

Beenham Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109802
Local Authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	337376
Inspection dates	15–16 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Paul Canham

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 of pupils on the school roll	92
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Claire Almond
Headteacher	Sue Butcher
Date of previous school inspection	4 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited seven lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and a representative group of pupils. Inspectors also talked with pupils during lessons. They observed the school's work, and looked at school documentation, assessment, the curriculum and monitoring information, and the school's development planning. Inspectors also scrutinised pupils' work and 47 parental questionnaires.

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

- The extent to which higher expectations are tackling the variation in learning and raising achievement in both key stages and for different groups of pupils.
- How successfully the school promotes pupils' experience and appreciation of cultures and faiths other than their own, in this country and beyond.
- How successfully leaders are giving support to the recently appointed staff.
- How far the leadership team and the governing body are influencing the school's direction and performance.

Information about the school

Almost all the pupils at this small school are from families of White British heritage, while others are from a range of ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage into one Reception class at the start of the school year.

Thereafter, all the pupils are in classes of more than one age group.

There has been a high turnover of staff in the past three years.

There is a pre-school care provision and an out-of-school club within the school, which are not managed by the governors. These were not inspected during this inspection.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school in which pupils progress well. Committed staff and governors have worked with determination to overcome the challenges brought about by substantial changes to staffing in recent years. The school has turned a corner and its focus is firmly aimed at sustained improvement. The hard work of all staff is evident in the rapid progress now being made by pupils through the school. All staff are highly committed to doing the best for pupils. At the very top, tenacious leadership has provided the driving force to overcome the challenges faced by the school. The leadership team has a clear and united vision for raising standards and maximising the opportunities for all pupils. This is reflected in their accurate evaluation of where the school is at present and of the improvements needed. For example, the school is aware of the need to focus on the teaching of basic numeracy skills to help raise achievement in mathematics. Consequently, the school is very securely placed to bring about sustained improvement and the capacity for moving forward is good.

The very large majority of parents are happy with their children's experiences at the school. They value the welcoming environment and the priority the school gives to pastoral care and guidance. Safeguarding requirements are firmly embedded, although the school acknowledges the importance of developing a systematic approach to reviewing its policies and highlighting this aspect in the school development plan. Well-informed and sensitive support ensures pupils feel safe in a supportive learning environment, enhanced by warm relationships between staff and pupils. There is planned intervention for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The success of this support leads to some distinctive examples of rapid progress.

The school knows that the quality of teaching drives improved performance. The headteacher's quest for high quality is evident in the adjustments in classroom practice and the raising of expectations. Consequently, pupils are progressing well in lessons that, typically, are lively, interesting and well paced. Pupils' strong personal outcomes can be seen in their good behaviour, interest and enjoyment of learning. Clubs, projects and themed weeks are popular and provide pupils with good opportunities to develop their creative and performance skills.

Governors share the commitment with the headteacher and senior leaders. They also provide a strong strategic approach to evaluating the school's success and supporting its way forward. However, elements of community cohesion have yet to be included in planning for cross-curricular themes and subjects. An accurate view of strengths, weaknesses and priorities comes from a close examination of data, bringing with it a good understanding of the needs of the community and groups of pupils. While the school has developed good links with local schools and the community, it recognises the

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need to provide pupils with opportunities to appreciate and value peoples' backgrounds within areas of the country, and other than the community served by the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress and raise the achievement of pupils in mathematics by: - focusing on the use of basic numeracy skills in lessons – supporting pupils with their use of these skills in a range of contexts.
- Extend the school's strategy for community cohesion by: – creating more opportunities for pupils to appreciate and value peoples' backgrounds in the United Kingdom – ensuring that elements are included in planning for cross-curricular themes and subjects.
- Develop a systematic approach to reviewing safeguarding policies by: – working closely with governors – drawing up a schedule for regular reviews – including the process as a priority in the school development plan.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils make good progress. There are clear signs that the school's determined efforts and targeted support are making a difference, particularly in English and science in Years 3 to 6. For example, pupils' willingness to participate and sense of enjoyment in their tasks are characteristic of lessons and indicate the quickening pace of learning across the school. For example, in one mathematics lesson, pupils were engrossed during an introductory session on mental arithmetic because it was challenging, rapidly paced and provided good opportunities for pupils to make good gains in their understanding of how numbers relate to each other.

Standards, as indicated by the results of national tests and assessments, have remained above national averages from year to year at the end of Year 2, with particular strengths in reading. The more rapid rate of progress is now having a marked impact on attainment further up the school, where staff changes had inhibited development in the past. Standards in Year 6 show substantial improvement in the past two years.

Standards are above average in English. They are not as high in science, and particularly mathematics, because teachers have been less confident in the teaching of these subjects. The increased proportions of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 in 2009 in each of these subjects are a strong feature and reflect the increased rates of progress through the key stage.

Pupils often take great care over their work, as seen in the good quality of written work and artwork seen in classrooms and around the school. Pupils usually work very well in small groups and independently from the teacher, and often thrive on getting the tasks right. They take pride in their work. The school's assessment shows that substantially more pupils are making good, and sometimes much better, progress than they did before. During lessons, all groups of pupils make similar rates of progress, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, the school is aware that progress in mathematics has not been as rapid as that made in English and science.

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Pupils say that they like coming to school because they feel very well cared for and safe. These positive characteristics are reflected in their above-average attendance. The pupils’ enjoyment of school life is evident in their happy and supportive approach towards each other, which helps to make the school a safe and welcoming place. These qualities underpin the improved rates of progress.

Pupils willingly contribute to class discussion and share their ideas. Their lively performances in singing assemblies show confidence and eagerness to become involved in whole-school events. Good behaviour ensures that lessons are orderly and productive. Pupils are well aware of dangers in and out of school, including when using the internet, and of how to keep safe. Pupils make a valuable contribution to the school through the school council and when acting as play leaders, which provide good opportunities to represent the views of others and develop leadership and management qualities. Pupils develop their skills in managing money through the selling of drinks and involvement in the business club, although numeracy skills are not as well developed as their literacy skills. Pupils also contribute willingly to the wider community through raising funds for local and national charities. An understanding of healthy eating is recognised in a national award.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils’ behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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How effective is the provision?

The curriculum takes good account of the wide ability range and mixed-age classes. A recent review has identified links between subjects, and close attention is given to literacy, numeracy and science skills within termly topics. The school recognises the need to develop basic skills in mathematics so that pupils can apply them in a range of contexts. Information and communication technology is used particularly well to underpin pupils' work and record it in different ways. Pupils' physical and creative skills are developed well in subjects such as art, music and physical education. Additional programmes, introduced for those falling behind in reading and mathematics are having a positive impact on rates of progress. The school enriches its curriculum through the good use of close links with local schools, a number of visits and visitors, and the recognition of festivals from a range of faiths.

Strengths of teaching lie in the attention that is given to individual pupils within mixed-ability classes, whatever their needs or abilities, and the range of interesting activities. These characteristics are underpinned by the collaborative approach taken by teachers and their assistants, who work effectively within teams and provide well-focused support. Learning is also encouraged by comprehensive planning and effective use of precise learning targets. These features successfully extend pupils' knowledge and skills and involve them in their learning. Typically, topics such as those in English and numeracy capture pupils' interest and hold their attention. Consequently, pupils are eager to do well. They are responsive to questioning and work particularly well in groups, as well as on their own. Where teaching is most successful, the rapid pace, lively questioning and well-pitched tasks ensure that pupils cover a lot of valuable ground. Occasionally, pupils do not always participate to the same degree because the tasks do not closely match their needs and the pace is not quick enough. Consequently, sometimes a very few number of pupils become a little restless and inattentive. Marking is supportive and usually tells pupils what they need to do to improve, although pupils do not always take note of the guidance.

Some of the school's strongest features are seen in its care and attention given to the particular needs of its community in school and locally. Effective links have been established with outside agencies to help the school address the needs of pupils who, for example, find great difficulty in learning to read. One parent's comments illustrated a particular strength: 'My child has been at the school for seven days. She has already gained confidence, learned routines and new words – an excellent start in a very caring atmosphere.' Individualised programmes of support are drawn up for the school's vulnerable pupils, covering a broad range of personal and learning needs. Individual achievement is managed through rigorous tracking of attainment and progress. Evaluations lead to focused intervention, either individually or in small groups. In these sessions, skilful reinforcement of literacy skills builds confidence.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is an effective leader and manager, and is both resolute and committed, with high aspirations. Other senior leaders and staff share the same determination to move the school forward. This determined leadership and management are key factors driving the school’s improvement. Focused work and increased expectations of progress are accelerating achievement for all groups of pupils across the school. The senior leadership team has a clear and accurate view of the school’s strengths and areas for improvement. This accurate self-evaluation is based firmly on observations of teaching and learning. Development has been inhibited by the number of staff changes, but the school is largely back on track and new staff have been galvanised. Staff feel very well supported and have benefited from professional development and opportunities to take on new roles. Their enthusiasm and expertise are being used to good effect and, therefore, the capacity to improve is good.

Governors are supportive and determined that the school builds on its growing reputation. Members form an integral part of the local community and readily challenge the effectiveness of the school’s developments. Their strategic involvement is strong and well-embedded structures ensure that policies are systematically reviewed and resources are closely targeted at educational need. Local services and agencies are used particularly well to enhance the well-being of vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Safeguarding requirements are highly prioritised and firmly established, although governors recognise the need to develop a systematic approach to reviewing policies and ensuring that the process is prioritised in the school’s development planning.

With the school located at the heart of the village, the needs of the community are well understood and met by providing social events, such as the ‘Friendship Club’ for local residents, and other activities that draw together members from the local community. The school is also actively engaged in promoting links with local schools to share expertise. The school recognises the need to develop links nationally, although they are developing internationally with a school in India. Parents are given good opportunities to give views on the school, and benefit from regular newsletters and access to the school’s website.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Reception class provides a creative, lively and stimulating learning environment. From expected starting points, children make good progress in all areas of learning, reaching above-average standards by the end of the year that prepare them well for entry into Year 1. Imaginative and sensitive teaching successfully captures the children's interests. Well-planned, themed topics ensure all areas of learning are covered, with a particular focus on reading, writing and number skills. Support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and for those who are more vulnerable, is good.

The Reception class provides children with a well-equipped area, both indoors and outside, and a wide range of stimulating activities. Adults give closely targeted support to both teacher-initiated activities and those which children choose for themselves. Good leadership and management ensure that children's needs are identified early and welfare arrangements are strong. Children are cherished and nurtured from the very start. As a result, they settle quickly and are eager to learn. Relationships are real strengths. Most children listen attentively and chatter happily about their work.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account: Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

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Views of parents and carers

The very large majority of parent questionnaires were positive, and many of the written comments expressed considerable satisfaction with the school. These included remarks about their children's enjoyment of school, the welcoming environment and very caring atmosphere.

A small minority of parents reported concerns about behaviour. Inspection evidence showed that, while pupils report that on occasion a very few are inattentive when not fully involved in lesson activities, they are confident that the school deals with the problem effectively. A small minority of parents also reported concerns over the lack of progress being made by their children. Inspection evidence showed that the rate of pupils' progress has increased substantially in all classes in Years 3 to 6. A very small minority of parents recorded concerns about several other issues, including the school's leadership and not taking account of concerns or suggestions. These concerns were not expressed in the very large majority of parents' comments and the inspection found no evidence to support them.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Beenham Primary to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 47 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 92 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	26	55	18	38	3	6	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	23	48	23	48	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	13	27	28	59	2	4	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	34	18	38	9	19	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	14	29	27	57	1	2	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	27	24	51	6	12	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	38	25	53	2	4	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	11	23	26	55	1	2	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	12	25	25	53	2	4	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	7	14	22	46	10	21	3	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	21	24	51	5	10	2	4
The school is led and managed effectively	15	31	20	42	7	14	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	44	22	46	3	6	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



17 September 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Beenham Primary School, Reading RG7 5NN

We very much enjoyed our visit to your school and thank you for making us feel so welcome. This letter is to tell you about some of the things we found while we were with you. Importantly, yours is a good school, where staff and governors are working hard to make it even better. We were pleased to hear that you like your school. The very large majority of your parents are happy with the school, too. You behave well and get on with each other.

Here are some important things about your school.

- You make good progress in lessons.
- You feel safe and secure in school and enjoy your lessons.
- Those in charge of the school have already made improvements that are helping you to make even faster progress.
- All staff take good care of you and make sure that you know what to do to keep safe.
- You have a good understanding of what makes for a healthy lifestyle and healthy eating.

This is what your school has been asked to do to make things even better.

- Help you to make more progress and improve your work in mathematics.
- Help you to understand more about people's backgrounds and communities in other parts of the country.
- Ensure that the school regularly checks its guidance for keeping you safe at all times.

We wish each one of you every success in your future education.

Yours faithfully

Paul Canham

Lead inspector

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