

Perry Beeches Junior School

Beeches Road, Great Barr, Birmingham, B42 2PY

Inspection dates 8–9 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- The headteacher and senior leaders provide a clear sense of direction. They successfully lead improvement in teaching and pupils' achievement because they have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Teaching is usually good, and some is outstanding. Teachers are successful in engaging pupils' interest and helping them to make good progress in their work.
- Pupils' achievement is good. At the end of Key Stage 2 they achieve standards that are in line with the national average in reading and writing. This represents good progress in relation to their starting points in Year 3.
- Teaching assistants are well trained and deployed effectively. They make a strong contribution pupils' progress.
- Pupils' progress is tracked closely and extra help for pupils who are disabled, those who have special educational needs and those who are at risk of falling behind is planned systematically.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive and as a result, pupils feel safe and well cared for.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to reading and have opportunities to read widely and often.
- Behaviour is good and pupils get along together exceptionally well. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strong feature of the school.
- Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and provide a balance of support and challenge to senior leaders.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in subjects other than mathematics.
- The attainment of all pupils in mathematics is not as strong as it is in writing and reading because the activities that teachers provide do not always fully challenge pupils in all parts of the lesson.
- Monitoring of the quality of teaching does not always provide teachers with sufficiently detailed improvement points to move all teaching to outstanding.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to explore ideas for themselves and carry out their own investigations.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 25 lessons, four of which were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Discussions with parents took place at the beginning of the school day. Inspectors considered 13 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). In addition, inspectors took into account results from the school’s recent survey of parents. The results of the 14 completed staff questionnaires were also analysed.
- Meetings were held with the senior and middle leaders, groups of pupils and three members of the governing body. A telephone discussion took place with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors heard a sample of pupils read, looked at past and present work in books, observed playtime and lunchtime activities and attended an assembly.
- The inspection team analysed information about pupils’ progress, attendance and behaviour and reviewed a range of documents including: the school’s self-evaluation and planning for improvement; records of the quality of teaching; information on the pupils’ current progress and achievement; and the school’s safeguarding information.

Inspection team

Rachel Howie, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Peter Kerr

Additional Inspector

Janet Watts

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized junior school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (the additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care) is above average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action plus, and those with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The proportion of pupils at school action is broadly average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to raise achievement, particularly in mathematics, by ensuring that:
 - pupils are consistently provided with regular opportunities to apply their mathematical skills in a range of different contexts
 - the activities provided for all pupils fully match their abilities in all parts of the lesson so that they are sufficiently challenged
 - there are more opportunities for pupils to learn through investigating and finding out things for themselves.
- Ensure that more teaching is outstanding by making sure that:
 - after all monitoring activities, senior leaders provide teachers with specific and detailed information about how they can continue to improve their practice
 - identified areas for improvement are quickly followed up so that improvement is sufficiently rapid.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- By the time they reach the end of Year 6, pupils attain standards in line with those found nationally in reading and writing. Mathematics was not as strong in the end of Year 6 tests in 2012. However, senior leaders put effective strategies in place to further improve the standards and progress in mathematics and, as a result, attainment in this subject for pupils currently in the school is rising.
- Senior leaders establish a secure knowledge of pupils' starting points when they join the school in Year 3. These are typically below average for their age. Pupils currently in the school, including the most able, are making good progress from these starting points. Learning observed in lessons and work seen in pupils' books demonstrate good progress. Actions taken since January 2013 to improve pupils' mathematical skills are quickening the rate at which pupils make progress.
- Progress in writing is a strength of the school. The assessments at the end of Year 6 showed that the proportion of pupils making better-than-expected progress was high in comparison with national figures.
- Pupils from all ethnic backgrounds achieve equally well. Those who speak English as an additional language are generally able to fully participate in all classroom activities and make progress in line with that of other pupils.
- The school promotes the enjoyment of reading well and pupils have very positive attitudes to reading. They are able to talk about authors enthusiastically and express personal preferences confidently.
- Effective and focused support is in place for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. The special needs coordinator works effectively with teachers, teaching assistants and outside agencies to ensure work is closely matched to their learning needs. This is ensuring that they typically make at least as good progress as other pupils in the school.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide additional support and resources for pupils who are eligible. This has resulted in these pupils making much better progress. The gap between the attainment of these pupils in English and that of their classmates is reducing rapidly. A wider attainment gap in mathematics reflects the priority to improve attainment in mathematics for all pupils.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good overall. It ranges from outstanding to a small proportion that requires improvement. School records show that the quality of teaching has improved during the course of the last year, partly as a result of some focused coaching support from the leadership team.
- In the best lessons teachers ask probing questions such as, 'Tell me how you know?' and 'Why do you think that?' This good practice enables pupils to explain their thinking in more detail. Where teaching is less effective teachers over-direct learning in lessons. This prevents pupils from testing out their own ideas or investigating answers independently.

- Teachers usually set work at the right level for all pupils and learning moves along quickly. Sometimes, particularly in mathematics, teachers do not make sure that the learning is challenging enough for pupils, especially the most able, throughout the whole lesson.
- Teachers plan frequent opportunities for pupils to practise their reading and writing skills across the curriculum in, for example, history and religious education. However, similar opportunities for applying mathematical skills are much less frequent. Pupils have a very positive attitude to reading and benefit from a well-resourced and inviting library and a range of reading material related to most curriculum areas.
- Pupils know what levels they are working at, and their individual targets in reading, writing and mathematics help them to know which skills they need to improve next. Teachers frequently refer to these targets in lessons and this helps pupils see their relevance.
- Teaching makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Good teaching observed in two Year 5 English lessons, for example, enabled pupils to explore their feelings and emotions towards a bully in a story. As a result, pupils' writing displayed a high level of empathy and understanding of character.
- Marking has improved since the previous inspection. The most effective marking provides pupils with a clear indication of what they have done well and some helpful advice about how to improve their work. However, marking is not always equally good in all classes.
- The school has some skilled teaching assistants who are deployed successfully to support individual and groups of pupils to make good progress. They run regular support groups for phonics (linking sounds and letters) to enhance pupils' reading skills and for mathematics as well as supporting individual pupils in class. There are strong working partnerships between teachers and teaching assistants.
- In response to the dip in the mathematics results in 2012, a new teaching system has recently been introduced by the subject leader. Teachers have participated in training to support the introduction of this new approach and enhance their subject knowledge. This initiative is beginning to lead to higher expectations of pupils during mathematics lessons. The school's tracking of pupils' performance shows that pupils in most classes are now making faster progress than previously was the case.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school is a very friendly, welcoming and calm place in which to learn. Pupils behave well around the school and are polite and respectful to one another and adults. Behaviour in lessons is usually good with pupils showing a keenness to learn. Occasionally, they become distracted and lose concentration but quickly return to the task after a reminder from the teacher.
- Within lessons and in the playground relationships are very positive. Pupils work and play together exceptionally well. This is, in part, as a result of a well-developed reward system; for example, pupils on the 'top table' in the dining hall each Friday have lunch with the headteacher as a reward for good behaviour.
- Pupils are very positive about the way school cares for them and keeps them safe. They have a good understanding about how to reduce risk to themselves in a range of situations both within and beyond school. The pupils who spoke to the inspectors were particularly knowledgeable about keeping safe when using the internet.

- Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms that bullying can take and are confident that members of staff will listen and deal quickly with incidents that arise. They say that bullying is very rare and school records confirm this.
- The school places considerable emphasis on the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of the pupils. Pupils have an excellent understanding of different faiths and beliefs. They have a range of opportunities to share and celebrate the diversity of culture and language within the school. This was evident in the discussion and reflections the pupils had undertaken about everyone smiling in the same language. One pupil summed this up by saying, 'We are all the same – just a bit different in what we believe.'
- Pupils are proud of the contributions that they make to the life of the school, for example, as school councillors, prefects, librarians or representing the school on a team. They are also proud of the work they do for charity and within the local community. Pupils were enthusiastic to talk to inspectors about the compact disk they had made and sold to parents to raise money for a local marching band, 'Beeches marching band', and the work that they undertake on the community allotment.
- Attendance has improved and is, currently, in line with the average for primary schools. This is as a result of a clear policy and thorough procedures which have been communicated regularly and effectively to pupils and parents.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and senior leaders have a clear vision for the school's further development of achievement and teaching – based on an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. Staff and governors support this vision well. This was evident from the unanimously positive responses from the staff in their survey.
- The school development plan is sharply focused on improving pupils' achievement with well-defined and realistic timescales. While standards in mathematics dipped in 2012, accurate analysis and decisive action by leaders have ensured that achievement is improving rapidly. Governors are not yet fully included in the monitoring activities that are set out in the plan.
- A new system for tracking pupils' progress has enabled senior leaders to better analyse how well individual and groups of pupils are progressing. This means that additional support for pupils is more systematically planned. Information about pupils' progress has been used particularly well to allocate resources to close the gap in attainment between those pupils eligible for pupil premium funding and that of other pupils.
- The senior leadership has effectively increased the proportion of good teaching through clearly targeted coaching. The mathematics and English subject leaders are outstanding role models in their own teaching and have been effective in supporting teachers whose teaching required improvement. They have been well supported in developing their own leadership skills.
- Senior leaders regularly monitor the quality of teaching. However, feedback to teachers after these routine monitoring activities is not always sufficiently precise about what action needs to be taken to improve teaching further.
- Senior leaders work hard to ensure that relationships with parents are strong. Newsletters are regular and informative and parents are invited to workshops in order to be better able to

support their children with homework. The parents' responses to a recent school survey showed that the vast majority are supportive of the work that the school is doing.

- The learning themes in which the curriculum is structured engage pupils' interest and the regular visits and visitors help to bring the learning to life. The deputy headteacher leads this area effectively.
- The additional sport funding (provided by the government to all primary schools) has been used proactively by the school to employ a specialist sports coach to work alongside teachers to develop their confidence and subject knowledge in all aspects of physical education. Additional after-school clubs are being run, and games and activities organised on the playground to increase the level of pupils' physical activity at playtime. However, it is too early to evaluate the impact of these initiatives.
- Arrangements for keeping pupils safe meet current requirements. The staff work very effectively with outside agencies to ensure that pupils who are most vulnerable receive a high level of support.
- The local authority has provided 'light touch' support for the school during the last two years because it accurately recognises the quality of education provided.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are well informed about key aspects of the schools' work. They provide a good balance of support and challenge to the senior leaders.
 - The governors' understanding of how well pupils are achieving has improved since the previous inspection. Through their curriculum committee, governors find out how well pupils are progressing and know how to use the available data on pupils' achievement to compare how well the school is performing in relation to schools nationally.
 - Although they are already well informed about the school's performance, governors intend to extend their own monitoring of school performance by further monitoring visits to the school. This programme has not yet been implemented, so its impact is unclear.
 - The governing body makes sure that performance management systems are in place and that the performance of staff is linked to the pay they receive and management responsibilities.
 - The budget is managed effectively and governors are aware of how the pupil premium is being spent to support eligible pupils' progress and the impact on their attainment.

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	103163
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	427391

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	357
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joanne Spencer
Headteacher	Elaine Williams
Date of previous school inspection	26 January 2010
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