

Beaumont Lodge Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120087
Local Authority	Leicester City
Inspection number	291623
Inspection dates	30 April –1 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Doris Bell

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	190
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Derek Matthews
Headteacher	Alison Marsh
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2002
School address	Astill Lodge Road Beaumont Leys Leicester LE4 1DT
Telephone number	0116 2366925
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Attainment on entry to the Nursery is lower than expected for the children's ages and the school has an above average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. More pupils than usual speak English as an additional language. A senior member of staff is on long-term sick leave, and the deputy headteacher only took up his post in September 2006. Five weeks ago, an acting headteacher was brought in to cover the headteacher's maternity leave on a part-time basis. The acting headteacher is using his own deputy to support the school on the days he is unable to be there.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with Section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

The school is not effective enough. Inadequate leadership and management have failed to halt the decline in pupils' achievement in recent years, most particularly in English. The school is currently not moving forward. It is dependent on the acting headteacher who is doing everything possible to keep the school on an even keel in the headteacher's absence. Staff do not understand their leadership and management roles and responsibilities and are not involved in the processes that lead to school improvement. At present, the school does not have the capacity to improve. Its own evaluation of its effectiveness as satisfactory is over-generous.

Achievement is inadequate because pupils are not taught well enough and their progress is too uneven. Standards are below average. In mathematics, pupils make satisfactory progress and reach average standards but standards are exceptionally low in English. Pupils' writing skills are particularly weak throughout the school. A support programme has been introduced to improve boys' writing in Years 5 and 6.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress overall, as do pupils for whom English is an additional language. Support staff make a good contribution to this. More-able pupils throughout the school make unsatisfactory progress because their work is not challenging enough. Several pupils echoed this when they told inspectors they would like harder work to do. Foundation Stage provision is unsatisfactory and Reception children in particular are not progressing well enough. As in the rest of the school, this is caused by weaknesses in planning and a lack of challenge for more-able pupils. The curriculum is inadequate and teachers are not provided with enough guidance in these areas.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall with some strengths in pastoral care that contribute to pupils' satisfactory personal development and well-being. However, there are weaknesses in academic guidance and support. Assessment information is not used well enough in planning or to set targets for pupils and too many pupils are unsure of their targets or how to reach them. Pupils' enjoyment of school is variable and time is wasted in some lessons because teachers do not manage pupils' behaviour well enough. Although most pupils enjoy school, they want learning to be more fun, especially in English. They have a good understanding of healthy living but their lack of progress in English leaves them insufficiently well prepared for their future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Strengthen senior management, build the leadership and management skills of all teachers, and adopt a robust approach to ensuring accurate self-evaluation and school improvement.
- Improve teaching throughout the school, raise achievement and accelerate the progress of all pupils, especially the more able, and particularly in writing.
- Make effective use of assessment information to track pupils' progress, set meaningful targets for them and plan learning that properly meets their needs.

- Ensure pupils understand their targets and improve the quality of teachers' marking, ensuring that it shows pupils how to improve their own learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Standards are below average throughout the school. Achievement is inadequate because too many pupils make insufficient progress in their work, particularly in English. The exceptionally low standards in English are the result of considerable weaknesses in writing, where more-able pupils often make the least progress. Pupils have too few opportunities to write at length or to extend their writing skills in different subjects. In some classes, their continuous writing books show good progress but in too many other classes their progress is minimal. Handwriting, spelling and punctuation are particularly weak.

In the Foundation Stage, children make uneven progress across the different areas of learning and their standards are below the national expectation. As they move through the school, the pupils make some satisfactory and occasionally good progress. This happens when their learning builds on what they already know and their teachers are clear about their different stages of learning. Effectively targeted support ensures that pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make satisfactory progress overall, as do pupils for whom English is an additional language. However, the uneven quality of teaching means that learning is too variable. More-able pupils do not do well enough in any age group.

The school sets itself realistically challenging targets but does not meet them. It makes little use of the information it has from tracking pupils' progress to secure their best possible achievement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Children quickly settle into the established routines in the Foundation Stage, successfully learning to work and play together. Behaviour is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in the rest of the school. Some pupils and their parents expressed concerns about bullying but pupils are satisfied that it is dealt with properly when it occurs. Most pupils feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe both in and out of school. In some lessons, pupils lack commitment, usually because the teaching is uninspiring. Despite the school's best efforts, attendance remains stubbornly below average, mainly because of parents taking holidays during term time.

Pupils understand well the benefits of healthy eating and physical exercise. They contribute constructively to the school and wider community through, for example, their work as school councillors and by raising funds for charity. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Most pupils have the necessary social skills to get on with each other and their environmental work helps them to appreciate and care for the world around them. Their awareness of different cultures in the local and wider community is modest.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Teaching and learning are inadequate. Although some lessons are satisfactory or good, too many are ineffective in promoting the pupils' learning. Planning is weak throughout the school. In the Foundation Stage, activities sometimes lack purpose, are too slow moving and not sufficiently linked to the next steps in learning. This slows the children's progress. In the rest of the school, some teachers plan well for the pupils' different stages of learning and pupils become alive and eager to learn in these classes. However, teachers work largely in isolation and usually plan only with regard to the pupils' ages rather than adapting national or commercial materials to meet the pupils' individual learning needs. Teachers' expectations of pupils are often too low in relation to the quantity, quality and level of work pupils can produce. As a result, the challenge that really inspires and motivates pupils to want to learn is missing. This affects particularly the more-able pupils and behaviour in some classes.

Teachers assess pupils' learning at regular intervals and feed the information into the centrally held system. However, not all teachers use this information well enough in planning or to set targets for pupils. In writing, teachers' subject knowledge is not always as secure as it needs to be to assess writing accurately or to promote it in different subjects. This affects pupils' understanding of how to improve. It is not clear, for example, what the priorities for improvement are when some assessments focus largely on the content of pupils' writing and when the considerable weaknesses in handwriting, spelling and punctuation are overlooked.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 4

The curriculum is inadequate because it fails to meet the needs of pupils, particularly the more able. The lack of challenge in it means that pupils do not achieve as well as they could. The new curriculum, introduced in September, covers statutory requirements but it does not provide teachers with enough guidance on how to promote writing in different subjects or improve the progress of more-able pupils. It is, however, enhanced by a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors, and it promotes pupils' health, safety and well-being satisfactorily. Sound provision is made for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and for pupils for whom English is an additional language. Curricular planning in the Foundation Stage is unclear and the use of outdoor provision to extend children's progress in all areas of learning is inadequate because its potential to do so is not sufficiently understood.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides satisfactory levels of care and support, although aspects of academic guidance are weak. The well attended breakfast club provides a large number of pupils with a healthy start to the day. All procedures for safeguarding pupils and ensuring their safety and well-being are in place. Pupils are confident they can approach an adult for help and get it. The school works very hard to improve pupils' attendance and has sound links with external agencies to do this and to support pupils who find learning difficult. Pupils have targets but they often do not understand them. Teachers' marking does not consistently help them to

clarify and to see what they need to do to improve their own learning. In some classes, this is done well but in others, efforts are too inconsistent to be of benefit to the pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

Leadership and management are inadequate because senior managers have been ineffective in guiding improvement. The staff's contribution to holding the school together is limited by their lack of involvement in and understanding of school self-evaluation and how this leads to improvement. Weaknesses in leadership and management at all levels mean that staff do not have a clear overview of their areas of responsibility or their individual contribution to pupils' achievement. Some checks have been made on teaching and learning but they are not robust enough to identify or tackle the weaknesses. The school's evaluations of most aspects of its work are over-generous and governors are not holding the school to account sufficiently.

The school improvement plan identifies some of the right priorities and how they are to be addressed. However, the practices arising from them differ from what is laid down in planning and are hindering improvement. Key aspects, such as improving standards in Year 6 and the progress of more-able pupils throughout the school, have not been tackled well enough since the previous inspection. The biggest weakness now facing the school, namely writing, is not being properly tackled through teaching or the curriculum. Because there is currently no leader for English, the school's ability to capitalise on its involvement in the support programme to tackle writing throughout the school is limited.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	4
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

2 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Beaumont Lodge (VC) Primary School, Beaumont Leys, Leicester, LE4 1DT

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for talking to us about it and about your work. While your school does a number of things correctly, there are too many things that it is not doing nearly well enough and these are affecting your progress. We call this 'requiring special measures', that is, measures which will help all of you do better. It means that we are asking the school to do some very precise things to improve. An inspector will be coming back from time to time to check on how well it is doing them.

- Here are some of the things the school is doing properly:
- It looks after you, cares and supports you in your personal development and well-being and in teaching you how to behave in a satisfactory manner.
- It ensures you have a good understanding of the importance of caring for the environment, and of keeping safe, fit and healthy.
- Some of your teachers make your learning exciting and therefore make you want to learn more.
- Those of you who find learning difficult, for whatever reason, make satisfactory progress because you are supported well in and out of class.
- Here is what the school needs to do to improve:
- Help the teachers lead and manage different parts of the school's work better, continuously checking how well it is doing, and making sure it is improving.
- Teach you even better than you are taught now so that you can make faster progress and, those of you able to do so, reach higher standards, especially in writing.
- Make better use of all the information it has about how well you are doing so as to check your progress, set your targets and give you work that challenges you to do as well as you possibly can.
- Explain your targets more clearly and show you how to improve your own learning.

You could help the school to improve by attending regularly, working hard and paying attention in class at all times, and helping each other to do better.

Yours sincerely

Doris Bell Lead Inspector