

Beechwood Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109936
Local Authority	Wokingham District Council
Inspection number	310147
Inspection dates	11–12 February 2008
Reporting inspector	John Laver

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	173
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr M Ballard
Headteacher	Mr G Davies
Date of previous school inspection	20 October 2003
School address	Ambleside Close Woodley Reading RG5 4JJ
Telephone number	0118 9695976
Fax number	0118 9693578

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This one form entry school is smaller than average. The numbers of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties, mostly moderate difficulties in literacy, is above average. A significant proportion of pupils joins or leaves the school other than at the usual transition dates. The school has recently experienced several changes in staff.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'Beechwood is a good school with a committed staff who provide an exciting curriculum for the children.' 'The school has an amazing team which dedicates so much time to the education and welfare of the children. I am very proud of them all.' These two statements, typical of many received from parents, help to explain why the school provides a standard of education which is always at least good, and has some outstanding features. Particular strengths are the outstanding personal development of pupils of all ages; the breadth and quality of the curriculum; the outstanding quality of care, guidance and support; and not least, the success of the school in steadily raising standards and achievement in recent years.

Inspectors agree with the parents who wrote that the school 'encourages pupils to be confident and independent. Most importantly, the children at Beechwood are very happy.' Outstanding personal development shines through in the exemplary behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school. It is also evident in their enthusiasm for learning and their participation in a range of activities such as the clubs and visits that enrich the curriculum. Older pupils behave very responsibly in helping younger children, and as such are excellent role models. Pupils are very articulate in explaining how the school council operates successfully and how they contribute to the school and wider community through monitorial duties and representing the school in outside events.

Pupils and parents testify to the excellent personal care that makes pupils feel safe and happy in school. The school also provides excellent academic support by carefully tracking each pupil's progress, and feeding this information into targets that pupils understand and which are regularly reviewed. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties is excellent. Increasingly, teachers use assessment constructively in lessons to match work well to the needs of individual pupils. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now never less than satisfactory, and is good overall. Pupils comment that, as a result, learning is 'fun'. Teaching is satisfactory when teachers allow insufficient opportunities for pupils' independent learning.

Children join Year 1 with standards in literacy that are broadly in line with expectations for their age, and above expectations in numeracy skills and their personal, physical and social development. Current standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are above average, as they were in the 2007 national tests. Pupils from all ability groups, and including those from minority ethnic backgrounds and those with learning difficulties, most commonly in literacy, make good progress. Pupils who join the school other than at the normal transition times adapt quickly to the high expectations of staff. Pupils are currently on track to meet even more challenging targets than those achieved in 2007. This is due to a combination of good teaching, pupils' very positive attitudes towards learning and the success of teachers and teaching assistants in supporting those needing extra help in developing basic skills. Although pupils make good progress in writing, it is not to the same extent as in other core skills. Opportunities to develop writing skills in other subjects such as history are not promoted strongly enough. Recent fluctuations in science standards have been targeted and progress in science has now improved.

Inspectors agree with parents that the school is led well. There are good monitoring and evaluation procedures. The school's leadership and a knowledgeable governing body are very aware of the school's strengths and areas for development. This is reflected in good strategic planning. Issues arising from the previous inspection, particularly the need to raise the standards of younger pupils, improve provision in information and communications technology (ICT), art

and design, and further develop assessment and monitoring, have all been successfully addressed. The resulting improvements, and the impact particularly on pupils' achievement and personal development, show that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Children make good progress in a well managed environment. They join reception with good personal and social skills. However, early language skills are underdeveloped and below usual expectations for their age. Children happily engage with the opportunities for writing and benefit from structured teaching of phonics and mathematical skills. Consequently they make rapid progress and reach expected levels of literacy by the time they enter Year 1, and above expectations in mathematics. The curriculum is well planned and exciting. Children's physical development is strong; for example, they enjoy moving to music and becoming animals in the 'Gruffalo' story. Their creative skills and knowledge, and understanding of the world, are well developed and reach expected levels.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement in writing by creating more opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy skills across the curriculum.
- Ensure that all teaching matches the quality of the best practice by enabling more opportunities for pupils' independent learning and research.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average and pupils achieve well. The 2007 national assessments showed pupils achieving significantly above average standards in reading and mathematics for seven year olds. Standards in English and mathematics for eleven year olds were well above average in the higher grades.

Whilst making good progress in English overall, pupils do not achieve as highly in writing as in other core skills. Science standards are beginning to rise at the same rate as numeracy. Pupils of all levels of ability, including the minority who have learning difficulties in literacy, make good progress. This results from the careful match of work and support to all learners' needs. Pupils also achieve well in music, sport and art.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Their behaviour is excellent and they are well-mannered and friendly. Pupils' excellent attitudes contribute to their good progress in all subjects. They thrive on opportunities to take on responsibility, as in the school council. They also take great pride in their school. Pupils' love of attending school is reflected in above average attendance. Pupils know about how to live healthy lives by eating sensibly and taking part in the wide range of sport. At the end of Year 6 pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, being articulate, confident and with above average academic standards and exceptionally well developed social skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good, and sometimes outstanding. The best teaching shows high expectations, detailed planning and good use of learning objectives. Pupils consequently have a clear idea of what they are learning, and why. Teaching assistants work skilfully to ensure that pupils with learning difficulties make good progress. Teachers provide a good match of work to enable pupils with higher ability to achieve well. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their enjoyment of practical tasks. They respond enthusiastically to challenging expectations, seen for example in German and the singing of songs in an English lesson to help pupils learn how to use a glossary. Teachers often encourage pupils to be more active learners, through frequent use of strategies such as 'talking partners' and getting pupils to assess each other's work. However, very occasionally teaching is less successful because the pace of learning is slower, with pupils passive for too long. As a result, opportunities are missed for pupils to develop more independent, research-based skills.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils love the opportunities which the curriculum provides. They and their parents are particularly enthusiastic about the wide range of clubs and activities, especially in music, sport and art, and they also enjoy the residential trips and other visits. There is a very high take up of after-school clubs. Pupils also enjoy swimming, French and German. ICT provision has improved since the previous inspection. An increasing range of support programmes for pupils needing extra help has had a marked impact on raising literacy and numeracy standards. The school has deservedly developed a reputation as a centre of excellence for sport.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Beechwood is a very inclusive school, because it meets the needs of all pupils well. Pupils and parents comment on its friendliness and family atmosphere. Pupils feel confident in approaching adults and each other for help. They feel safe and believe that the very few cases of inappropriate behaviour such as bullying are dealt with well. Arrangements for safeguarding children are robust. The school has made great strides in the tracking of pupil progress and using assessment to set targets, often with the participation of pupils themselves. The school regularly reviews the targets, and this has helped to raise standards and the level of achievement significantly in recent years.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The senior leadership team is committed to improvement and has appropriate plans to address issues such as inconsistent performance in science. Senior leaders have managed recent changes in staffing and limited finances well, so that pupils' learning has not been significantly disrupted. The school makes very good use of its extensive space and facilities such as the 'reflective garden'. The role of subject leaders is developing well and the organisation and impact of

monitoring and evaluation have improved considerably since the previous inspection. Governors challenge both the process and impact of initiatives, and have an excellent understanding of the strengths and areas for development for the school. The school has excellent links with other schools and agencies to ensure there are many opportunities to share expertise, for example in science.

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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	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?	1

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
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

28 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Beechwood Primary School, Reading, RG5 4JJ

Thank you for the way in which you welcomed us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed seeing your school, especially the large open areas, the reflective garden and the high quality displays around the school. Above all we very much enjoyed talking to you and seeing you at work and play.

Your school gives you a good education, and has some outstanding aspects. Both you and your parents told us this, and we agree with you. We were particularly impressed with your excellent behaviour and the considerate way you behave towards both adults and other children. We know that most of you enjoy learning and that you are very enthusiastic about the wide range of clubs. We admire the hard work of Mr. Davies and the rest of the staff in providing you with so many opportunities.

We also believe that the school is well led and gives you excellent help and guidance. You told us that you feel safe and that 'this is a very caring school'. We enjoyed listening to you telling us about your various activities and were impressed by what you achieve in helping others, for example through serving on the school council. You have a very good understanding of how to lead healthy lives and how to help the adults run the school smoothly.

Your teachers help you to learn well. As a result, you do better at Beechwood than many pupils do in other schools, and we know that most of you give your best. We know that your teachers often succeed in helping you learn in an interesting way. They give you lots of practical tasks, and provide good help through marking and targets so you can improve your work even more.

Because you are good learners, we have asked the school to do two things which would help you do even better. One is to give you opportunities to write more, sometimes in different subjects as well as in English lessons. We have also asked the teachers to give you even more opportunities to work on your own, because many of you have shown that you are very capable of finding out things for yourselves.

We wish you well for the future.

John Laver

Lead Inspector