

# Beechview Academy

Guinions Road, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP13 7NT

## Inspection dates

18–19 June 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- The school has been through a turbulent period, with changes to both the leadership team and the teaching team. This has held up the rate of improvement.
- The quality of teaching varies. Not all teachers make enough use of assessment information to plan work that builds on what pupils already know and can do. Sometimes, the work provided for pupils is too easy.
- In some lessons, teachers do not make it clear what they want pupils to achieve. Consequently, pupils' behaviour declines, and they lose focus on learning.
- Pupils do not make enough progress in writing. They do not have a secure grasp of spelling, punctuation and grammar. Their handwriting is often untidy and pupils do not present their work as well as they should.
- Some leaders are relatively new to their roles. They do not all make enough use of performance information to evaluate the impact of actions they have taken.
- Subject leaders do not routinely check the quality of teaching in order to provide targeted support to their colleagues and improve outcomes for pupils.
- The curriculum is not planned well enough to ensure that pupils develop knowledge and skills progressively as they move through the school. Pupils do not routinely read books to broaden their knowledge across the curriculum.
- The school does not meet all statutory requirements for the publication of information on the school's website.
- Actions leaders have put into place to improve the school remain at an early stage of implementation. They have not yet had time to bring about the desired outcomes.

### The school has the following strengths

- Staff provide a high quality of care for pupils. They know their pupils well and they ensure they are safe in the school.
- Enrichment activities provide pupils with opportunities to excel in some subjects, including art, music and sports. Specialist teachers from the trust provide additional support to the school.
- The executive headteacher provides a clear direction to the school. He has already brought stability to the school, following a period of turbulence.
- Governors provide a good balance of support and professional challenge to school leaders.
- Pupils' outcomes in reading and mathematics are improving. A higher percentage of pupils are now on track to reach the standards expected for their age.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - all leaders make sharper use of performance information to evaluate the impact of the actions they put in place to raise standards
  - subject leaders monitor the quality of teachers' work so that they can better support their colleagues to improve their skills
  - the school's website includes all statutory information.
  - the curriculum is planned to show how pupils will build their skills and knowledge across all subjects of the national curriculum.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by making sure that:
  - all teachers make use of assessment information to plan work that builds on what pupils already know and understand
  - teachers have consistently high expectations for pupils and that they provide work that offers pupils a good level of challenge, especially for the most able pupils in mathematics lessons
  - all teachers make clear what it is they want pupils to learn, so that pupils focus on their work and behaviour in lessons improves.
- Improve pupils' outcomes, particularly in writing, by:
  - making sure that pupils consistently learn to spell and punctuate their work accurately and that their work is grammatically correct
  - ensuring that pupils' handwriting is correctly formed and that their work is presented to a high standard
  - providing pupils with examples of good-quality written information in all lessons to help them to improve their writing and further broaden their knowledge across the curriculum.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- There has been significant turbulence in staffing at all levels in recent years. The current executive headteacher joined the school in September 2018. Leaders for English and for mathematics are new to their roles, as are the two assistant headteachers. This has meant that some actions for improvement have yet to become embedded.
- In October 2016, the school became an academy within the Marlow Education Trust. This has enabled school leaders to harness support from specialists within the trust to help to improve teachers' skills. While this is bringing about some improvements, much remains to be done to improve the quality of teaching and so improve pupils' progress, particularly in writing.
- The executive headteacher has established a vision for the school that has involved staff and governors. Consequently, all staff know what the school is aiming to achieve and the part they have to play in that success. School leaders are currently reviewing school development plans to see where further improvements can be made.
- Not all leaders are skilled in using performance information accurately enough to evaluate the impact of the actions they have put into place. As a result, they are not able to articulate how effective new initiatives have been. There are times when they have an over-generous view of how well pupils are learning.
- Subject leaders are knowledgeable and enthusiastic. The leaders for English and mathematics have identified gaps in pupils' learning and they are taking steps to secure further improvement. However, subject leaders do not all routinely check how well their subject is taught. They are therefore unable to offer support to their colleagues to help them to improve their skills.
- School leaders offer pupils a range of subjects, but they do not ensure that pupils build their skills and knowledge systematically and progressively as they move through the school. As a result, pupils do not all get a thorough grounding in some subjects, such as history and geography.
- One of the school's strengths is that they access specialist support teachers for some subjects, including art, physical education and music. This has helped to develop pupils' skills in these subjects and adds to their learning and enjoyment of the school. Pupils undertake a variety of additional visits to local places of interest and this promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.
- During the inspection, pupils in all year groups took part in Arts Week, in which they used fruit and vegetables to create physical pictures of faces and of animals. These were then photographed to record what pupils achieved. Other groups of pupils used charcoal to create still-life drawings of different fruits and vegetables. These activities allowed pupils to develop skills of observation, perception and creativity while having a lot of fun.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make better progress to their classmates in reading and writing, and it is similar in mathematics. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is knowledgeable and knows what needs to be

done. However, she does not always evaluate the impact of the changes she has introduced.

- Disadvantaged pupils often make better progress than other pupils. This is because the pupil premium grant is allocated effectively to help disadvantaged pupils to overcome their specific barriers to learning. In some classes, teaching assistants provide good support so that pupils build resilience and confidence in the classroom.
- Overall the school is a harmonious community where pupils from all backgrounds get on well together. Pupils say that they are equally valued and that discrimination on any grounds is not tolerated. The school values, including honesty, respect and kindness, reflect British values and so pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors are skilled and share a range of professional expertise that helps them to play a key role in shaping the strategic direction of the school. They have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and have taken action to bring stability to the school after a period of upheaval. Governors have established links with school leaders and so regularly check on aspects of development that are in the school development plan. Minutes show that they question school leaders over decisions taken and will probe further when they think more clarity is needed.
- Governors visit school formally as well as informally and so they see for themselves how well the school runs on a day-to-day basis. Governors know that pupils' outcomes are not as good as they should be. They provide a good balance of support and professional challenge to school leaders. Governors ensure that funding for disadvantaged pupils is spent well and they take spending decisions to secure good value for money. However, they have not ensured that the school meets statutory requirements regarding information on the school's website.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The designated safeguarding leader (DSL) is highly efficient and leaves no stone unturned when it comes to keeping pupils safe. She has undergone all necessary training and ensures that all staff are fully trained so that they know exactly what to do should they have a concern that a pupil might be at risk from harm. The DSL records all concerns, however minor, and so builds up a picture of pupils' needs. She is proactive and works in close cooperation with external agencies to ensure that pupils receive the help they need in a timely way. Records of the suitability of adults to work with pupils are thorough and accurate.
- Pupils say they feel safe in the school and know they can approach adults with any worries they may have. They are taught to keep themselves safe through the curriculum and through their personal, social and health education lessons. They are frequently reminded of the need to stay safe when online.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Requires improvement**

- Not all teachers have high enough expectations of pupils. Teachers do not consistently make enough use of assessment information to plan work that is matched well enough to pupils' learning needs. Often the work is at too low a level and offers little challenge. When this happens, pupils become bored and demonstrate 'off task' behaviour.
- Teachers do not all focus clearly enough on what they want or expect pupils to learn. This results in activities that lack purpose and do not build on previous learning. As a result, pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- In some mathematics lessons, teachers do not check on how well pupils are learning. Consequently, they do not move pupils on quickly enough by providing them with harder work when they show that they are ready. Often pupils, especially those who are most able, complete more of the same without deepening their learning. Teachers often praise low-level work and do not challenge pupils to do better.
- While some teachers skilfully question pupils to probe their understanding, this is not consistently effective across the school. In some classes, teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to explain their ideas or demonstrate their learning and understanding.
- Overall, relationships between adults and pupils are good. Teaching is often lively and engaging, and teachers try to make lessons interesting for pupils. They are making increasingly effective use of resources to support pupils' learning, particularly in mathematics. For example, pupils use physical apparatus to help them to find relationships between numbers.
- Teaching of reading has improved, as a result of training provided for teachers. Although there are increased opportunities for pupils to read in lessons, books and rich texts are not routinely used to develop pupils' knowledge in other subjects.
- Teachers provide plenty of opportunities for pupils to write in both English lessons and when learning other subjects. However, they do not routinely pick up and address poor spelling, punctuation and grammar and, as a result, pupils repeat their mistakes. Pupils' handwriting is often untidy, and they do not all present their work as well as they should.
- In some classes, teaching assistants provide good support to disadvantaged pupils and those pupils with SEND. They check on their work and provide them with help in class, and this increases pupils' confidence and helps them to make progress similar to their classmates. However, there are times when teaching assistants spend too much time on managing pupils' behaviour or giving out books and worksheets.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Requires improvement**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Staff provide a good quality of care for pupils, and this helps to make pupils feel safe and secure. Adults know pupils and their families well and so can spot early signs that a

pupil may be in need of help.

- Pupils are happy and they enjoy the school. They are very positive about the extra-curricular activities that are offered to them. They say that most pupils are friendly and kind and they feel that they are well supported in the school. They say that incidents of bullying are rare but that all adults take their concerns seriously.
- The quality of pastoral care provided for pupils is strong. All staff provide highly effective support for those pupils who face challenging personal and emotional circumstances. Staff are very caring and go out of their way to ensure that pupils are happy and safe in the school.
- The playground has been thoughtfully planned with different zones provided for different activities. Some of these are for pupils to use on a rota basis to avoid overcrowding. As a result, most pupils take part in physical activities during the mid-day break.
- Not all pupils take pride in their work, because not all teachers encourage them to do so. Work across some subjects is untidy, and pupils do not take enough care when writing, drawing or colouring.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. When teaching is lively and engaging and captures their interest, they behave well. However, in those lessons where the work is too easy, they become fidgety and display 'off-task' behaviour which slows their learning. Occasionally, at lunchtimes, some pupils become boisterous, indulging in physical play that can get out of hand.
- There are few recorded incidents of poor behaviour. Bullying is rare, and there are few incidents relating to racism or poor behaviour. There have been very few fixed-term exclusions and no permanent exclusions in recent years.
- Attendance has improved and is currently above average.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- In the national tests in 2018, pupils' progress was significantly below average in writing, below average in reading and average in mathematics. School progress information suggests an improving picture in 2019, although pupils' attainment in writing is below that of reading and mathematics. However, other than disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, pupils do not make as much progress as they should, because there is insufficient challenge for them.
- Pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics are improving. This is owing to a new approach to the teaching of mathematics that was introduced earlier this year. Pupils are now required to reason and explain their calculations. As a result, pupils deepen and consolidate their understanding of mathematical concepts.
- Work in pupils' books shows that pupils apply their understanding of number to solving written problems. As a result, pupils are gaining fluency in manipulating numbers and therefore becoming more accurate in their calculations. However, there is not always a high enough level of challenge for the most able pupils, and they do not reach the

higher standards of which they are capable.

- Pupils in Year 6 enjoy reading and have positive attitudes towards reading. They have a range of skills that they use to read fluently and confidently. They say that they do read in school but they are less clear about how reading supports their learning across the curriculum.
- Across the school, pupils' progress in writing is slow. Pupils struggle to write using correct spelling, punctuation and grammar. Their handwriting is not always correctly formed and the presentation of their work is poor.
- Pupils with SEND make better progress than other pupils. This is because the work provided for them is pitched at the right level. Additionally, teaching assistants offer a good level of support that helps pupils with SEND to understand what it is they are expected to do.
- Disadvantaged pupils make better progress than other pupils. Teachers know the specific barriers they face and provide help and guidance that helps these pupils to overcome their difficulties. Owing to the high level of care provided by adults, these pupils gain confidence and so are more willing to attempt to work independently.

## School details

Unique reference number	142609
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10102016

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Sponsor-led Academy
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	185
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alistair Handford
Executive Headteacher	Peter Holding
Telephone number	01494 527 113
Website	<a href="http://www.beechview.bucks.sch.uk">www.beechview.bucks.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@beechview.bucks.sch.uk">office@beechview.bucks.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school is smaller than most primary schools, and pupils are taught in single-age classes.
- The school became a sponsored academy under the Marlow Education Trust in October 2016. The school works in close partnership with Sir William Borlase's Grammar School, the other school in the trust. The trust board delegates some responsibilities for the governance of the school to a local governing body.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is higher than in most primary schools.
- The school has a high proportion of pupils with SEND.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and who speak English as an additional language are above average.
- The school has undergone a period of significant instability in staffing in recent years. The executive headteacher joined the school in September 2018.



## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils working in most classes, sometimes jointly with school leaders. They looked at work in pupils' books and they listened to pupils reading in Year 6. Inspectors observed pupils in the playground and as they moved around the school.
- Meetings were held with school leaders and four governors, including the chair of governors. Inspectors spoke to pupils in and around the school and they met with a group of Year 6 pupils to gain their views of the school. They met with other leaders, including the SENCo and the DSL.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including school leaders' own views of the school, the school improvement plan, minutes from governing body meetings and other school policies. Inspectors looked at records relating to pupils' behaviour and safety.
- The inspectors met with a few parents and carers at the start of the school day. However, there were too few responses to the online survey Parent View to take into account. There were no responses to the staff or the pupils' survey.

## Inspection team

Joy Considine, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Paul Shaughnessy

Ofsted Inspector

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