

# Beechwood Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	135145
<b>Local Authority</b>	Plymouth
<b>Inspection number</b>	341622
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30 November –1 December 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Andrew Saunders

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	359
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Pat Lopez
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Andrea Norris and Mr Mark Lees
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Bampfylde Road Southway Plymouth PL6 6SR
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 18 lessons, and held combined meetings with governors and staff from the federation of schools, along with inspectors from the inspection of the other school in the federation. They also held discussions with groups of pupils and had informal opportunities to talk to parents. They observed the school's work, looked at the school development plan, records of monitoring, the school's evaluation of the recent data and school policies, and discussed the impact of the federation on pupils' learning and progress. They considered the views of pupils and staff through the questionnaires submitted by the end of the inspection. They also analysed questionnaires received from 61 parents.

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

- the progress made by pupils in Key Stage 2, and the progress made by groups such as girls, particularly in mathematics
- the use of assessment to ensure teaching brings about effective learning, particularly for groups of pupils identified as needing particular support
- how effectively leaders and managers have brought about sustainable and rapid improvements in learning, to raise standards further.

## Information about the school

This large new school came into being through the amalgamation of two local primary schools a little over a year ago, within a suburban area of Plymouth. The school is part of a federation of two schools, led by a team of two headteachers and a combined senior leadership team. The school is currently located in what was a previous infant and junior school building; there is a new building currently being constructed and the school will move across to this site in the next few months. The vast majority of the pupils are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The school runs a breakfast club. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a Nursery class and two Reception classes. There is a privately run nursery on the site, which is inspected separately. There is also a communication support unit on the site, called I CAN, run by the local authority. This is subject to a separate inspection. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools 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?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

Leaders and managers in this new school have ensured that the impact of the major changes that have taken place has been very largely positive. The work of the school is satisfactory and improving. In particular, pupils say they have enjoyed getting to know many new friends and there is a positive attitude among the pupils and staff about the benefits they have gained. As a pupil typically said, 'It's great having new friends; in fact, people from the different schools are now best friends'. They are looking forward with considerable anticipation to moving into the new buildings in April 2010.

The federation with Oakwood Primary School means that many roles are shared and this has played an important part in raising expectations and developing a more distributed style of leadership. While many of the strategies introduced show signs of making a difference, developments are at an early stage. For example, in lessons, teachers usually give pupils an indication of what they should achieve, but this is not often enough linked to the ability of different groups. The use of targets in English is well established and effective, but targets are not as well used elsewhere. The school's leaders know what remains to be done to bring about further improvements, because they look closely at all aspects of the school's work. Their capacity to do so is satisfactory, and strengthening as further evidence of the impact becomes available.

Pastoral care is a strength of the school because of the dedication of the staff and the good relationships that have been established. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make a good start in developing their skills and knowledge as learners. Progress in older year groups is satisfactory. There is inconsistency in the use of the assessment of pupils' work, particularly in lessons. As a result, teachers do not give pupils enough guidance on how to improve their work. Although pupils have helpful individual targets in English they do not have them in other subjects. Consequently, while standards are broadly average, not enough pupils are challenged to reach the next level of their learning. This is particularly the case for the oldest pupils in mathematics and writing. Data are increasingly well used to identify those who need additional help, although the plans for such support are not sufficiently well focused or understood by the pupils. This is particularly the case for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities whose individual education plans are not reviewed on a regular basis.

Pupils feel that the school helps them stay safe, and they know what they can do to ensure they develop healthy lifestyles. This helped the school to achieve the Healthy Schools award. Most parents and carers agree with the positive statements in the Ofsted questionnaire, particularly that their children are kept safe and that teaching and learning are good. As one parent commented, 'Children are well mannered and care for each other. Those with particular needs are well accepted'. Another expressed parents'

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views of the new school when they said, 'We know that 'our' school is something special in Plymouth'. The pupils are wholeheartedly involved in improving aspects of the school, notably through the innovative, elected parliament.

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

- Raise standards, particularly in mathematics and writing at Key Stage 2, by:
  - giving pupils more specific guidance to know what they need to do to reach the next level of learning
  - ensuring that success criteria used in lessons relate to the progress pupils of different abilities need to make.
- Develop more accurate use of targets by:
  - ensuring the good practice in English is more widespread
  - reviewing more frequently the individual education plans in place for those who need them.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Observations of lessons confirmed that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage benefit from good learning strategies and make good progress, while the learning of all groups of pupils in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory. Older pupils are reaching broadly average standards. Pupils enjoy their learning and have appreciated the improvements that have already been brought about. There is an exciting vision for the use of information and communication technology (ICT), with the introduction of netbooks for all Key Stage 2 pupils, and wide availability in Key Stage 1. While this is relatively new, pupils are already confidently using the computers when it is appropriate. Teachers are increasingly using assessment data to ensure that each pupil is making the progress he or she should, and this is based on ambitious goals.

As a consequence of the consistent use of the golden rules, behaviour is good. The very few pupils who find it difficult to follow the school's expectations are well managed so that learning is not disrupted. Pupils have good opportunities to take on responsibilities, through the school council, the playground buddies, 'Super Sixes' and reading support, for example. The elected parliament includes positions for 'Minister of Literacy', and ICT, among others, and an opposition. These pupils play an increasingly active part in helping to find interesting ways for the school to improve what it does. Pupils show good understanding of moral and social issues and are appropriately reflective when given the opportunity. There are some opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of the wider communities and beliefs of others in Britain. Many pupils told the inspectors how much they enjoy the wide variety of clubs available, and they are proud that the sporting teams have been successful in local competitions.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

### How effective is the provision?

The federation has meant that teachers work together to plan lessons, and are sharing good practice. Lessons observed were at least satisfactory and often included good aspects. For example, the use of techniques to assess pupils' progress throughout lessons is becoming embedded and teachers are increasingly adjusting what they are doing in the light of this. As a result, work is often well matched to the needs of the pupils. Teachers make good use of paired discussion and small whiteboards to record thinking, so that all pupils are kept engaged. Teaching assistants are well informed about how they can be effective and they provide good support for those who need it. In English, pupils are helped to know what they need to do to reach the next steps of their learning through the targets set for them. While pupils are beginning to understand these targets, not enough has been done to ensure they are used more widely, and are reviewed more frequently, to ensure pupils make good progress across all year groups and areas of the curriculum. This is also the case for the plans put in place for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Much of the marking seen was good, and some exemplary, although pupils do not respond enough to the teachers' comments.

There has been a rolling programme to develop a more creative approach to the curriculum and this is well developed in some year groups. In the best examples, literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are being given prominence throughout the curriculum.

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<sup>1</sup> 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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However, this is not yet fully developed across all year groups. The curriculum is inclusive, varied and interesting, with opportunities to enhance the personal development of the pupils. For example, pupils looking at the evacuations during the Second World War thoroughly enjoyed their day as evacuees. Opportunities to learn music and a modern foreign language are well developed because of the expertise within the federation. A good range of visits and visitors contribute to pupils' understanding, such as the Widening Horizons project, where Year 5 pupils have the opportunity to experience career-based opportunities to raise their aspirations. Residential visits are used effectively to develop self-confidence, initiative and team-building skills. As these different aspects of the curriculum become increasingly well coordinated, the curriculum is improving.

The pupils' sense of being well cared for comes about because of the considerable commitment of the staff towards ensuring pupils are known as individuals, and that all their needs are met. The use of the golden rules is consistently applied so that pupils know what is expected. As a result, behaviour is considerate and pupils are kind towards each other. A few parents had concerns about the behaviour of a very few pupils, but inspectors found that teachers have good strategies to manage any incidents. Pupils also felt confident that on occasions when they might have worries, or bullying might occur, these were quickly and effectively dealt with. The school has a number of strategies to deal with absences, which helped increase attendance last year. More recently, attendance has been affected by swine 'flu.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The school's leaders and managers have had to overcome extensive difficulties during the amalgamation of the schools, along with the issues of temporarily relocating while overseeing the planning and building of the new school. Throughout this time they have ensured that pupils are kept safe. The headteachers have been instrumental in developing an exciting vision for the school and have brought together staff from considerably different situations, in impressive unity. They have a robust understanding of the strengths and areas needing development, because of a rigorous and systematic review of lessons, work and planning. The vision to establish consistently effective, enjoyable learning is widely shared by all the staff, who are consequently working hard to bring this about. Team leaders and subject coordinators talk enthusiastically of the

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opportunities available because of the federation. For example, sharing of good practice is encouraged by leaders and welcomed by staff.

The governors have been instrumental in developing the vision for the federation. They are well informed, and are becoming increasingly confident in providing challenge alongside their loyal support. For example, their understanding is growing about the data and the implications about learning. The school has begun to analyse the effectiveness of its policies in helping pupils to understand their role in local, national and global communities, although this is at an early stage. Similarly, although they have yet to fully evaluate the impact of their work, school leaders promote equal opportunities through analysing the performance of different groups of pupils.

Currently, pupils know a lot about their own community, and have some national and international links. There is a wide range of partners who help the school promote learning and well-being, including parent support advisors, local industries and adult learning opportunities. The vast majority of parents feel well informed and the school has done much to develop ways of communicating with many parts of their community. There are some opportunities to help parents support their children, although these are not always as well attended as they might be.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

**Early Years Foundation Stage**

Before the children join the Nursery class, staff ensure that they have a good picture of the early needs of each child and this helps parents and the children to feel comfortable and settle into the routines quickly. Children often arrive with skills and knowledge that



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are low, particularly in communication. The well-resourced and bright, cheerful environment in the Reception and Nursery classes provides good opportunities for children to choose activities in all the areas of learning and they make up ground quickly. Accurate observations are used to identify and meet their individual needs with interesting, creative activities so that they continue to make good progress. Provision for learning outdoors is not quite as strong as that seen indoors, although plans indicate that this will improve when they move to the new school site. The I CAN unit which operates next to the Early Years Foundation Stage provides a positive partnership that benefits the children attending the unit, as well as those in the school. For example, pupils learn to use sign language, and those who have communication difficulties benefit from particularly expert support. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is strong, with a good grasp of recent developments in early learning and a clear vision of how to bring about improvements to children's learning. As a result, staff work well together. The good relationships between adults and children mean that children feel safe and play and learn happily together.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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 very large majority of parents responded positively to all the questions in the parental questionnaire and the comments made often reinforced this view. A very small minority disagreed with a number of the statements, including whether the school meets their child's needs, how effectively the school is led and managed, and whether they were happy with their child's experience. A very small number of parents commented that they felt bullying was not sufficiently well dealt with. However, in line with the views of the vast majority of parents, inspectors found that the school has effective strategies in place to ensure pupils know who they can talk to, and that any incidents are taken seriously, investigated thoroughly and dealt with sensitively. Some of these incidents happen off the premises, but the school recognises the role it can play in resolving such matters and does all it can to do so. A number of positive comments were made, recognising all the school has done to bring about improvements, particularly in teaching.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Beechwood 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 61 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 359 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	57	23	38	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	37	61	22	36	2	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	32	52	25	41	3	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	29	48	26	43	5	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	38	62	22	36	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	31	51	22	36	4	7	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	33	54	24	39	1	2	1	2
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)	22	36	33	54	2	3	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	29	48	25	41	6	10	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	36	31	51	4	7	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	43	28	46	4	7	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	33	54	20	33	3	5	3	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	35	57	17	28	5	8	1	2

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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



2 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Beechwood Primary School, Southway, PL6 6SR

Thank you for chatting to us and helping us find our way around the school when we visited. We enjoyed looking at the work you are doing and hearing about what you like about your school. Many of you told us how well you get along with each other, and we could see this from the way you look after each other and behave well. This is particularly impressive as you have come together from different schools, and you told us how proud you are to be part of Beechwood. We have found that the school gives you a satisfactory education. This means that it does some things well, but there are a few things that it could do better.

These are some of the things your school does well.

- Leaders and teachers have managed the changeover to the new school well. They know what needs to be done to make sure things continue improving.
- Those of you in the Nursery and in Reception make good progress in your learning.
- Staying healthy is important to you; you particularly enjoy the physical education lessons.
- Your behaviour is good and you feel safe in school.
- The teachers know you well and look after you so that you like being at school.

Here are some of the things we have asked your school to improve.

- Help you to do even better in the national tests at the end of Year 6, particularly in your writing and in mathematics, by helping you to know what you need to do to reach the next level of your learning.
- Give you specific things to aim for in your work, like the targets you get in English, particularly for those of you who find learning more difficult.

I know you are really looking forward to moving into your new school, and I am sure that it will be a great opportunity to learn even more, and to continue developing into confident young people.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Saunders

Lead inspector

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