

Inspection of Beecroft Academy

Westfield Road, Dunstable, Bedfordshire LU6 1DW

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 March 2024

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	Good

The headteacher of this school is Sarah Hughes. The school is the single member of Beecroft Academy Trust. The trust is overseen by a board of governors, chaired by Hannah Bell.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils know the adults have high expectations of them at Beecroft Academy. They try hard to earn house points, achievement certificates, values awards or afternoon tea with the headteacher. Throughout the school, adults and pupils show the monthly focus value, for example politeness. Relationships are warm and respectful in this friendly school.

Pupils appreciate that the differences between them enrich their school community. They celebrate the many languages and cultures represented in the school, for example on Culture Day. Pupils learn about major world religions. They respect the fact that people have different beliefs or opinions.

Trips, 'wow days' and visitors are carefully planned to give pupils a wide range of experiences. Pupils of all ages learn to swim in the temporary swimming pool. Trips to the zoo enhance pupils' learning in science and geography. Visiting speakers describe their various jobs. This inspires pupils to aim high.

Pupils develop leadership skills and learn about how democracy works. Members of the pupil leadership team are elected to their roles. They help the adults in assemblies, speak at the local Remembrance Day service or support younger pupils on the playground. The school council and eco-council get involved in the running of the school.

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

Since the last inspection, the school has continued to improve and refine the curriculum. It has developed 'The Beecroft Way'. This highly consistent approach to curriculum planning and teaching methods now gives all pupils a good quality of education.

Curriculum plans now set out clearly the essential knowledge pupils should learn and the order in which they should learn it. Teachers deliver the curriculum skilfully. They often make links to what pupils have learned before or to what pupils have learned in other subjects. As a result, pupils build connections and deepen their knowledge across all subjects.

Teachers use a variety of checks to see how well pupils are learning. They act swiftly to address any gaps or misconceptions. Similarly, curriculum leaders check how well the curriculum is working. They make changes where needed. Historic weaknesses in the quality of education mean that many pupils have gaps in their knowledge. The quality of their written work is not always of a high enough standard because pupils do not yet apply the techniques they are learning in writing lessons to the way they record their learning in other subjects. However, despite this and the school's low published outcomes, the impact of the school's actions is evident in pupils' current learning.

Movement in and out of the school is relatively high. Many pupils do not speak English as their first language. The school puts effective support in place quickly. Consequently, these pupils progress well against their various starting points.

In early years, visual resources, actions and gestures support all children, particularly those with limited English or children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to develop their language and communication skills. Children thrive in the early years indoor and outdoor environments. The bespoke curriculum prepares them well for key stage 1.

The school has a high proportion of pupils with SEND. The school has ensured that teaching staff are appropriately trained to meet the differing needs of these pupils. Teaching staff are skilled at adapting tasks. This enables pupils with SEND to work with increasing levels of independence and confidence.

Reading is a priority. Adults deliver the school's chosen phonics programme expertly. In early years and key stage 1, pupils learn the sounds they need to read and write unfamiliar words. Increasing numbers of pupils can read confidently by the end of Year 1. Pupils who need extra help are supported to catch up quickly. Older readers develop fluency and expression through regular reading lessons and other reading opportunities. Adults read high-quality stories with enthusiasm. They share their own reading preferences with pupils to promote a love of reading.

Pupils are learning to manage their behaviour well. This is a result of consistent routines and clear expectations. Classrooms and corridors are calm. Any pupils who struggle to meet expectations receive bespoke support to improve their behaviour. Most pupils attend well. The school has taken effective action to improve pupils' attendance.

The school's personal development programme is thoughtfully planned to meet pupils' needs. There is a wide range of clubs that enable pupils to extend their talents and interests. Lessons in financial literacy prepare pupils well for their future lives. Pupils learn about personal safety, both online and offline.

The governing body has grown in strength. Governors and leaders have worked together well to drive improvements. Governors provide support and challenge as appropriate. Leaders have successfully managed staff well-being and workload through a period of significant change.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Historic weaknesses in the curriculum and in teaching approaches mean pupils have gaps in their learning. They can talk about their current learning well but struggle to articulate deeper past learning. The school must use its assessment systems to identify and close gaps in pupils' knowledge.
- Pupils do not yet apply the techniques they are learning in writing lessons to the way they record their learning in other subjects. As a result, pupils' work in some subjects does not reflect the depth of their knowledge. The school should develop pupils' writing so that work across the curriculum is of a consistent high quality.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	140276
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	10295062
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	420
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Hannah Bell
Headteacher	Sarah Hughes
Website	www.beecroftacademy.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	24 and 25 and 30 January 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school operates before and after-school provision.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with a range of leaders, including senior leaders, the special educational needs co-ordinator and governors, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector spoke to the chief executive officer of the Pyramid Schools Trust, which provides school improvement support to the school.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, physical education, religious education and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and spoke with some pupils about their learning. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector listened to several pupils read to a familiar adult. An inspector also looked at curriculum plans for writing and samples of pupils work in English.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documentation and policies. These included the school development plan and minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors reviewed the responses to Ofsted's parent, staff and pupil questionnaires. They also spoke with pupils, parents and staff to gather their views of the school.

Inspection team

Caroline Crozier, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Mark Sim

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