



Beechwood Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134701
LEA LUTON LEA
Inspection number 282652
Inspection dates 24 May 2006 to 25 May 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. Colin Henderson LI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Beechwood Road
School category	Community		LU4 9RD
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01582 518400
Number on roll	624	Fax number	01582 565010
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr.Nasir Bilal
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mrs. Ann Housden

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 24 May 2006 - 25 May 2006	Inspection number 282652
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large, recently amalgamated primary school that serves its local community, an area of socio-economic disadvantage. Pupils come from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Over 70% speak English as an additional language. The attainment of most children starting in the Nursery is well below average, particularly in English language skills. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average. A high proportion of pupils joins or leaves the school at times other than the usual transfer points.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Beechwood Primary is an improving school that provides a satisfactory education for its pupils and gives satisfactory value for money. The headteacher, supported soundly by governors and an improving staff team, provides strong leadership. She gives a clear and purposeful direction to the school and standards are rising. Newly developed procedures are helping the school to gain an accurate view of how well it is doing. These procedures are beginning to improve the quality of education provided by the school. However, they are not sufficiently developed to ensure a consistently good standard. The management of some subjects and year teams is not rigorous enough to ensure that all pupils are achieving as well as they could. Pupils enjoy school and behave well. Attendance is below average and the school works hard to encourage parents to get their children to school and on time. From well below average attainment on entry, achievement is satisfactory overall throughout the school. Children do not attain the nationally expected levels by the end of the Foundation Stage. By the time they leave Year 6, pupils attain standards that are below the national average overall. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are too low. Pupils who speak English as an additional language and those who find learning difficult make satisfactory progress overall as a result of the sound support they receive. Teaching and learning are improving as a result of effective leadership. Some good teaching in Year 6 helps an increasing number of pupils to attain nationally expected levels in English. However, there are inconsistencies in the expectations of some teachers and these limit pupils' achievement, particularly the more able.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards by raising teachers' expectations, particularly of more able pupils, to a consistently high level in all classes. - Raise standards in ICT by providing more opportunities to improve pupils' skills and apply them in different subjects. - Extend the role of subject and team leaders to enable them to raise standards across their subjects to match the improvements seen in English and mathematics.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory overall. From a low starting point on entry, children make satisfactory progress through Nursery and Reception classes. As they have a lot of catching up to do, they do not reach the level expected for their age by the beginning of Year 1. Most pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2, although weaknesses in English language skills limit their achievement, particularly in writing. By the end of Year 2, standards are below the national average. They are well below in writing. Year 6 pupils make rapid progress in literacy and numeracy as a result of consistently good teaching. Pupils' progress is satisfactory overall in Years 3 to 6 as teaching is not of a consistently high enough standard. By the end of Year 6, pupils attain standards that are below average overall. They are improving, especially in

English, where many Year 6 pupils attain nationally expected levels. Standards are higher than those attained in the 2005 national tests, when the school did not achieve its challenging target. More pupils are attaining above average levels, although the proportion is well below the national average. Pupils who find learning hard and those who speak English as an additional language are supported soundly and make satisfactory progress. More able pupils and those with particular gifts and talents achieve satisfactorily overall, although they are not always stretched enough in some classes to extend their skills. Standards in ICT are well below nationally expected levels as pupils do not have enough opportunities to extend their skills.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Good behaviour and an enthusiasm for learning help pupils enjoy school. They like their teachers - 'They boost your confidence if you are feeling down.' Pupils say that bullying is not a problem and they know what to do, should it occur. They are polite and considerate towards others. Attendance is broadly average, despite the school's best efforts to improve it. This is mainly due to families taking holidays in term time. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and pupils have a good understanding of the wide range of cultures represented in the school. Pupils make a sound contribution to the community by fund raising for charities. Older pupils take on some responsibilities, such as being House Captains, but there is room for them to play a bigger part in the running of the school. They know their views are taken seriously because the school council asked if they could wear badges and now they do! The school helps pupils to know how to lead safe and healthy lives, through an effective personal, social and health education programme and links with outside agencies like the fire service. There are many sporting opportunities, including lessons led by specialist teachers. There is a good emphasis on healthy eating. Pupils have a sound grounding for the world of work through the emphasis on literacy and numeracy and the opportunities to work in pairs. However, their computer skills do not receive high enough focus.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall, with much that is good and some outstanding, particularly in Year 6. Good teaching is evident in each year group but the quality is not consistently good and its effectiveness varies between classes. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and have good relationships with their pupils. This promotes positive attitudes towards learning. In the best lessons, teachers plan in detail and pay particular attention to ensuring that activities help all pupils to learn well, whatever their ability. Where teaching is less effective, activities provided for the pupils and teachers' questioning do not ensure that pupils, particularly the more able, make good progress. Assessment procedures in literacy and numeracy are satisfactory and most

teachers use their knowledge of pupils' attainment to plan for the next steps in their learning. Assessment procedures in other subjects, for example, ICT, are not consistently established, although planned for further development. Pupils who speak English as an additional language and those who find learning hard have particular attention paid to their needs. This is starting to improve the progress they make in lessons and in many classes, but not all, teaching assistants contribute well to this progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory, with some good features. This keeps most pupils busy and interested. Much work has been done in developing the curriculum in literacy and numeracy and this is starting to raise standards in those subjects. The school is aware of the need to extend these developments to other subjects, particularly ICT. In the Foundation Stage there is a good emphasis on promoting children's personal, social and emotional development. This is built on well throughout the school through a carefully planned programme of personal, social and health education. Activities reflecting the rich cultural backgrounds of the pupils are an important feature of the curriculum and the life of the school. The curriculum is enhanced by a satisfactory range of activities. For example, visits are arranged to such places as the local mosque and church, as well as places further afield. Included in the many visitors to school are public service organisations and theatre groups. These opportunities provide pupils with interest and breadth in the curriculum and they greatly appreciate these. The range of extra-curricular activities, including various sports, is satisfactory and benefits pupils' health and well-being.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils feel safe and know there is an adult to turn to if they need help. Much has been done to improve behaviour, with teachers taking more responsibility for its management. Support for pupils who speak English as an additional language and for those with learning difficulties has recently been improved to help them make progress. For example, the progress of those who speak English as an additional language is now being tracked through the Reception Year. Links between home and school are satisfactory but more could be done to keep parents informed about the changes taking place as the school develops. All staff have undertaken recent training about child protection matters. Risk assessments are thorough and the school makes all the required checks on adults working in the school. The guidance given to pupils does not yet include the monitoring of their personal development. Pupils know and understand their literacy and numeracy targets and these are beginning to help them improve their work. Older pupils speak confidently about the National Curriculum level they are working towards in English.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher, ably supported by her deputy and assistant heads, provides strong leadership. She has rapidly gained a clear understanding of what needs to be done and has developed systems that check pupils' achievement closely in English and mathematics, has improved their behaviour and raised teaching to at least a satisfactory level. The school has benefited from good support from the local authority to introduce new procedures. It increasingly takes into account the views of parents, pupils and governors to inform its improvement planning. The headteacher has made effective use of half-termly improvement plans to introduce new initiatives at a rate that staff can handle. However, many of these are not yet sufficiently established to improve pupils' achievement consistently. The headteacher has encouraged staff to work more as a team to try to bring about improvement at a faster rate. Despite recruitment difficulties, she has worked closely with her governors to establish a strong senior leadership team that is beginning to improve pupils' achievement. Some subject leaders manage their subjects well, for example, English and mathematics. However, the management of subjects and year teams in raising standards has not been established fully. Governors are supportive and work closely with the school, although do not always check rigorously enough on how well it is doing. Good leadership is rapidly improving the quality of education and beginning to raise standards. This effective leadership, together with recent staff appointments, have put the school in a good position to improve.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for being so friendly and making us feel welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and watching you learn. What we liked most about your school - You enjoy your lessons, especially when the teachers make them interesting and fun. - You get on well together and are polite and friendly. Your behaviour is good. - You told us that you feel safe in school and there is always someone you can speak to if you have a problem. - Your school council does a good job in letting the teachers know what you think. - Mrs Housden, her staff and governors have good ideas about how to make your school better and they are working hard to make this happen. What we have asked the school to do now - Teachers to make more of your lessons interesting and challenging to help you achieve better. - Provide more opportunities for teachers who are responsible for particular subjects or years, to look carefully at each others' teaching and see where they can help you to achieve even better. - Help you to improve your ICT skills and use them more often to help your learning in other subjects. We hope that you continue to be happy at school and carry on working hard. Very best wishes.