

Inspection of Beacon Academy

Woodthorpe Road, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 2NF

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 November 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Beacon Academy is an inclusive, welcoming school. Pupils are proud of it. They enjoy being together, working hard and using their imagination. They feel that staff listen to them and want to know straightaway about any worries they may have. Pupils make the most of the rich learning environment around them, whether that is discussing the works of art on the wall or playing cooperatively in the autumn leaves. They say that they will always remember the learning, particularly when it takes place outside.

Beacon Academy has a calm, purposeful atmosphere. This helps pupils to concentrate well in lessons. Pupils say that sometimes they fall out, but they all understand the school's golden rule of 'respect'. Teachers make sure that pupils know exactly what bullying is. Leaders investigate the few incidents that are reported to them. They check that the incidents do not happen again.

Leaders have begun to put a well-planned curriculum in place so that pupils learn more. Parents and carers have noticed the difference and say that the school has gone from strength to strength recently. Most feel that their children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), get off to a great start in their education.

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

Leaders want pupils to be well prepared to take their place in Loughborough and the world beyond. They have high expectations of what all pupils, including those with SEND, can achieve. In most subjects, they have identified what pupils need to know in order to be ready for the next stage of their learning.

In subjects such as mathematics, the curriculum is organised well. Staff have received the right training so that they understand exactly what to teach and how to do it. Pupils get as many chances to practise new concepts as they need. Teachers check what pupils have not remembered well enough and adapt the curriculum to build in extra time to review learning. Leaders have identified what pupils have not learned because of the pandemic. For example, they know that pupils did not have enough chances to undertake practical work in science. They have made more time for pupils to study science in this academic year.

All staff know that reading is really important. Children start to learn phonics as soon as they start their Reception Year. Staff know exactly what help to give children as they begin to master these sounds and blend them together. Pupils read with enthusiasm as they experience success. Older pupils explain why they like particular authors and how teachers help them to get better at reading.

Nursery-age children enjoy listening to familiar stories. Teachers choose texts to read aloud so that pupils encounter some of the important words that they will meet

in other subjects. Pupils learn to recite poetry and debate. They speak with confidence and assurance.

Some of the subject curriculums have been developed more recently. Leaders have not checked that pupils will revisit important knowledge in some subjects often enough so that they can recall it. Leaders are still improving staff knowledge in these areas of the curriculum.

Most adults understand how to help pupils with SEND to make the best progress possible. They provide just the right amount of support so that pupils can develop independence. They work well with other agencies to identify precisely what pupils need to know next. Occasionally, adults do not link this to all the areas of learning in the school's wider curriculum.

From early years, children learn how to keep their bodies healthy. In Reception Year, children learn how to clean their teeth properly. Older pupils like the clubs after school that help to keep them active. They vote for their representatives on the school council, and explain how adults have the chance to vote for Members of Parliament. They enjoy learning about what people believe. However, they cannot always recall what they have learned about different faiths. Pupils say that discrimination is not tolerated and know that they must treat everyone fairly.

Leaders and staff want to achieve the best for every pupil. They help families who do not send their child to school every day. This has made a difference to some, but too many pupils still do not attend often enough.

Governors and trustees have made sure that leaders have had the right support to make the school a better place to learn. Staff speak highly of the training that they have received and say that it has made a difference. They say that leaders and staff work together as a team, and feel that they get the help that they need to manage their workload effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders act decisively to make sure that pupils are safe. They follow up concerns that are raised with them straightaway. Governors check that the systems in place to keep pupils safe are working.

Staff know the risks that pupils face. They teach them how to stay safe right from the beginning of their time in school, for example through learning to cross the road safely. Pupils learn that no one should touch them without their permission and what to do if someone sends them an unwelcome photograph. Pupils feel safe in all the areas in and around school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is not yet sufficiently well planned in some subjects. However, it is clear that leaders have already taken action to plan next year's curriculum and to train staff in how to deliver it. For this reason, the transitional statements have been applied.
- The school's curriculum is well sequenced in most subjects. However, in a few subjects, pupils do not get the chance to revisit important knowledge. Pupils do not always recall what they have learned before. Leaders should clarify precisely what they expect pupils to remember. They should make sure that they continue to improve staff subject knowledge in these areas.
- Leaders address poor attendance in a number of ways. However, they have not yet evaluated the impact of these strategies well enough. Too many pupils are persistently absent from school. Leaders should continue to check that the approaches taken are making a difference and that pupils' attendance improves.
- Most teachers make sure that they plan the curriculum so that pupils, including those with SEND, can build on what they have learned before. On some occasions, pupils' next steps are not linked well enough to all areas of learning in the school's curriculum. Leaders should make sure that all staff have the knowledge and expertise that they need to adapt the curriculum for all pupils.

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	139005
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10199970
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	365
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Hall
Principal	Catherine Gadd
Website	www.thebeaconacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	17 June 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the principal and deputy headteacher have been appointed. The assistant headteachers have taken up their new roles.
- The school does not currently use an alternative provider.
- The school has provision for two-year-olds.
- There are enhanced resourced classes for pupils with moderate learning difficulties.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club on site.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with the executive principal, the principal and other senior leaders.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, English, mathematics, history and religious education. They met with subject leaders, considered curriculum planning, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning, and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors heard individual pupils read.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke with leaders about some other subjects.
- Inspectors considered opinions expressed through the staff and pupil questionnaires.
- Inspectors spoke with designated safeguarding leads and governors. They scrutinised the records that leaders kept and spoke with staff, pupils and parents.
- Inspectors visited the breakfast club and spoke with groups of pupils. They met parents at the beginning and end of the day and considered the views expressed through Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Hazel Henson, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Janis Warren	Ofsted Inspector
John Lawson	Ofsted Inspector
Vondra Mays	Ofsted Inspector

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