

Inspection of a good school: The Beacon Primary Pupil Referral Unit

Longdon Close, Woodrow South, Woodrow, Redditch, Worcestershire, B98 7UZ

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 September 2021

Outcome

The Beacon Primary Pupil Referral Unit continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils attending The Beacon are helped to re-engage with learning and to see themselves as successful. This builds their confidence so that they are ready for their next stage of education.

Adults have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. They work together to help pupils focus on learning. Staff act as excellent role models. They have a calm and consistent approach. They care about the pupils' well-being and want them to do well.

Each day is carefully structured. It starts and ends with individual target-setting and reflection. Pupils are rewarded for achieving their targets. Many thrive on the positive praise they receive. A strong focus on personal, social and health education (PSHE) threads through everything. For example, pupils enjoy awarding, and being awarded, the 'kindness coin'. Lessons are well paced to help maximise pupils' engagement.

Pupils speak positively about activities such as forest school, equine therapy and swimming. Pupils say they feel safe and are well looked after. The curriculum teaches pupils how to keep safe, for example, near water, crossing the road and using the internet. Bullying does sometimes happen, but it is rare. If it does, staff support those involved to reduce the likelihood of it happening again.

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

Before a pupil joins the school, staff work with the pupil's family and home school to build an understanding of their needs. Staff develop high-quality, detailed plans to address all aspects of these needs. Assessments take place regularly and plans are updated frequently. This ensures that each pupil benefits from tailored support that adapts as they make progress and their needs change.

Leaders have rightly prioritised reading. They believe that all children should learn to read. Pupils who need to learn phonics have one-to-one sessions with trained staff at least four times a week. Pupils read books that are well matched to their reading abilities. Reading for pleasure has a high profile in the school and pupils clearly enjoy story times. Books are used effectively throughout the day to calm and engage pupils. Pupils spoken to were enthusiastic about their class reading book.

In mathematics, morning activities include time for pupils to practise earlier learning in preparation for the main lesson. Teachers split lessons into short activities to help pupils keep focused. Lessons include regular practical mathematical activities. There is an appropriate emphasis on securing pupils' basic mathematical knowledge and developing fluency in using numbers.

Most other subjects are taught through a series of topics. These are based on the national curriculum and ensure that pupils access a broad curriculum. Teachers find out what pupils already know about a topic and create activities to build on this. However, they sometimes focus too much on the activities rather than the knowledge they want pupils to learn and remember.

The PSHE curriculum, which forms the basis of the school's work, creates a supportive culture. Daily sessions are carefully planned to meet pupils' needs. Staff use a wide range of therapeutic interventions. They draw upon research and advice from external agencies to support their work. Pupils also enjoy meeting visitors, going on trips and, increasingly, the reintroduction of after-school clubs. School attendance is high.

Staff work closely with parents and carers. This includes regular telephone calls and the opportunity to visit school for 'proud parent sessions' which celebrate each child's progress and successes.

Local headteachers have high regard for The Beacon's work. They recognise the positive impact it has had, for example through providing support for staff and stabilising placements for individual pupils.

Staff work well together, despite the team being split across two sites. They feel well supported by leaders who are seen to care about their well-being.

The school's management committee works closely with leaders, providing support and challenge. The committee is aware of the school's strengths and areas for development. However, the committee is not currently as effective as it wants to be in fully supporting the school because there are too few committee members.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a culture where safeguarding is the 'living and breathing' core of the school. Staff receive relevant, regular training. They are informed about the risks that pupils may face. They are vigilant and well placed to identify pupils who may need help to

keep safe. Leaders work closely with external agencies. Any referrals are followed up in a timely way. Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe through the curriculum. Leaders make sure that adults in school are suitable to work with children.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- When planning topics, staff sometimes focus more on the activities pupils will complete than on the specific subject content to be taught. As a result, pupils can miss learning something important without leaders being aware. Leaders need to ensure that planning includes the key knowledge that pupils need to know and remember.
- There are several vacancies on the management committee. This reduces members' ability to have a positive impact on the work of the school. Leaders should act on plans to expand the committee so that it is better able to provide more informed strategic leadership.

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 or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2016.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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 the school and 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

Unique reference number	130987
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10199610
Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	8
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Headteacher	Lesley Hatton
Website	www.thebeaconpru.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 – 29 January 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is based on two sites, one in Redditch and one in Kidderminster.
- The school caters for children with social, emotional and mental health needs. In addition, some pupils have further special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Many pupils have, or are being assessed for, an education, health and care plan.
- Many of the pupils have been, or are at risk of being, permanently excluded from school. When pupils leave The Beacon, they may return to their home school, join another mainstream school, or attend a specialist setting.
- Some pupils attend the school on short-term, part-time courses. These pupils are dual registered, attending both The Beacon and their home primary school. At the time of the inspection, there were no pupils attending one of these courses.
- The school provides outreach support to local primary schools to help reduce the risk of pupils being excluded from school.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors spoke to the headteacher, senior leaders, members of staff and pupils. The lead inspector also spoke to the chair of the management committee, a representative of the local authority and five headteachers from local schools whose pupils have accessed the services of The Beacon.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors met with the subject leader, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector also looked at topic plans and spoke to leaders about their approach to teaching a broad range of subjects.
- Inspectors spoke to leaders and staff about the systems and actions they take to ensure pupils are kept safe. They looked at policies and school records. Inspectors spoke to pupils and observed the relationships between pupils and adults.
- Inspectors also met with leaders and staff in order to find out about SEND, behaviour, the wider curriculum, pastoral support and well-being.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff and Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View. This included comments received via the free-text facility.

Inspection team

Catherine Crooks, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Susan Hickerton

Ofsted Inspector

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