



Beech Green Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115600
Local Authority Gloucestershire
Inspection number 290269
Inspection date 22 November 2006
Reporting inspector Judith Rundle HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	St James
School category	Community		Quedgeley
Age range of pupils	4-11		Gloucester GL2 4WD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01452 722363
Number on roll (school)	415	Fax number	01452 723617
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Claire Medland
		Headteacher	Christopher Stott
Date of previous school inspection	16 September 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

Beech Green is a significantly larger than average primary school. Most of the children have favourable social and economic backgrounds and the percentage of pupils eligible for a free school meal is well below average. The number of children with learning difficulties or disabilities is in line with the national average; however, there is a slightly higher than average percentage of pupils with a statement of special education need. The school population is stable with very few children moving in or out of the school. The school has been recognised with awards for Investors in People, Artsmark Gold, Basic Skills and Healthy Schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Beech Green is a good school with outstanding features, and has very good capacity to improve further. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher, supported by a strong senior leadership team, has led to a clear direction being set for further development where 'every child has a right to achieve to the best of their ability.' All adults who work at the school are fully committed to putting the needs of children at the heart of their work. Children thrive within an environment of outstanding care and work that is carefully matched to meet their needs. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. One parent comments 'Thank you to everyone involved in making my children's experience a happy one.'

Teaching is good with some outstanding features which enable children to make good, and frequently better, progress in lessons. This is reflected in results at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 having been well above national averages in all subjects for a number of years and the majority of children attaining the early learning goals in the Foundation Stage. Lessons are well planned to expose children to a full range of activities that lead to high levels of independent learning. They are confident and excited in their learning and are eager to share their work, which is imaginatively displayed around the school, leading to a very bright and visually stimulating learning environment.

Children have very good opportunities to take responsibility within the school and relish their work on the school council, as Friday Friends and house captains. They make the most of opportunities to represent the school in the local community and play an active role in influencing improvements at the school, such as presenting their playground designs to local councillors, and now use these facilities with great joy during breaks and lunchtimes.

Children are helped very effectively to develop healthy lifestyles and have good understanding of why it is important to be fit and active. The majority of children attend an extra-curricular activity and comment that more of them now ride bikes to school since the bike shed has been improved.

The school has secure systems for tracking the progress of all children and uses these very effectively to identify anyone that is not making the expected progress. Appropriate support is then put into place to help individual children reach their potential. Children with specific needs are supported very well as necessary in classes by teaching assistants. Although children have targets for improvement, they are not fully exploited across all subjects to support continuous improvement, neither are they shared with parents and carers so that they can be more involved in supporting their child's learning at home. New procedures that are being piloted to assess pupils' work for learning are already making a significant change to the standards achieved in writing and motivation of children in Years 2 and 6, who strive to achieve their best. The use of talking partners is also helping them to understand strengths in their own and others' work and is leading to perceptive comments on how to improve. One Year 6 child indicated to her partner 'I wish you had a bit more extension in sentences.'

Children enjoy coming to school and behaviour is exemplary in and around the school. Children are polite and courteous to each other and adults; all of them listen attentively to input from other children in the class. They have very positive attitudes to learning which is reflected in attendance being above the national average. One girl explained that her favourite subject was mathematics 'because I like being challenged by doing extra sums that are slightly harder'.

Procedures for monitoring the work of the school are robust and have led to appropriate priorities for further development. The senior leadership team and governing body have very good knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and work as a genuine partnership to bring about further improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use the pupils' targets across all subjects to support more opportunities for continuous learning.
- Communicate pupils' targets to parents and carers so they can better support their child's learning at home.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter the school with broadly average standards and make very good progress throughout the Foundation Stage. Achievement is good across all other age groups, producing results well above national averages for children aged 7 and 11. Children attain better results in reading and mathematics than writing at age 7. Science and mathematics results for 11 year olds are better than English. Girls attain higher results than boys in writing.

Writing has been slightly weaker than other aspects of work, especially for boys. However, the school has introduced a large number of good strategies to help redress this, such as literacy lessons focusing on extended writing opportunities for a purpose, more variety in teaching strategies and changes to the resources available in the library. Early evidence indicates that these are having a very positive effect on improving the quality of writing across the school and particularly boys' enjoyment of writing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

This is a particular strength of the school. Children are given outstanding experiences that help them develop socially, morally and academically. For example, Year 6 children write and make presentations to their peers on why they should be elected as school councillors, and help Reception children at the start of the day and during lunch. Younger pupils hold secret ballots for the election of school councillors and have classroom responsibilities. All children are helped to understand their feelings and actions and their impact on others.

They have good opportunities to develop understanding of other cultures and show great care for others through the use of the friendship stop in the playground and their fund raising activities for charities. One child commented that 'if you stand by the friendship pole others always come and ask you to play'.

Children have well developed understanding of being healthy and comment favourably on the changes to healthy snacks at break times and being able to pre-order their lunch based on a healthy balance. They understand fully why healthy options have been introduced but also appreciate the opportunity to have 'treats on a Friday, when we can bring in chocolate'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good with some outstanding features. The majority of lessons are well paced and activities are frequently exciting, which means that children have fun in their classes and stay motivated. The majority of teachers and teaching assistants are highly skilled at knowing when to intervene at the right time to extend learning and most teachers use excellent questioning techniques to extend children's understanding. Children are keen to study topics in depth and talk articulately about what they have learned. The range of stimulating displays throughout the school reflects the high expectations of children's presentation and independence in learning.

Lessons are planned in year groups to fully utilise teachers' experience and to provide good support for newer members of staff in developing the Beech Green ethos of educating the whole child. Teachers with special expertise are used effectively in subjects such as music, where children make very good progress in their performance, listening and evaluation skills.

Most teachers use interactive whiteboards effectively during lessons and children are increasingly using information and communication technology (ICT) to research their work. For example, a group of boys accessed the Internet to find more details on the Egyptians and another child said 'I enjoy using ICT as we are learning about PowerPoint and can make moving slides and edit our own work.'

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well planned and, although it does not reflect linking subjects on paper, this is very apparent during lessons. For example, the ideas introduced during a science lesson were used to develop sentence and paragraph construction in Year 2 literacy, and children in Year 3 loved acting out their history topic with the story of Theseus and the Minotaur. Children of all age groups have opportunities to experience a good range of extra-curricular activities which are well attended.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care of pupils is central to the school's work and ethos and is very evident throughout the day-to-day running of the school. Exceptional care is shown by all adults and children for each other. Celebration assemblies recognise this ethos of care as one child described being rewarded for 'being kind to midday supervisors'. Children with learning difficulties or disabilities are well catered for, are fully included in all lessons and consequently make good progress during their time in the school. All children said they know who to talk to if they have a problem and 'We know that it is always dealt with, by the midday supervisors or our teachers.' Tracking of children's progress is well established and information is used well to support individual children. The new system using assessment for learning has only recently been introduced; however, positive impact can clearly be seen in Years 2 and 6 where this is being trialled, especially in writing. The introduction of talking partners has increased the number of opportunities for children to develop their speaking and listening skills as well as good opportunities to evaluate and improve their own and peers' work. Children obviously enjoy these opportunities in lessons. The school development plan reflects appropriate training and implementation of these new strategies across the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher is a quietly inspirational leader who has firmly put children at the centre of all the school's work. He has quickly created a strong leadership team, and together they are improving what was already an effective school. However, the role of subject leaders has yet to be fully exploited. Staff and governors are supportive of the changes and work very well as a partnership to ensure that all children have a wealth of experiences and opportunities to develop both socially and academically while in the school. The school development plan is well conceived and the significant changes that have already taken place indicate that the school has very good capacity to improve further.

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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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

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	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
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

I am writing to say thank you for making me feel so welcome and for talking to me when I came to visit your school recently. I also want to tell you what I found out about your school.

You are very lucky to go to such a good school where everyone shows good care for each other, where adults make you feel safe and help you achieve the best that you can. You behave very well in lessons and in the playground and I like the way you include other children in your games when they stand by the friendship pole. You obviously enjoy coming to school and many of you said that you had favourite lessons because they were fun and challenged you to learn new things. It was good to talk with some of you about canopic jars and to hear the samba music played with such enthusiasm.

The school gives you really good opportunities to take responsibility around the school and all of you do this very well. I hope that you continue wanting to be school councillors, house or sports captains and class helpers.

Your teachers know how well each of you is doing and give you support when you need it. When you use talking partners in lessons, it helps you understand your work more and helps everyone know how you can make your work even better. Some of you are using targets and success criteria in lessons. I think it would be good if you used these in more of your lessons and shared them with your parents or carers so that they could help you with your learning at home.

I know you will continue to work hard and make the most of your time at Beech Green and I wish you every success for the future.