

Beechwood Primary School

Linden Road, Luton, LU4 9RD

Inspection dates 7–8 May 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement.

- Pupils' achievement, although improving, is not yet consistently good across all year groups and subjects.
- Teaching is not good in all lessons. Some weaker teaching has not ensured that all pupils make good progress year on year, especially in writing.
- Progress is slower in writing than in reading and mathematics because pupils have limited opportunities to write in different subjects. This limits their opportunities to use rich and varied vocabulary to extend their writing skills.
- Teachers do not always use assessment information to set tasks that are demanding enough for all pupils, especially the most able.
- In some lessons, teachers do not use questioning skilfully enough to interest pupils, extend their thinking and increase their understanding.
- Where not enough activities are planned in lessons, pupils sometimes sit waiting with nothing to do when they have finished their work. Consequently, they make too little progress.
- Pupils' work is often presented untidily.

The school has the following strengths

- The school is improving. Over the past year, leaders and governors have worked strongly together to lead improvements in teaching and achievement. The school has a good capacity to improve further.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in English grammar, spelling and punctuation is above the national average. Attainment in reading and mathematics is in line with the national average.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They concentrate well on their work. The school keeps pupils safe and pupils themselves say they feel very safe.
- Provision for early years is good and helps children to make rapid progress in literacy and numeracy skills.
- Governors provide increasingly strong leadership. They have attended training and now regularly challenge leaders about the progress of all groups of pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in 29 lessons, 15 of which were seen jointly with the headteacher, a deputy headteacher or an assistant headteacher. Inspectors made a number of shorter visits to lessons and observed small groups of pupils taught by teachers and teaching assistants. The inspectors also listened to pupils in Years 2 and 6 read.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of staff, the chair and the vice-chair of the governing body, and two representatives of the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the 24 responses to the online Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View. They talked to parents in the morning as they accompanied their children to school. Inspectors also considered the 88 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' books and at a number of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' current attainment and progress; the school's evaluation of its performance; school improvement planning; documentation relating to teachers' performance over time; and records relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Tusha Chakraborti, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Graham Marshall	Additional Inspector
Neil Harvey	Additional Inspector
Christine Senior	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Children in the early years attend full-time in the Reception classes and part-time in the Nursery classes.
- Most pupils come from Asian or British Asian backgrounds. Most of these pupils speak English as an additional language. There is a small proportion of pupils who are at the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is extra funding which supports the education of children in the care of the local authority and pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school is a member of the area cluster group, which includes local nursery, primary and secondary schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in all subjects and classes by:
 - making sure that all tasks set in lessons take into account what pupils can already do and are sufficiently demanding for pupils of all abilities, particularly the most-able
 - making sure that all pupils are able to move on to their next task as soon as they are ready
 - questioning pupils regularly and skilfully to ensure that they are well engaged in their learning.
- Speed up pupils' progress in all areas, especially in writing, in both Key Stages 1 and 2 by making sure that:
 - pupils have regular opportunities to write in subjects other than English so that they can develop a richer, more ambitious and interesting vocabulary
 - pupils improve their presentation skills across the school.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher sets a clear sense of purpose and direction to improve all aspects of the school's work. Working closely with other leaders and the governing body, he has ensured a culture of effective teamwork whereby all staff are included in the drive to move the school forward. As a result, after a short period of decline, the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement have improved over the past year. Standards are higher than when the school was last inspected.
- The school's leaders have established clear responsibilities at all levels of leadership. Year leaders, inclusion managers and subject leaders work well together to improve all aspects of the school's work.
- Leaders monitor the quality of teaching and the pupils' progress regularly and effectively. Arrangements for checking staff performance are rigorous. Staff are set challenging performance targets and are set demanding targets for improvement, linked closely to the progress of pupils in their classes. Teachers receive good opportunities for professional development. They understand the link between their performance and their rates of pay.
- The curriculum is broad and provides many opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of their community, although opportunities for them to extend their vocabulary in subjects other than English are not widespread.
- Pupils learn to respect the values of others and that any form of discrimination is wrong. The school places a strong emphasis on promoting pupils' understanding of British values as well as the importance of tolerance, perseverance and unity. This prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through a range of subjects, including religious studies, art, music and sporting activities. A range of clubs and events, such as 'world book day' and 'science and technology day', enhance pupils' enjoyment of learning.
- The school uses the primary physical education and sports funding well. It employs specialist coaches who provide additional sporting provision in and after school, as well as training for staff to enhance their expertise. Pupils enjoy a range of inter-school competitions and their participation rate is now high.
- The procedures for the safeguarding of pupils are rigorous and meet statutory requirements. All staff have received training on child protection. They implement the procedures effectively so that the school is a safe place for pupils.
- All staff are committed to sustaining equal opportunity for all pupils and to ensure that there is no discrimination, whatever pupils' background or ability. All pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, benefit from high-quality adult care and good relationships.
- The school uses pupil premium funding effectively to support eligible pupils. It is used to support these pupils individually or in groups.
- The school gives good support to pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable, including pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, and those who are at the early stages of learning English, so they now make faster progress.
- The school is supported well by the local authority appointed adviser, who is a headteacher of a local primary school and a national leader of education, to improve the school's performance. The school also works very well with local primary and secondary schools to enrich pupils' experiences and enable staff to share and develop good practice.
- The school has a close partnership with parents. All parents spoken to during the inspection were very positive and pleased with all the school is doing for their children. Staff provide good support to parents on how they can help their children's learning at home through a range of workshops, information

evenings and newsletters.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors visit the school regularly to gain first-hand knowledge of all aspects of the school's work. They have a good understanding of how well pupils are progressing and the effectiveness of teaching. They challenge leaders and ask pertinent questions about how any underperformance, in teaching and in pupils' achievement, is tackled. Governors know the results pupils attain in national tests and understand how they compare nationally. They set challenging targets for the headteacher and understand how each member of staff is paid according to their progress towards their targets. Governors monitor the school's finances carefully and ensure that the funds for sports and pupil premium are used effectively to improve pupils' achievement and their well-being. They ensure that the safeguarding requirements are met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are very proud of their school and describe it as 'like a family'. They value the diversity of culture and religion in and outside their school and demonstrate a good understanding of British values and equality. They have positive attitudes to learning and show respect for each other and adults at all times.

- Staff implement the school's procedures for managing pupils' behaviour fairly and consistently. This has a positive impact on pupils' behaviour, including that of those with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. Pupils appreciate the new behaviour policy. They are confident that behaviour in school is good and that teachers deal with any rare, minor disruption in lessons quickly and effectively to restore a positive learning environment in classrooms.
- Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities, such as being members of the school council and raising funds for national and international charities. Recently they raised funds for a sponsored child in Ethiopia, exchanging letters to develop their understanding. They take responsibility for organising activities during the whole school events like 'world book day' and 'science and technology day'.
- Pupils' attendance is broadly in line with the national average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Parents are confident that their children are safe at school at all times. Pupils say that they feel very safe and that they receive high-quality care and support from all the adults in the school. They say bullying is very rare and that, should it occur, it is quickly dealt with.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying. They are well aware of the dangers of the misuse of the internet, social networking sites and drugs and alcohol. They have a mature understanding of a range of bullying issues that pupils of their age may encounter. They know what to do about them should they occur.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching is improving but it is not yet enabling pupils across the school to acquire all the key skills necessary for good progress, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of how much progress pupils can make. In some cases, they do not make effective use of the information they have about what pupils already know and can do to ensure that work is sufficiently challenging for all groups of pupils, especially the most able. Consequently, pupils do not always achieve the standards of which they are capable.
- Teachers do not always question pupils skilfully to extend their knowledge and understanding of the

contents and skills that they are learning. Sometimes, pupils have to wait too long for their teacher's attention when they finish their work and so do not make enough progress.

- In writing, teachers do not consistently ensure that pupils are able to write at length in different subjects. Teaching of the use of varied and rich language to make writing more mature and interesting is limited. Consequently, pupils do not achieve high enough standards in writing, even though they make good progress in using grammar and punctuation accurately. Pupils' presentation skills are weak.
- In some lessons, pupils make particularly good progress because teachers have good subject knowledge and use effective questioning to check on their understanding and build on what they already know. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. As a result, pupils increase their self-esteem and make good progress.
- There is a positive climate for learning in lessons and pupils respond readily to tasks, showing interest and enthusiasm. Relationships are good and teachers manage behaviour well in all classes. In most lessons, teachers ensure that the teaching assistants give pupils the help they need to improve their work.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is effective, as a result, pupils develop the skills of using letter sounds to read and write effectively. This is helping them to make faster progress in reading this year. In mathematics, pupils are increasingly taught calculation and problem solving skills well.
- Marking of pupils' work is effective, particularly in English and mathematics. This, along with regular verbal feedback, provides clear and effective guidance for the next steps pupils need to take to move their learning on. Pupils act on teachers' marking and the support they receive from their teachers helps improve their progress.
- In the Nursery and Reception classes, children enjoy using their developing knowledge of phonics to help them read new words. Outdoor activities are used effectively to extend and reinforce learning in all areas.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Except in the early years, the progress of different groups is not yet good. Over time, pupils have not made consistently good progress in their knowledge and skills in reading, writing and mathematics across year groups. In 2013, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was broadly average by the end of Year 6. In 2014, pupils' attainment in writing dipped, to be significantly below average. Standards remained average in reading and mathematics. Attainment by the end of Year 2 has been broadly average over the past three years.
- In writing, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to write in different subjects extensively, using rich and varied vocabulary. As a result, they do not reach the standards of which they are capable. Their presentation skills are often weak. Older pupils are however, gaining an increasing understanding of different styles of writing and are keen to discuss their favourite characters from books.
- In Year 6 in 2014, the gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils was about a term behind that of other pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. These pupils were approximately two terms behind other pupils nationally in reading and writing, and one term behind in mathematics. These pupils are now attaining standards that are in line with those of their classmates. This is due to the effective support provided which is enabling these pupils to make accelerated progress throughout the school. However, like that of their classmates, their progress still requires improvement.
- Pupils' work and the school's own assessment data show that the progress of current pupils has accelerated this year, especially in reading and mathematics. The proportion of pupils making faster progress has increased rapidly in both Key Stages 1 and 2. As a result, a higher proportion of pupils are on track to achieve above average standards by the end of the year, particularly in reading and mathematics.

- An increasing number of the most-able pupils are making good progress this year, especially in reading and mathematics. They read a range of stories and information texts which enhance their understanding of different styles of texts. In mathematics, they use calculation skills well to solve problems. However, sometimes, the progress of these pupils slows. This is because teachers do not always set them challenging tasks that make them think and make rapid progress in gaining higher-level skills.
- In the early years, children achieve well. Results of the Year 1 phonics check were well above the national average in 2013 and 2014. During the inspection, younger pupils showed they can use their knowledge of phonics to read unfamiliar words.
- Pupils who are at the early stages of learning English achieve broadly in line with their classmates. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including those with specific social and emotional needs, make similar progress to others because they are supported increasingly well in one-to-one and small-group sessions which help them learn effectively.

The early years provision

is good

- Improved leadership and teaching ensure that children make better progress in the early years than in the rest of the school. As a result of this good leadership, children are given rich and interesting learning opportunities. All adults provide children with an enjoyable, safe and secure learning environment, so that children feel very safe and secure, and they quickly grow in confidence.
- Children start in the Nursery and Reception with skills that are below those typical for their age in language and communication skills and numeracy. They make good progress because adults use stimulating learning resources effectively to ensure rapid progress from their low starting points. The proportion of children who achieve a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year is in line with the national average. They are well prepared for their entry into Key Stage 1.
- Teaching is good. Regular teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) supports children well in developing their reading and writing skills. Children show a great deal of interest in shared reading and many are able to write their names and short sentences. Staff provide a range of engaging activities that encourage children to become confident in pursuing indoor and outdoor activities that match their own interests as well as those directed by adults. 'Learning journals', in which children's achievements are recorded, are used effectively to check on children's progress and to plan their learning.
- Behaviour is good. Children have an excellent relationship with their teachers and learning support assistants. They are confident in speaking to adults, sharing concerns and celebrating their achievements. They listen carefully, support one another and are starting to take on simple responsibilities, such as tidying up. Appropriate procedures ensure they are safe in the setting.
- The school works in close contact with families from before their children start school and throughout their time in the early years. All parents consulted during the inspection at the start of the day stated that their contributions are valued and that they are very happy with the school's work with their children. Children's 'learning journals' are shared with parents regularly. As a result, parents know how their children are doing in school and are able to support their learning at home.

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	134701
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	456060

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	880
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Hish Parker
Headteacher	Mark Sherwin
Date of previous school inspection	21 June 2012
Telephone number	01582 518400
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