

Inspection of a good school: Beeches Junior School

Beeches Road, Great Barr, Birmingham, West Midlands B42 2PY

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 June 2023

Outcome

Beeches Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Beeches Junior School is a happy, welcoming place. Leaders and staff want all pupils to believe in themselves and succeed academically and personally. Pupils respond well to this. They work hard and achieve well. Pupils feel safe, valued and at ease in school. As one pupil said: 'Teachers care about us all. We learn about diversity. We learn to respect and believe in ourselves and each other.'

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), understand the high expectations for behaviour. Regular routines help most pupils to behave well. Teachers provide extra support for those pupils who find it more difficult to maintain good behaviour. Pupils have a mature understanding of bullying. They are confident that staff deal with any issues that arise. Inspection evidence supports this. Staff encourage pupils to reflect on their own actions. This helps to develop their sense of responsibility and self-discipline.

Pupils take part in a wide range of sporting activities and events. Recently, the girls' football team proudly represented the school in a tournament at a professional football ground. Pupils enjoy working with different organisations, such as theatre companies. Visits and residential trips help to build pupils' confidence and broaden their experiences.

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

Leaders and staff share a clear ambition for every pupil to achieve well. They have thought carefully about the key knowledge that they want pupils to know and understand in each subject. They have carefully sequenced the order in which this should be taught. Teachers use assessment well to check what pupils already know before introducing them to more complex tasks. This supports pupils' learning.

The history curriculum is ambitious and well sequenced. In different units, pupils deepen their knowledge and understanding of recurring historical concepts, such as civilisation

and empire. In art and design, pupils study a wide range of art, ranging from Ancient Japan to contemporary street art. Pupils enjoy learning and behave well in lessons.

Leaders prioritise reading. Staff promote a love of reading at every opportunity. Regular events, such as 'Beeches brilliant reader' assemblies, encourage pupils to read widely. Many pupils do so. As a result, more pupils are developing a greater depth of understanding about what they read. The range of books available reflects the school's commitment to diversity and inclusion. This helps pupils to associate reading with enjoyment and real-life issues.

Leaders have recently introduced a new phonics programme to support the teaching of early reading. Leaders accurately identify those pupils who need extra support with phonics. These pupils receive additional teaching. This is having a positive impact for most pupils. Some staff do not yet have the level of expertise needed to teach phonics effectively. In a small number of cases, this slows down the rate at which pupils become fluent readers.

Pupils enjoy mathematics. Leaders support staff to bring about consistency in teaching across the school. There is a daily practice and recall session in addition to regular mathematics lessons. This helps pupils to remember important mathematical facts. An increasing number of pupils achieve a high standard in mathematics by the time they leave Year 6.

Leaders identify the needs of pupils with SEND quickly and accurately. They draw on the expertise of other agencies when necessary. Pupils with more complex needs receive tailored care and support. As a result, most pupils with SEND achieve well. However, in some lessons, pupils with SEND do not have access to resources and strategies that help them to learn and build their independence. This hinders their achievement.

Pupils are polite and respectful of others. They understand and appreciate differences. Pupils' mental health and emotional needs are met well by staff. Leaders are keen that pupils have many different wider experiences. During the inspection, for example, pupils visited a local museum and were intrigued to learn about Victorian schooling. These activities help to foster a love of learning.

The majority of staff are positive about the way leaders consider their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, staff and governors are trained well in safeguarding procedures. Everyone understands their responsibilities. Staff are alert to the signs of harm, abuse and neglect, including those involving online activities. Leaders have put effective systems in place for staff to record concerns. Leaders respond immediately and ensure that pupils and families receive the support that they need. Leaders share the right information with the right people quickly when necessary. They work effectively with other agencies.

In lessons and assemblies, pupils learn how to recognise signs of risk, including online. They receive guidance and support to identify trusted adults in school and at home.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's new phonics programme is not yet fully embedded. A few staff do not have the level of expertise needed to teach phonics well. As a result, they do not adapt their teaching to address pupils' misconceptions. In a small number of cases, this slows down the rate at which some pupils become fluent and confident readers. Leaders should ensure that all staff are equipped to implement the phonics curriculum effectively.
- In some lessons, teachers do not make sure that pupils with SEND have access to resources and strategies that they need to successfully tackle the tasks set. This hinders their learning and independence. Leaders should ensure that the tasks set for each pupil with SEND are appropriate and that all teachers support pupils to learn well and to develop independence.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2018.

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	103163
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10278827
Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	362
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Andrew Thorp
Headteacher	Mike Smart
Website	www.beechesjnr.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	25 January 2018

Information about this school

- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school provides a before- and after-school club, which is managed by the governing body.

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 met with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders and the leader of SEND. She met with representatives of the governing body.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents, including the school's safeguarding information and the single central record.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils, and looked at work in pupils' books.

- The inspector looked at samples of pupils' work in other subjects, including science, religious education, and art and design.
- The inspector listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult. She met with groups of pupils to talk about their learning and life in school. She met with parents and carers at the beginning and end of the school day.
- The inspector met with all staff to talk about the curriculum, their workload and the behaviour and personal development of pupils.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour at playtime and lunchtime and talked to them about behaviour, bullying and welfare matters.
- The lead inspector reviewed responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the pupil and staff surveys. She gathered the views of pupils and staff on site through discussion with these groups and from their online questionnaire responses.

Inspection team

Marilyn Mottram, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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