

Beechview School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110521
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	310346
Inspection dates	7–8 May 2008
Reporting inspector	David Mankelow

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	182
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr M Prince
Headteacher	Ms B Melero
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2004
School address	Guinions Road High Wycombe HP13 7NT
Telephone number	01494 527113
Fax number	01494 443583

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Beechview is an average sized junior school. Proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those with English as an additional language are above average, as are the proportions with learning difficulties and those eligible for free school meals. Four acting headteachers have led the school since September 2006. An executive board, appointed by the local authority, has been responsible for financial and personnel issues since that time.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Beechview is a satisfactory school. There has been a history of underachievement and low standards, especially in mathematics and science, which coincided with turbulence in the leadership of the school. Effective support from the leaders of a nearby National Support School (NSS), a National Leader of Education, and from the local authority has reversed the decline and standards are now rising. Under the inspirational guidance of the current acting headteacher, leadership and management are now satisfactory. Senior and middle leaders are involved in assessing the school's strengths and weaknesses. As a result, they have a clear understanding of what needs to be done to raise standards and have begun to do so.

A strength of the school is the good pastoral care that it provides which results in pupils feeling safe and wanting to come to school. Pupils' personal development and well-being is good. They behave well and take good care of each other. They know they can turn to an adult for support if they are worried. Parents appreciate this and are overwhelmingly supportive of the school, although concerned that there has been a sequence of temporary headteachers. It is a significant credit to the staff that they have maintained parental confidence in the absence of a permanent headteacher.

Staff from the NSS have introduced effective procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' progress. Pupils who have fallen behind have been identified and are given appropriate support by teachers and well-trained teaching assistants to begin to overcome this. Pupils now make at least satisfactory progress overall and in some year groups, progress is good. Support for pupils with moderate learning difficulties and those with English as an additional language is well organised and effective. Those pupils make the same progress as their classmates. A higher percentage of current Year 6 pupils are working at expected levels in mathematics and science because of better teaching and a variety of support strategies. However, their overall achievement since joining the school is only satisfactory because they have lost too much ground in the past.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Most lessons are well planned and work is matched accurately to pupils' prior attainment. However, this is not always the case and on occasions, work is not sufficiently challenging, especially for more able pupils. In these lessons progress is not as good as it should be. Teachers are beginning to make better use of individual pupil targets to plan future work. Whilst this is beginning to raise standards, in some classes pupils do not have a sufficiently clear understanding of their targets. Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously, but their comments do not always let pupils know clearly enough what they need to do next. The curriculum is satisfactory overall with strengths in the range of enthusiastically attended after school clubs.

The executive board, appointed by the local authority, provides effective support to the governing body so governance overall is satisfactory. However, the governing body has many new members who do not yet have the skills and experience to hold the school to account so it is not yet ready to take back full delegated responsibilities. The pace of school improvement is slowed by not having a permanent headteacher. However, the procedure for making the appointment is well under way and pupils' good personal development and well-being, and improved standards and achievement this year indicate that the school is soundly placed to continue to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards by ensuring that work is always well matched to pupils' prior learning, especially for the more able.
- Ensure that all pupils have a clear understanding of their individual targets and that marking consistently lets them know what they need to do in order to improve their work.
- Strengthen the leadership and management of the school through the appointment of a permanent headteacher and by ensuring that governors have the skills needed to fulfil their responsibilities.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Attainment on entry to the school is a little below average, particularly for the proportion of pupils reaching levels above those expected. In previous years, standards were too low, especially in mathematics and science, and pupils made inadequate progress during their time in the school. Improved teaching has led to better achievement this year. Pupils' progress is now well tracked and those at risk of falling behind are identified and given good support from class teachers, support teachers and teaching assistants. As a result, achievement is now satisfactory and a higher proportion of pupils in Year 6 are working at the expected levels.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being is a strength of the school. Pupils enjoy coming to school, they are polite and have positive attitudes to learning. Although the attendance of a small minority is a concern, the school works closely with parents and external agencies and is doing all it can to resolve this. Pupils behave well in class and around the school. They make a good contribution to the school and wider communities. For example, the school council was responsible for organising improvements to playground equipment. A pupil voiced the feelings of most when saying, 'Playtimes are much better now that we have more to do.' The role of the learning mentor has made a real difference to the life of the school. Since her appointment, bullying has decreased and is now very rare. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Assemblies give pupils good opportunities for reflection and some lessons support spiritual development. This was seen in a good lesson about persuasive language where pupils expressed very thoughtful views on recycling. Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle, knowing that they need to have a good diet and take regular exercise. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching across the school is characterised by good relationships which result in pupils' positive attitudes to their work. Teachers, support teachers and teaching assistants work effectively as teams to support pupils with learning difficulties and so they take a full part in the life of the

school. Teachers plan work at different ability levels for the pupils in their classes, but some of the work is not sufficiently challenging, especially for more able pupils. As a result, pupils do not always reach the standards of which they are capable, particularly in mathematics and science. Teachers mark work regularly but in some classes the comments made do not tell pupils clearly enough what they need to do next in order to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is broad, balanced and covers all statutory requirements. There is a good range of extra-curricular clubs that make a significant contribution to pupils' social development and to them adopting healthy lifestyles. When asked what the best thing about their school is, one pupil typically responded, 'The sports clubs are great, I can't wait to play rounders this afternoon.' A good range of visits and visitors is used to enrich learning. Computers are used increasingly well by teachers and pupils to support many areas of the curriculum and the development of investigational skills. This is contributing to improved achievement. Sound opportunities are provided to link work in different subjects, but the school recognises the need to develop this further in order to make work more interesting and raise achievement in literacy and numeracy.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

This is a caring school, which gives high priority to the welfare of the pupils. Pupils say that they feel safe and secure because the staff know them well and respond quickly to their needs. There are effective systems that promote good behaviour. Children are successfully encouraged to work with others and this promotes positive relationships. Pastoral care has many good features, particularly in the provision for vulnerable pupils and those with additional learning needs. There are good relations with outside agencies, who give additional support to pupils in need. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Teachers now set individual targets for pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics. However, in some classes the targets are not clearly understood by the pupils and not specific enough to tell them exactly what they need to do in order to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The current acting headteacher quickly made an accurate evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses when she took up the position in September 2007. With support from the local authority and the headteacher of the National Support School, she has introduced many effective initiatives to overcome past weaknesses in the day-to-day running of the school, in personnel matters and in teaching and learning. She has done this decisively but sensitively and with the backing of the school's senior and middle leaders. As a result, the school has a calm, purposeful atmosphere where all staff are working together to raise achievement. This good teamwork has resulted in improved achievement this year and the trend is upwards. The partnership between the executive board and the governing body is effective but whilst growing in expertise, many governors are new. They are not yet ready to take on the full range of governors' responsibilities but have the capacity to do so. The chair of governors has a clear understanding

of the school's strengths and weaknesses. He is fully aware of the critical importance to the school of successfully appointing a new headteacher.

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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?	3
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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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	3

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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?	3
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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

20 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Beechview School, High Wycombe, HP13 7NT

You may remember that I visited your school a few days ago with another inspector. Thank you very much for telling us all about your school and for making us feel so welcome. I am writing now to tell you what we found.

Yours is a satisfactory school. Most of you enjoy coming to school because the teachers look after you well. You especially enjoy all of the clubs that the staff provide for you. You know that you need to eat sensibly and take lots of exercise to stay healthy. You behave well and are kind to each other. You told us that there is hardly any bullying now. You know that your teachers listen to you and take you seriously if you have any worries. The teaching in your school is satisfactory so you make satisfactory progress. In the last couple of years standards haven't been high enough but things are better now and most of those in Year 6 are ready to move on to the secondary school.

There are a few things that we think would make your school even better. Teachers need to make sure that you are always given work that is hard enough so you reach higher standards. They also need to make sure that you all know exactly what you need to do next to make your work better. The school governors need to make sure that they know what their responsibilities are and then carry them out. They also need to appoint a new permanent headteacher.

You can help your teachers a lot by continuing to behave well and work hard.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

David Mankelow

Lead Inspector