

Beamont Community Primary School

O'Leary Street, Warrington, Cheshire, WA2 7RQ

Inspection dates 29–30 January 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement.

- Pupils leave school with below average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Too few pupils reach the higher levels of attainment at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2.
- The quality of teaching is not yet consistently good enough to enable all pupils to make good progress. Progress across the school is uneven.
- Ineffective teaching in the past has resulted in gaps in some pupils' learning. There has not yet been enough time to tackle these issues fully.
- Work sometimes does not provide enough challenge, particularly for the most able pupils.
- Individual targets set to help pupils improve are not specific enough.
- Handwriting and spelling skills are not taught consistently well across the school.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to think through interesting problems when practising their mathematics skills.
- The quality of teachers' marking varies. It does not always provide pupils with the next steps needed to improve.
- Attendance still requires improvement.
- Leaders' views of the impact of actions to bring about improvements are sometimes too positive. Targets and timescales in school plans are not precise enough to enable leaders to check if the school is improving quickly.

The school has the following strengths

- Progress has started to speed up across the school and more pupils are reaching the standards expected for their age.
- The teaching of reading in Key Stage 1 has improved and standards are rising rapidly.
- Pupils' good behaviour in class makes a positive contribution to their learning.
- School leaders and governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- The quality of teaching is improving due to the senior leaders' clear focus on improvement.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They are happy and feel safe and well-cared for.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 24 lessons or parts of lessons, including four that were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- The inspectors also looked at examples of pupils' work and listened to pupils read. They observed the teaching of reading and talked to pupils about the books they have enjoyed and those that they are currently reading.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils and inspectors spoke to pupils about their work. Inspectors held meetings with four governors. They spoke to a representative of the local authority and met with members of the school staff.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the start and end of the school day. They took account of 11 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's own questionnaires to parents. The responses to staff questionnaires completed during the inspection were also considered.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including external reviews of the school's work, safeguarding documents, records of current standards and progress, the school development plan and documents relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance. Minutes from governing body meetings and information provided for governors by school staff were also considered.

Inspection team

Lyn Pender, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Nina Heron	Additional Inspector
Douglas Scholes	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than most other primary schools.
- Most pupils are White British with small proportions of pupils from other heritages. A very small minority of pupils speak English as an additional language; however, the proportion has risen in the current year.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is well above average. A below average proportion of pupils are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through pupil premium funding is above the national average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.)
- The school provides a breakfast club for pupils.
- Since the last inspection the school has experienced significant changes in staffing. The leadership team has been restructured and 27 members of staff have left the school. In September 2013, five teachers and six teaching assistants joined the school staff.
- The headteacher returned to school the day before the inspection following a period of maternity leave. The headteacher of a local primary school acted as executive headteacher of the school during the headteacher's absence.
- The school did not meet the government's current floor standards in 2013, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- A private organisation provides wrap-around day care for pre-school children within the Early Years Foundation Stage unit. This provision is subject to a separate inspection. Reports for this provision can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better in order to raise standards and increase the rate of progress made by pupils by:
 - ensuring all teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do and achieve and provide the challenge to allow this
 - ensuring that the individual targets for pupils tell them exactly what they need to do to improve
 - making sure teachers' marking provides next steps to help pupils improve and allow time in lessons for them to correct their work and act on the advice given
 - ensuring that handwriting and spelling skills are taught consistently across the school
 - enabling pupils to practise their mathematical skills through providing more problem-solving opportunities.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring school plans contain precise actions linked to pupils' achievement that are checked regularly to ensure that improvements are being made quickly.
- Continue to improve attendance and reduce the number of pupils who are regularly absent from school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because over time too few pupils reach the overall national standard at the end of Key Stage 2. Some weak teaching in the recent past has had a negative impact on achievement. Leadership is tackling this with a will but gaps in pupils' knowledge that this left behind are still to be filled securely. Staffing is now more stable and changes made by leaders to check on the quality of teaching and additional training for teachers have begun to help current learners make faster progress.
- Although year groups vary, most children join the Nursery class with skill levels below and sometimes well below those typical for their age. Children generally leave the Reception class working at levels closer to but still lower than expected levels for their age. Because of effective teaching, children currently in the Early Years Foundation Stage are beginning to make faster progress, especially in learning about letters and the sounds they make.
- Standards in Key Stage 1 vary from year to year. In 2013, pupils' attainment was below the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics and too few reached the higher levels. Improved teaching strategies and a redesigned curriculum are now having a positive impact. Pupils of all abilities are making faster progress and more pupils are working at the levels expected for their age. An increased proportion of pupils are on track for higher level achievement by the end of Year 2.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2013 was below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Although progress accelerated during their time in Year 6, too few pupils made the progress expected of them by the end of Key Stage 2 and very few did better than this, especially in writing and mathematics. This picture is starting to change and in the current year groups, as a result of better teaching, rates of progress have increased in some classes and more pupils are working at levels expected for their age and some are doing better than this.
- At the end of Year 6 in 2013, the attainment of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, all of whom are known to be eligible for free school meals, was at least two terms behind that of other pupils in the school and over a year behind similar pupils nationally in reading and writing. In the current year, pupil premium funding is beginning to help eligible pupils make faster progress and attainment gaps have begun to close.
- Standards in reading are rising. The proportion of pupils reaching the Year 1 standard in 2013 improved, although it remained below that of other schools. As a result of good and outstanding teaching in the current Year 1, pupils' skills are being developed well. However, gaps in pupils' knowledge higher up the school are not being closed quickly enough because the teaching of reading and spelling is not consistently good across all classes.
- The most able pupils are starting to make better progress but overall the level of challenge that teaching provides for them is not yet as high as it could be. Therefore, they do not achieve as well as they should.
- Pupils who are disabled and those with special educational needs achieve as well as their peers in the school, given their starting points and abilities.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Pupils' work, evidence from inspectors' observations, some undertaken jointly with school leaders, and reviews of the quality of teaching by the local authority, all indicate that teaching is improving.
- However, although the large majority of teaching seen by inspectors was good, too little was outstanding and some required improvement. Teaching has not been effective enough over time to secure pupils' good or better achievement and, consequently, pupils are not yet making consistently good progress.

- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved since the last inspection. Checks on how well children are doing are more accurate and are used well to provide activities which help children settle quickly. They become happy, curious and interested learners.
- Decisive action by the school has raised the quality of teaching in Year 1. It is now at least good and is sometimes outstanding. The central area between the classrooms has become a vibrant learning space. Here, there is a continuous buzz of pupils eager to learn and most pupils are making faster progress.
- Pupils do not always make good progress because teachers do not always have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. For example, activities do not always challenge the thinking of the most able pupils. The basic skills in mathematics are being developed increasingly well but pupils do not have enough opportunities to use what they have learned to solve problems.
- Work is marked regularly and teachers often praise pupils' efforts. However, teachers' marking, particularly in mathematics and topic work, does not always provide pupils with the next steps they need to take to improve their work. Too few opportunities are provided for pupils to make corrections or act on guidance when it is given. The use of individual targets to help pupils to improve their work is inconsistent across classes.
- The teaching of early reading skills, particularly in Years 1 and 2, is now a strength. However, spelling gaps are not picked up quickly enough in the older year groups. Handwriting skills are not taught methodically and well across the school.
- The elements of teaching which enable pupils to make better progress include:
 - lessons that are well planned, so that activities provide appropriate challenge for different groups of pupils and little learning time is lost
 - effective teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants, so that pupils, including those pupils who have special educational needs, are supported to achieve well throughout the lesson
 - regular checks by teachers of how well pupils are doing so that misunderstandings are quickly spotted and corrected.
- Across the school, warm and positive relationships exist between pupils and adults. The effective teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants is contributing well to pupils' overall learning and progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils, staff and members of the governing body confirm this. Pupils and the parents who spoke to inspectors say that behaviour has improved a lot since the previous inspection report.
- Pupils take a great pride in their school. They are kind and considerate to each other and to adults in the school. They enjoy contributing to the life of the school and readily take on roles such as that of school councillors.
- Behaviour in lesson is good and improved attitudes to learning are helping pupils make faster progress in class. They are keen to share their ideas with others and enjoy working in pairs and small groups. Pupils are eager to learn but their handwriting in books is sometimes untidy and prevents this aspect from being judged even higher.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe and well-cared for in school. They move very sensibly around school and play together happily on the playground. Pupils have a clear understanding of the different types of bullying and say that neither bullying nor racism is tolerated in their school. If pupils do fall out with each other, they trust the adults to help them to sort issues out if they are not able to do this for themselves.
- Pupils who are potentially vulnerable and those with additional learning, health, social or emotional needs are supported well. The pastoral care team, in particular, provides excellent support for pupils and their families and this is helping pupils to do increasingly well in school.
- Due to the concerted efforts of school leaders, staff and parents, pupils' attendance has

improved in the current year. It is now closer to, but not yet securely in line with, the national average and fewer pupils miss school regularly. Pupils who join the school at other than the normal times are helped to settle quickly. The breakfast club provided by the school and a firm focus on the need to attend school regularly and on time are contributing to the improvements being seen in pupils' progress in class.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Improvement is required because, although teaching shows some considerable strengths and pupils' achievement is beginning to improve, leadership and management are not yet securely good overall and over time. However, leaders have demonstrated the capacity to continue to improve the school.
- Some developments are relatively new, including the role of subject leaders, and have not yet had time to impact fully on the quality of teaching. Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, at times, they hold too positive a view of the pace of change in improvements brought about to date. Targets in leaders' improvement plans are not always securely linked to pupils' achievement. Some timescales are not tight enough to ensure that checks on the impact of actions take place regularly enough to ensure that things are improving quickly.
- The executive headteacher, who has led the school for the last two terms, the headteacher, other leaders, staff and governors all share a strong determination to continue to move the school forward. Middle leaders are beginning to check the quality of teaching and have a developing understanding of the relative strengths and aspects of teaching which still need to improve. The headteacher has developed a strong sense of teamwork among all who work in the school and staff morale is high.
- Leaders' determination to ensure improved consistency in performance between different groups reflects the school's commitment to inclusion and securing equal opportunities for every pupil.
- Systems to check on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement have been strengthened and improved. Assessment of pupils' progress is detailed and has become increasingly accurate. This is giving leaders a clear overview of how pupils are doing. Teachers are using the information from these regular reviews increasingly well to plan the next steps in learning and to identify any pupils who are falling behind.
- The curriculum contributes well overall to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Subjects are brought together into topics that capture pupils' interests well.
- Pupils of all ages enjoy sports activities and physical education lessons. The primary school sports funding is being used to extend after-school activities and promote a more active lifestyle for all pupils.
- The local authority provides ongoing support for the school. School leaders have also commissioned external specialists to help develop the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The local authority has worked with governors and school leaders to stabilise staffing. The governing body supported senior leaders in taking decisive action to improve the quality of teaching. Governors hold the school to account and ask searching questions from an increasingly well-informed standpoint.
 - Governors know where improvement is needed. They understand the need to ensure improved consistency in the quality of teaching and are keeping track of the current actions to improve pupils' achievement. They receive regular reports on pupils' progress and have an accurate overview of how well pupils are doing.
 - Governors are fully informed of how additional funds, including the pupil premium funding, are spent. They are aware of the difference these funds are beginning to make to eligible pupils.
 - Governors ensure that performance management systems are thorough and that targets set for leaders and staff are linked to pupils' progress and school priorities. They are fully aware of the link between achievement of progress targets and salary progression.

- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

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	135161
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	431001
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	422
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mal Holt
Headteacher	Karen Morris
Date of previous school inspection	2 July 2012
Telephone number	01925 630143
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