

Beechwood School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111211
Local Authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	337641
Inspection dates	2–3 December 2009
Reporting inspector	David Carter HMI

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	277
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Gwyn Evans
Headteacher	Mr Anthony Hadfield
Date of previous school inspection	7 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 18 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including pupils' work, school policies, monitoring records, school development plans and minutes of meetings of the governing body. Responses to questionnaires from 129 pupils and 111 parents and carers were received and considered.

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

- attainment on entry and the progress pupils make
- the progress made by girls and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the quality of the school's self-evaluation
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels in securing school improvement.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average primary school, which serves an urban area within the East Cheshire town of Crewe.

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. Most pupils are from a White British background, with a very small proportion from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. More pupils join the school after the start of Reception than is typical. The school holds a number of awards including Artsmark Gold, Activemark, Healthy Schools Standards at both national and local levels, Family Learning accreditation, I CAN accreditation and the Inclusion Quality Mark.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

There are particular strengths within the school, notably the outstanding level of care, guidance and support which is provided for pupils. The school knows its pupils well and this helps to support their personal well-being. Consequently, pupils enjoy coming to school and they participate in a wide range of activities, both within and beyond the school day. The good provision for physical activities contributes to pupils' healthy lifestyles. Pupils behave well: they are welcoming, polite and demonstrate consideration for each other. They report little bullying and say that they feel completely safe in school. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong, although their awareness of other faiths and cultures is limited.

Although teaching is satisfactory, it is inconsistent. As a result the progress pupils make in lessons ranges from satisfactory to good. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and understanding below the levels expected for children of their age. Overall, they make satisfactory progress as they pass through the school, attaining standards which are below the national average at the end of Year 6.

The school has accurately identified where pupils are not achieving as well as they could and appropriate intervention programmes have been put in place. For example, a reading programme that has been introduced throughout the school is already helping to improve attainment. Strong leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage has successfully improved provision in this area where children are now making good progress in their learning and development. These are examples of the school's recent work, which is having a significant and sustained impact on increasing the progress made by pupils. Although senior leaders have demonstrated that they have the capacity to bring about improvements to teaching and learning, this is not fully reflected in their improvement planning documentation. Planned actions are not linked sufficiently to measurable outcomes for pupils. Consequently, it is likely to be difficult for the governing body to monitor the impact of the school's improvement work.

The school works well with parents and carers. Their views are valued and influence the work of the school. Parents and carers receive clear information about their children's achievement and they are invited into school to work alongside their child at points during the year. The school is using new technology such as the website and text alerts on mobile phones, to ensure that parents are kept up-to-date with school events.

A new creative curriculum has been introduced, following consultation with pupils. This is already impacting upon pupils' personal development, as they are engaged in their learning and are keen to do well. Pupils are beginning to show increased gains in their learning, particularly in reading. Improvements in writing and mathematics are less

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marked.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing and mathematics and ensure consistent rates of progress by:
 - making more effective use of assessment to ensure that activities are matched to the needs of all pupils
 - extending opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills across all subjects.
- Develop school self-evaluation and development planning by:
 - focusing classroom monitoring and evaluation more directly on outcomes for pupils
 - ensuring that plans for action are linked to measurable outcomes for pupils
 - ensuring that the governing body are fully involved in monitoring the impact of actions taken by the school.
- Develop the pupils' understanding of a wider range of faiths and cultures by providing a wider range of opportunities within the curriculum.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Although progress is broadly satisfactory, it is improving securely and quickly. The relatively new staff team is supporting the needs of groups and individuals effectively. Pupils are responding well within lessons. As a result many pupils are now making good or better progress in lessons. Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is carefully planned and their progress is improving. There is no significant difference in the attainment of different groups, including girls and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their economic well-being is satisfactory. The school has invested in resources to ensure that pupils are able to develop their skills in information and communication technology, both in the new suite and in classrooms. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to develop their understanding and awareness of business and enterprise. They have a thorough understanding of financial literacy and are involved in various school and community events where they can demonstrate their skills.

Pupils are supportive of the initiatives for improvement and they make a positive contribution to the smooth running of the school. They are proud of their school council and the influence which this has upon making decisions. Pupils' understanding of the needs of the local community are less well developed.

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The extent to which pupils feel safe, including their understanding of what constitutes unsafe situations is outstanding. They enjoy school and, although average, their attendance has improved markedly within the last year. Pupils support each other well and they respect each other's differences. The school has established a buddy system whereby pupils ensure that everyone enjoys their break and lunchtimes. Pupils told inspectors that if any problems arise then the adults listen to them and deal with their concerns.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, although some good and outstanding teaching was observed during the inspection. Classrooms are calm, stimulating and well-organised. The school's tracking system provides teachers with useful information about pupils' attainment. However, this information is not used consistently by all teachers to ensure that the tasks set in lessons meet pupils' needs precisely. In the better lessons, teaching is conducted at a brisk pace. Activities are planned well to match the needs of the pupils. There are good opportunities for pupils to demonstrate

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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what they can do and understand. In lessons where progress is slower, pupils often spend too long listening to the teacher and have few opportunities to demonstrate what they know and can do.

Work is marked regularly and informs pupils of how they can improve. Intervention programmes for pupils who speak English as an additional language and those who have special needs and/or disabilities are being used successfully to improve the progress made by individual pupils.

The curriculum has been reviewed recently and pupils' views have been taken into account when devising the themes for each class. Consequently, it is matched well to their experiences and interests. Although this is a new initiative it is already proving successful in engaging pupils more fully in their learning. The curriculum is focused on pupils' personal development and ensures they make good progress in this aspect of their education. The school has established a number of partnerships and links which enhance pupils' experiences. These are increasingly involving the role of visits and visitors. For example, the strong link with the local secondary school has enabled the pupils to work with specialist teachers and this has increased pupils' skills and understanding in the area of design technology. The curriculum is enhanced with a very wide range of enrichment activities, including those which involve the local community. Pupils speak highly of the wide range of out-of-school clubs which are attended by most pupils.

The welfare of all pupils, especially the most vulnerable, is paramount and staff are rigorous and persistent in ensuring high levels of care. Transition arrangements between different classes are good. Pupils feel prepared for the next stage in their education through the effective partnership with the local secondary school. Similarly, very good partnerships with other agencies promote high standards of care which are appreciated by parents.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The new senior leadership team has set up an appropriate framework to lead and manage the work of the school. This system ensures that there is whole school involvement in decision making and lines of accountability are secure. Consequently, the staff and governors are able to work together to drive forward school improvement. Although improvement planning is at an early stage of development, the school has

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already demonstrated its ability to address the school's most urgent priorities. The governing body has provided helpful direction by targeting funding where it is most needed. The team have begun to track pupils' progress systematically. They have used this information to set challenging targets in order to accelerate progress and raise standards. Where differences in performance between groups of pupils have been identified, the school has put in place strategies to address this inconsistency. This is a good example of the school's satisfactory approach to equality of opportunity. They have commenced regular monitoring of teaching and learning and are beginning to evaluate the curriculum and the impact of professional development.

The school has ensured that the safeguarding of pupils receives high priority. All requirements were in place at the time of the inspection and significant improvements have been made to the school accommodation in this respect.

The school has a good understanding of its own community. However, its work to improve community cohesion within the wider national and international communities is at an early stage of development.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
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	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage unit provides a vibrant and stimulating learning environment. The skills of children joining the Nursery vary from year-to-year. Typically, the skills of many children are well below the expected levels of knowledge and understanding when they start school. Children make good progress during their time in the unit and at the end of Reception they are working close to the expected level.

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A wide range of carefully planned opportunities enables children to learn through first-hand experiences. There is a good balance between adult-directed activities, such as helping children to recognise numbers or sounds, with child-selected activities, where support staff work well to ensure that these activities promote learning. Staff who work with children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities help them to integrate fully into activities so that they are included at an early stage. Children behave well and form very positive working relationships with other children and adults.

Although provision has improved since the last inspection, there is still limited scope for children to engage in an extensive range of learning outdoors. Activities do not reflect the wide range of indoor learning.

The assistant headteacher leads the unit well. The team meets regularly to discuss professional matters affecting the children and works hard to ensure that individual needs are met. Consequently, all staff are skilled in assessing children's learning, collecting a wide variety of useful evidence which allows them to measure each child's progress and identify next steps in learning.

Parents and carers are welcomed as partners in their children's education. As they drop their children off in the morning, they spend time with them, seeing their work and supporting them at the start of the school day. This also enables parents and carers to discuss the well-being of their children with the staff and is indicative of the effective welfare arrangements which are in place.

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

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers, who made their views known to inspectors through the inspection questionnaires, are happy with their child's experience at Beechwood School. Any concerns raised from the questionnaires were taken into consideration during the inspection.

A very small minority of parents and carers were not happy with their child's experience at school, raising concerns about progress. In particular: how the school informed them about their child's progress; the ways in which the school helped them to support their child's progress; and the actual progress made.

Inspectors found that progress was variable across the school, but that it is satisfactory and improving overall. The school makes good arrangements for informing parents of

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their child's progress and the ways in which they can support their child at home.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Beechwood School 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 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 111 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 277 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	65	60	40	37	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	63	58	44	40	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	48	44	50	46	10	9	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	54	50	42	39	10	9	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	58	53	45	41	1	1	2	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	48	44	49	45	10	9	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	47	43	55	50	3	3	1	1
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)	46	42	49	45	4	4	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	53	49	46	42	6	6	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	48	44	51	47	4	4	6	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	38	35	59	54	6	6	3	3
The school is led and managed effectively	55	50	50	46	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	65	60	38	35	4	4	1	1

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.



4 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Beechwood School, Crewe, CW1 2PH

Thank you for making the inspectors so welcome when we visited your school recently. We were impressed with the way in which you answered our questions in such a friendly and polite way. We appreciated your support and this has helped me to write the report. In the report, I have said that your school is satisfactory overall but it has quite a lot of good features. We found that:

- the staff take very good care of you
- you feel very safe and enjoy coming to school
- you behave well and are keen to do well
- you enjoy your new topics and taking part in after school clubs.

Teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good. In lessons, you listen well, try your best and present your work carefully. The way you help each other and take responsibility, such as by being members of the school council or playground buddies, is also good. Almost all of you enjoy school. This is because of the good curriculum with lots of interesting activities, both during and after the school day.

The way the school is led and managed is satisfactory. Your school leaders are eager for you to do as well as you can. This is why they keep assessing your progress and setting targets to help you to improve.

To help the school to do as well as it can for you, I have asked leaders and teachers to make the following improvements.

- Help you to improve your progress, particularly in writing and mathematics. You can play your part by checking your answers and completing your homework.
- Provide you with opportunities to develop your writing and mathematics skills in other subjects.
- Ensure that you have a chance to learn more about other faiths and cultures, both within the United Kingdom and abroad.

Yours sincerely,

David Carter

Lead inspector

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