

Beech Grove Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123711
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	340404
Inspection dates	3–4 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Joanna Pike

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	297
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lisa Hunt
Headteacher	Kerry Chappell
Date of previous school inspection	3 May 2007
School address	Courtland Road Wellington Somerset TA21 8NE
Telephone number	01823 662438
Fax number	01823 666497
Email address	office@beechgrove.somerset.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors spent over three fifths of their time looking at learning, including visiting 15 lessons. All 10 teachers were observed. Inspectors also talked with governors, senior and middle leaders, and groups of pupils, including the school council. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' literacy and numeracy books, the school's development plan and monitoring records. Inspectors also scrutinised 35 questionnaires from staff, 91 questionnaires from pupils and 96 questionnaires from parents and carers.

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

- as a result of the school's actions, is progress now consistently good across the school?
- are middle and senior leaders successfully embedding the improvements across the school, especially in mathematics?
- how well does the school's monitoring of teaching and learning, and staff training, contribute to improving teaching?
- do pupils have a good understanding of their own learning and how this helps them make better progress?

Information about the school

Beech Grove is larger than most primary schools. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average, whereas the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. A children's centre which is not managed by the school shares the same site. The school has gained the Silver Eco award, Healthy Schools Status and the Study Support award.

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

Pupils really enjoy their learning in this good school. Their increasing understanding of how to be a successful learner is helping them to make the best of their lessons. As one pupil said, 'I don't mind if I get anything wrong because I learn from my mistakes.' Pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles is outstanding. They spoke in detail about the importance of exercise in making your heart beat faster and giving your brain more oxygen. Excellent provision for social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) results in pupils having strengths in these areas. Behaviour is consistently good in lessons and around the school.

The headteacher has been tenacious in developing a strong staff team who share her drive to raise achievement. Governors, senior and middle leaders contribute effectively to school improvement through a well-organised monitoring programme. This, together with the close tracking of pupils' progress, has helped pinpoint where weaknesses lie. This good self-evaluation has enabled the school to identify where to focus its efforts to best effect. Determined action has been taken to address the dip in attainment and progress in 2008, through improving provision. This has been successful in reading and writing, resulting in above average attainment and good progress. The school has transferred many of the successful strategies to mathematics. Progress and attainment are improving here, but the school knows it has more to do. Nonetheless, the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

Pupils know their current targets and how well they are doing because teachers regularly talk about them, especially in writing. Marking gives particularly useful advice in writing but this good practice is not so apparent in mathematics. Pupils are not given time to respond to the advice in writing or mathematics. Teachers make clear what pupils will learn in lessons and often give pupils the key points to being successful. Learning is more rapid when teachers use these key points actively throughout the lesson for pupils to self-assess their progress. Teachers give clear explanations and make good use of strategies such as 'talk partners' to keep pupils learning briskly. Occasionally, teachers spend too long talking and the pace of learning slows because pupils are passive. Questioning is well used in many lessons, but sometimes teachers do not probe pupils' thinking enough.

Children start in the Reception classes with skills below those of pupils of a similar age. They make good progress across all areas of learning and achieve well by the end of the year. Attainment across Years 1 to 6 is broadly average. Pupils continue to make good progress and achieve well.

The good curriculum has some outstanding elements. Pupils themselves contribute to

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planning what they will learn. Teachers make learning exciting through interesting topics and excellent use of trips and visitors. The school's outstanding partnerships with other schools and organisations also contribute to pupils' learning. For example, good links with the local fire service and police have contributed to pupils' excellent understanding of safety awareness.

Comments by parents and carers such as 'my child loves coming to school' are typical and it is no surprise that attendance is above average. The school is an exceptionally caring community where pupils' welfare is given the highest priority. Safeguarding procedures are meticulous.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in mathematics and ensure that teaching in the subject is consistently good by making sure that:
 - lessons move at a sufficiently brisk pace and pupils do not spend too long listening to teachers
 - questions are used well to probe pupils' understanding and extend their learning
 - pupils are helped to reflect on their learning during lessons and are given time to respond to clearer advice from marking.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

In Years 1 to 6, good progress in writing was seen in books and lessons, with pupils achieving well, especially in their story writing. Short, sharp sessions at the start of the day really help pupils to work at their targets, especially in writing. These sessions, together with the well-organised intervention programmes, have had a positive impact on pupils' progress, especially in writing and particularly in Years 5 and 6. Achievement in writing is steadily improving, and attainment is above average. In mathematics, pupils are developing more secure calculation methods because of the emphasis on learning tables. Regular opportunities to tackle problems help pupils apply their calculation skills. Attainment and progress in mathematics are improving but more slowly. More-able pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress as a result of careful matching of work and effective support.

Pupils have great awareness of their responsibilities to the school and local community. Opportunities to contribute are relished. These include: being members of the school council, acting as peer mediators or involvement with the school eco committee. Younger pupils do not have so many chances to contribute. Pupils can empathise with others, such as through their work on refugees, which resulted in some of them organising fund-raising. Pupils gain a good awareness of the world of work through presentations given by different adults about their jobs, and activities such as running the school fruit tuck shop every day, including managing the finance. These experiences, together with their above average reading and writing skills, prepare them

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well for their future economic well-being.

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	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers plan learning in small steps which helps pupils gradually build their understanding. Adults and pupils have good relationships which give pupils the confidence to have a go. Teaching assistants provide effective support in lessons and also through the good range of intervention programmes which are contributing to the increased rate of progress. Occasionally, teachers do not make the best use of teaching assistants in lessons when the whole class work together. The 'successful learning' project is further building pupils' understanding of how to do well. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have recorded their feelings about learning. They wrote, 'flabbergasted, proud and confident' to describe success.

Pupils show excitement about their lessons because of the well-planned, innovative curriculum. Different subjects are linked together into topics so that pupils can apply their literacy and numeracy skills. However, opportunities for applying numeracy are not yet frequent enough. Involvement with the local community further enriches the

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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curriculum, such as when pupils invited local politicians and older members of the town to a presentation about the Second World War. Gifted and talented pupils benefit from the good variety of activities they have to extend their skills. Currently, a group of Year 6 pupils are developing their own website and teaching other pupils how to use it. The excellent range of clubs is valued by pupils and contributes well to their academic and personal development. Pupils benefit from the well-planned homework activities which encourage families to get involved.

Parents are justifiably confident that their children are well looked after. The school makes good use of the outstanding links it has with outside agencies, including the children's centre, and support for vulnerable pupils and families is excellent. Pupils are involved in carrying out safety checks with staff and governors, demonstrating the school's commitment to taking account of their views. A significant factor in the above average attendance is the school's effective procedures in this area. Good transition arrangements ensure that children starting in the Reception classes can settle quickly, move smoothly into Year 1 and ensure pupils can make a confident start at secondary school. The well-organised breakfast club helps pupils get off to a good start in the mornings.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
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 headteacher has successfully created a school where pupils really want to learn because they are enthused by the curriculum. At the same time, she has kept a sharp focus on raising achievement by improving teaching and learning. Staff share her drive and ambition. Weaknesses in teaching have been systematically tackled through astute use of data about pupils' progress and information from monitoring lessons. Training has successfully developed the skills of staff. Expectations have been raised by setting challenging targets and class teachers keep a careful check on pupils' progress. Senior and middle leaders regularly meet with class teachers to focus on where teaching and support have not had an impact and action is swiftly taken.

Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses from their links with different subjects, their analysis of pupils' data and reports. They challenge the school, and are not afraid of holding it to account. However, they are not yet making enough use of national data to fine-tune this further. Governors have contributed significantly to driving forward the development of community cohesion. An audit has helped the school

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accurately identify the need to develop links with schools in the United Kingdom to extend pupils' understanding of cultural diversity. Annual Global Dimension fortnights are effective in helping pupils gain a good understanding of the global community. The school is successful in promoting equality, being a harmonious community where all are valued and feel valued. There are no significant gaps in attainment between different groups of pupils. Parent partnership is strong with many parents and carers coming into school in the mornings to read with their child, or attending the curriculum workshops or 'tea parties' when parents and carers can raise any concerns they have. Pupils feel extremely safe and secure because of the school's thorough and sensible approach to safeguarding. The child protection policy has clear procedures and links effectively with other policies to ensure pupils' health, safety and well-being. Staff training is regularly undertaken, including in areas such as cyber-bullying. All staff are trained in first aid. Record keeping is well organised.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get off to a good start in the Reception classes because of the well-planned provision. Returning from a welly walk in the town, children's enjoyment was very evident. They returned buzzing with information particularly about safety. Their behaviour is excellent and they work well together or independently. The classrooms are attractive and carefully laid out with good resources to support learning. Good gains are made in all areas of learning because of the appropriate balance between activities children choose and those led by adults. Assessment is thorough and is effectively used to plan the next steps. Children enter the Reception classes with weaknesses in linking

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sounds and letters, writing, calculation, and knowledge and understanding of the world. Because of the good provision, by the end of the year, most pupils have progressed well and attainment in these areas is broadly average.

Welfare is outstanding and children feel safe and secure. Parents appreciate the close involvement they have, such as sharing activities at the start of the school day. Children were very interested in hearing about one parent's work as a marine cartographer. Good leadership constantly looks at how to improve children's learning. Close links with the children's centre are contributing well to improvements such as the shared outdoor area. Plans to provide a covered outdoor area will ensure that more frequent use can be made of outdoor activities.

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

Parents and carers have very positive views of the school. Almost all parents and carers feel that their child enjoys school. They also feel that teaching is good and their child progresses well. A few parents and carers felt that the school did not deal with behaviour effectively and that they were not kept informed of their child's progress. Inspectors looked at these areas carefully. The school's behaviour policy results in good behaviour. Parents and carers have good opportunities to find out how their child is doing. The school encourages parents and carers to talk to class teachers daily and many do. Parents' evenings are held regularly so that teachers can discuss pupils' progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Beech Grove 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 96 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 297 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	58	60	34	35	1	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	40	42	52	54	4	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	35	36	51	53	10	11	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	46	48	48	50	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	48	50	46	48	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	49	51	45	47	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	47	49	48	50	0	0	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)	40	42	47	49	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	38	40	53	55	0	0	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	30	50	52	13	14	3	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	28	63	66	4	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	45	47	47	49	4	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	49	51	44	46	3	3	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.



5 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Beech Grove Primary School, Wellington, TA21 8NE

On behalf of the inspection team thank you for making us welcome, showing us your work and talking to us about your school. Also, thank you to those of you who filled in questionnaires. I thought you might like to know what I am saying in my report. Yours is a good school and we enjoyed our two days with you. We will remember how polite and well behaved you all were. You all get on well and are good at looking after each other. Your understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles is outstanding, as is your awareness of how to stay safe.

You get off to a good start in the Reception classes and continue to make good progress throughout the school, especially in reading and writing. The main reasons why you progress well is the good teaching and the well-planned curriculum. Lots of you told us how much you like school and the exciting things you do in lessons. This leads to you really working hard because you enjoy your learning.

Those in charge of your school want to make things even better for you. We have tried to help by suggesting the school does the following things:

- help you make even better progress in mathematics by ensuring that teachers don't talk for too long; that in lessons you know the small steps you need to make and are given time to use these to find out how well you have done; and to act on advice given from marking.

Yours sincerely

Joanna Pike

Lead inspector

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