

Beeches Infant School

Beeches Road, Birmingham, West Midlands B42 2PY

Inspection dates

27–28 June 2017

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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has set a clear and ambitious vision for the school. She has created a happy, united and strong staff team. Expectations of adults and pupils are high.
- The headteacher is ably supported by an effective wider leadership team. All are fully involved in school improvement. Regular training is provided for staff where areas of weakness are identified. This has led to improvements in achievement and teaching.
- Leaders regularly assess pupils' progress. They analyse data accurately to pinpoint where further support is needed. However, leaders do not currently track the progress of the most able pupils. Governors are therefore unclear how well these pupils are achieving.
- Governors provide good levels of challenge and support. They question leaders thoroughly in meetings in order to hold them to account.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They provide work which is well matched to pupils' level of ability. Effective support is provided where needed, especially for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Leaders strongly promote pupils' personal development and well-being. Pupils are highly tolerant and respectful to each other, appreciating and understanding the differences between people.
- All adults provide high levels of nurture and support for pupils, especially for those who are vulnerable. The culture of safeguarding within the school is strong and procedures are robust. Leaders and staff make sure pupils are safe and know how to stay safe.
- Pupils behave well and work hard. They are polite, sensible and respectful. Pupils enjoy school.
- Children make good progress in the early years. Teaching is good and leaders have a clear vision for further improvement. However, teachers' assessments for some children on entry to school are too low.
- While disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their starting points, there is still a gap in attainment between these pupils and other pupils' nationally. This gap is diminishing in English but less so in mathematics.
- Pupils do not make as much progress in mathematics as they do in English. Some teaching does not challenge pupils well enough, especially the most able. Pupils' reasoning skills are not sufficiently developed.
- On occasions, teachers ask pupils questions which are too simple. They do not probe or extend pupils' thinking, especially in mathematics by asking more searching questions which make pupils think hard.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue the focus on raising the quality of teaching in mathematics by:
 - raising the level of challenge for pupils, especially the most able
 - improving the use of teachers' questioning so that they probe and deepen pupils' thinking
 - developing pupils' reasoning skills in order to strengthen their understanding.
- Continue to improve leadership and management by:
 - increasing the accuracy of early years assessments by paying closer attention to evidence captured in children's learning journals on entry
 - further diminishing the difference in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally, especially in mathematics
 - tracking the progress of the most able pupils so that leaders and governors have a clear understanding of how well these pupils are achieving.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The strong and effective leadership by the headteacher has maintained the good level of education within the school since the previous inspection. Together with her leadership team she continues to drive improvements in teaching and learning and responds quickly when issues arise. Staff morale is high as shown in the teacher survey.
- To strengthen the effectiveness of teachers and support staff, the school has a comprehensive programme of professional development in place. Staff meeting time, training from senior leaders and peer observations all contribute to teachers' knowledge and improved practice. Teachers video each other teaching in order to provide incisive feedback and suggestions for improvement. This shows a culture of trust, respect and desire to improve.
- Leaders have a clear overview of where strengths and weaknesses lie. They have accurately identified that disadvantaged pupils do not currently reach the levels expected nationally. To this end, they have formulated appropriate action plans and set challenging targets for all staff linked to pupils' progress. As a result, all staff are held accountable and contribute to whole school improvement.
- Leaders at all levels, including the assistant and deputy headteacher, year group leaders and the inclusion manager, all make a strong contribution to how well pupils achieve. They monitor teaching and learning closely and ensure that tailored support is provided for pupils who are struggling or in danger of falling behind. Distributive leadership is fully established together with accountability and shared responsibility.
- Leaders proactively challenge themselves, work in collaboration with other schools and openly seek external support. Local authority support is commissioned from Birmingham Education Partnership (BEP). In response to the school's own request, external headteacher colleagues, representing BEP, carried out a review of the impact of pupil premium funding on eligible pupils. The report provided helpful advice and an accurate assessment of current provision. The BEP representative has an accurate view of the school.
- Pupils enjoy the wide range of subjects taught. The curriculum is broad and balanced and taught through an exciting range of topics. Thematic books demonstrate pupils' good progress in history, geography, art, science and religious education. Particular strengths lie in reading, creative arts and personal, social and health education. Pupils benefit from numerous visits to places of interest, linked to their topic work. Extra-curricular activities are also very popular, with large numbers of pupils taking part in a good range of sports clubs.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. This is reflected in excellent relationships among pupils and between pupils and adults. The school's motto of 'we grow, we care, we learn, we share' underpins the ethos within the school. Pupils are taught to be respectful and caring to others and to help each other. As a multi-ethnic and multi-religious community, pupils learn about other cultures and faiths. For example, pupils visit a church, temple and mosque during their

time in school. They understand difference and embrace it. As a result, pupils play and work together happily and harmoniously.

- The sports premium is used well and has a positive impact on pupils' participation in physical exercise. Sports coaches run a wide range of after-school activities, for example basketball, rounders and gymnastics. Leaders carefully monitor participation in these activities to ensure value for money and monitor involvement of boys and girls from different year groups. Additional midday supervisors have also been employed to supervise play zones created in the playground. Extra equipment has been purchased to provide more pupils with the chance to develop their sports skills.
- The pupil premium and special educational needs funding is used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils and those with specific needs. Primarily, it funds additional staffing to work with individuals or small groups and run intervention programmes to enable pupils to make good academic progress. Pupils' social, emotional and behavioural needs are also considered. To this end, pupils benefit from 'forest school' time, nurture group and contact with the family support worker. Teachers and leaders carefully monitor the progress of these pupils in order to assess the impact of funding received. They meet regularly to discuss where provision is most successful and adjust this where there is evidence it is having less success. Nevertheless, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils remains below other pupils nationally and more needs to be done to diminish the differences which exist.
- The school has successfully introduced an assessment tracking system, which allows leaders to collect and analyse the achievement of individuals, cohorts and most pupil groups. They use the information gained to check the quality of teaching and inform future actions. They do not, however, track the progress of the most able pupils. As a result, leaders and governors are unclear how well this group is achieving.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a good overview of the school. They are supportive and dedicated in their roles. They receive comprehensive information from the headteacher and her staff through their reports and from governor visits to school. Governors have a good understanding of assessment information and are involved in gaining first-hand evidence from pupils' workbooks of how well pupils are doing. They question leaders well in meetings to challenge them and hold them fully to account.
- Governors make sure that safeguarding policies and systems are fit for purpose. They keep their own safeguarding training up to date and ensure that appropriate checks are made on all staff who join the school and adults who have contact with children. They check that the school's procedures keep pupils safe in all respects.
- Governors keep a careful check on finances and manage the school budget efficiently to ensure that funding is spent appropriately and for the benefit of pupils. They set challenging targets for the headteacher in line with school priorities and provide an independent perspective on the pay and performance of other staff.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding within the school. There are five designated leaders within the school, demonstrating the high priority this aspect is awarded. The headteacher ensures that effective policies and procedures are in place to keep pupils safe. All staff are fully trained and clear about what action to take if they have any concerns about a pupil. Once an alert is received, swift action is taken by senior leaders to refer incidents or disclosures to the appropriate authority. The family support worker acts as an effective conduit between home and school. This enables the school to work effectively with families and external agencies to ensure that they get the best possible support and deflect potential issues arising. Safeguarding records are stored securely and are of high quality.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use appropriate subject vocabulary so that pupils acquire the right technical terms, especially in phonics and writing. They explain activities clearly and demonstrate to pupils how to tackle tasks set so that they know what to do. Staff apply the school's marking and feedback policy consistently.
- In English, teachers plan carefully to make sure that the work set builds on what pupils already know and can do. Adults carry out regular checks during lessons to ensure that pupils understand the work set and are making good progress.
- The school's detailed assessments of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and good communication between staff provide a strong platform for pupils' learning. Support staff work effectively with individuals and groups and make a good contribution to pupils' achievement.
- Phonics is taught well. Leaders have introduced a systematic and structured approach to teaching letters and sounds. Effective training has been provided for all staff and as a result standards are above average and rising and pupils are confident readers and read regularly. Most read with expression and apply their phonic skills to their writing to help them spell more complex, unfamiliar words. A good range of books are available to promote a love of reading. Pupils read fluently and have good levels of comprehension.
- Teachers provide daily opportunities for pupils to practise their handwriting, grammar, spelling and punctuation skills. They plan different types of writing activities, including cross-curricular writing and recounts of school trips. This not only helps pupils practise and apply their basic skills, but raises their level of engagement and interest. Most pupils present their work neatly. English books demonstrate good progress over time.
- In mathematics, teachers do not always challenge pupils well enough, especially the most able. On occasion, the level of work provided does not build on what pupils know and can already do. The teaching of higher order skills, such as reasoning, and teachers' use of questioning are also underdeveloped in mathematics. Too few pupils can articulate how they reach their answers and some teachers do not probe pupils' understanding sufficiently to detect where there are gaps in pupils' learning. These

factors limit pupils' mathematical knowledge and understanding and reduce pupils' rates of progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- As a member of Unicef's Rights Respecting Schools programme, pupils have an excellent understanding of respect and tolerance for others. Each class has established their own class charter setting out key values. These values are reinforced in lessons, assemblies and through prominent displays. Pupils told inspectors that they have a right to 'have their opinions heard, a good education and to be cared for and looked after properly'. This demonstrates pupils' high levels of maturity and sensitivity.
- Pupil voice is a strength within the school. Leaders regularly collect pupils' views and act on their ideas accordingly. Additional equipment was purchased for instance, following discussion and canvassing of pupils' ideas to make lunchtime more pleasurable. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of British values, especially democracy and the rule of law. This helps prepare them well for life in modern Britain.
- Adults provide excellent levels of nurture and support for all pupils. Leaders and staff have a detailed knowledge of pupils' backgrounds and circumstances. The family support worker signposts parents to appropriate external agencies and runs parenting courses. The inclusion leader is proactive in gaining the right support for pupils with complex learning or medical conditions. This is especially helpful for those families and pupils who are the most vulnerable. School also provides training sessions for parents who struggle to manage their children's behaviour and run workshops to show parents how they can support their children at home with their learning. As a result, excellent relationships are established with families, which in turn benefit the pupils.
- Pupils are safe and feel safe at school. Stranger danger and online safety are all taught regularly. Pupils are confident to talk to an adult if they are concerned about anything. They are taught about risks and how to avoid them. Visiting speakers, for example from the NSPCC, together with personal, social and health education lessons inform pupils about personal safety issues. As a result, pupils have a good understanding about keeping themselves safe.
- Pupils have an age-appropriate awareness of different forms of bullying. They know that bullying is systematic and deliberate. They are confident that if they report any unkind behaviour, teachers deal with it swiftly. The school records show that any potential bullying is dealt with effectively.
- Parents who responded to Parent View and spoke to inspectors confirmed that their children are safe and happy at school. Typical comments include, 'The support my child receives is above what would normally be expected from a school.' Another stated, 'My child was very grumpy when she had to stay home for a day due to illness.'
- Pupils have a good awareness of how to stay healthy. They understand the importance of regular exercise, sleep and a balanced diet.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They are polite, courteous and highly respectful to adults and each other. They have positive attitudes to their learning and are proud to attend Beeches Infant School.
- Pupils say that behaviour is good and their parents agree. Records checked show that there are very few serious incidents. Where these do occur, staff record them in detail and take appropriate action to ensure that they are not repeated. Exclusions are only applied, in accordance with the school's policy, as a final resort, and when earlier steps have not been effective. Leaders analyse records carefully in order to detect patterns and trends.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the school's behaviour system. Most work hard to remain on the green level of the traffic light chart in all classrooms to demonstrate that they are behaving well. They understand and accept that appropriate sanctions are applied if they are moved to red or amber on the chart. They are clear about what is expected from them and respond accordingly.
- Leaders carefully track and check the attendance of pupils. Over time, attendance is broadly average but illness and unauthorised holidays in term time have led to a dip in attendance this year. However, leaders take effective action where a pupil's attendance becomes an issue. The family support worker provides a valuable communication link between home and school. Leaders investigate cases of persistent absence thoroughly.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils make good progress as they move through the school. There is clear evidence in pupils' books that all groups of pupils make good progress in English and mathematics, including disadvantaged pupils, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the most able. Well-planned lessons, together with effective additional support where needed, enable all pupils to achieve well.
- Provisional key stage 1 results for 2017 indicate that standards are set to be higher than those achieved by the school in 2016 and slightly above the national average at both the expected and higher level in all subjects. A good level of attainment has been sustained since the previous inspection.
- Standards in the Year 1 phonics test have risen year-on-year for the last four years. Provisional results for 2017 show that the proportion of pupils reaching the required level is above the national average. This reflects the impact of training and improved teaching.
- Pupils make good progress, not only in English and mathematics, but in other subjects, including science, history, geography and religious education. This is evidenced in pupils' thematic books, which demonstrate pupils' good level of achievement. Displays around the school and in classrooms also demonstrate the range of subjects taught and celebrate pupils' creative talents such as art and sewing.
- High-quality teaching, nurture and support enable pupils who have special educational

needs and/or disabilities, including those who have education, health and care plans and complex needs, to make good progress. Effective, and often tailored, personal support, is provided by teachers and support staff to meet pupils' individual needs. Additional intervention programmes, provided outside core lessons, also contribute to the positive impact on pupil's achievement.

- School's own assessment information and evidence from pupils' books show that pupils from ethnic minority groups and those who speak English as an additional language all make good progress. They achieve as well as their peers because they are fully included in all aspects of school life and provided with support and intervention if deemed necessary. This demonstrates leaders' commitment to equality of opportunity.
- Work in books and discussions with the most able pupils show that they are making good progress. However, on occasion, work provided lacks challenge and reduces the rate of progress for these pupils, especially the most able disadvantaged pupils. As a result, they do not reach the higher levels in mathematics of which they are capable. Leaders do not currently track the progress of the most able so have not responded as swiftly as they could have or provided the same good-quality support other groups receive.
- Although disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their starting points, they do not attain as well in reading, writing or mathematics as other pupils nationally or their classmates. Inspection evidence shows that the pupil premium is used effectively and that differences in attainment are beginning to diminish. However, further work is needed to ensure that these pupils reach and exceed the levels expected in all year groups.

Early years provision

Good

- Most children transfer from the local nursery school and good links exist with this setting. The majority of children start school with skills and knowledge which are below those typical for their age but there are also a significant number who are working at age-appropriate levels. Children make good progress in all areas of learning. By the end of Reception Year, the majority of children reach a good level of development and are well prepared for more formal schooling in Year 1.
- Teachers and adults provide a good level of care and supervision. They establish good relationships with children and as a result children work hard and want to do their best. The learning environment is well equipped and good use is made of both classroom spaces and the outdoor learning environment to promote all aspects of the early years curriculum.
- Teaching is good. Teachers plan exciting and interesting activities, which stimulate and retain children's interest. Staff model good language so that pupils develop their communication and literacy skills well. All adults skilfully question children to check on their levels of understanding and plan the next steps in learning. The early years premium and special needs funding is used to good effect and ensures that those children, for whom the funds are intended, make good progress.
- Leadership and management in the early years are good. The leader has an accurate view of provision and is keen to improve it further. For example, leaders from the

school and nursery have recently begun to work together to agree assessment information for children joining the school. The early years leader has a secure understanding of data analysis and uses the information gathered to inform planning across the Reception Year.

- Procedures for children joining the school are effective because the school involves the parents as much as possible in the process. Parents and children attend workshops and play sessions prior to the children formally starting school. These sessions were observed during the inspection and a happy and supportive atmosphere was evident. These opportunities enable staff to gather additional information about children and build positive relationships with parents. Ongoing workshops are provided for parents to maintain their involvement in their children's education and give them the skills needed to support their children at home.
- Children adhere fully to classroom routines and work cooperatively together. They behave well and respond quickly to adults' instructions. They treat each other with good levels of care and respect and are on hand to quickly help anyone who needs it. For example, during the inspection, a girl fell over in the playground but another girl quickly came to help her up and said without any prompting, 'I'll look after you.'
- Safeguarding is effective. Teachers and other adults are attentive to the needs of children and make sure that they are fully supervised and work and play in a safe environment.
- Learning journeys capture the wide range of evidence gathered by teachers to support their assessments of children's abilities. Photographs and annotated observations, together with samples of children's work, all contribute to teachers' evaluations. However, at the start of the academic year, the assessments by teachers of some children do not take enough account of higher level work produced by them. This reduces the accuracy of assessments of some children's starting points.

School details

Unique reference number	103164
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10032717

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.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	270
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Maureen Bowyer
Headteacher	Vicky Colley
Telephone number	0121 360 4222
Website	www.beechesinfantschool.org.uk
Email address	enquiry@beechesinf.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6–7 February 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- The early years comprise of three Reception classes for children who attend full time.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational

needs or an education, health and care plan is average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in all classes. A number of lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read. They talked to groups of pupils to gain their views of the school. The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime, lunchtime and in lessons.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including: assessments and records of pupils' achievement; the school's checks and records related to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance; records of governors' activities; records of how teaching is managed; and the school's own self-evaluation and improvement plan.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and all members of the leadership team. The lead inspector met with the chair of the governing body and two other governors. The lead inspector also spoke with the director of school improvement for Birmingham Education Partnership on behalf of the local authority, and reviewed copies of reports produced by local headteachers.
- Inspectors took account of the 30 views on Parent View and talked to parents at the start and end of the school day.

Inspection team

Heather Simpson, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Bamber Loizou	Her Majesty's Inspector
Joanne Evans	Ofsted Inspector
Louise Minter	Ofsted Inspector

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