

# Beacon Primary School

Davis Road, New Invention, Willenhall, West Midlands WV12 5HA

## Inspection dates

14–15 March 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher, through his commitment, vision and imagination, has led a rapid improvement in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. He sets very high expectations for pupils and staff alike.
- The governing body understands the school's strengths and weaknesses in detail, and provides effective support and scrutiny.
- Pupils benefit greatly from a broad and often exciting curriculum. They enjoy good extra-curricular activities, especially in sport.
- Leaders have successfully extended the early years provision to include two-year-olds. Many children in the younger years catch up rapidly from low starting points.
- Subject and other middle leaders, several of whom are new to their roles, are not yet fully effective in driving up the quality of teaching.
- Teachers only occasionally set work that requires pupils, particularly the most able, to think deeply and consider how they can apply their knowledge in new ways.
- Teaching in mathematics does not often encourage pupils to reason mathematically and explain their thinking.
- In 2016, pupils left key stage 2 having made progress in writing and mathematics that was above the national average.
- Pupils across the school, including those who are disadvantaged, are currently making strong progress in English, mathematics and a range of other subjects including science, music and physical education (PE).
- Teaching is good. Teachers set work that builds upon what pupils can already do, and check carefully on their progress in lessons.
- Staff care for pupils exceptionally well. They use their detailed knowledge to provide each individual with every opportunity to succeed. Safeguarding is effective.
- Pupils' attitudes to school are consistently positive. They show exceptional care for each other, and take great pride in their work. They behave well in lessons and at social times.
- The rate of attendance is rising, but remains below the national average.
- Leaders do not track of the achievement of the most able pupils specifically, and so they cannot check easily on how well teaching is helping this key group to progress.

## Full report

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

- Further improve the quality of teaching by:
  - ensuring teachers set tasks for pupils, especially the most able, that make them think hard and apply their knowledge in new ways
  - making sure that pupils are given frequent opportunities to develop their ability to reason mathematically.
- Deepen the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - extending the contribution which subject and other middle leaders make to improving the quality of teaching
  - checking on the progress of the most able pupils as a group, so that leaders and governors can readily judge the impact of teaching on their academic progress
  - providing training to enable all teachers to set work which regularly deepens pupils' understanding.
- Increase the rate of pupils' attendance to at least the national average by working intensively with the small minority of parents whose children are frequently absent.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher is ambitious for the school, and has established high expectations for pupils and for staff. As a result, both the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement have risen rapidly since the last inspection. There is a very strong sense of teamwork in the school that unites staff, pupils and parents.
- Leaders demonstrate imagination alongside their determination. Three examples illustrate this. The school has engaged a voice coach to improve pupils' self-confidence, spoken English and spelling. Leaders have promoted sports that are suitable for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They have decorated areas of the school with exquisite detail to resemble for example, a French bistro, Narnia or the civic buildings of London.
- Leaders use their knowledge of pupils' circumstances expertly to try to ensure that everyone has a fair chance to succeed. The school spends the pupil premium well, largely on a tightly managed programme of academic support for pupils who need to catch up. Leaders spend the physical education and sport premium effectively on promoting competitive sport and training for staff. This physical education provision is well linked to the broader promotion of health, fitness and well-being.
- Pupils benefit from a broad curriculum, which places due weight on knowledge and skills in a wide range of subjects in addition to English and mathematics. Trips to places of interest, such as the theatre or Warwick Castle, and themed days add to pupils' engagement with their work. A number of extra-curricular activities, largely in sport, further enhance pupils' learning.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development most effectively, so that pupils respect adults and learn to care for each other. They have an excellent understanding of British values. They learn to be tolerant of different cultures and traditions, understand democracy and see how their views contribute to the improvement of the school.
- Leaders set ambitious targets for pupils' achievement, and judge their progress in all core and foundation subjects using a commercial assessment scheme. They use the outcomes of assessments to identify those who are at risk of falling behind. Teachers check their judgements with one another, and increasingly with those made in other schools.
- Leaders hold teachers rigorously to account for their pupils' progress, and this is closely linked to the formal management of their performance. Staff, including teachers who are at an early stage of their careers, are confident in asking for support. They say that training is consistently enabling them to develop their skills.
- Those who lead provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities spend the additional money provided for these pupils effectively. They make sure that teachers understand how to meet their needs in the classroom, and check frequently on their progress.
- Leaders have an accurate and detailed view of the school, and use this to draw up relevant plans for improvement. However, although they are aware of the progress

made by other groups of pupils, they do not look specifically at that made by the most able. They therefore miss the opportunity to identify the extent to which teaching is meeting the needs of this particular group.

- Teachers who lead subjects and other aspects of the school's provision are enthusiastic and appreciate the confidence placed in them by senior leaders. They provide support to their colleagues, and help to check on standards. However, some are new to their roles and do not have the expert knowledge of their area of responsibility to help teachers become outstanding practitioners.
- The local authority has provided valuable support and advice to the leaders, particularly on aspects of leadership and management. The extent of officers' involvement with the school has rightly diminished as leaders have become more assured and standards have risen.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governance is effective.
- Governors have a detailed knowledge of the school, and share the headteacher's ambition and vision. Individual governors bring particular expertise to the school, including their own understanding of leadership in education. Governors recognise the need to update their own knowledge and skills, and seek external advice when appropriate.
- Governors work closely with senior leaders and some visit the school frequently. They make sure that they are well informed about pupils' progress at the school, and how it compares with that of pupils nationally. They check on the expenditure of additional funding provided to support groups of pupils, and evaluate its impact on their progress.
- The governing body has a thorough knowledge of the risks faced by pupils in the local community, and ensures that leaders take all the steps necessary to keep pupils safe. Governors make sure that they follow the right procedures when staff are appointed, and that leaders make all the necessary checks on all who come into contact with children. They have made major improvements to the physical security of the site.
- Governors make appropriate arrangements for the management of the headteacher's performance, and ensure that teachers' pay is managed fairly. They have supported leaders by holding discussions with the parents of those pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's arrangements meet all statutory requirements, and all policies and procedures are up to date. The headteacher has ensured that all staff are familiar with child protection guidance and have been trained to an appropriate level. Leaders make sure that parents are aware of the school's policies and how they can play their part in keeping children safe. Posters around the school remind children and adults what to do if they have a concern.

- Inspectors found that staff keep detailed and well-organised records. They work well with parents and others to help pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved rapidly. Teachers have high expectations for their pupils, and set work which builds effectively on what they can already do. Pupils, in turn, are enthusiastic and willing to work hard.
- Learning is characterised by very strong relationships between pupils and adults in the classroom. Staff manage pupils' behaviour effectively, including that of a small number of pupils with significant additional needs. Pupils collaborate well when asked to do so, and are very willing to help each other learn.
- Teachers plan carefully to make sure that the work set is pitched at the right level. They have good subject knowledge, and explain new ideas clearly, using the correct subject-specific terms. Teachers check effectively on pupils' progress during lessons so that they can move on pupils who have understood the work, and challenge any misconceptions. They encourage pupils to reflect on their work, learn from their mistakes and improve.
- Teaching assistants generally work effectively in the main classroom with individual pupils and small groups, refocusing teachers' questions and breaking learning down into smaller steps. They also lead well-planned sessions for small groups of pupils at risk of falling behind. Pupils report that homework makes a valuable contribution to their learning.
- Starting in the early years, adults develop pupils' phonic knowledge well because they introduce letters and sounds in a structured sequence. They use a variety of different techniques to enable pupils to read and to record the sounds in writing. Teachers give older pupils a range of strategies to help them understand what they read, and link reading texts effectively to the topics pupils are studying. The school makes sure that those pupils who read little at home frequently read aloud to adults before school starts.
- Pupils who spoke with inspectors enjoy reading and staff ensure that the books they read for pleasure are well matched to their abilities. Weaker readers catch up quickly because they know how to use their phonic knowledge to sound out unfamiliar words and because the school promotes reading so effectively. More-able readers cope well with more demanding texts, but some lack a little expression and fluency when reading aloud.
- The school has addressed the weaknesses in writing identified in the last inspection report. It ensures that from an early age, pupils pay close attention to handwriting, punctuation and spelling. Teachers encourage pupils to develop a more mature written style by including particular features in their writing, such as a number of adjectives or a particular type of sentence. In the older years, the most able pupils sometimes lack opportunities in English lessons to apply all their writing skills, and pupils' best writing

comes when they have the opportunity to write at length in other areas of the curriculum.

- Teaching in mathematics is focused on building up pupils' knowledge and calculation skills, and ensuring that they understand the straightforward practical application of the skills they have learned. However, a scrutiny of workbooks in mathematics showed that many pupils had few opportunities to reason mathematically and think more deeply about how they could apply their understanding in new ways.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Leaders take a well-coordinated approach to all aspects of pupils' welfare. They ensure that pupils are safe, and promote physical fitness, healthy eating and emotional wellbeing most effectively. Staff use their detailed knowledge to encourage and nurture all pupils, especially the most vulnerable.
- Pupils feel entirely safe in school, and say that there is no bullying, adding that pupils would know whom to turn to if any problems arose. The school teaches pupils how to stay safe from a wide range of different risks. Pupils explained to inspectors in detail how to stay safe online, the importance of road safety and fire safety in the home. Leaders and governors have taken appropriate steps to protect pupils from any particular risks that arise locally.
- Leaders have identified the importance of physical fitness in a neighbourhood where levels of obesity have been particularly high. In response, they have successfully promoted competitive sport, and require each class to walk at least a mile every day. Pupils understand the benefits of healthy eating, and increasing numbers are eating healthily at lunchtime. The school also runs after-school classes which show pupils how to prepare food from basic ingredients.
- Discussions during the inspection showed that the school's sporting profile has also increased pupils' self-esteem. Pupils appreciate the improvements leaders have made in the school, and can explain how these have encouraged them to work hard. They show a conspicuous concern for each other, and older pupils act as play leaders and buddies at lunchtime. Several pupils join the school in the middle of a key stage, and those who spoke to inspectors said that they had been made most welcome.
- Leaders' willingness to listen to pupils' views, both about their learning and about the development of the school, enhances pupils' confidence and contributes to the strong sense of teamwork within the school.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of the importance of rules and of their own responsibilities. They follow staff instructions quickly and with no fuss. Their conduct at social times is friendly and sensible. Pupils play happily together, in part because

there are a range of activities on offer both within the building and in a well-maintained outdoor playground.

- Pupils very much enjoy learning, and are willing to persevere and work hard. They take a pride in their written work and present it neatly. They apply themselves consistently well when working with others and on their own. Inspection evidence showed that pupils discuss and debate challenging issues in a considered way, showing both a keen interest in and respect for others' views.
- Leaders keep good records of behavioural incidents, and these show a sharp reduction in incidents of poor behaviour. This results from the consistent implementation of a policy based on rewarding good conduct, which pupils understand and respect. The school no longer uses fixed-term exclusion, but has excluded two pupils permanently this academic year as an appropriate sanction in two very serious cases of misbehaviour.
- The behaviour of the few individual pupils who demonstrate particular behavioural needs, some of whom join the school in-year, shows considerable improvement.
- When occasionally teachers do not set work that builds securely on what pupils already understand, they sometimes become a little inattentive.
- Pupils' overall rate of attendance fell during the last academic year. The school has made strenuous efforts to reward good attendance and to work with families of pupils who are often absent. As a result, attendance has begun to rise once more, and the proportion of pupils absent persistently has fallen markedly. Nevertheless, the attendance rate remains below the national average. The school has identified a small number of families, many in complex circumstances, with whom to conduct additional work.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- In the last two years, effective teaching and an ambitious school culture have led pupils' outcomes to improve rapidly. This improvement has changed the pattern of attainment in the school. In the younger years, pupils are working at the standards expected of their age. However, at the top of key stage 2, some pupils still have some catching up to do to achieve the high standards of which they are capable.
- Information supplied by the school, observations in lessons and evidence from pupils' workbooks show that in all year groups, pupils are making strong progress in English, mathematics and several other subjects. Inspectors also observed that pupils' standards of spelling, punctuation and grammar have risen as a result of leaders' determined focus on improving these skills.
- In 2016, pupils left Year 6 having made progress in writing and mathematics which was above the national average, and progress in reading which was at least in line with that average. The proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was high.
- Last summer, the proportions of pupils who attained the expected standard in reading, in writing and in mathematics in the key stage 1 tests were above the national average. The proportion of Year 1 pupils who attained the expected standard in the

phonics check was also high, reflecting the school's effective approach to phonics teaching.

- The majority of the school's pupils are disadvantaged. Published results, information supplied by the school and inspection evidence all show that their progress has been in line with that of other pupils in the school, and generally above that of other pupils nationally. This reflects the rigour with which leaders plan and check on the additional academic support funded by the pupil premium.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress across the school. Plans explain to classroom staff how their needs can best be met, and teachers are held to account for their progress.
- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, generally make good progress. However, inspection evidence suggests that it is sometimes not quite as strong as that made by other pupils in the class. Teachers set work which allows the most able to build on their existing understanding, but sometimes it fails to challenge them to think really deeply and consider how to apply their appreciable skills in different ways.
- Leaders rightly acknowledge the importance of spoken English, and pupils learn to speak confidently and clearly in a range of contexts. Inspection evidence showed that standards across the school are high in several further subjects, including science, physical education and music, in which all key stage 2 pupils take a formal qualification.
- Both pupils' attainment across a range of subjects and their excellent attitudes to learning prepare them well for secondary school.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Some children start in the early years with skills and abilities which are typical for their age, but the majority have abilities which are less well developed. Leaders rapidly identify those children who need additional support, drawing effectively on the assistance of other professionals when necessary.
- A scrutiny of children's learning journeys and observations during the inspection showed that children are making good progress, with many achieving very well from low starting points. The proportion leaving the Reception class having attained a good level of development has increased year on year, and, in 2016, was in line with the national average. Children's skills and evident self-confidence make them well prepared to embark on key stage 1.
- Teaching in the early years is good. Staff have high expectations for what children can achieve, and challenge them effectively to develop early skills in literacy and numeracy. They explain and demonstrate new ideas well. Staff record a wide range of evidence to help them judge children's progress accurately. Activities promote children's development in all key areas of learning, and in general represent highly appropriate next steps for each child.
- Staff rapidly establish effective routines, so that children's behaviour in the setting is good. Children are polite to adults, playing and working happily together. They have



good opportunities to make their own choices and direct their own learning. Robust procedures keep children safe and ensure that all welfare requirements are met.

- Leaders are increasingly effective at involving parents in their children's learning. Staff visit each home to ensure that they have a rounded view of every child before they start in the setting. Parents are invited into school to learn more about the curriculum and how they can support learning at home.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have successfully extended the provision to cater for two-year-olds. They have established a warm, nurturing environment in which the youngest children form strong relationships with staff, and are given every opportunity to learn new skills. The physical environment is well suited to their needs. Staff assess and record their abilities ready for the Nursery class.
- Leaders of the early years provision have succeeded in improving standards and particularly the rate at which children acquire new skills. However, the setting has seen several staffing changes recently, and leaders have not currently established consistent teaching of the highest quality. Use of the well-resourced outdoor area remains underdeveloped.

## School details

Unique reference number	131580
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	10025197

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	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	420
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Trawford
Headteacher	Paul Drew
Telephone number	01922 710874
Website	<a href="http://www.beaconprimaryschool.co.uk">www.beaconprimaryschool.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:postbox@beacon.walsall.sch.uk">postbox@beacon.walsall.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	24 February 2015

## Information about this school

- Beacon Primary School is a much larger than average primary school. Children attend full time in the Reception class, but only for the morning or afternoon session in the Nursery class. In September 2015, the school began offering education to two-year-olds.
- The school runs a pay-as-you-go breakfast club.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and receive support from the pupil premium is high.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The number of pupils who join the school at times other than at normal points of transfer is high.

- Since the last inspection, the school has experienced a high turnover of staff. However, staffing is currently more settled. Three members of staff are specialist leaders of education.
- In 2016, the school met the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils by the end of Year 6.
- At key stage 2, the school has recently begun to use a very small amount of part-time alternative provision at the Shepwell School in Willenhall. Further details are withheld in the interests of confidentiality.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in 22 lessons, one learning walk and some activities for small groups. Three observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also visited breakfast club, after-school cookery club and an assembly presented by the two visitors who led the Science Day on the second day of the inspection. They observed pupils' conduct at break and lunchtimes.
- The inspectors held discussions with senior leaders, other leaders and class teachers. The lead inspector met with governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Three groups of pupils, two chosen at random, met with inspectors. Inspectors spoke with a large number of pupils informally. One inspector listened to pupils from Years 2 and 3 read.
- The inspectors looked at many workbooks in their visits to classrooms, and, sometimes with a senior leader, scrutinised in depth work produced by several pupils this academic year. They considered a wide range of information about pupils' current and recent performance.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, both electronically and on paper. These included development plans and evaluations of the school's performance; the headteacher's reports to the governing body and the minutes of governors' meetings; and reports on pupils' progress. Inspectors scrutinised in detail records showing how the school supports vulnerable pupils.
- The inspection team took account of the 21 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire and the comments made using the free text facility. Inspectors spoke with parents delivering their children to school on the second day of the inspection. The inspectors also considered the 21 responses to the questionnaire for staff.

## Inspection team

Martin Spoor, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Tracy Stone	Ofsted Inspector
Kim Ellis	Ofsted inspector

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