

Bean Primary School

School Lane, Bean, Dartford, DA2 8AW

Inspection dates 8–9 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Most pupils achieve well. They make good progress from starting points that are generally low to reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6.
- The environment in the Early Years Foundation Stage fosters a strong interest in writing and helps children to develop positive attitudes to learning and completing tasks.
- Regular monitoring and appropriate training for staff have ensured that teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now good overall with examples of outstanding practice.
- Pupils behave courteously around the school. They enjoy coming to school and feel very safe. Attendance figures have improved since the previous inspection and are now above the national average.
- Sharply-focused and able leadership has driven a range of key improvements since the previous inspection. The governing body now works closely with other senior leaders to ensure all pupils reach their potential.
- The management of teacher performance is robust and governors ensure resources are used well to bring about continued improvement in pupil outcomes.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding to ensure that pupils make rapid and sustained progress in all subjects in all year groups.
- While marking indicates the next steps pupils need to take to improve in both English and mathematics, opportunities for pupils to assess their own work are more limited in mathematics.
- Occasionally, learning objectives are not broken down into their smaller steps and this limits pupils' ability to assess precisely how they have performed in those lessons.
- Although uncommon, there are occasions where teachers miss opportunities to promote excellent behaviours for learning for some pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons or parts of lessons, listened to pupils read and attended assemblies. The teaching of a range of subjects was observed including guided reading.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff, and representatives from the governing body and the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 17 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), to other communication from parents and carers, and to the questionnaires submitted by staff.
- They observed the school’s work and looked at a range of documents including those relating to safeguarding and child protection, the minutes of governing body meetings, the school’s self-evaluation, the school development plan, data on pupil performance, logs relating to behaviour and attendance figures.

Inspection team

Jeanie Jovanova, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Bryan Meyer

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is nearly double the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. A range of minority ethnic groups are represented in smaller numbers, including a settled Traveller community.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding provided by the government for some pupils, such as those known to be eligible for free school meals) is lower than average.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision for any pupils.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching in order that pupils make rapid and sustained progress throughout the school in all subjects by:
 - ensuring teachers clearly indicate the steps needed to successfully achieve the learning objective in all lessons
 - ensuring pupils are given as many opportunities to self-assess their work in mathematics as they are in English
 - ensuring that all teachers are equally confident in using the full range of strategies for promoting high levels of positive behaviours for learning in their classrooms.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are generally below those expected for their age. The highly skilled staff ensure that the environment stimulates children's interest so that the activities they choose sustain their concentration and develop a range of skills well. Opportunities for writing are available across a range of activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage so children spend a lot of time writing. During the inspection, pupils were seen making a large sign for a garage outside, making cards for their families, writing lists of words studied earlier that day and annotating pictures they had drawn. This has ensured that the proportion of children reaching age-related expectations in literacy by the end of Reception has risen year on year since the previous inspection.
- The focus on writing continues throughout the school, underpinned by a robust programme for the teaching of phonics (letter patterns and the sounds they represent). As a result, pupils learn to read unfamiliar words with confidence. The percentage of pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1 was much higher than the national average.
- Rigorous monitoring of pupils' performance means that any anomalies are quickly spotted and measures are put in place to accelerate progress for those pupils so they can catch up. As a result, the proportion of pupils both making and exceeding expected progress between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 compares favourably with the national picture and is increasing.
- Attainment in mathematics, which was a relative weakness at the previous inspection, has now improved and results in both English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 are broadly in line with national figures.
- The school promotes reading well and pupils are avid readers. They take great care when compiling their reading journals and understand the strong links between phonic knowledge, spelling, reading and writing.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because teaching strategies, both within the classroom and in intervention sessions, are carefully tailored to meet their specific needs.
- Pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium make good progress because leaders monitor how effectively targeted funding is spent and how much impact interventions are having. They are quick to adjust provision where necessary to ensure good progress is maintained.
- The school shows its commitment to equality of opportunity by ensuring pupils from different ethnic groups achieve well. For example, the proportion of pupils from Traveller heritages reaching the highest level in mathematics (Level 6) is higher than that found nationally.

The quality of teaching is good

- Close monitoring, a judicious use of professional development opportunities and a willingness on the part of the staff to embrace change means that teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now good.
- Teachers consistently encourage pupils to reflect on and discuss their learning, regularly check that groups and individuals have understood, and reshape tasks or explanations where necessary. Introductions to lessons are crisp, appropriate tasks are set and teachers explain the steps needed to complete them. In a Year 6 writing lesson, the teacher, by the use of skilful questioning, elicited all the elements needed to achieve the task from the pupils themselves. However, on occasion, teachers do not break down the intended learning into smaller steps; pupils then find it hard to evaluate precisely how well they have performed.
- The teaching of phonics threads through much of the curriculum throughout the school. Teachers take every opportunity to reinforce phonic skills and spelling rules so pupils are confident readers and writers.

- Reading is taught well because pupils' individual strengths and interests are taken into account. For example, using 'eReaders' and tablet PCs has engaged some previously reluctant readers. Pupils understand how to choose books at the right level to stretch their skills and talk eloquently about different strategies for reading unfamiliar words.
- A major improvement since the previous inspection is the use of targets to help pupils know how to improve their work. Pupils speak confidently about their targets and understand how to measure when they have met them and are ready to move on to the next.
- The marking of pupils' work has also improved. Teachers give useful feedback which pupils respond to. For example, a comment about using capital letters for the names of countries ensured every country had a capital letter from then on.
- Pupils are encouraged to assess their own work and point out two things they did well and one thing they would improve upon. This good practice in self-assessment is well embedded in literacy, including in written work from areas of the curriculum other than English, but less consistent in mathematics. The curriculum offers myriad opportunities to reinforce key skills in communication and mathematics across a range of subjects. A Year 5 project linked mathematical investigation, calculation, and design and technology to produce a stunning art installation which now graces the outdoor space. Pupils regularly write at length in history, producing, for example, a non-chronological report about the Ancient Egyptian mummification process.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are courteous and respectful of adults and each other when moving around the school. Playtimes and lunchtimes are calm. Lessons begin punctually because pupils are mindful of school routines. Adults support the process but never need to be obtrusive as pupils regulate their own behaviour well.
- Behaviour in lessons is generally good; pupils engage readily in learning tasks and show a high level of interest and understanding. They complete homework activities, such as the weekly writing task in Year 2 and their reading journals, with commitment and pride. Pupils are astute and mature when assessing their own work and responding to teachers' comments and suggestions for improvement.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because there are still rare occasions when one or two pupils are less focused than they ought to be. While this does not cause any disruption for others, on occasion, teachers miss the opportunity to reinforce positive learning behaviours for the pupil concerned.
- The school is proactive in supporting pupils with particular behavioural needs. Behaviour logs show clearly that behaviour for those pupils has been managed successfully over time. The fact that the use of fixed-term exclusions has reduced significantly supports this assertion.
- Attendance has improved since the previous inspection because leaders and managers, including the governing body, use a range of strategies to promote full attendance. Strong relationships with parents and carers underpin this improvement.
- Pupils have a keen understanding of what constitutes bullying, including such aspects as cyber-bullying. They say it rarely happens in school and is always dealt with effectively.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They can explain how to stay safe on the internet, are aware of road traffic safety, and use equipment and resources safely. Pupils spoken to during the inspection were unanimous in saying they felt safe at school, and this is reflected in results of in-house surveys. Most parents and carers who completed the online survey agreed that the school keeps their child safe.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders and managers are tenacious and exacting in the pursuit of improvement. They have presided over a range of improvements since the previous inspection. Attendance figures,

strategic involvement of governors, achievement in mathematics, and embedding a robust and effective marking and feedback system are the most notable successes.

- The school evaluates its strengths and areas for development well. Leaders and managers prioritise their action planning and build on existing successes in a constant bid to fine-tune provision. There is a unanimous conviction that pupils deserve the best which drives this striving for excellence. Taking the track record of improvements into account, this attitude ensures the school has the capacity to continue to refine its practice and meet increasingly aspirational pupil outcomes. There is no discrimination and all pupils are provided with equal opportunities.
- There is clear accountability for pupils' progress. Regular meetings ensure both individual and groups of pupils' performance is rigorously analysed and solutions are quickly sought to ensure all pupils remain on track to reach the challenging targets the school sets for them.
- Leaders devolve pupil premium funding well to provide specifically tailored individual support. Initiatives such as one-to-one tuition and mathematics catch-up programmes, delivered by trained staff, have accelerated progress so the gap between pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium and other pupils in the school is closing.
- The development needs of the teaching staff are accurately assessed and met in a range of ways. Coaching has been effective at improving individual performance in the classroom. Where a broader need is identified, a whole-school approach is taken. A good example of this is the focus on phonics. All staff received high-quality training and leaders made clear their vision of how phonics would thread through the curriculum. This has resulted in a cohesive and consistent approach which ensures pupils grow in confidence as writers and readers from their arrival in Reception until they leave for secondary school with secure skills that will enable them to succeed well in the next phase of their education.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Assemblies, trips, visitors, and a vibrant and stimulating curriculum all contribute to broadening pupils' horizons and encouraging them to think deeply about a range of serious issues such as when imagining what it must have been like to be consigned to the workhouse.
- The local authority has provided an appropriate, well-targeted package of support since the previous inspection which the school has used judiciously to effect improvements. Support is now light touch as the school is developing independence and has greater internal capacity to drive change.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body scrutinises the spending of the pupil premium funding carefully. Governors ask questions as to the effectiveness of interventions and monitor staff deployment to ensure maximum benefit for pupils. Where an initiative is not working, changes are made immediately. Governors play a key role in ensuring the management of staff performance results in improved outcomes for pupils. They understand the link between financial reward and high-quality teaching, and ensure that this is reflected in the pay structure and appraisal system. Governors have a keen understanding of information on pupil performance and take strategic decisions to help improve areas of relative weakness. For example, they appointed a specialist mathematics teacher to provide highly targeted tuition, which has contributed to increased progress and higher attainment in mathematics. Training for governors is comprehensive and of high quality. These include detailed sessions on how to interpret pupil performance data, enabling them to ask more challenging questions of senior leaders.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	118266
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	401734

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

Type of school	All-through
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	191
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Bonner
Headteacher	Laura Herbert
Date of previous school inspection	19–20 November 2009
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