

# Beechwood Primary School

Grasmere Drive, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 2TT

**Inspection dates** 8–9 December 2015

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Leaders have established a happy and stimulating environment where pupils develop an enthusiasm for learning and grow in confidence.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Teachers plan engaging tasks which enable pupils to learn effectively.
- Governors know the school well. They share the headteacher's determination to further improve outcomes for pupils and the quality of teaching.
- Pupils make good progress from their starting points because teachers expect them to learn independently and think for themselves. This ensures that pupils leave the school ready for learning in secondary education.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are improving across the school. The proportion of pupils meeting the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics is above the national average.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. They are proud to be part of the school and show respect to teachers and each other.
- The broad and balanced curriculum provides rich learning experiences across a range of subjects. The school makes good use of its grounds to provide outdoor learning opportunities for pupils.
- Children in the early years make a positive start to their school lives. They are happy and safe and enjoy achieving success in their learning.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are extremely positive. The school's ethos makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils attend school regularly and few are persistently absent. Pupils and parents agree that pupils are kept safe.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not make outstanding progress. The most-able pupils are not always given work that challenges them enough.
- Leaders have not ensured that the school's revised marking policy is followed consistently in all classes.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to complete reasoning and problem-solving activities in mathematics lessons.
- Action plans are not always focused sharply enough for governors to be able to measure the impact of school improvement activities.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching further so that it enables all pupils throughout the school, especially the most able, to reach their full potential by:
  - giving pupils more opportunities to apply their skills to a wider range of reasoning and problem-solving activities in mathematics lessons
  - ensuring that pupils have time to respond to marking comments and other feedback in their work books
  - ensuring that the work set for all pupils, especially the most able, is always well matched to their abilities and that pupils in all classes understand exactly what is expected from them in every lesson.
  
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management further by:
  - ensuring that all leaders evaluate the quality of pupils' work more rigorously in order to continually drive improvement in all subjects
  - developing action plans further so that progress against targets is easier to measure.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher and other leaders are focused on ensuring that pupils do well. The school is an 'Advanced Thinking School' and as such, pupils are taught to think for themselves and develop self-reliance in their learning. As a result, pupils' skills in learning independently are well developed.
- Leaders have worked hard to implement new ways to assess how well pupils are learning. Senior leaders use this information, alongside evidence from work in pupils' books and lesson observations, to monitor and improve standards in teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, staff are held to account for their performance and outcomes for pupils across the school are improving.
- Leaders ensure that pupils have a good awareness of British values and that their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is well developed. Pupils value their own differences and know right from wrong. They experience democracy when voting for candidates to join the Junior Leadership Team. Leaders further develop pupils' knowledge of British values through a series of well-planned assemblies and by teaching pupils through 'excellence weeks' on the subject.
- Pupil premium funding is used well to support disadvantaged pupils throughout the school. The funding is mainly used to employ additional adult support and this has ensured that the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are good.
- The primary school sports funding is used effectively to provide a wide range of sporting activities and also to provide additional training for staff. Pupils also have a say in which sports they would like to try, and they enjoyed working with a basketball coach during a themed sports week. Pupils also have opportunities to take part in sporting competition, such as the local swimming gala. There are many extra-curricular activities available to pupils, such as netball, football, gardening and computing. The vast majority of pupils have attended at least some of these sessions.
- Systems to monitor the attendance of pupils are effective. Pupils attend school regularly and overall attendance is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who miss school regularly is low and is below the national average.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils enjoy a broad and balanced curriculum. Teachers make good use of the school grounds to engage pupils in outdoor learning. Pupils also enjoy school visits which broaden their understanding of subjects, such as a recent visit to York to find out more about the Mayan civilisation. Pupils also develop skills in the arts; every pupil in Key Stage 2 learns how to play a musical instrument. Pupils also have opportunities to get involved in large-scale projects, such as designing parts of the website and planning for and designing outdoor play equipment. These experiences provide pupils with purposeful opportunities and the motivation to learn.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View are very pleased with the education provided by the school. They say that pupils are happy, safe and are making good progress. Every parent responding to the survey said that they would recommend the school to others.
- The local authority provides effective support to the school. Advisers know the school well and have provided tailored support, for example when reviewing provision in the early years. They have provided opportunities for leaders to share good practice with other schools in the borough.
- Leaders of subjects share the headteacher's high expectations. They are involved in the regular monitoring of standards within their subjects and also share good practice, for example by completing demonstration lessons for other teachers to observe. They also ensure that all staff receive the training they need to be effective. Leaders check the standard of work in pupils' books and provide general, whole-school findings for staff. However, this sometimes lacks rigour in respect of not all teachers knowing exactly what they need to do to match the highest standards within school.
- Leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development of the school. Action plans address the correct priorities, but plans could be developed further so that it is easier for governors to measure the progress made against targets.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governance of the school is good because governors know the school well. They visit the school regularly and join leaders in monitoring school effectiveness. They offer support and also hold leaders to account for pupils' outcomes, which are rising.
  - Governors have a good understanding of national assessment information and of the performance of pupils currently at the school. They are aware of the relative strengths and weaknesses in school and

have challenged leaders to improve outcomes for pupils in writing, which are now rising across the school.

- The governing body receives detailed information from the headteacher which allows them to challenge and support. They do not just rely on the headteacher for information; they also receive reports from external advisers who work alongside the headteacher in a drive for improvement. They understand the link between staff performance and pay progression.
- Governors help to ensure that the pupil premium and primary sports funding have an impact on improving pupils' opportunities and outcomes.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. School leaders and governors create a safe culture by ensuring that policies and procedures are kept up to date. Leaders ensure that all staff receive training regularly, including when new staff join the school. Governors have completed training in safer recruitment along with school leaders and this has ensured that there is an accurate record of pre-employment checks on all new staff. Risk assessments are completed for activities and areas around the school site and also when pupils go on trips to ensure that all are kept safe. Leaders ensure that vulnerable pupils are well supported and that external agencies are doing all they can to provide timely support to pupils and their families.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

is good

- The quality of teaching across the school is good overall and pupils make good progress from their starting points. Teachers plan lessons which interest and engage pupils so they learn well.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are strong and respectful. Pupils work well together in lessons and discuss their ideas to challenge each other's thinking. Pupils feel well supported by staff when they are struggling with their work. Parents agree that pupils are taught well and make good progress.
- Teachers encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. They provide prompts and systems for pupils to learn so they are not over-reliant on staff for support. This helps pupils to develop into confident and independent learners.
- Classrooms are stimulating and well ordered and good use is made of technology to engage pupils in their learning. Pupils say that the technology used by teachers makes their lessons fun and exciting, for example when teachers show video clips to support their teaching. Resources in classrooms are well ordered and labelled which supports pupils' skills in independent learning.
- Pupils enjoy the creative homework tasks that are set for them, for example when researching new topics. They also enjoy opportunities to read and practise spellings and have access to a range of online learning materials to support their learning at home.
- Work in pupils' books confirms that they make good progress in English and mathematics. Pupils have enjoyed changes to the teaching of writing which allow them to study a class novel in detail. Teachers use assessment information well to plan lessons which challenge pupils to improve. Pupils also have more opportunities to edit and improve their writing. As a result of changes to the teaching of writing, pupils are now making good progress in all classes.
- Teachers mark pupils' work in accordance with the school's agreed marking policy. Pupils are praised when they have achieved well. Teachers write comments allowing pupils to complete further practice and further improve their learning. However, pupils are not always given the opportunity to complete this further practice.
- Pupils are given regular opportunities to complete number work and calculations within mathematics lessons. However, they do not have enough opportunities to apply this mathematical knowledge to solve problems and to develop their reasoning skills.
- Teachers typically have secure subject knowledge. Most teachers assess pupils' learning throughout each lesson and where there are misconceptions, they address them quickly. Most teachers ensure that pupils know exactly what they are going to learn and why, and also explain carefully how they might achieve their targets within the lesson. In a minority of lessons observed, not all pupils fully understood how they would achieve success by the end of the lesson.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare **is good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school motto of 'Think for yourself, care for others' is lived out in practice. Pupils develop independence in their learning, but also collaborate well with their peers to share their thoughts and opinions. Relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils and their peers are strong.
- Pupils are confident and are happy to discuss their work and their experience at school. They are open about their opinions and can justify their viewpoints. Pupils who need additional support with their work demonstrate maturity by explaining clearly how this support adds to their learning.
- Older pupils take on additional responsibilities in school, such as being buddies for younger children in the Reception class. They look out for their buddies at playtimes and at other times and help them to settle in at Beechwood. Pupils take a pride in this work. They also enjoy contributing to school developments through the Junior Leadership Team.
- Pupils all say that they feel safe and are taught how to stay safe, including when using the internet. All parents who responded to Parent View agreed that pupils feel safe and that they are well looked after.
- Leaders ensure that all staff have regular safeguarding training. As a result, staff know how to keep pupils safe and free from harm.
- Pupils are well rewarded for working hard. They receive housepoints for good work and the winning house is rewarded at the end of term with a treat, such as a trip to the swimming baths. They also enjoy being recognised for good behaviour and having the chance to win a prize from the 'golden box' in assemblies.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school because expectations for behaviour are high and clear to everyone. Pupils are polite and courteous and the school is a calm and orderly place.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different types of bullying, including cyber bullying. They say that bullying never happens and would be confident that it would be quickly dealt with if it did happen. This is a view shared by all parents who responded to Parent View.
- Playtimes are enjoyable occasions. The playground is well resourced and pupils have plenty to do. Consequently, pupils learn to play well together and develop strong social skills. Most pupils respond quickly when the bell is rung for the end of playtime and line up sensibly.
- Pupils are eager and keen to work in lessons, particularly when they are appropriately challenged. They usually respond quickly to adults' instructions and learn to persevere when faced with challenges. Very occasionally, pupils lose focus when the level of challenge is not appropriate and this slows the pace of learning.

## Outcomes for pupils **are good**

- Pupils in all classes make good progress from their starting points across a range of subjects, including mathematics and English. School records and work in pupils' writing books show that pupils are now making stronger progress in writing. The progress made by pupils from entry to the school in the Reception Year to their exit from school in Year 6 is good.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 decreased in 2014 due to the proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs in a very small class. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics were higher in 2015 and were above the national average.
- Pupils make good progress from their starting points in the early years. The proportion of pupils achieving a good level of development at the end of the early years has improved over the last three years but is still below the national average.
- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics across Key Stage 1 from their starting points.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress from their starting points because of the good support they receive. Frequent checks on their progress highlight any gaps in their learning and additional support is arranged where needed.

- The small proportion of disadvantaged pupils, entitled to support through the pupil premium funding, generally make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The most-able pupils do not always reach the standards expected of them, especially in writing. Not enough of the most-able pupils make more progress than expected in writing compared to other pupils nationally.

## Early years provision

is good

- The leadership and management of the early years are good. Leaders have ensured that children are happy and safe and that learning activities are stimulating so that children make good progress.
- Good teaching engages children and motivates them to learn. Children's knowledge and skills are assessed regularly and activities are then planned which capture pupils' interests and build on what they already know.
- In 2015 and in previous years, there were too few disadvantaged children in the early years to report specifically on their outcomes and progress without identifying individuals.
- Children's behaviour is good. They are active and inquisitive learners who work well together and are happy to share. They are well supervised in a safe environment.
- Children show perseverance in their learning because they are interested in what they are doing. Adults work well to interact and question children to move their learning forwards. Children enjoy learning and succeeding, for example when getting the correct answers when playing word games on the large screen.
- Staff in the early years know the children and families well. Information is shared with parents regularly and school records indicate that all parents are happy with the arrangements when children first start in Reception and how well children are supported when settling in.
- Pupils generally enter Reception with skills that are below those typically expected for their age. They make good progress across early years and more children are now achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception. However, the proportion of pupils achieving a good level of development is still below the national average. Leaders and staff have been working with other schools in the borough and with experts from the local authority to help accelerate progress in the early years, and this is having a positive effect. As a result, a new assessment system has been introduced, which helps leaders to check more closely how children are learning throughout Reception Year.
- Classrooms are bright, welcoming and stimulating for children to investigate and explore. All areas of learning are promoted well indoors, but at times children could have more exposure to letters and numbers when working outdoors. Children love working in the outdoor areas, either making large structures, such as a reindeer's sleigh, or by role playing in the mud kitchen.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	111175
<b>Local authority</b>	Halton
<b>Inspection number</b>	10002556

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	149
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Knights
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stephanie Kidd
<b>Telephone number</b>	01928 560479
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.beechwoodschoolruncorn.co.uk">www.beechwoodschoolruncorn.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:sec.beechwood@halton.gov.uk">sec.beechwood@halton.gov.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	10 July 2012

## Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is well below the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children that are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs is below the national average.
- There is out-of-hours provision including private day-care provision for 0 to 4-year-olds and a pre-school on the school site. They are not managed by the governing body and are subject to separate inspections.
- In 2014, the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher, deputy headteacher and four new teachers have been appointed.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons in all classes and in a range of subjects. Four joint observations took place with the headteacher.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms and assessed the school's promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Inspectors also observed pupils in the playground and during lunchtime.
- Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and in the learning journals of children in the early years.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, special educational needs coordinator and subject leaders. Inspectors met with three members of the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body. A telephone conversation took place with the School Improvement Adviser from the local authority.
- A group of pupils discussed their opinions about the school and their learning with an inspector. Inspectors also spoke informally with pupils on the playground.
- Thirty-three responses to Ofsted's online parent survey (Parent View) were also considered.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including information on pupils' outcomes, the school's evaluation of its own performance and its development plan. Behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding were also scrutinised.

## Inspection team

Ian Hardman, Lead inspector

David Blackburne

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector



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