

Beech Grove Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123711
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	292755
Inspection dates	3–4 May 2007
Reporting inspector	David Curtis

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	295
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Hall
Headteacher	Kerry Chappell
Date of previous school inspection	4 February 2002
School address	Courtland Road Wellington TA21 8NE
Telephone number	01823 662438
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than the average primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is not significantly different from the national average. Four teachers have been appointed in the last two years, including two members of the senior management team in September 2006. Attainment on entry has been below average in the past, although for the current Reception group it is average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'When my son leaves Beech Grove this summer it will be a sad time. The school works hard to be consistent, supportive and encouraging. This trickles down through every member of staff and leaves the pupils proud to be part of the school community.' The views of this parent, together with other similar views, sum up the essence of this good school. Good leadership and management are central to the school's success. Through recent good staff appointments and very rigorous analysis of its performance, the school has made significant strides in raising standards and improving pupils' achievement. The school uses assessment of pupils' progress most successfully, especially in identifying and then addressing areas of underperformance. Standards are broadly average and achievement is satisfactory, having been inadequate two years ago. In science, pupils' skills in investigations and experiments are below average and weaker than their scientific knowledge. The successful implementation of the social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) has led to a significant improvement in pupils' attitudes to school, behaviour and a dramatic drop in the number of permanent and fixed-term exclusions which were above average. These successes help to show that the school has good capacity for further improvement.

Good teaching and learning, linked to a good curriculum, have a major impact on improving standards and achievement. Teachers and teaching assistants work in effective partnership to support all pupils. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the way teachers help them to build up the skills needed, for example in being able to write a letter of complaint. Most pupils say that teachers' marking helps them to improve their work. They find having targets for literacy and numeracy very helpful so that they can see their own progress. Pupils say that they would like similar targets in other subjects. A minority of pupils feel that marking and targets are not used so successfully in their class.

Provision and standards in the Foundation Stage are good and improving at a rapid pace. The new leader has made a significant contribution to improving the quality of teaching and raising expectations of what children can achieve. As a result, children in Reception are on course to meet the goals expected of them.

Another key factor contributing to school improvement is the good care, guidance and support. The quality of support for vulnerable pupils, together with those who have learning difficulties and disabilities, is outstanding. Because pupils are so well cared for, their personal development and well-being are good. Behaviour is good, and, in some lessons, is exemplary. Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in good attendance. Pupils show a good understanding of the need to eat healthily and keep fit. Pupils who manage the school's 'Fruit Shop' are adamant that, 'We only sell healthy snacks'. Pupils feel safe in school and know that adults will help and support them. One pupil who was worried about going on a residential visit spoke highly of how the headteacher reassured her over her worries and concerns about the visit. In Reception, children settle very quickly into the day-to-day life of the school. They are very happy, secure and confident and really enjoy learning, along with the local cat that joins them for stories and outdoor play!

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards across the school in pupils' skills in the investigative and experimental aspects of science.

- Ensure that in all classes teachers follow the school's marking scheme and involve all pupils in knowing and understanding their own targets.
- Introduce a programme to develop pupils' targets in other subjects, starting with science.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are broadly average by the end of Year 6 and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Two years ago achievement was inadequate. Evidence from lesson observations show that pupils are making good progress. As a result, pupils' achievement continues to improve. Standards in English, mathematics and science are rising year on year. In science, there is a relative weakness in pupils' skills in investigative and experimental work which are not as strong as their knowledge of scientific facts. Progress in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. Standards are broadly average.

Children now make good progress in Reception as a result of much improved teaching and learning following the successful appointment of the new leader for the Foundation Stage. Children are on course to meet the goals expected of them in all six areas of learning, representing good improvement over previous years.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because of effective support from teachers and teaching assistants. The success of the SEAL programme has meant that many of these pupils have much better attitudes to school. As a result, they are willing to learn and make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Relationships between adults and pupils are generally of very high quality and a positive aid to learning. Pupils are knowledgeable about how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They particularly enjoy growing and eating their own vegetables in the school garden. They appreciate the opportunities the school gives them during lessons and through lunchtime and after-school clubs to take part in many different activities. The school's encouragement of thoughtful debate and consideration of others is recognised by the pupils themselves as beneficial, and the playground is a happy, harmonious place. Pupils contribute to their local community through involvement with national and local charities, and take part in local competitions and musical activities. Pupils recognise and value the work of the school council.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Through assemblies and the SEAL programme, pupils reflect sensitively on issues which concern them. In Year 6, pupils take on responsibilities, such as being house captains. They talk enthusiastically about their training to be peer mediators. Through running the 'Fruit Shop' and developing links with business, pupils' economic well-being is developed successfully. However, there is still room to further develop their key literacy and numeracy skills to make sure they are well prepared for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching in Reception is good, with outstanding features. There are significant strengths in planning to meet children's individual learning needs. Teaching assistants play a significant role in assessing children's progress and in teaching small groups. In Years 1 to 6, teaching is typically good. Teachers' planning is effective and is adapted successfully to meet pupils' needs. Interactive whiteboards are used effectively to teach new skills and knowledge. Lessons proceed at a good pace. Marking is mainly supportive and tells most pupils how they can improve their work, although this is not totally consistent across the school. Similarly, a few teachers do not regularly involve pupils in using their literacy and numeracy targets to help improve their work. Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to the good progress made, especially by pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Assessment is a significant strength. Starting in Reception, teachers regularly assess progress to identify trends, especially potential underachievement. Good use is then made of planning and support programmes to help those pupils in danger of falling behind. This rigour in using assessment has contributed significantly to the improving achievement of pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum for children in Reception is good. There is a very strong balance between activities where children are taught by teachers and teaching assistants and those which they choose for themselves. Outdoor play is a particular strength. In Years 1 to 6, the good curriculum contributes to improved standards and achievement. Pupils now have good opportunities to use and apply their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills in other subjects. Particularly good examples of this are seen in history and design and technology. However, there is still room to improve pupils' use of writing and how such skills are developed in other subjects. The school's personal, social, health and citizenship programme, together with SEAL, is a major reason for pupils' personal development being good.

There is a good range of well-attended extra-curricular activities, including a homework club. Visits by a willow sculptor and local artists are good examples of how the school enriches its curriculum. Gifted and talented pupils have good opportunities to take part in events at the local secondary school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The pastoral care and individual support provided are outstanding. Staff make every effort to get to know every child and family and to provide pupils with encouragement to learn and to develop as rounded individuals. Individual needs, whether of those who find learning difficult or of gifted and talented pupils, are swiftly identified and given carefully planned, individualised attention. The behaviour management strategies introduced over the last two years have been highly successful. A dedicated parent liaison team provides information, guidance and a friendly welcome in an effort to help parents support their children's learning.

The developing system for academic support and guidance is of high quality although it is not consistently used by all teachers or in subjects other than English and mathematics. This has a restricting effect on pupils' progress. The system of individual target setting which is effective in most classes is greatly appreciated by pupils who are given clear goals and feel in charge of their own learning. There is a very high level of commitment from all staff in promoting the health and safety of pupils. The arrangements for safeguarding pupils are very good. The vast majority of parents are very appreciative of the support they are given by the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's leadership is good. She is successfully building a strong leadership team which is hard working and committed to raising standards. Recent appointments in particular are having a very positive impact on the school's development. The subject leaders' role, including that of the Foundation Stage leader, is being developed very well, and this is having a positive impact on raising standards. This is a good improvement since the last inspection where it was an area for development. School improvement groups consist of teachers, teaching assistants and governors. These groups play a significant part in moving the school forward. Improvements to pupils' behaviour and attitudes to school through SEAL, together with rising standards and improving achievement, are testimony to the success of leadership and management. There remains some work to be done, particularly in ensuring that all teachers follow the school's schemes for marking and assessing pupils' work.

School self-evaluation is rigorous and is followed up with a school development plan with clear and appropriate strategies for improvement. Analysis of pupils' performance is thorough and used well to set individual targets which are well known and understood by most pupils. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are well organised and trained, and are effectively supporting and challenging the school.

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Annex A

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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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	3

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.

Annex A

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	2
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

7 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Beech Grove Primary School, Wellington, TA21 8NE

Thank you very much for your warm welcome when we visited your school. It was good to meet many of you. We would like to say a special thank you to the school council and those of you in Year 6 who gave up part of your lunch break to meet with us. I am delighted to tell you that you go to a good school. These are some of the things that we thought were particularly good:

- The work you are doing in English and mathematics is improving all the time and we think you learn a lot in your lessons.
- Your behaviour is very good and you enjoy your friends.
- In lessons, you work hard and like having targets in literacy and numeracy.
- You enjoy taking part in after-school clubs.
- You feel very safe in school and know teachers and adults will help you if you are worried and concerned.
- All of the people who lead and manage your school are working hard together to make your school even better than it already is.

We have asked your headteacher, teachers and governors to do three things which we think will help to make your school even better. These are:

- To improve your skills when doing experiments and investigations in science
- To make sure that all teachers tell you how you can improve your work through marking and making sure you know your targets
- To give you targets in other subjects, starting with science.

Yours faithfully

David Curtis Lead inspector