

Inspection of a good school: Beckfoot Phoenix

Braithwaite Avenue, Keighley, West Yorkshire BD22 6HZ

Inspection dates:

15 and 16 February 2022

Outcome

Beckfoot Phoenix continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if the inspectors were to carry out a section 5 inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a section 5 inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's motto, 'Learning lots, making memories and being brilliant', accurately describes Beckfoot Phoenix.

This is a school of warmth, of care, and of ambition. There are no limits to what staff believe their pupils can achieve. Staff want the very best for the children. This is a school where the pupils come first, and where decisions are taken in their best interests. Staff take the time, and the care, to get to know the pupils they will be working with very well.

Beckfoot Phoenix is a welcoming, nurturing school. Pupils are happy to meet visitors and to welcome them into their school. Pupils help their friends and each other. They are considerate of one another.

As staff know pupils well, and as pupils learn to be considerate, the relationships in school are strong. This means that behaviour is very good. When a pupil needs help to manage how they are feeling, staff know what to do. Pupils understand and accept when a classmate is having a difficult moment.

The overwhelming majority of staff, pupils and parents who communicated with inspectors believe that bullying is not a problem in school, and that matters are dealt with quickly and effectively. Inspectors agree with their opinion.

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

The school's curriculum is aspirational and of high quality. Supported by the multi-academy trust (the trust), leaders have put in place a meticulously planned curriculum. It has inbuilt flexibility, so that the needs of all pupils are met. Staff planning is accurately matched to precision-tooled curriculum plans, and to pupils' education, health and care

(EHC) plan targets. Timetable organisation enables swift adaptations to groups, so that pupils receive teaching that is appropriate to their needs.

Leaders have prioritised reading. A rich seam of literacy runs through the school. Pupils with profound and complex learning needs receive pre-reading teaching. For pupils whose cognitive ability enables it, they are taught how to read. Owing to the wide range of pupils' needs, leaders' approach to phonics necessarily draws on a variety of schemes and methods. They are in the process of introducing a new systematic synthetic phonics scheme, approved by the Department for Education, to further strengthen their already effective teaching of reading.

The wider curriculum is a rich one. Pupils experience a wealth of opportunities to broaden their awareness of their community and the world, such as 'Wonderful Wednesday' and the whole-school 'parades'. The programme of lunchtime and after-school activities is gradually being restarted in line with the school's COVID-19 management protocols. Activities include the Cub Scout pack, which has continued where possible throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, football tournaments, sensory trails and links with the local community, such as a nearby older people's home.

In the context of the provision of Beckfoot Phoenix, behaviour is exemplary. Across the board, staff have consistently high expectations that are founded on strong, caring relationships. Pupils' behaviour around school is of a high quality: they are polite, considerate of others and orderly. Inspectors were routinely made to feel welcome by pupils. Leaders have established robust systems to help staff manage pupil behaviour, and to help pupils to self-regulate. Pupils are taught about how to recognise how they feel, and are given the means of communication to express 'big' feelings. Consequently, a positive behaviour culture permeates the school. When low-level disruption happens, or when pupils start to enter crisis, it is dealt with calmly, effectively and appropriately on a pupil-by-pupil basis.

Leaders are working hard to improve pupils' attendance. This is a challenging task, due to the medical needs of numerous pupils. A new system, however, is beginning to bring about improvements.

Leaders, supported by the trust and the 'Local School Committee' of governors, have listened to the voice of staff in relation to workload. Following a staff survey, leaders took action. Staff felt that some of the work they were asked to do, especially with regard to assessing pupils' progress, had become unnecessarily bureaucratic and was of limited value to their planning. As a result of leaders' actions in response, all of the staff spoken to by inspectors, and the very large majority of staff in Ofsted's survey, feel that workload has reduced. They feel strongly that the work they are now doing is effective in helping pupils to achieve. Inspectors agree.

In discussion with the principal and trust leaders, the inspectors agreed that these areas may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection: the continuing work already underway to further strengthen the teaching of phonics; the work to continue the improvements in pupils' attendance; and the ongoing reopening of the wider curriculum following the easing of COVID-19 restrictions.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff understand that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities often have significant and complex vulnerabilities. They ensure that they know their pupils well, so that they can spot when anything may be wrong or is worrying the pupil. Staff support pupils to have a voice through the wide range of communication methods which are in place for pupils to use. Pupils demonstrate that they feel safe by engaging with activities and not being afraid to make their feelings known. Staff use their knowledge of pupils, and information from families, to ensure that they are alert to any worries the pupils may have.

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 predecessor school, Phoenix Special School, to be good in June 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	144891
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	10200626
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	103
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Winkley
Headteacher	Rachel Stirland
Website	www.phoenixschool.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Beckfoot Phoenix is a special school for pupils with severe learning difficulties and profound and complex learning and medical needs. All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school is part of the Beckfoot Trust.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. An inspector met with the chief executive officer of the Beckfoot Trust. An inspector met the chair of trustees and members of the Local School Committee.
- Inspectors spoke with staff and with pupils, both formally and informally.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and science. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, 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.

- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors examined the checks the school makes on staff employed at the school. Inspectors reviewed the processes leaders use to identify and help pupils who need support, including liaison with external agencies such as the local authority's children's services. Inspectors explored the ways in which pupils, particularly those who are non-verbal, are enabled to communicate with adults.
- Inspectors took into account the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils, and the online Parent View survey for parents.

Inspection team

Steve Shaw, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annali Crawford

Her Majesty's Inspector

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