

Beech Hill Community Primary School

Dunstable Road, Luton, Bedfordshire LU4 8BW

Inspection dates

24–25 January 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- There have been several changes in leadership, including governance, since the previous inspection. Over time, this has resulted in standards declining. Priorities to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement have not had sufficient focus.
- Leaders have not ensured that teaching is securing consistently strong progress for all pupils, including pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, the most able and those who are disadvantaged. Therefore, too few pupils reach the expected and higher standards of attainment.
- Until very recently, governors have not had an accurate view of the school's performance. This has limited their ability to check on the impact of leaders' work to improve the school.
- Middle leaders, including subject leaders, have not yet had sufficient opportunities to develop or apply their leadership skills to improve teaching or outcomes for pupils.
- Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. Consequently, teaching and learning are not consistently good across all subjects and year groups.
- Teachers are making better use of assessment information to check pupils' progress so that teaching is well matched to pupils' needs. However, work is not always set at the right level for the different needs of pupils.
- Children get off to a positive start in the early years. However, teachers' expectations of what children can achieve are not high enough. Children spend too much time on activities that lack purpose.

The school has the following strengths

- More recently, the leadership team, strongly led by the interim executive headteacher, is clearly focused on improving pupils' academic achievement.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are polite and respectful.
- The school provides a safe and secure learning environment. Safeguarding is effective.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. There are strong links with the local community.
- Leaders use the physical education (PE) and sport premium funding to very good effect.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - developing the skills of middle leaders so that they can improve the quality of teaching and raise standards in their areas of responsibility
 - making sure that the stronger practice evident in teaching and learning is shared more widely across the school
 - strengthening the capacity of governors to provide the right degree of challenge to assure themselves that pupils from different groups and in different year groups are achieving as well as they should be
 - ensuring that the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and for those who have SEN and/or disabilities is helping to overcome underperformance quickly.
- Accelerate pupils' progress and raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics to meet at least the national average by ensuring that teachers:
 - have consistently high expectations for pupils' achievement across a full range of subjects
 - accurately use the school's assessment system to track and improve pupils' progress
 - use this assessment information to set work that is well matched to pupils' needs, particularly for those pupils who are disadvantaged, pupils with SEN and/or disabilities and the most able pupils.
- Further improve the achievement of children in the early years by:
 - providing more challenging and purposeful opportunities for children to practise and develop their early reading, writing and number skills when choosing their own activities.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Over time, there have been numerous changes in leadership team and governance roles. This has had a detrimental effect on maintaining a clear focus on school improvement work and, as a result, teaching is not improving quickly enough to ensure that pupils achieve as well as they should.
- The leadership team knows the strengths and development areas of the school well. However, the capacity to bring about rapid and sustained improvement is limited, as senior leaders are trying to undertake too many roles of responsibility. The middle leadership team is not yet sufficiently established to share some of the workload and, consequently, middle leaders are not yet effectively able to lead improvement in their specific areas of responsibility.
- Leadership of teaching is improving. Valuable work is under way to establish an effective system for assessing accurately and tracking how well pupils are performing academically. Teachers are beginning to make better use of this information in their lesson planning. As a result, pupils' progress is improving, but this is not yet embedded or consistent across the school.
- Leaders use the extra government funding they receive for disadvantaged pupils, and for those who have SEN and/or disabilities, to provide additional support for these pupils. However, there is very little understanding of the impact of the specific activities which are put in place. Governors have not kept a careful enough check on this spending to ensure that it has maximum benefit for these pupils. Therefore, too many pupils supported through this funding do not make the progress that they should.
- Since his arrival at the beginning of January 2018, the interim executive headteacher has already taken rapid steps to improve the school. Sharply focused plans with timely actions are in place to swiftly raise standards. Supported by senior leaders, his intent to share responsibilities, increase accountability and give staff ownership of systems and routines has motivated staff. As a result, staff morale is high and they are keen to make the necessary changes required to improve pupils' outcomes.
- More recently, the local authority has provided effective training, support and challenge to the school aimed at raising standards and improving pupils' outcomes during the many changes in leadership and governance.
- The curriculum is organised and arranged to ensure that a breadth of subjects beyond English and mathematics is taught. Pupils have access to a wide range of extra-curricular activities, trips and residential visits, which enhance their learning. They told inspectors that they enjoy these experiences which 'help to increase our confidence and teach us to be independent'.
- Pupils develop a good understanding of British values. Pupils are expected to demonstrate these values, including tolerance, in their day-to-day activities. Leaders ensure that the school's own values are promoted well. This supports pupils to form positive and healthy friendships with each other.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social understanding is promoted particularly well. Through their lessons and assemblies, pupils develop a good understanding of the range of

cultures and faiths seen in Britain today. During the inspection, pupils of different faiths were observed choosing to pray in the school's multi-faith room. This positive and inclusive approach prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.

- The primary sport grant is used extremely effectively. Leaders are acutely aware of the importance of physical activity and provide pupils with an extensive range of opportunities. Well-organised and enthusiastic sports coaches work alongside teachers to teach physical education (PE). The progress of pupils is tracked closely and shared with parents and carers. The coaches also provide a wide range of physical activities, including many after-school and holiday clubs. Leaders encourage parents and the local community to take part in sporting events and use the school's facilities so that families can develop a life-long love of sport and enjoy a healthy lifestyle together.
- Leaders have worked hard to gain the trust and support of families and the local community. Relationships are strong, and the work of the school to bring the community together is valued. The school's informative website, the workshops provided for parents and the support offered in many aspects of parenting enable parents to understand how they can better support their children's learning at home.
- The number of parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire was very low, but there were more responses to the school's own recent parent questionnaire. These responses and the comments of the many parents who spoke to inspectors were very positive. Parents said that they appreciate the support they receive from the school and the hard work of staff who are 'very approachable' and 'are always there for you'. Parents describe the school as 'excellent' and a 'school for the community' where 'children really enjoy themselves'. One parent, summing up the views of many, said, 'Both my children have spent happy years at the school. The staff have always shown support and care.'

Governance of the school

- Most of the governors are new to the role and although they have regularly received information on the performance of the school, they do not yet have the skills they need to analyse this, or to use it to form their own views of the school's effectiveness.
- Although governors are aware of some of the school's most important priorities, they have not ensured that leaders set clear and ambitious targets to improve outcomes for pupils. This has limited their ability to hold leaders to account for the impact of their work. As a result, some aspects of the school's performance have not improved quickly or consistently enough.
- Governors are keen volunteers who are passionate about their role in the school and the role of the school in the local community. They devote time regularly to visit the school. They have a good understanding of the ethos of the school and the impact of the school's work in relation to pupils' personal, social and emotional development.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders, led by the deputy headteacher, have developed a strong culture where staff share responsibility for the safeguarding of pupils and are confident to raise any

concerns. Procedures are working well. Staff receive regular training to keep them abreast of any updates in statutory guidance. As a result, pupils are safe and well cared for.

- Leaders ensure that staff are trained in the 'Prevent' duty to keep pupils safe from risk of radicalisation and extremism. Staff are alert to signs that pupils could be at risk and report them. These reports are followed up by the appropriate agencies and authorities.
- The school site is safe and secure. Staff and all adults who come into regular contact with children are vetted carefully prior to appointment. All of the statutory checks are made to ensure their suitability to work with children. Confidential records on staff and pupils are kept securely.
- The most vulnerable pupils are given a high priority. Record-keeping is effective and the school works well with external agencies to ensure that concerns are quickly followed up. The school's family workers and safeguarding officers are diligent in ensuring that vulnerable pupils and their families receive the pastoral support they need.
- Parents who completed the school's own survey and those who spoke to inspectors during the inspection unanimously agreed that their children are safe and well cared for. One parent, who commented for many, said, 'The school is a good and safe place for all.'

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Over time, teaching has not led to pupils making good progress because teaching is not consistently good throughout the school. Until very recently, expectations of what pupils could achieve have been too low.
- Teachers do not set work or plan activities which challenge pupils at the right level for their ability. The most able pupils are sometimes expected to complete tasks which they have already mastered, or are given challenges which do not deepen their learning. Some lower-attaining pupils and pupils with SEN and/or disabilities are not given enough time to fully understand aspects of their learning. As a result, some pupils are not making the progress of which they are capable.
- Until recently, teachers have not been assessing with accuracy what pupils can do, nor linking that to pupils' starting points. This has limited teachers' ability to identify the next steps in their learning that pupils need to make in order to achieve more rapid progress. Recent training is beginning to increase teachers' ability, across key stages 1 and 2, to make good use of assessment information so that they have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- It is clear that teaching is improving, and this is leading to pupils' better progress. Where teaching is stronger, staff use questioning skilfully to check pupils' understanding and take their learning forward. In addition, pupils receive detailed feedback on their work in line with the school's policy. This effectively helps pupils to deepen their understanding and make thoughtful responses and improvements to their work. However, this does not happen consistently across the year groups and in different subjects.

- Phonics is taught well. Leaders have provided training which has improved the teaching of early reading skills so that pupils have more confidence in using their phonics knowledge to decode texts. However, teachers have not developed pupils' reading skills well in Years 3 to 6. As a result, pupils have made slow progress in their reading in key stage 2 for too long. Recently, leaders have introduced a new approach to teaching reading throughout the school, which focuses on developing pupils' comprehension skills. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy the new structure to reading. It is too early to judge what difference it is making to improve pupils' achievement in reading.
- The quality of teaching in mathematics has improved and is leading to better progress for pupils. Teachers have a better understanding of the demands of the new curriculum and are providing more frequent opportunities for pupils to investigate and solve problems. However, pupils lack the skills they need to explore and explain their mathematical reasoning. This limits the ability of the most able pupils to work at greater depth.
- Teaching promotes pupils' speaking and listening skills well. This helps all pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, to build up a good stock of words and to talk about their learning clearly and confidently. Teachers and teaching assistants often model correct sentence construction and encourage pupils to use a range of vocabulary in their writing tasks.
- All adults in the school expect pupils to behave well, and they do. This means that no learning time is lost through low-level disruption. Pupils are productive and purposeful in lessons. Pupils help each other and are respectful of others' views. They pay close attention to the work they have done and are keen to improve and extend themselves. As one pupil commented, 'I learn more when I get things wrong.' Pupils have confidence in their teachers and other adults and trust them to help them to do well.
- Classrooms and shared areas are inviting and interesting spaces for learning with plenty of prompts and reminders to support pupils in their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Beech Hill Community Primary School is a friendly and welcoming place. Pupils are happy and confident. They are unfailingly polite and charming to visitors, being clearly proud of their school. Pupils told inspectors that they know that the adults in the school care about them and 'listen to our ideas about improving the school'. Pupils take care of their books; their work is generally neat and well presented. They appreciate and look after their attractive school building and its environment.
- Pupils told inspectors that bullying is rare but, if there are any unpleasant incidents, pupils are confident that staff will deal with these well.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They also know how to keep safe in many situations, particularly when working or playing online. They enjoy posts of responsibility, such as looking out for younger children and being kind to them. Pupils know that they can

Speak to an adult if they have any worries.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school and in lessons because of the high expectations of all staff. Pupils take responsibility for their behaviour and respond positively to the school's behaviour policy. One pupil commented, 'I know how to behave and the school helps me.'
- Playtimes and lunchtimes are well-supervised occasions with a wide range of activities that ensure that pupils can play and socialise happily together.
- The behaviour and safeguarding officer meticulously monitors pupils' behaviour in school. He knows the pupils well and they respond positively to his support. School records confirm that incidents of poor behaviour are few, and leaders still work to reduce them even further.
- Leaders take effective action to ensure that the few pupils with low attendance are appropriately well supported and challenged. The attendance and inclusion officer diligently monitors why pupils are absent and follows up concerns with parents quickly. Leaders work closely with other external agencies, such as the education welfare officer, to ensure that any attendance concerns are addressed. As a result, attendance is at least in line with national figures, including for some of the most vulnerable pupils and disadvantaged pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Until recently, leaders' actions to improve standards in key stage 1 and key stage 2 have lacked urgency. The progress pupils make is not consistently good in all subjects and all year groups. Too many pupils are not as prepared as they should be for the next stage of their education.
- Since the previous inspection, the standards achieved by pupils in the Year 1 phonics screening check have been at least in line with the national average. Although there was a dip in the 2017 results, observations of phonics being taught during the inspection and the school's current assessment information demonstrate that pupils are currently making strong progress in their phonics knowledge. Pupils who read to inspectors applied their phonics skills well and were able to demonstrate clear understanding of what they had read.
- Over time, the standards reached by pupils by the time they leave key stage 1 fluctuate. In 2017, pupils' attainment was below the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics. However, pupils' current workbooks demonstrate that their achievement is quickly improving in all these subjects.
- For the past two years, the standards reached by pupils by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6 have been below the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the progress pupils made from their various starting points improved in 2017 in all three subjects, although it remained below national figures.

- Across the school, pupil premium funding is not being used well enough to support disadvantaged pupils to catch up quickly with age-related expectations. Differences are not diminishing between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils in the school and that of other pupils nationally.
- The progress and attainment of the most able pupils vary across the school. Teachers are becoming increasingly aware of the priority to challenge this group of pupils. Consequently, the attainment of the most able is beginning to rise in some year groups. However, leaders know that there is much more to do to ensure that the proportion of pupils achieving the highest levels by the time they leave Year 6 is at least in line with the national average.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities do not always make strong progress from their individual starting points. There are systems to identify pupils' needs, and support is put in place, but leaders do not currently track pupils' progress closely enough to make sure that these pupils make the progress they should.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The majority of children enter the early years with skills and knowledge below those typical for their age. Historically, the number of children achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception was below the national average. In 2017, this improved and was broadly in line with the national average.
- The early years is currently led by one of the assistant headteachers. She has an accurate understanding of the strengths and priorities for improvement across the Nursery and Reception classes. Consequently, leadership in the early years is becoming more focused on how well children are learning, and children are making better progress from their starting points.
- The environment for learning, both indoors and outside, is well resourced, and equipment is organised so that it is accessible for children to use. However, teachers do not make the most of the learning environment by providing a wide range of stimulating and engaging activities so that children learn as they play. As a result, children do not consistently make the progress they are capable of to be well prepared for Year 1.
- The promotion of early reading, writing and number skills in Nursery and Reception is underdeveloped. There are too few planned opportunities for children to practise and apply the skills they have been taught when choosing their own activities.
- In both Nursery and Reception, adults engage children in conversation readily. They model language well, introduce children to new words and follow the children's interests to hold their attention and develop their skills.
- Staff ensure that children learn to manage their behaviour and self-control to make progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Relationships between staff and children are supportive and caring.
- Adults ensure that children are safe and that safeguarding arrangements are secure. The children know how to stay safe in the environment and take reasonable steps to manage their own well-being and health. For example, inspectors observed children independently putting on their coats to go outside, and sweeping up spilled rice on the

floor so that 'nobody slips'.

- Parents feel included in their children's learning through the regular updates they receive, and special events such as workshops on phonics and open mornings when they have the opportunity to visit the school and observe their children's learning. Teachers welcome the comments from parents in their children's online learning journeys about children's achievements outside of school, and, consequently, the partnership between home and school is strong.

School details

Unique reference number	131089
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	10037632

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	937
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vinette Hoffman-Jackson
Executive Interim Headteacher	Chris Davidson
Telephone number	01582 429434
Website	www.beechhillprimary.com
Email address	head@beechhillprimary.com
Date of previous inspection	1– 2 May 2014

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The ethnicity of most pupils is Asian or Asian British. Almost all pupils speak English as an additional language and many are beginners when they start in the Nursery.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the government’s pupil premium funding is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is broadly in line with the national average.
- The school meets the Department for Education’s definition of a coasting school based on key stage 2 academic performance results in 2014, 2015 and 2016.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in every class at least once. The majority of the observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher, deputy headteacher or an assistant headteacher.
- A wide range of pupils' workbooks were looked at by inspectors throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteachers (who are also the inclusion and the early years leaders), the year team achievement managers, subject leaders, newly qualified and trainee teachers, the school business manager, the personnel officer, the behaviour and safeguarding officer, the attendance and inclusion officer, the vice chair of the governing body, another governor and the local authority improvement adviser.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally in class, and around the school at break and lunchtimes to seek their views about the school.
- Inspectors met with three groups of pupils more formally to discuss many aspects of school life.
- Inspectors heard some pupils in Year 1, Year 2 and Year 6 read. Inspectors talked to pupils about their reading habits and looked at their reading records.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's website and a range of school documents, including: assessment information; minutes from the governing body meetings; the school's own evaluation; improvement plans; and records about behaviour, safeguarding children, and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the seven texts made by parents to the Ofsted online Parent View questionnaire and the school's own surveys of the views of parents. Inspectors also spoke to some parents before and after school, and during the inspection. Additionally, inspectors took account of the 46 views expressed by members of staff and the two responses from pupils to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Fiona Webb, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Susannah Edom-Baker	Ofsted Inspector
Amanda Godfrey	Ofsted Inspector
Henry Weir	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2018