

Beechwood Primary and Nursery School

Meredith Street, Crewe, Cheshire, CW1 2PH

Inspection dates 16–17 September 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- This is a good school where everyone is welcomed and valued. The passionate and dedicated staff believe all pupils deserve the best they can offer.
- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors provide good leadership and management and have brought about considerable improvements in teaching, progress and learning since the time of the previous inspection.
- There is no sense of complacency. The headteacher, governors and staff continually strive for improvement. Their plans for improvement are sharp and focused.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They behave consistently well and this makes a very positive contribution to their good progress and the school's harmonious atmosphere.
- Pupils are proud of their school and take pride in their school work. This is reflected in the high quality of the presentation in all their work.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers and teaching assistants work closely as a team and use a range of strategies to support those pupils in danger of falling behind.
- Children settle quickly and make good progress in the early years.
- Pupils make rapid progress throughout the school. They make progress in reading, writing and mathematics at a much faster rate than usually seen. Achievement is good.
- Staff, pupils and parents agree that the school provides a safe and caring environment in which pupils can learn.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils, especially the most able, do not have enough opportunities to practise and apply the higher level punctuation and grammatical skills in extended pieces of writing in subjects other than English.
- In writing, pupils are not always provided with enough time to respond to teachers' marking and thereby improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 22 lessons. In addition, they made a number of short visits to lessons and listened to pupils read from Year 2, Year 3 and Year 6.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and senior and middle leaders. Inspectors also met with five governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body.
- Inspectors took account of 12 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), and the outcomes of conversations with parents during the inspection.
- Inspectors also considered the views expressed in the 20 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school at work and scrutinised the work in pupils' books, the school's own data on pupils' current progress, improvement plans, planning and monitoring information and minutes of governing body meetings. Records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding and child protection were also considered.

Inspection team

Anthony Kingston, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jennifer Lawrence	Additional Inspector
Jeremy Barnes	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Beechwood Primary is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- Since the time of the last inspection the school has experienced many changes in staffing.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils and, therefore, eligible for the pupil premium is well above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who do not have English as their first language is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who join the school other than at the usual time is well above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment in writing, especially for the most able by:
 - providing pupils with more well-planned opportunities to write at length in English and other subjects
 - ensuring pupils are always given time to correct and improve their work by acting on the guidance in teachers' marking.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has led the school extremely successfully through a period of considerable change since the time of the previous inspection. She has built a whole-school team with a shared ambition and determination for pupils to gain maximum benefit from their time at school. This has led to considerable improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement. Some middle leaders are relatively new to post but because of the excellent support given to them by senior leaders are growing into their role and responsibilities extremely quickly. Staff questionnaires reflect their resolve in supporting the headteacher's ambitions for the school.
- The school's plans for ongoing improvement reflect ambition. Current plans are focused and sharp identifying exactly what is to be improved. The criteria against which the headteacher and governors can evaluate success are precise. This enables them to assess the impact of the actions they have taken.
- The local authority knows the school well and has confidence in the school's ability to improve. It is committed to providing high-quality support for the school as necessary.
- Leaders at all levels use their accurate understanding of how well the school is doing to plan and implement priorities for improvement. This is evident, for example, in the success of the school's development and introduction of the new curriculum and the highly refined assessment and tracking system.
- The tracking system enables leaders and teachers to check on how pupils are doing. It is comprehensive and accurate and is used relentlessly to check on the effectiveness of teachers' work. The information is used very effectively by leaders to drive improvements forward and increase the rate at which all groups of pupils make progress.
- The management of teachers' performance has been used well to raise standards with clear links to the progress pupils make. Targets are also linked to priority areas in the school's development plans and teachers' areas of responsibility. This has been particularly effective in supporting teachers who are new to the profession to develop their skills.
- Leaders have prepared the school extremely well for the implementation of the new National Curriculum. For example, Year 3 and Year 4 pupils have been working within the new curriculum in English, mathematics and science since Autumn 2013. As a result of this forward thinking approach, the school has designed a curriculum which recognises the necessity to teach some subjects discretely but to thread the skills within reading, mathematics and especially writing through a range of exciting themes. It meets all the new requirements, including preparing pupils for life in British Society and to respect different views and cultures.
- Pupils, appreciate the broad range of after-school activities on offer, such as musical, sporting and artistic opportunities which make a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is particularly apparent in the stunning quality of art displayed around the school.
- The primary school sports funding has been used effectively to provide additional opportunities for pupils to develop their sporting skills and regularly participate in inter-school competitions. As a result of these initiatives, the proportion of pupils who now participate in sporting events has increased from 32% in 2013 to 78% in 2014. Money has also been spent judiciously on coaching for staff in order to develop their skills.
- Very strong support is provided for pupils and their families. Relationships with parents are good. This was exemplified by one parent and supported by many others who said, 'It's like an extended family. The staff are always there for you and are prepared to go that extra mile to help.' Effective support is provided for pupils entering the school throughout the year so that they can settle quickly.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the school exceptionally well and bring a wide range of skills and experience to support its work. They understand the school's strengths and what it needs to do to maintain improvements. Governors are aware of the quality of teaching and have a good understanding on managing teachers' performance and how well teachers should be remunerated for their level of expertise. Governors provide effective support and challenge, including setting school improvement targets which are reviewed regularly at governors' meetings. They monitor spending carefully and are aware of how the school is using the pupil premium to improve pupils' achievement and the school sports funding to improve the quality of provision for physical education and sport. Safeguarding and child protection have a high priority and governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are proud to belong to Beechwood Primary and Nursery School and relish opportunities to take on additional responsibilities such as acting as prefects to monitor behaviour in corridors and school ambassadors who escort visitors around the school. Their good attitudes and good behaviour make a significant contribution to the calm yet vibrant learning environment, the quality of their learning and the sense of belonging to a community in which everyone is valued.
- Staff are skilled at managing pupils' behaviour. When pupils find school life difficult they are given the support they need to help them to manage their behaviour successfully in lessons and on the playground. This is proving highly effective in helping pupils to reflect on and understand the consequences of their behaviour.
- Pupils themselves consider behaviour is good and managed well by all adults. Just occasionally in lessons, where activities are less interesting, a few pupils become fidgety and do not pay full attention.
- Current attendance is above average. This is a dramatic improvement since the previous inspection and is the consequence of the resolute and imaginative leadership by the headteacher, the school's Community Liaison Leader, Attendance Officer and good parent cooperation.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and their parents agree. Pupils trust their teachers and have a good understanding of personal safety, especially how to keep themselves safe on the internet, when crossing the road and when on their bicycles. They understand what is and what is not bullying and say that it rarely happens in school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good and is sometimes outstanding.
- Recently appointed teachers and teaching assistants have brought new strengths that have added to the overall quality of teaching. This is accelerating pupils' progress.
- Classrooms are bright and organised well with displays of pupils' work in a wide range of topics. They also contain prompts and information to which pupils can refer when working.
- A particularly strong aspect of all teaching is the excellent relationship between staff and pupils. Consequently, pupils are confident learners, prepared to try hard and unafraid of making mistakes because they know that they will learn from them. This approach to teaching has resulted in developing an excellent climate in which pupils can learn and feel safe.
- In most lessons, pupils learn well because teachers use assessment information effectively to ensure that work is sufficiently challenging for all.
- Throughout the school, pupils are given interesting and imaginative opportunities to apply and develop their reading, writing and mathematical skills to real-life activities, especially in mathematics. However, the most able pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to further develop their writing skills through greater engagement in extended pieces of writing in subjects other than English.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work closely and effectively together and use a range of strategies to support the learning of pupils who are in danger of falling behind. Pupils who need extra help are supported within classes or in individual or targeted group sessions. Teaching assistants model language well and their good questioning helps pupils to learn well.
- The school has invested in high levels of skilled and dedicated teaching assistants to support pupils' learning inside and outside the classroom, especially those with disabilities and special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language. They liaise very closely with teachers and lead specific group and one-to-one sessions. They are skilled and highly effective in giving pupils a boost to their learning.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work is good. It carefully explains what pupils are doing well and what they need to do to improve. However, pupils are not always provided with enough time to respond to teachers' marking, especially in writing and, therefore, do not always master the skills they need to reach the higher standards.

The achievement of pupils is good

- At Key Stage 1, standards in reading, writing and mathematics have improved enormously from being significantly below average in 2012 to average in 2014. This reflects the good progress pupils are now making in both Year 1 and Year 2.
- In 2014, progress throughout Key Stage 2 was well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, by the end of Year 6 standards improved from being significantly below average in 2013 to above average in mathematics, average in reading and slightly below average in writing.
- Pupils enjoy writing and much is vibrant. However, they do not have enough opportunities to engage in extended writing activities in subjects other than English. As a result, the skills required to reach the higher standards are not sufficiently well developed and some of the most able pupils do not, therefore, attain those standards of which they are capable.
- Pupils' writing is helped by the emphasis that is given to reading, which boosts their vocabulary and to speaking and explaining ideas in lessons. In a Year 2 class, for example, pupils were learning about adjectives. Challenged by the teacher to write a sentence about a tiger one pupil wrote, 'The amazing animal pounced on its prey with its strong legs.'
- Reading is a priority throughout the school. Pupils read every day at school and love the opportunities offered to them to spend time in the school's exceptionally comfortable and well-stocked library.
- The teaching of linking letters and sounds (phonics) is enabling younger pupils to tackle new and unfamiliar words with greater confidence. This is reflected in the above average proportion of six-year-olds who achieved the expected level in the recent phonics check.
- As pupils move through the school they develop a love of reading. This was exemplified by a group of Year 6 pupils who agreed that, 'When you're reading you get lost in new worlds and time just vanishes.'
- Pupils are proud of their achievements. This is reflected in the good quality of presentation in all their work.
- The school checks that all pupils have equal opportunity to succeed. The needs of all groups of pupils are identified promptly and support is added where most needed. As a result, all groups of pupils, including disabled pupils, those with special educational needs, pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress.
- The very small proportion of the most able pupils who on entry to Key Stage 2 had reached Level 3 by the end of Key Stage 1. However, throughout Key Stage 2, pupils made rapid progress and by the end of Year 6, the proportion reaching the higher Level 5 was slightly above the 2013 national average in reading and mathematics but below in writing.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide additional teaching assistants for group work, one-to-one tuition and nurturing activities. Because of the well-targeted support the attainment of disadvantaged pupils is similar to and sometimes above that of their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2014, those pupils eligible for pupil premium funding were six months ahead of those nationally.
- School data and inspection evidence show that disadvantaged pupils often make faster progress than their peers. This is because they are getting excellent additional support from their teachers and highly skilled teaching assistants.

The early years provision is good

- Children start in the early years with skills that vary, but which for the overwhelming majority are below those typical for their age.
- Children make good progress because of skilful teaching and precisely planned activities which are well matched to individual children's interests and needs. As a result, by the time children leave the early years, the proportion reaching a good level of development is above the national average.
- Vital to this rapid progress is the focus on developing children's personal skills. Adults sensitively explain how to behave in the early years, what the routines are and gently encourage children to work and play together and to support each other. As a result, children's behaviour is good, relationships are excellent and children are happy and feel safe and secure.
- Much thought has gone into developing children's language skills. Daily opportunities to work in groups listening to each other and discussing ideas make a significant improvement in children's language development.
- Teaching is good. Practitioners have a good understanding of how children learn and the skills they need to acquire while in the early years. This allows them to plan activities that match children's interests and

thereby promote rapid gains in their learning.

- The outdoor area has been thoughtfully developed to provide lots of interesting opportunities for learning. For example, the mud kitchen enables collaborative play and social skills, while the insect hotel encourages the development of children's curiosity and investigational skills. Early reading, writing and mathematical skills are taught thoughtfully. This is reflected in the good progress children make in their understanding and application of phonics.
- Children's learning journals reflect their time in the early years and the progress they have made. Leadership is good. The early years leader and her team have a good understanding of its strengths and areas for development of unit. They work well together to identify priorities and evaluate how well everything is working to improve on what they already do. They share the headteacher's passion about giving the best opportunities they can for all children in their care to be successful.

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	111211
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	451254

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	352
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Naomi Irving
Headteacher	Valda McGee
Date of previous school inspection	19 June 2013
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