

# Inspection of a good school: Beechwood Primary School

Grasmere Drive, Beechwood, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 2TT

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Inspection dates:

18 December 2019

## **Outcome**

Beechwood Primary School continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are happy at Beechwood Primary School. They like the friendly atmosphere at the school. They enjoy a wide range of activities that help them to develop as well-rounded individuals, such as clubs for yoga or cake decoration. They also have opportunities to learn a range of musical instruments.

Pupils develop confidence by achieving well academically and through the range of activities that help them to develop their personal skills. Teachers set high expectations for pupils' learning. The majority of pupils attain well in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2.

Pupils live and breathe the school's motto of 'Think for yourself, care for others'. Teachers are effective in reinforcing this message so that pupils behave well. Pupils focus on their work. Learning proceeds without interruption. Pupils understand the consequences of bullying. They said that bullying is rare because staff act swiftly to address any concerns that pupils raise.

Staff look after pupils well. The caring ethos and the kind nature of staff ensure that pupils feel safe.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Senior leaders and governors know the school well. Governors reassure themselves about the quality of education by questioning leaders on a range of issues. Teachers believe that they are supported well by leaders. Staff have opportunities to work alongside each other to develop their teaching skills. This has helped to create a culture of support and challenge among the staff.

Reading is a priority. Pupils love reading. The curriculum for phonics clearly defines what children and pupils should know and remember at each stage in their learning. In the Reception class, children practise the sounds that they have learned in each lesson before

moving on to new content. Staff continue to reinforce children's phonics skills throughout the day. In key stage 1, teachers frequently recap pupils' previous learning to build on what pupils already know. Staff act as strong role models for pupils. They demonstrate letter sounds precisely. Staff quickly pick up on any pupils who are at risk of falling behind and provide them with extra support. As a result, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged, sound out words well to read accurately. In key stage 2, pupils read fluently and with expression. However, some pupils do not understand some of the words and phrases that they read. They do not question what they mean. As such, they lack some understanding of the books that they read.

In mathematics, pupils clearly described how their learning has built over time to help them with their current work. For example, Year 4 pupils understand how their knowledge of multiples helps them to solve problems involving division. In the early years, children's learning is structured well. Children move from reliably counting objects to perform simple calculations. Some children then go on to explain the process of adding two numbers together. In each year group, teachers set clear expectations for pupils' learning. This enables teachers to support pupils who do not fully understand their work at the point of learning. They help all pupils remember and apply their skills and knowledge to their current learning with increasing confidence. This is especially true for disadvantaged pupils and those pupils with SEND.

In art, teachers develop pupils' knowledge and skills in a logical order so that their work develops well. Pupils watch video clips that demonstrate different artistic techniques so that they can evaluate their own work, and that of established artists, more effectively. Pupils' learning is enhanced through taking part in local and national arts-based projects and competitions which provide them with many opportunities to experience art in different contexts. However, it is not as clear to see how the expectations for pupils' learning build from topic to topic or from year to year in geography and history in key stage 2. Leaders are currently working on their plans to make sure that pupils' learning is more clearly defined in these subjects.

The wide range of additional activities on offer at the school contribute well towards pupils' personal development and their appreciation of culture. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in sports tournaments, go to art exhibitions and take part in drama events. Leaders promote positive mental health and have trained four staff as mental health first aiders to support pupils' social and emotional mental health.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff and governors receive regular training and updates on safeguarding. They know the signs and symptoms to look out for if they are concerned about a pupil's well-being. Pupils know how they can keep themselves safe, including when online.

Leaders undertake safeguarding checks on new staff. The named governor for safeguarding has expertise in this field. He regularly checks on the school's provision and

reports to governors on the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Pupils in key stage 2 read texts fluently and with expression. However, their technical skills in reading are so strong that they read new words and phrases well without understanding what they have read. This means that they do not understand some of the nuances of the texts that they read. Leaders should ensure that pupils have opportunities to question the meaning of new vocabulary to further enhance pupils' reading comprehension.
- The school's curriculum is not yet coherently planned and sequenced in some subjects. However, it is clear from the actions that leaders have already taken that they are in the process of bringing this about. Pupils' work in geography and history shows appropriate end points in learning in these subjects. However, the expectations for pupils' learning in other year groups in key stage 2 are too similar to each other. This stops pupils from building on their learning from year to year. Leaders should ensure that end points for pupils' learning in subjects such as geography and history are more clearly defined for pupils so that the progression in pupils' knowledge and skills is made clearer for staff and pupils.

The transition statements were used on this inspection to confirm that pupils benefit from a good quality of education.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged Beechwood Primary School to be good on 8–9 December 2015.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## **Further information**

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

## School details

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 111175   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Halton   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10111018   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Community  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 4 to 11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 152  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair of governing body</b>             | Mr Dave Knights  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Mrs Stephanie Kidd   |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.beechwoodschoolruncorn.co.uk">www.beechwoodschoolruncorn.co.uk</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | 8–9 December 2015  |

## Information about this school

- In September 2019, the school opened resourced provision that is equipped to support up to six pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

## Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, we met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and subject leaders. We also spoke with a representative from Halton local authority.
- We met with groups of pupils from across the school to ask them about safeguarding. We also met with the headteacher, governors and teachers. We reviewed documentation which included the school's safeguarding policy, register of the checks carried out on new employees and safeguarding records.
- We observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and discussed behaviour and bullying with pupils, parents, teachers and senior leaders.
- We spoke with parents at the start of the school day and took account of 30 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. We also took account of 19 responses to the pupil survey and 14 responses to the staff survey.
- We considered reading, mathematics and art deeply as part of this inspection. For these subjects, we spoke with the headteacher, met with curriculum leaders, teachers

and pupils, undertook an analysis of pupils' work and visited lessons. We heard pupils read. We also looked at pupils' work in science, geography, history and design technology.

### **Inspection team**

Steve Bentham, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Cole Andrew

Ofsted Inspector

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