

Beckmead School

Monks Orchard Road, Beckenham, Kent, BR3 3BZ

Inspection dates

20–21 November 2013

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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Since the appointment of the new executive headteacher the quality of education has rapidly improved. As a result, the leadership of the school is outstanding.
- Pupils achieve well and make good progress academically, developing skills that will support future training and employment prospects, including their social skills.
- Teaching is good. The range of subjects is very well matched to pupils' interests, which promotes high levels of engagement.
- The development of a nurturing approach to looking after and managing pupils has provided a calm, warm and inclusive community where pupils feel safe and secure. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding.
- Staff provide excellent role models for pupils, showing exceptional qualities of teamwork, respect for others, and a deep sense of care and concern. Senior leaders are visible at all times providing clear direction, support and guidance.
- The school has a strong drive to continue its recent improvements, and to offer its provision to a greater number and a wider age range of pupils in the local area.
- Governors carry out their responsibilities very effectively. They have accurate, current knowledge of how well the school is performing, and provide very good challenge and support where it is needed.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Improvements to pupils' progress, school attendance and behaviour have happened only recently. The school needs to demonstrate that it can sustain this progress over time.
- Mathematics teaching could be improved by the consistent use of practical resources.
- Pupils are not always aware of what they need to do to improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons or parts of lessons on both sites. The majority of observations were carried out jointly with members of the senior management team. Inspectors also observed a nurture breakfast session, break time and an assembly.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, a range of senior and middle managers, the school council, representatives from the governing body, and the link advisor from the local authority.
- The 39 responses from Parent View (online questionnaire) were analysed, along with 36 completed staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including information available on the school website, records of pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance, self-evaluation and school development plans. Pupils' workbooks and key policies and procedures were examined, including those for safeguarding and safer recruitment.

Inspection team

Andy Lole, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Andrew Penham

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Beckmead School caters for up to 104 boys who have a range of complex needs including behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, communication difficulties and those with a diagnosis of autism. All have a statement of special educational needs.
- The school is based on two sites. The newly opened Chaffinch Brook site provides for a group of primary aged pupils with autism and challenging behaviour.
- Beckmead staff provide support to a range of local authority services, including the Behavioural Support Service, the Primary Pupil Referral Unit, and a Community Learning Team which meets the needs of pupils who are referred to the school in Year 11.
- Over half of pupils are from minority ethnic groups the largest group being Black Caribbean. Almost two thirds are entitled to receive the pupil premium (additional funding from central government for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority).
- Alternative provision is provided for all pupils in Years 10 and 11 to attend a local college one day a week to complete vocational courses. Staff from the school accompany pupils on their visits.
- The school does not enter pupils early for their GCSE examinations.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that pupils know what are the most important things they need to be working on to improve their English and mathematics.
- Ensure that marking is consistent in all lessons in order that pupils fully understand how to make improvements to their learning.
- Have practical resources available in lessons to help pupils with their understanding of mathematics.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most pupils enter the school with skills and knowledge that are well below what is expected for their ages due to previous negative attitudes to education, low self-esteem or learning difficulties. Due to recent improvements in the quality of teaching, and the content of the subjects on offer pupils in Key Stages 2 and 3 have made excellent progress over the last year.
- Some of the pupils in Key Stage 4 who have had negative experiences of the school in the past still have poor attitudes to learning, and as a result made less progress, despite receiving good teaching recently. However, in 2013, at GCSE just over two thirds of pupils achieved five A* to G passes while a third achieved five A* to C passes. This represents an improvement on the 2012 results. Achievement is not outstanding because pupils' progress has not been of a consistently high standard for pupils in all key stages. However, the rates of progress have recently improved rapidly for the majority of pupils.
- Making good progress and valuing learning are now central to the culture of the school. Staff have very high expectations of pupils. Lessons are typically calm and relaxed with pupils feeling confident to extend their skills, and accept support where they need it. Pupils show respect for each other's contributions to lessons.
- School development work has been well targeted on subject areas that require specific input. Following a focus on reading during the last academic year pupils demonstrate that they are able to read aloud when requested in lessons, and often volunteer to do so. When faced with unfamiliar words pupils show that they have sufficient awareness of phonics (the sounds letters make) to be able to sound them out and then proceed with their reading.
- The school's information about achievement shows that the rates of progress for different groups are similar. The pupil premium funding has been used in a variety of ways, including improving resources to support learning and providing nutritious food during nurture sessions. These developments have contributed to improving rates of school attendance and progress.
- Progress in mathematics is good because pupils are taught strategies for working out problems. Teachers have good subject knowledge. However, pupils do not always have access to practical resources which would support their learning.
- All Years 10 and 11 pupils study with an alternative provider. These include a variety of training in practical subjects such as catering, hospitality, construction, childcare and retail. They make good progress and there are effective arrangements for checking their work, attendance, punctuality and behaviour. School staff continue to support pupils at college in the first year after leaving Beckmead, which resulted in 100% of last year's school leavers getting onto relevant training courses.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is well planned to ensure that it is matched to each pupil's ability, and that learning builds on what has been taught previously. Teachers are particularly skilled in selecting activities that have relevance and are meaningful to the pupils. An example was a Year 7 English lesson looking at a variety of poetry using different dialects. Pupils were asked to translate a poem written in patois into standard English, which engaged them well and led to good learning.
- Teaching assistants and teachers work extremely effectively together, providing support for pupils when they need it, and knowing when they are able to leave them to work on their own. Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive, resulting in pupils feeling very secure in their classrooms. The more mature pupils support others in their learning by giving helpful prompts or by carefully avoiding possible confrontations.
- Good use of questioning aimed at specific pupils enables teachers to assess learning throughout lessons, and make adjustments to their teaching when needed. A good pace is adopted in most lessons, often giving pupils set amounts of time to complete tasks, so that they know that there is no time for inactivity.
- Whole-school systems for keeping track of the rate of each pupil's progress are effective, enabling senior leaders to identify when individuals are falling short of what is expected of them. The monitoring of teaching is also very well established, so that if a teacher is unsuccessful in helping pupils learn, action is swiftly taken to rectify the position.
- Increased opportunities for learning in a wide range of subjects have contributed to improvements in teaching. Examples include film making, drama, boxing, horticulture and photography. A high quality humorous film made jointly by pupils and staff of a trip to the dentist that turned into a zombie movie was warmly received when it was shown in assembly.
- Information is available to pupils to show them the range of learning they have to achieve to move to the next level in English and mathematics. However, there are inconsistencies in how pupils are supported to know the most important next steps they need to master.
- The quality of marking varies between teachers, resulting in missed opportunities for pupils to learn from their mistakes.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Beckmead School is a community where pupils feel very safe and valued. The school ethos is about care, support and understanding, not criticism and judgement. Staff communicate a depth of concern for all pupils, and a real willingness to go to great lengths to meet individual needs. Pupils are very aware of this and reported, 'It feels like they look after me like I'm their son', and 'there is always someone to talk to – to express my feelings'.
- Behaviour in lessons is usually excellent. Pupils show a keenness to learn, and respond extremely well to the guidance and support offered by staff. Many are able to concentrate and work hard for the entire lesson with little individual input from staff. When difficulties occur these are skilfully managed by staff, resulting in minimal loss of learning.
- Pupils are proud of their school. Parents and carers also have a very positive view of the school, reporting how happy and safe their child feels at school.
- Attendance levels are now broadly average, and so far this academic year there have been no exclusions. Both these achievements demonstrate a huge improvement over the last two years.
- Pupils make very good progress in their social skills, learning how to express their thoughts and feelings calmly and coherently. There is an established ritual of greeting one another with a handshake and a 'hello', which is extended to visitors, with pupils presenting themselves as confident and considerate young people.
- The school tackles bullying and discrimination well. Pupils are very aware of what racism is and the negative impact it can have on individuals and society as a whole. Pupils report that on the rare occasions that racist language is used, or when bullying occurs staff intervene quickly and effectively.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Through the inspirational leadership of the executive headteacher the school has been transformed into a highly successful organisation since the last inspection. He has been able to communicate his vision to create a very strong staff team, which provides consistency and reliability through high quality teaching, guidance and support.
- Very high expectations drive forward everyday work with pupils, and the strategic vision of the school. Having opened the Chaffinch Brook site early this term, which is already providing a good level of education for its pupils, and preparing to take over the running of the Pupil Referral Unit and the Behaviour Support Service, there are also plans to build and run a new college, which will be for Key Stages 4 and 5 pupils.
- Outstanding management of teaching has ensured that where there has been underperformance this is quickly identified and put right, resulting in significant recent improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Staff speak positively about the support the performance management system gives them, and the frequency and range of professional development opportunities that they take part in.
- A wide range of positive learning activities promotes excellent moral and social progress for pupils. The school community provides a very positive multicultural experience through the warm interactions of adults and pupils, which is reinforced in carefully planned literacy, music and sporting lessons. Assemblies encourage personal reflection which aids spiritual development.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding and safer recruitment are strong.
- Self-evaluation procedures are robust, resulting in senior staff and governors having a very clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Joint observations completed during the inspection indicated the accuracy of the school's judgements made about the quality of teaching. School development activities are well targeted to ensure standards are continuously raised.
- The school has a very good relationship with the local authority, working closely together to improve the provision for pupils who are finding it hard to access learning in other schools. A local authority advisor maintains some oversight of the school's performance, and is available to provide support when requested.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are suitably trained to fulfil their duties. They know the school extremely well. This is due to strong management structures that are in place to monitor progress, teachers' performance and the quality of their teaching, development activity and finances, and through regular visits when governors spend time with pupils in their nurture groups. They have current knowledge of how pupils are progressing through a good understanding of the data that is shared with them, and the impact of pupil premium and sports funding. There is a clear connection between how well teachers are performing and how they are rewarded linked to pupils' progress.

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	101853
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	425479

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	90
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Barbara Alcaraz
Executive Headteacher	Jonty Clark
Date of previous school inspection	20–21 September 2011
Telephone number	020 8777 9311
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