

Beech Green Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115600
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	338616
Inspection dates	2–3 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Marion Thompson

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	404
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs C Medland
Headteacher	Mr C Stott
Date of previous school inspection	2 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 22 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 the school development plan, assessment information, safeguarding documentation, curricular planning and samples of pupils' work. The team analysed the results of the 132 Ofsted questionnaires completed by parents and looked at staff and pupil questionnaires.

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

- the effectiveness of self-evaluation and planning
- the impact of teaching, learning and assessment on pupils' progress
- the level of challenge provided by the governing body.

Information about the school

This is a very large school, which has a large Early Years Foundation Stage for children aged four to five. The vast majority of pupils are of White British origin, although other ethnic groups are represented. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below that usually found. A large number of pupils entered all year groups within the school when a new housing estate was built from 2006 onwards, although this has now stopped. The school has gained the Artsmark Gold Award and has Healthy School status.

There is an on-site Nursery run by a private provider and this has been inspected separately. A report is available on the Ofsted website.

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

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils and is improving. It has been through a turbulent period because of a combination of extreme staffing difficulties and a rapid influx of pupils into all year groups. Staff have worked hard to reverse the underachievement which occurred during this period. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and /or disabilities, now make satisfactory progress, attainment is broadly average and rising, and achievement is satisfactory. In a large and increasing minority of lessons pupils make good progress, making up lost ground quickly. However, there is further to go as, in a number of satisfactory lessons, work does not always fully meet the needs of the lowest and higher attainers, so they are catching up in some aspects of English and mathematics more slowly. Pupils enjoy learning, take their responsibilities seriously and know how to keep safe and healthy. Behaviour, which had declined, has improved, as shown by the reduction in the number of exclusions and the calm and purposeful ethos in lessons. Most pupils attend regularly and attendance is average.

The headteacher provides a determined lead to securing improvements, with good support and challenge from governors. Planning is satisfactory and is based on sound self-evaluation. However, the current system for monitoring pupils' progress, while satisfactory overall, does not provide sufficiently detailed and timely information to help teachers identify underachievement quickly and to inform the planning of the next steps pupils need to take. This is being addressed as a matter of urgency. Effective partnerships are used well to enhance the curriculum and the good care, support and guidance the school provides. The school is valued by parents and carers, who know that their children are kept safe and that their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Rising standards and the increasing proportion of good teaching show that the school has satisfactory capacity to continue to improve.

A lively curriculum engages pupils' interest and provides good opportunities for pupils to catch up when they are falling behind. The increasing number of challenging lessons contributes to pupils' faster progress. However, in a large minority of satisfactory lessons, progress is slower because tasks do not match the range of pupils' needs as closely. In a number of classes, marking and feedback in class provide clear guidance on how to improve work. Follow-up procedures ensure that pupils have understood and acted on the advice. However, both the quality of marking and feedback and the follow-up are too inconsistent across the school.

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved rapidly and is good. It is well led and managed and children make good progress.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By September 2010:
 - improve progress in mathematics and English by ensuring that
 - lessons are consistently planned to provide a good level of challenge for pupils of all abilities
 - marking and feedback in class consistently provide clear guidance to pupils on how to improve their work and is followed up to check that pupils have acted on the advice.
- ensure that pupils' progress is more closely and regularly monitored in order to plan next steps more effectively.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Children enter Reception with skills that are broadly as expected for their age. By the end of Year 6, attainment is broadly average, representing satisfactory progress for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. In a large and increasing minority of lessons, pupils make good progress in English and mathematics, because work is well matched to their needs. Sentence-level work is helping pupils to improve their writing, as is the focus on weaker areas, such as calculation and problem solving in mathematics. By the time they leave, reading skills form a solid platform to support pupils' future learning. Satisfactory skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology and good social skills form a sound foundation for pupils' future study. In some lessons, progress, while satisfactory overall, is occasionally slowed by work which is somewhat lacking in challenge for the most able and occasionally a little difficult the least able.

Pupils' enthusiastic attitudes support their learning well. They enjoy challenging work and are eager to answer questions. Most work well in pairs and groups, though a very few find this difficult and on rare occasions their behaviour slows learning. Most pupils, however, behave well and have a good awareness of how to stay safe, for example in relation to their use of the internet. They treat others with respect, showing that they know right from wrong. However, play is occasionally too boisterous. Despite the school's best efforts, a small core of pupils is persistently absent. Pupils adopt healthy habits, choosing healthy school meals and participating in extra-curricular sports. They make a good contribution to the school and local community, showing a growing awareness of wider issues, like the environment. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 are involved in developing a local conservation area. Pupils show respect for those of other cultures and religions, although as yet links with pupils from a wider range of backgrounds are limited.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Lessons are characterised by good relationships which motivate pupils to learn. Learning objectives are clear and planning incorporates a range of activities and styles that engage pupils in learning. The growing number of good lessons, confirmed by the school's own monitoring, provide pupils of all abilities with a good level of challenge and demonstrates high expectations. However, in some satisfactory lessons, work occasionally does not stretch the most able to the same degree and is a little too difficult for the least able pupils. On rare occasions, the behaviour of pupils with complex needs slows the pace of learning, but this is increasingly well managed through the systems the school has introduced. Marking and feedback in class are regular and encouraging. In some classes they establish an effective dialogue, enabling pupils to make improvements. However, in other classes they do not provide pupils with clear guidance on how to improve their work. Where comments are made, pupils are occasionally given insufficient opportunities to respond to them.

The curriculum stimulates pupils to learn. Partnerships are used well to provide exciting activities, particularly in the arts and sports, as shown by external awards. Personal development is promoted well. Improvements to the curriculum are beginning to have a positive impact on the rate of pupils' progress. For example, an intervention group for pupils who make slow progress in reading in Years 3 to 6 is helping them to catch up. More-able pupils in Year 6 receive targeted support which is improving their progress in

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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mathematics and English. However, occasionally curriculum planning is not well matched to the whole range of pupils' needs.

Parents and pupils appreciate the effective systems the school has in place to promote pupils' health, safety and welfare. Good support is provided to pupils and families whose circumstances make them vulnerable and to those with social and emotional problems. Partly as a response to parental concerns, an effective policy on behaviour management was introduced, which is having a positive impact. Robust systems are in place to encourage regular attendance, but a small number of families do not cooperate in ensuring their children attend regularly. Provision for pupils with special educational needs has many good features. The recent introduction of a more detailed and manageable system for monitoring pupils' progress has enabled staff to set more meaningful targets and next steps for pupils, but this is at a very early stage.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, supported by parents, the senior team and a hard-working and committed staff, provides a strong sense of direction in raising expectations of better achievement for pupils. Planning is based on sound, if slightly overgenerous, self-evaluation. Clear priorities have resulted in improvements in achievement, better behaviour and good personal development for pupils. However, the school recognises that the monitoring of pupils' progress is not sufficiently detailed and regular. A new tracking system is being introduced rapidly to provide information for use in target setting and planning. Monitoring and staff development have led to improvements in teaching, where an increasing proportion is now good, and a more effective curriculum.

The school works hard to promote equal opportunities. All pupils, regardless of background and ability, make at least satisfactory progress. The school helps those whose circumstances make them vulnerable and at risk and those with emotional and behavioural difficulties to overcome barriers to learning. Safeguarding procedures are extremely thorough and pupils feel secure.

The school promotes shared values well and works hard to establish good relationships with parents, some of whom are hard to reach. The school community actively supports cohesion within the area, for example through links with a local sheltered housing project. However, understanding of and contribution to the international community is more limited.

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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	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	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

Levels of skills on entry to the Reception classes are broadly as expected for children's ages. Children get off to a good start, and are now reaching above-average standards on entry to Year 1. Progress in writing is particularly good. Support for children's learning is always good and is frequently better. Children settle quickly because of the good transition arrangements and the care they receive which helps them to feel secure. They enjoy their learning. Staff and parents form good relationships which promote children's welfare well. However, children's targets are not yet shared with parents so they can be reinforced at home. Children learn to listen attentively and are eager to answer questions. They understand the basics of keeping safe and cooperate well. From the outset they begin to develop independence. For example, one child was looking for 'tricky words', working alone for a lengthy period, writing these words down. They take responsibility for tidying away after each activity and make decisions about when they play in the well-organised outside area. Children adopt healthy practices, such as washing their hands before eating, enjoying healthy snacks and being very active. The curriculum provides a good balance between child-initiated and teacher-led activities. Staff know children well and provide them with good support. Occasionally, however, assessments by teaching assistants are slightly inaccurate. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed.

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

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

Around a third of families responded to the questionnaire. The inspection team agrees with the positive views of the school's work held by the majority of parents. They feel that their children enjoy school and are kept safe. Inspectors do not agree with the minority of parents who feel that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour, does not take account of parents' views and that their children do not make satisfactory progress. The school has moved on considerably in recent times and these issues have largely been resolved.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Beech Green Primary 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 132 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 408 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	71	54	55	42	6	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	71	54	59	45	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	51	39	68	52	12	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	58	44	59	45	13	10	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	71	54	54	41	7	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	61	46	58	44	10	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	67	51	59	45	6	5	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)	50	38	58	44	4	3	4	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	54	41	68	52	7	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	33	25	73	55	14	11	6	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	41	31	68	52	13	10	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	59	45	60	45	5	4	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	69	52	50	38	8	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.



4 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Beech Green Primary School, Gloucester GL2 4WD

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. A large number of your parents and carers responded to our questionnaire so please thank them. Your views and those of your parents and carers helped us in coming to our judgements about your school. We found that the school provides you with a sound education where your achievement is satisfactory. It is improving quickly. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are confident and happy, enjoying their learning because of the good care the team of staff provide. They make good progress and achieve well.

Across the school we were impressed with:

- the way in which you are beginning to make faster progress, especially in English and mathematics, and are making up lost ground
- your enjoyment of learning, the way you take on responsibilities and carry them out well, your good knowledge of how to stay fit and healthy and your knowledge of how to keep safe
- the good care the school provides to make sure you are safe and happy
- the lively curriculum and increasing number of good lessons, which provide you with a good level of challenge and interesting experiences and help you to know how to improve your work
- the strong leadership of the headteacher who, supported by the staff, is working hard to make sure things continue to improve as fast as possible.

In order to improve things even further we have asked the staff to help you do even better in English and mathematics by making sure the work you all get is at the right level for you and makes you think hard. We have also asked teachers to make sure that marking and comments in class provide you with clear guidance about how to improve your work, and that this is followed up to make sure you understand and use the advice well to help you do better. We have also asked the school to track your progress more carefully and frequently, so that the information can be used to decide on the next steps you need to take.

We hope you will continue to enjoy your learning as much as you do now.

Yours faithfully

Marion Thompson

Lead inspector

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