



Beenham Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 109802
Local Authority West Berkshire
Inspection number 288500
Inspection dates 24–25 January 2007
Reporting inspector Vanessa Ward

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Mount Pleasant
School category	Community		Beenham
Age range of pupils	4–11		Reading RG7 5NN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0118 971 3397
Number on roll (school)	84	Fax number	0118 971 2087
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Ms Claire Almond
		Headteacher	Mrs Sue Butcher
Date of previous school inspection	11 June 2001		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 24–25 January 2007	Inspection number 288500
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Beenham Primary is much smaller than the average primary school. Pupils come from the village of Beenham and surrounding areas. Most of its pupils are White British and their social backgrounds are mixed. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. More pupils than are usually found have learning difficulties or disabilities. An after-school club is provided on four days of the week. The school is part of a local federation of small schools. There has been a high turnover of staff in the past few years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Beenham Primary School is a good school. It provides a good quality of education. The school's intensive focus on values plays a significant part in promoting its positive ethos. Good levels of care and support contribute to the pupils' good personal development. Pupils say they that 'the teachers are really kind'. Pupils enjoy being in school and show positive attitudes to learning. They take on responsibilities very readily and are keen to contribute to the development of their school.

In the past few years, due mainly to unforeseen circumstances, there have been numerous changes of staff. This has led to some classes being taught by several teachers and has disrupted the learning of some pupils and slowed their progress. However, the staffing situation is now largely resolved, teaching is good and pupils are making good progress. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher has successfully maintained the focus on school improvement during this time. Her very clear understanding of the changes needed to bring about improvement and her determination to move the school on have been crucial. She has been, and continues to be, very well supported by the governors. However, the high staff turnover has disrupted the delegation and development of leadership and management roles. For some periods of time the headteacher has successfully carried out several leadership roles single-handed and taken on the coordination of too many subjects. Now that the staffing situation is more settled, the senior leadership team is being re-established and the school is in a strong position to devolve and develop the roles of subject leaders.

The good quality of provision in the Foundation Stage gives the children a good start, and this is built on through Years 1 to 6. Good teaching and an interesting curriculum contribute to this continuing good achievement, as well as to pupils' enjoyment of being at school. Standards in test results fluctuate because numbers in each year group are small and so the proportions of higher and lower attainers affect the statistics disproportionately. Current standards are above average. Analysis of pupils' progress shows that there is some underachievement in mathematics and, whilst work has begun to rectify this, the school is aware that more needs to be done. The school sets some targets for pupils, but they have insufficient involvement in evaluating how well they are doing.

The school has good links with other agencies to promote the well-being of its pupils. Its involvement with the local schools' federation provides good opportunities to enrich the curriculum and broaden the learning experiences it provides for pupils.

Improvements made since the previous inspection, combined with successful initiatives such as improving achievement for higher attaining pupils and promoting the outcomes for Every Child Matters, indicate that the school's capacity to improve is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics throughout the school, making sure that teaching focuses on providing suitable challenge for all pupils.

- Re-establish the senior leadership team and develop the leadership roles of subject leaders.
- Involve pupils more in understanding their learning targets and in evaluating their success in achieving them.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are above average. The skills of the children when they enter the Foundation Stage vary from year to year and, overall, are typical of most four-year-olds. By the end of the Reception year, most have reached the expected goals in the areas of learning. The school's tracking procedures are now being used with greater rigour to identify where pupils make less progress than expected. A good range of intervention strategies is used to provide additional support for these pupils. This, combined with good teaching, is helping to accelerate progress and therefore increase the value that the school adds to pupils' learning. Analysis of the school's data indicates that all groups of pupils make good progress overall, although there is some underachievement in mathematics, particularly for less able pupils. The school has begun to put in place strategies to rectify this. Since the previous inspection, the school has successfully focused on improving pupils' writing skills. The school's involvement in a project to increase challenge for pupils, especially the more able, is contributing to this improvement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and contributes to their good personal development and well-being. Pupils care for each other, and the school's focus on values helps them to consider the views and feelings of others. Their social skills develop well through paired and team work, and through opportunities to make a contribution to both the school and the wider community. Helping to clear away after lunch, carol singing in the village and serving tea to visitors from the community are activities that help to develop these skills. Pupils gain good understanding of different cultures through the curriculum, and the school is working to increase their awareness of cultural diversity in Britain.

Pupils' attendance is above average, and most pupils behave well. The school council successfully represents pupils' views, and has been influential in selecting playground equipment. Pupils feel very safe in school and are confident that any concern will be quickly resolved. Pupils enjoy a healthy diet in school, and take part enthusiastically in the many opportunities for sport and exercise. The school is encouraging greater pupil participation in its drive to gain a Healthy Schools award. Opportunities to organise fund raising, and the school's emphasis on improving skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), prepare pupils well for life beyond school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good and contribute to the pupils' good achievement. Good relationships boost pupils' confidence and promote self-esteem. Throughout the school, teachers share the purpose of each lesson with the pupils and help them to understand how they can be successful. This helps them to know what they are expected to learn and to reflect on their progress at the end of the lesson. As a result of this process, pupils who were learning how to write a balanced argument had a good understanding of how to go about it, and set to work confidently. Occasionally, teachers do not make clear to pupils how much work they should produce in a given time. This causes some loss of pace and reduces progress. As part of the initiative to ensure that all groups of pupils are challenged well in mathematics, the school is currently reviewing its teaching and learning styles. In the Foundation Stage, good teaching and thorough assessment ensure that learning builds on what the children have already learned. Throughout the school, support staff work well with small groups of pupils, including giving assistance to those with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and contributes well to pupils' progress as well as their personal development. It is enhanced effectively by educational visits and by visitors to the school, as well as joint activities, such as drama, in collaboration with other schools in the federation. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their residential visits. Before and after-school clubs enrich pupils' learning and provide additional opportunities for exercise. The promotion of safe practices and healthy living through the curriculum is good. In order to increase pupils' enjoyment, the curriculum is being revised by linking themes across several subjects. The school is incorporating more opportunities for pupils to practise literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects to help tackle the underachievement in mathematics. Pupils of all abilities enjoy a full curriculum and the school is increasing its links with the secondary school in order to further enhance the curriculum for the most able pupils. In the Foundation Stage, the good balance between teacher-led activities and those selected by children supports their good progress.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The good quality of care, guidance and support provided by the school promotes both pupils' academic and personal development. Parents are appreciative, one parent commenting, 'The teachers have been fantastic in providing my child with kindness and support'. Children are enabled to settle quickly into school and to start making good progress. All aspects of health and safety are very successfully promoted and

monitored. Systems for behaviour management are effective. Whilst teachers often provide pupils with useful guidance about how well they are doing when they mark their work, pupils have insufficient knowledge of their learning targets and are not involved enough in evaluating their progress towards achieving them. Liaison with outside agencies is successful in supporting the well-being and development of all pupils, and especially those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Support for pupils when they prepare to move on to the next stage of their education, is well planned and effective.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good and contribute significantly to the good progress made by the pupils. The excellent leadership of the headteacher has steered the school through a very difficult time. The appointment of new permanent teachers, and the return of others from long-term absence, is enabling a strong sense of teamwork to develop. The leadership and management structure is being reorganised and the school is well placed to ensure that all leadership roles are appropriately developed so as to make a greater contribution to improvement. Good plans are in place to enable subject leaders to have greater influence over improving standards and achievement in their subjects.

The school's process for evaluating its strengths and weaknesses is comprehensive and accurate, as is the way it makes plans for school improvement. The process successfully involves the staff and governors and seeks and values the views of parents and pupils.

Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They provide the headteacher with a good balance of support and challenge.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for making me feel welcome when I visited Beenham recently. It was very useful to listen to what you had to say about what you enjoy doing.

You told me that your school is a good place to be and I agree with you. All of the grown-ups look after you very well. You told me that you enjoy being in school, feel safe there and know that an adult will always help you if you have a problem.

Your teachers give you lots of interesting things to do and you told me how much you enjoy special events such as residential trips and arts week. Your work shows that you are making good progress and are achieving good standards in English, mathematics and science. Your teachers know that you could do even better in mathematics and have started to help you with this. I have asked them to continue, so that your work improves. Your teachers are good at keeping track of how well you are doing. I have asked them to involve you more in this process so that you know what you need to do to achieve your targets and can help in deciding how well you are doing.

You take on lots of responsibilities, such as looking after younger pupils and preparing for assemblies, and these help to make your school a happy place. You eat fruit and vegetables in school and are involved in many sports. These things help you to be healthy. I am glad that you enjoy making changes to your school through your school council.

Your headteacher, teachers and governors are good at finding ways to improve your school. They work together to find ways to help you learn better. They are going to do more of this so that all of you get the best chance to do really well. I know that you will help them as much as you can.

I hope that you will carry on enjoying school and working hard.

Yours sincerely

Vanessa Ward

Lead inspector