

# Beech Hill Community Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106399
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wigan
<b>Inspection number</b>	344689
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 March 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sonja Oyen HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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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>	238
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Maureen Haddock
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Janet Seddon
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 April 2008
<b>School address</b>	Netherby Road Beech Hill Wigan WN6 7PT
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and an additional inspector. They visited 16 lessons taught by 10 members of teaching and support staff and two school assemblies. They held discussions with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher in her role as special educational needs coordinator, phase leaders, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board, other teaching and care staff and pupils from Year 6. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' work as well as school documentation including the development plan and records of pupils' progress and care. No questionnaires for parents, staff and pupils were issued as this was initially a monitoring inspection. The inspectors met with parents as they brought their children to school, attended an assembly and waited to discuss their children's progress with class teachers.

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

- how well has the school sustained progress as well as managing the move into temporary accommodation?
- has the school a clear picture of what it needs to do next?
- are pupils making enough progress?
- how well have the staff built on the points raised in the last monitoring inspection?

## Information about the school

Beech Hill is a smaller than average primary school close to Wigan town centre in an area of significant social and economic hardship. One in three pupils is entitled to free school meals, well above the national average. The number of pupils on roll has fallen in recent years. An increasing number of pupils join or leave throughout the school year; five pupils have started school in the last three weeks. Nine pupils are in the care of the local authority. Five pupils speak English as an additional language and two are in the early stages of learning to understand and speak it. One fifth of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, predominantly moderate learning difficulties and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Three pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

In January 2010, the main school moved into temporary buildings and a new school, planned to open in 2011, is being built on the site of the former main buildings. The Nursery and Reception Year children remain in a separate building shared with Sure Start provision. Of the 39 children who attend the school nursery, 19 started in January. Some attend full days and others either the morning or the afternoon session.

Following the inspection in April 2008, the school was placed in special measures. HMI has visited the school on five occasions to monitor its progress. In this period, six teachers and five members of the support staff have left the school and six teachers have been appointed. The local authority replaced the governing body with an Interim Executive Board in September 2008.

**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

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. Beech Hill is now providing its pupils with a satisfactory quality of education; pupils enjoy learning, morale is high and staff are working as one to take the school forward. Pupils and their parents and carers are pleased: 'lessons are fun', 'my child loves it', and, 'he wants us to do the same things at home', were typical comments.

The school has sustained the good provision for the children in the Nursery and Reception classes and improved other aspects of its work to at least satisfactory. The move to temporary accommodation has not diverted attention from the drive to improve. Key leaders now have the expertise and knowledge to make well reasoned decisions that will make a positive difference to the outcomes for pupils.

After initial negativity and periods of slow progress, there has been a swing in the school's culture to one of praise, support and willingness to resolve issues. This reflects changes in personnel and the positive impact of support and guidance from local authority consultants. Lately, the staff have been sharing effective practice and leading professional development sessions. As the headteacher put it, 'We are at the top of the mountain. It's been a long climb but worth it'. Nevertheless, she and the staff know there is some way to go to ensure all pupils fulfil their potential and constantly give of their best. Some management systems are not as slick or as timely as they need to be to allow the school to keep a critical eye on its performance.

Welcoming classrooms, structured teaching, interesting topics, practical activities, partner work, breakfast and after-school clubs, all account for why pupils are achieving better than before. Staff comment that 'all pieces in the learning jigsaw are slotting into place'. This was exemplified well when Year 6 lead learners, with minimal guidance from adults, enabled others to explain confidently how to find the area of a complex shape. The spontaneous applause and smiles of pride from adults and pupils said it all. Similarly, in the Nursery and Reception classes, the children are confident, independent and gaining a good start in reading, writing and number.

Standards are set to rise. More able pupils are starting to fulfil their potential, especially in Year 6, and many pupils in all year groups are just below the level expected for their age. However, gaps in learning from previous years continue to keep standards below average. Too many pupils struggle to read unfamiliar words as they are unsure of letters and their sounds. Support programmes are helping pupils to catch up and boost confidence, such as quick recall of multiplication facts. The emphasis on making writing interesting, especially for younger boys, has paid off well in pupils' willingness to write

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and their awareness of different formats, but errors in spelling and inaccurate punctuation let down the quality. Pupils know their targets and want to do well. Chances are being missed to show pupils how the work in all subjects can help them to achieve targets in reading and writing. In some cases, targets given in pupils' books have not been reviewed for some time.

Two key strands in the school's growing success are first, the good quality of care, guidance and support, and second, the complementary skills and expertise of the headteacher and deputy headteacher. The headteacher has been very effective in working with staff, parents, carers and outside agencies to ensure the school is a safe haven for all. Good support for pupils with physical and behavioural needs ensures that they play a full part in school life. For some pupils, such as the more able and those who speak little English, there is scope to do more to enable them to benefit from all activities. This partly reflects gaps in staff's expertise and subject knowledge. The regular tracking and analysis of pupils' progress are now well established, but not always sharp enough to identify those elements that will bring about quick returns as well as those that are more long term. Middle managers are itching to develop practice further and to help compile a school development plan. Given the planned move to new buildings in 2011, this is an apposite time to plan for the 'new Beech Hill' alongside the actions to accelerate the desired rise in standards.

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

- Accelerate pupils' progress, especially in reading and writing, by:
  - analysing the gaps in learning to enable structured teaching that will undo bad habits and establish a knowledge of key rules and strategies
  - personalising learning to take even better account of the needs of the more able pupils, and those who speak English as an additional language
  - fostering pupils' use of expression and tone in oral reading
  - broadening teachers' knowledge of how to teach basic skills effectively.
- Refine the use of assessment to inform teaching and learning by:
  - using evidence from work in all subjects to indicate to pupils when they meet a target in reading, writing and mathematics
  - ensuring that short-term targets are reviewed regularly.
- Sharpen strategic leadership and management by:
  - agreeing a vision for the new school and identifying long and short-term intentions related to specific outcomes for pupils
  - tightening management systems to ensure that the school keeps pace with necessary reviews and evaluations.
- 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.

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## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The improving picture is at its very best for the youngest and oldest pupils. The good outcomes for the Nursery and Reception Year children bode well for the future. Given the low starting points of many current Year 2 and Year 6 pupils, and erratic learning in previous years, these pupils have moved on markedly in the last few terms. This is because teaching is geared to securing small steps in learning and good support for those with particular needs. The school's data show that most pupils are on track to meet their targets. Although there are still some pockets of slower progress because of inconsistencies in teaching, this upturn in learning is in marked contrast to previous years when too many pupils underachieved.

Standards are rising slowly. A higher proportion of Year 6 pupils than in 2009 are working at the level expected for their age in English, mathematics and science. The school's results in the national tests and teacher assessments were better in 2009 than in 2008. A creditable success was that all Year 2 pupils reached the level expected for their age in mathematics. However, none excelled. This year, a small number of Year 2 pupils are beginning to shine in mathematics and writing. Performance in reading is not as good. This also typifies other year groups and difficulties in interpreting text carry over into other subjects.

Pupils comment on how learning is now more enjoyable and how well they get on with each other. In lessons, they settle quickly and are particularly keen when there is something for them to do. Year 2 pupils discussed sensibly with their partners whether a book was fiction or non fiction and Year 3 pupils were excited about their visit to Stockport to see actual air raid shelters. Pupils' confidence and willingness to have a go have grown as a result of frequent praise and encouragement from all adults. Year 6 pupils are blossoming; they know that they need to improve in spelling, for example, if they are to get into the middle and top sets at secondary school. Their modern day version of the parable of The Good Samaritan was much appreciated by family members who came specially to see the presentation.

Pupils behave well. Despite the cramped outdoor space, pupils play happily and make the most of games equipment. They enjoy working with specialist sports people and also extra activities, such as cheerleading. They show good consideration for the safety of others, and say they feel very safe. Incidents are few and dealt with immediately. Attendance and punctuality have improved to average and a growing proportion of pupils have good levels of attendance. Pupils enjoy the daily choice of fruit and eat sensibly at lunchtime. A parent commented that by tasting 'fruit from around the world', her child was more willing to try different foods at home.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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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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<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 quality of teaching is stronger than it was two years ago. Although there are inconsistencies to iron out to ensure that all pupils benefit from good teaching, there are strong common aspects and effective practice to share. Some teaching is outstanding, especially for the oldest and youngest pupils.

The teachers and teaching assistants form effective teams and lessons are often a hive of productive activity. Relationships are good. Detailed planning for lessons ensures a structured approach with steps to success then shared and reviewed with pupils. The staff prepare thoroughly, often making new resources; good examples are the mats to help pupils to spell key words. When the adults praise, encourage, ask probing questions and give clear demonstrations, the pupils learn well. Occasionally, the teachers miss chances for pupils to explain what they have learnt or where they are having problems. There are some gaps in teachers' subject knowledge and expertise, especially in the teaching of reading and in how to ensure that the challenge is right for all, particularly those who are learning to speak English and the more able. Effective links with other agencies and the careful tailoring of provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities ensure these pupils make satisfactory progress in meeting their targets.

The staff are now reaping the benefits of the support from local authority consultants. Pupils like the use of topics to link learning in subjects and the marking comments that indicate what to do next. Pupils are starting to reflect on their own progress and to reply to teachers' comments. The half termly reviews of pupils' progress give a clear indication of where action is needed to support those who are not making the progress expected

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or where targets need to be refreshed.

*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 appointment of new staff has strengthened the pool of teaching and leadership expertise. The pace of improvement has quickened as phase leaders have used the skills they gained through working with local authority consultants to guide their teams in raising standards. As a result, confidence and expectations are surging and the school has become increasingly self-sufficient in identifying how well it is doing and where improvement is needed. This is timely given the calls on the headteacher to liaise with other agencies on social, safeguarding and child protection issues. Productive links between the learning mentor, families and local authority services have led to a decrease in persistent absence and effective support for pupils who find it hard to behave well at all times. The school's 'open door' and good links with support networks are appreciated by parents and carers. 'They listen and help' and, 'They tell us how our kids are getting on. I have no worries', were two comments.

The current work to compile a school development plan provides a prime opportunity not only to identify the long-term vision for the school when it moves into its new buildings and how it will be achieved, but also the action needed to bring about short-term benefits for pupils. Phase leaders are now in a strong position to identify the specific areas for improvement in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding, and effective practice that will make a difference especially in ensuring that all pupils achieve their best. At present, some pupils could do more. The school is starting to widen pupils' perspectives of local and regional culture and values. Year 6 pupils and their families are logging on to the school's new virtual learning environment where they can find homework and ideas to try out online. Year 5 pupils were pleased to be the school's first representatives in Wigan's 'Let's Sing' project.

The school has kept up with educational developments and national requirements but some aspects remain incomplete, including those related to financial management systems. There is also some tardiness in gathering evidence for planned reviews of policies and practices. The Interim Executive Board, which will continue for the school year, monitors closely the school's progress and holds key leaders to account.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*



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<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</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>3</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

The children in the Nursery and Reception classes are happy, independent, very well behaved and willing to learn. Parents and carers were pleased that their children had come on so well in their speaking and took more notice of things around them. This reflects the wide range of interesting activities and the high quality of teaching with an emphasis on developing speech and social skills, as well as reading, writing and number. The children make good progress and, from often low starting points, move into Year 1 at or generally close to the level expected for their age. In 2009, the children's performance was the strongest yet, especially in the children's ability to link letters and sounds. The current Nursery and Reception children like stories, have a go at writing names, letters and words, and use number to solve problems. Reception children were keen to tell visitors how they had helped each other to make pig masks to wear in retelling the tale of 'The Three Little Pigs'. They also matched labels to items and wrote words independently.

Themes and adult-led sessions are well planned with the children's needs in mind. Nursery children were fascinated to hear about the work of the 'lollipop lady'. They wanted to hold her lollipop sign and asked some mature questions about safety when crossing the road. The adults make good use of the indoor space to set up a range of work areas where the children can choose their own activity and help themselves to a choice of snacks. Reception children spontaneously got the materials they needed and organised themselves sensibly. This independence begins from day one in the nursery where the staff have high expectations of the children but adapt their approach to take into account each child's needs. All the staff are very skilful in managing the children and keeping them engaged.

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The staff work well as a team expertly led by the nursery teacher. In the short time she has been at the school she has built on good practice and introduced several effective changes. A prime example is the structured tracking of each child's progress in aspects of personal and social development against national age-related descriptions. The staff are quick to pick up on significant steps in the children's progress, use detailed observational comments, photographs and samples of work to record them and keep parents and carers well informed. The phase leader has an accurate view of the strengths of the provision and where it could be improved. She and the Reception teacher are already looking at more ways to foster the children's creative development and how to make even better use of the outdoors.

*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**

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

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

## 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.**



19 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Beech Hill Primary, Wigan, WN6 7PT

Thank you for your help when Julie Price Grimshaw and I visited Beech Hill to see how well you are getting on. This was my fifth visit to the school and I was pleased to see that you have settled so well into your temporary home. Many of you told us you like it, although, and we agree, the tarmac play area is a little cramped. Let's hope there is a lot of sunshine ahead so you can also use the field.

This was my last visit as the school is now doing well enough to manage without my reports. Well done to you and all the staff! There have been some ups and downs for Mrs Seddon, Mrs Saddington and all your teachers and helpers, but their hard work has paid off and you are learning better than before. You told us that you enjoy school and we could see that in lessons and at playtimes. Like you, the Nursery and Reception children have lots of interesting things to do and they get off to a good start. I was really pleased to see that most of you are on track to meet your targets. Your writing has certainly come on well and your work is now much neater. Year 6 – it was a real treat to see your modern-day take on the Good Samaritan and to watch you helping each other to work out the area of a shape. I'm sure you will now cope well if that comes up in the test.

To help the school to continue to improve, I have asked the Interim Executive Board, Mrs Seddon and all the staff to do the following things:

- help each other to help you to move on faster by undoing some of your bad habits in handwriting and spelling. You also need help in using expression when you read out loud and in deciding what the words mean.
- use all your work, not just your English or mathematics work, to show when you have met a target. The adults also need to look regularly at the targets in the front of your books and make sure there is always a challenge for you.
- work together to decide what kind of school Beech Hill will be when it moves into its new buildings and what they need to do to make it happen. Also, what they need to do to make sure you do your best in school. I am sure you will have ideas!

I have enjoyed meeting you all and look forward to seeing the new buildings.

Yours sincerely

Sonja Øyen

Her Majesty's Inspector

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