

# Beechwood Primary School

## Inspection report

---

Unique Reference Number	134701
Local Authority	Luton
Inspection number	328954
Inspection dates	12–13 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Heather Weston HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

---

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	636
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Miki Ralevic
Headteacher	Mrs B A Housden
Date of previous school inspection	24–25 May 2006
School address	Linden Road Luton Bedfordshire LU4 9RD
Telephone number	01582 518400
Fax number	01582 565010
Email address	beechwood.primary.admin@luton.gov.uk

---

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	12–13 November 2008
Inspection number	328954

---

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors visited in excess of 45 lessons, either for half the lesson, or for shorter periods, held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils, and held informal discussions with parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation, including those relating to safeguarding, school generated data, monitoring records and governing body minutes. 191 parent questionnaires were analysed, together with pupil and staff questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the progress made by different groups of pupils, particularly in English and science
- the progress made by pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities at Key Stage 2
- the action being taken to improve standards in boys' writing throughout the school
- the effectiveness of action being taken to improve science.

## Information about the school

Beechwood School is a very large primary and nursery school, catering for pupils from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. When children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in the Nursery the majority are not yet at the levels generally expected for children of their age, particularly in their language and mathematical skills. A significant number of pupils, almost twice the national average, leave or join the school during the year.

## Further information about the school

	School's figures	School's figures compared with other schools
School size	636	Well above average
Free school meals	30.6%	Well above average
Proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	33.3%	Well above average
Proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups	91.2%	Well above average
Proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language	80.7%	Well above average
Proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	1.1%	Average

## Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

1

Capacity for sustained improvement

1

### Main findings

The school's improvement since the last inspection is outstanding. The high quality self-evaluation carried out by the senior leaders, staff and governors has led to clearly prioritised, well-planned action to improve all aspects of the school's provision. This has moved the school's overall effectiveness from satisfactory to outstanding in just over two years. It is a remarkable achievement and demonstrates the school's outstanding capacity to improve. Outstanding leadership, high expectations and a clear view of what needs to be done to improve the school's work have enabled all pupils to make good progress and reach standards close to national averages overall. Good quality teaching and highly effective support, guidance and care are given to pupils with English as an additional language, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those that have difficulty in controlling their behaviour. This means that they too make good progress in their learning.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teachers' use of marking consistently informs pupils how to improve their work and that teachers give pupils the time to improve their work in the light of this marking.

How well does the school meet the needs of individuals and different groups of pupils?

2

Achievement is good. All pupils make good progress in lessons and towards their targets. Standards have risen steadily in recent years and are continuing to rise. From very low starting points, pupils' attainment is broadly average by the time they leave school and slightly above average in mathematics. This means that pupils are increasingly well prepared for the next stage in their education. At the end of Key Stage 1 standards in reading, writing and mathematics are good because pupils learn rapidly due to good teaching and the school's effective use of targets. At Key Stage 1, pupils reach above average standards in writing and at Key Stage 2 above average standards in mathematics because of more structured split group lessons. Pupils from different ethnic groups are making equally good progress because of the strong focus on literacy. The gap between boys' and girls' achievement in writing is

narrowing because of a sharper focus on boys' writing.

Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are polite, courteous and sociable. Nearly all are extremely well behaved and have excellent relationship with others, demonstrating their excellent moral and social development. Pupils delight in assuming responsibility. They show care, kindness and consideration towards younger pupils who settle into school quickly because of this. Pupils said that the few who behave inappropriately improve their behaviour and learn self-control because staff manage this so well. Pupils, including the most vulnerable, all say they feel safe and that the very little bullying is dealt with effectively by peer mentors and staff. This was confirmed by parents. Pupils assume healthy lifestyles extremely well, consistently making healthy choices, buying more fresh fruit than might be expected, bringing in healthy packed lunches and exercising vigorously. Punctuality and attendance are satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual development is outstanding. There are excellent opportunities for reflection, and pupils leave school as mature young people due to their greatly increased confidence. So too is their cultural development outstanding. They celebrate, understand and appreciate the diversity of other cultures, developing their knowledge and learning through focused visits, topics in world religions and the celebration of world faiths.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2
How well do pupils behave?	1
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	1
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	1
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2
Pupils' attendance and punctuality	3
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	1

## The quality of the school's work

Teaching and learning are good with some outstanding features. Staff provide pupils with excellent opportunities that enrich their learning and these are having a positive impact on pupils' attainment, progress and enjoyment. The outcomes of the staff's hard work are clear, the quality of pupils' work has rapidly improved.

Teachers' planning is of consistently high quality and includes careful planning of the roles of teaching assistants and other adults. Teachers use assessment data well to

<sup>1</sup> Grades for attainment are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; 4 is low

match activities to pupils' needs. Very effective use is made by teachers of electronic white boards to capture pupils' interest and to help them learn. The emphasis on extending pupils' vocabulary is exemplary. All teachers ensure that the vibrant classroom displays contain not only correct 'technical' vocabulary for each subject but also a range of words, for example for 'said', the number of possible alternatives is amazing!

Teachers demonstrate very effective practice in developing pupils' speaking and listening skills and in teaching phonics skills, to help with reading and writing. They are extremely well supported by highly skilled teaching assistants who make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. Their contribution is crucial to the success of the innovative, highly successful practice in mathematics, and is reflected in the improvements in standards in this area. The school is exploring and developing ways to use this approach in other areas of the good curriculum.

Pupils who are finding it difficult to reach their targets are given effective support to boost their learning and help them make the same progress as other pupils. However, although teachers give good verbal feedback to pupils, and pupils are also skilled at evaluating their work, the quality of teachers' marking in informing pupils how to improve their work is inconsistent.

Personal, social and health education permeates the school, as reflected in its friendly and welcoming ethos and this has a positive impact on behaviour and personal development. The science curriculum has been improved and now has consistent planning. There is also a sharp focus on developing pupils' understanding of scientific concepts through key vocabulary and an increased emphasis on practical investigations, in order to raise standards. Staff have worked hard to improve boys' writing, and the school now caters for them very well through the effective use of information and communication technology, careful selection of interesting and exciting topics such as 'Gladiators' and the introduction of the work of carefully selected authors to stimulate and capture boys' imaginations.

Support, guidance and care are outstanding and staff work closely together to meet the needs of each and every child. Induction into school is excellent. Family workers, in conjunction with the inclusion manager and teaching assistant for pupils who are in the early stages of learning English are tireless in ensuring that not only pupils but also their families get the best possible support and encouragement. The inclusion manager's work with outside agencies results in pupils gaining the best possible benefit.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

High quality teaching and purposeful learning	2
Effective assessment and academic guidance	2
An appropriate curriculum which meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, provision through partnership with other organisations	2
Support, guidance and care	1

## How effective are leadership and management?

The school's significant progress since its last inspection demonstrates its capacity for continued improvement. Senior leaders and the governing body are clear about what they need to do next as a result of highly effective practice in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. All staff reflect on the quality of the school's provision. This leads to improvement planning which pinpoints just those specific areas for improvement. Senior leaders do not allow the school to be deflected by other initiatives. They have very high expectations of all staff, but make sure that they are given high quality training, mentoring and support to enable them to meet these expectations. Induction procedures for new staff are a model of best practice. Leaders have a passion for ensuring that all pupils have an equal opportunity to make at least good progress. To this end they make sure that all barriers, be they emotional, social, physical or linguistic are overcome. But, leaders are not satisfied with this, they want all pupils to achieve the highest possible standards, and are tireless in the pursuit of this aim. Governors, too, play an effective part in the work of the school by for example, monitoring provision.

The school makes an outstanding contribution to the community through senior leaders' careful consideration of the needs of the school and wider community. Excellent opportunities exist for the local community to voice concerns, for example, when the school invites community police officers to visit. Curriculum opportunities are well planned to develop pupils' awareness and understanding of the wider community and of cultural differences. In addition, pupils' awareness of the global community is developed through the sponsorship of a child in Ethiopia, and by raising money for charity.

Family workers make a strong contribution to ways of bringing the community together by actively encouraging parents to become involved in the very extensive range of activities they provide, many of which are oversubscribed. Their work is underpinned by high levels of support and the staff's willingness to listen and help out where possible. This has helped to develop the very strong relationships with parents.

Safeguarding procedures are robust and rigorous and a model of best practice. All aspects are detailed and are monitored as a matter of procedure.

### *These are the grades for leadership and management*

Monitoring, evaluating and planning for improvement to outcomes for pupils	1
Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination	1
Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective	1
Ensuring that the governing body provides effective challenge and support so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities are met	2
Promoting the school's relationship with parents and carers, including their involvement in decision-making about matters relating to learning and well-being	1
Developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services	1



Ensuring the school contributes to community cohesion	1
Deploying resources to achieve value for money	1

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children come into the Nursery with knowledge and skills that are well below the level expected for children of this age, particularly in aspects of their personal development, communication and language skills, mathematical and cultural development. From this starting point, children make exceptionally good progress through the Nursery and Reception classes to reach broadly average levels in many of the areas of learning by the time they move into Year 1. This progress is most notable in their spoken language and reading. One of the key factors in improving reading is the strong focus on teaching letters and their sounds (phonics). While teaching overall is exceptionally good, teaching of phonics is a particular strength and is reflected in the very rapid gains children make. Teachers make the phonic sessions so lively and enjoyable that children almost 'soak up' their knowledge without realising it! However, children's writing remains below the expected level and has not yet benefited from these sessions. This is high on the agenda of the EYFS leader.

The leadership of the EYFS leader is good and developing well under the guidance of the headteacher, who oversees the work of the EYFS. Staff carefully monitor and accurately evaluate the provision. As a result, the planning for children's learning is of a consistently high quality and all children have equal opportunities to progress and develop. The well-planned curriculum addresses all the areas of learning and presents children with a wide range of play based activities. Children are able to make choices, show high levels of engagement and persevere well with their tasks. These tasks enable them to show initiative and develop confidence, as seen in their excellent behaviour and attitudes towards each other. Adults are not always quite as effective in responding to children's own ideas and interests and this is an area that the school is working on. Thorough, on-going assessments are used exceptionally well in planning the next steps in children's learning to ensure they move forward at a brisk pace. Currently, the outdoor facilities limit the options available for further developing all areas of learning, but a good start has been made to ensure that the learning that takes place inside can be mirrored outdoors. However, this is something the school is acutely aware of and plans are in place to redevelop the outdoor provision.

The arrangements for entry into school are of high quality and the coordination of the transfer from the EYFS into Year 1 makes it almost seamless.

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?*	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?*	1

---

How effectively is the welfare of the children in the EYFS promoted?*	1
How effectively is the provision in the EYFS led and managed?*	2

\* Common judgements made across all inspections of the EYFS

## Views of parents and carers

Parents are extremely satisfied with the school's work and actively engage in all the school offers as a result of the excellent partnerships the school has forged with them. The vast majority of the good number of parents who responded to the questionnaires were entirely positive in their responses. Parents' views and opinions are actively sought, for example, on the proposed changes to the school building, and they are kept very well informed by teachers about their children's welfare and progress. Parents are very well involved in the life of the school, by being for example, volunteer helpers and the two family workers run accredited training to help vulnerable families to join in through the parenting club.

## What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2006-7, 14% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2006-7, 46% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing for its pupils suitably. In 2006-7, 34% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2006-7, 6% of schools were judged inadequate.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Achievement:	an overall measure of the pupils' success in their academic learning. The term combines attainment and progress. Pupils might make good progress, for example, but if their attainment remains low, inspectors may judge that their achievement is only satisfactory.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



14 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Beechwood Primary School, Luton, LU4 9RD

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We were extremely impressed by your politeness and your behaviour. We have never had so many doors held open for us! We were also very impressed by your school, which we think is outstanding. Mrs Housden and the staff do all they can to make sure that you all make good progress, but they are not satisfied with that, because they are working hard to make your progress even better. Your teachers plan your work very carefully, and together with your teaching assistants, teach you well. Your school looks after you extremely well. The support, guidance and care you receive are excellent. All the adults make absolutely sure that any difficulties any of you have, which get in the way of your learning, are overcome. I also know many of your parents appreciate the courses run by the school, such as keep fit and sewing.

Mrs Housden, with the help of the other staff, has identified how to help you make even more progress. There is one thing we think would also help to make the school better. This is to:

- make sure that all teachers mark your work in a way that lets you know how to improve your work, and give you time to make those improvements.

You can help by making sure that you do improve your work as teachers suggest, because we know that this will help you make better progress.

With best wishes

Heather Weston  
Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).