

Inspection of a good school: Beacon Primary School

Davis Road, New Invention, Willenhall, West Midlands WV12 5HA

Inspection dates:

9 to 10 November 2022

Outcome

Beacon Primary School continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a graded (section 5) inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish at this school. All staff share leaders' high expectations and ambition for every pupil to achieve their full potential. Leaders ensure that pupils develop the knowledge, confidence and determination to achieve exceptionally well.

Pupils likened the school to being in a 'wonderland'. The beautifully themed corridors transport pupils to different places at every turn. One pupil said, 'One minute you're in Narnia, then Downing Street and then France. There is a surprise around every corner'. Pupils are proud of their school, their teachers and themselves. They love learning and appreciate what leaders do for them.

Pupils feel safe and say that bullying is very rare. Pupils sometimes fall out, but they are taught to resolve differences themselves or with the help of other trained pupils. They know that all adults are there to support them if they need them. One pupil said, 'If anything does happen and we need help, it is sorted out in a click of your fingers.'

Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is exceptional. Pupils show excellent manners. One pupil said this was because, 'We have been taught to have good manners since Nursery. It is just something we do. Now we are role models to the younger ones.'

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

Leaders have designed a highly ambitious curriculum. They have carefully identified the important knowledge that they want pupils to develop over time in each subject, including in the early years. Teachers make regular checks on what pupils know and remember. They use this information well to adapt their teaching accordingly so that any gaps in pupils' learning are addressed very well.

Leaders have ensured that in every corner of the building, pupils are inspired to read. As a result, pupils love reading. They enjoy reading in the quiet spaces along the school's corridors, which are themed around famous children's books. Pupils speak positively about how they get to use the school's book vending machine. Books are available for pupils to read at breaktimes. Parents have the opportunity to borrow books before and after school, both for themselves and for their children. Leaders' and staff's actions have established a very strong reading culture across the school.

Children in Reception start to learn to read from the outset. All staff are well trained to teach phonics. Reading books carefully match the sounds that children know. This helps children to practise reading and develop fluency and confidence. Children relish daily story time, including listening to books read by a teacher on the school's radio station.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well supported and are fully included in lessons. Teachers understand these pupils' needs really well. Pupils are given regular opportunities to practise the specific skills they need to improve. Consequently, they achieve exceptionally well.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They take pride in their learning, and this is reflected in the work they produce. Pupils are kind and tolerant. They do not use any discriminatory language at school. They welcome everyone who comes to their school. One pupil said, 'One thing I love is the fact that we are a family. And we will always be part of the Beacon family.'

Leaders have put in place an inspirational programme for pupils' personal development. Pupils are confident and resilient. They do not fear making mistakes. Pupils relish the wide variety of roles and responsibilities available to them. The school mayor leads the school council. 'Mental health heroes' support pupils if they are upset, but they will consult an adult when needed. 'Kindness heroes' help to look after the school rabbits, and the 'bankers' run the Beacon bank. The bank allows pupils to earn Beacon 'money' for good attendance, work and attitudes. Pupils spend their savings on toys, stationery, hot chocolate with a teacher or even 15 minutes with the school dog, Rufus. Pupils also run their own radio station that broadcasts at lunchtime. They write their own show, where they play music, read breaking news and tell jokes. Together, this instils a sense of confidence, ambition and pride in pupils.

Historically, some pupils' attendance has been an issue. Leaders have put in place a more rigorous and accountable approach to attendance. As a result, the number of pupils who regularly miss school is declining significantly.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about their workload and well-being. They said that recent changes to the marking policy have made a difference to their workload. Staff appreciate the little touches that make a big difference, for example the redeveloped staffroom.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is well managed. Leaders have ensured that all staff are able to spot if a pupil is at risk of harm or neglect. Staff report any concerns promptly and effective help and support are quickly put in place.

Pupils are taught ways to help keep themselves safe, including when online. Leaders work with external agencies, such as the police and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, to educate pupils about risks such as a knife crime. Pupils know how to report concerns and are confident that there is always a trusted adult they can talk to.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2017.

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.

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	131580
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	10226917
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	472
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sheila Hayward
Headteacher	Claire Chandler
Website	www.beaconprimaryschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	14 and 15 March 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not make use of any alternative providers.
- The school has a nursery on site. It accepts two-year-olds.
- Leaders run a breakfast club that pupils can pay to attend.
- The school is part of the Lighthouse Federation of schools.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector held meetings with the executive headteacher, the headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator and other curriculum leaders. The inspector also met with two governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- The inspector met with the designated safeguarding leads and checked documents relating to safeguarding, including the checks made on staff. She also examined documentation relating to pupils' attendance and behaviour.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, and the views of staff from Ofsted's online survey.
- The inspector also spoke with pupils and staff informally during the school day.

Inspection team

Eve Morris, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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