre and private nursery on the site. These are not managed by the school's governing body and were not part of this inspection. The school has had extensive building works in the last two years.

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

- This is a good school. The rates of pupils' progress has been good over time, apart from a dip in 2011 when the school experienced significant expansion together with extensive building works. Senior leaders manage this very large site well. The school is not yet outstanding because writing is not as strong as reading and mathematics and, although teaching is good overall, it is not consistently good in all classes.
- Achievement for all groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, is good. Children make a good start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage and progress through Key Stage 1 and to Key Stage 2 is good. Attainment is broadly average in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching is good, but there is also some outstanding and satisfactory teaching. The school monitors and supports teachers well. In the few satisfactory lessons, teachers sometimes miss opportunities to challenge pupils in their grammar and punctuation. Marking is consistent throughout the school and pupils know what they have to do to improve their work and to reach the next level. Excellent teaching was seen in music.
- Behaviour around the school and in lessons is good. Pupils make good gains in their personal development and consequently feel very safe in school. They demonstrate good attitudes to learning; they are polite and consider the needs of others. The vast majority of parents and carers report that behaviour is good.
- The management team, supported by an active governing body provides strong leadership and a clear vision for developing the school further. Performance management is rigorous.

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

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the standard of writing to the same level as mathematics and reading by ensuring that:
 - key skills, especially grammar, punctuation and spelling, are taught consistently well
 - pupils are able to write in a lively and imaginative way and still maintain good standards of grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Ensure that teaching is consistently good or better in all year groups by insisting on consistently high expectations, especially in pupils' writing.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Inspectors agree with most parents and carers that achievement is good. Most children join the Nursery class with basic skills well below the expected level for their age. Despite considerable mobility in the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good progress in all areas of learning in both the Nursery and Reception classes. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2, but attainment is still below average by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. The good progress continues through Key Stage 2 and pupils reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6, although attainment in writing is not quite as good as in reading and mathematics.

Writing skills are being suitably developed in other subjects, for example, Year 6 pupils wrote about Greek mythology. They made excellent progress hunting out interesting vocabulary for their descriptive phrases. Pupils used dictionaries and thesauruses to help them use lively description such as 'encrusted with grime' and 'trees shaped like bony fingers'. A weakness in writing occurs when pupils use lively writing but cannot always combine it with accurate punctuation, grammar and spellings.

Pupils enjoy learning because teachers plan interesting tasks. They gain confidence as they progress through the school. Progress in mathematics has accelerated significantly this year. In an excellent Year 6 mathematics lesson, more-able pupils relished the challenge of calculating the seating plan for a year group assembly. Pupils used their mathematics knowledge very well to calculate the area of single chairs and to plan different solutions, giving sensible consideration to the size of the aisle and the room needed to accommodate parents attending. They discussed problems such as where to put babies and their buggies. They suggested solutions such as a buggy parking area within the hall. They all clearly understood the difference between metric and imperial measurements.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress over

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time because support is appropriately focused and based on a sound analysis of individuals' learning needs. The gap between the performance of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and others is closing. Many pupils have exceeded their targets in all areas and are reaching the expected level. Those who join the school other than at the usual time, settle in well and make the same good progress as their peers.

Together with other reading programmes, improved teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) in the Early Years Foundation Stage has accelerated pupils' reading ability. Pupils enjoy reading and the phonics and other reading programmes are having a good impact on pupils' ability to decipher difficult words. Year 2 pupils confidently tackle challenging words and they talk about what they have read. Older pupils use expression well and are excited by the content of stories and styles of writing.

Quality of teaching

Most pupils, parents and carers say that teaching is good. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught well, with plentiful opportunities provided for them to learn through activities led by adults and those that they choose for themselves. Excellent teaching was seen in a Year 5 music lesson: pupils were challenged to sing a round and to explain the difference between canon and a round. Teaching was vibrant and the teacher helped the pupils appreciate the complexities of classical music in a very simple and clear way. More-able pupils could talk about differences between melody and rhythm.

Teachers do not always notice when pupils make mistakes in their spelling, grammar and punctuation in class and in their writing. Teachers use questions effectively to check pupils' knowledge and understanding, but sometimes miss opportunities to highlight grammatical errors. They use assessment information well to plan interesting curriculum work. The systems for marking are generally good throughout the school. Pupils with additional needs are well supported by family support workers and teaching assistants in class. Teaching for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good, as it is for different groups of pupils.

The planned curriculum provides memorable experiences, and the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. As a result, pupils enjoy their learning, behave well, get on well socially, and have good attitudes to school. The house system is well established and very popular. Pupils are proud of their involvement in the town's Shakespeare production of *Macbeth*. Assemblies are well planned and promote pupils' spiritual development well. In a Year 3 and 4 assembly about Australia, effective role play and a story about a race from Sydney to Melbourne, helped pupils appreciate that 'not giving up and continual effort' can help the most unlikely athletes win the race.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Good relationships are evident and, consequently, behaviour has been good over

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time. It is good throughout the school, in lessons and at break and lunchtimes. Pupils and staff show considerable respect for each other and for visitors to the school. Most parents and carers who replied to the inspection questionnaire, or who talked to inspectors, felt that their children were safe in the school and most thought that behaviour was good. Behaviour for learning is good. Pupils are motivated to learn, and they work well independently, with a partner or in small groups. Most pupils who responded to the questionnaire and those who talked to inspectors said that they felt very safe in school and that behaviour was good.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, care and welfare are good, and this contributes to children's very positive experience of school, their positive attitudes to learning and good behaviour. Older pupils know about safe use of the internet, and they are aware of different types of bullying and the dangers of drugs and alcohol. Pupils know the difference between falling out and bullying and say that they can discuss any problems that they have with adults. They report that any concerns are dealt with effectively. When they take on positions of responsibility, such as monitors or school councillors, they do so with enthusiasm and commitment.

Good behaviour contributes well to learning. Case studies show clearly how well the school deals with any pupils who have problems. The school works extremely hard to ensure attendance is average and improving. Pupils enjoy competing for the best attendance trophy of the week. Punctuality and absence improve as pupils get older. Family support workers provide a strong level of support for families throughout the school.

Leadership and management

Since the last inspection, the school has experienced a difficult period, with a major building programme proving more disruptive than anticipated. The headteacher's experience and skilful management, well supported by other senior leaders and middle managers, have ensured this very large primary school runs smoothly and efficiently. All leaders communicate strong drive and ambition. Staff work together well and they have a thorough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Equality of opportunity and the elimination of discrimination are pursued effectively. Provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good and pupils are making the same progress as their peers. Gaps in pupils' performance are narrowing, particularly for those known to be entitled to free school meals. A continual drive for improvement is underpinned by effective systems for evaluating the strengths and further areas for development of the school. The school's good organisation, strong, shared vision and good outcomes, indicate that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed, with good induction arrangements and good links with parents and carers. Rigorous leadership and management of teaching have ensured that teaching continues to improve. Effective monitoring and evaluation of teaching and effective professional development have enhanced teachers' skills and methods used across the school, especially in

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mathematics. There is a strong determination to improve and the school deploys its resources well.

The school's evaluation of its own performance is rigorous. Tracking of progress over time is thorough, and senior leaders quickly identify any dips, and develop sensible strategies and interventions to promote improvement. Appropriate developmental areas to further improve the effectiveness of the school are clearly identified in the school improvement plan. The governing body is well organised. It supports staff effectively in coping with the many changes, and challenges the school well to ensure school improvement initiatives are successful. It ensures that all safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements.

The curriculum provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Links between subjects such as design technology and English are strong, and creative curriculum and creative writing days contribute to pupils' enjoyment. Assemblies give very good opportunities for reflection, musical opportunities and a time to celebrate work well done. Aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are promoted well throughout the school and pupils regularly take part in sporting events against other schools, artistic, music and drama workshops and local cultural events. They are given plenty of opportunities in lessons for pupils to develop their collaborative skills and to suggest initiatives to improve their school. Pupils, parents and carers appreciate the good extra-curricular opportunities and enrichment activities.

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.

25 June 2012

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Beechwood Primary School, Luton, LU4 9RD

Thank you all very much for welcoming us to your school. We thoroughly enjoyed your singing in assembly, talking with you and your teachers, and reading the views of those who returned questionnaires. You and your parents and carers told us that most of you make good progress in your learning at Beechwood Primary School. We agree that the school has many strengths, and it is good overall. These are the things we liked best.

- You get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes and those who join the school at different times settle in well. You all make good progress throughout the school.
- You told us that you like learning and enjoy all the activities, visits, visitors and clubs. Some of you are performing in *Macbeth* in Luton.
- Your behaviour is good and you all have a sensible attitude to your learning.
- There are good opportunities for you to take on responsibilities as monitors and members of the school council, and to contribute to helping your school improve.
- Your headteacher, senior leaders, governors and all the staff have coped very well with the extensive building works and the growth of your school. They know what needs improving and are well organised.

We have identified two things that will help the school get better.

- Ensure that you do as well in writing as you do in reading and mathematics. While it is important that you all write using lively and imaginative vocabulary, you must at the same time ensure your grammar, punctuation and spelling are accurate.
- Ensure that teaching is consistently good or better in all classes and year groups.

Best wishes for the future. You can all help by continuing to work really hard and take more care to check your spellings and punctuation.

Yours sincerely

Marion Wallace
Lead inspector

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