

Beech Green Primary School

St James, Quedgeley, Gloucester, GL2 4WD

Inspection dates 30 April–1 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- There is a calm and purposeful working environment where pupils thrive and enjoy their learning. Their enjoyment of learning begins in the Reception classes, where children's enthusiasm for learning is developed.
- Achievement has improved. Most pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, and standards are higher at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 than at the time of the previous inspection.
- Teaching is good. Pupils try hard, enjoy learning and are keen to tackle new and challenging work.
- Pupils behave well; they are polite and respectful and have a clear understanding of right and wrong.
- Pupils feel safe in school and most parents are confident that their children are well cared for and helped to do their best.
- The headteacher provides strong leadership and a clear direction for the school and is well supported by senior leaders. Consequently, pupils' achievement and teaching continue to improve.
- The governing body provides good support and has 'stepped up' its challenge to the leadership. They know how well pupils are achieving and what still needs to improve.
- Pupils' enjoyment of learning is enhanced through their participation in the many musical and artistic activities.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding. Occasionally, progress slows when teachers spend too long explaining tasks.
- A small proportion of pupils who are capable of reaching the higher level in mathematics fall short of their target because the work is not always sufficiently challenging or exciting.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 19 lessons, four of them jointly with the headteacher, observing all classes. The inspectors heard pupils from Years 1, 3 and 5 read and held meetings with two groups of pupils.
- Meetings and discussions were held with the Chair and Vice Chair and another member of the Governing Body and senior leaders. A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority. The inspectors also had informal discussion with a parents at the beginning of the school day.
- Inspectors took account of the 38 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), correspondence from two parents and responses to the staff questionnaires during the inspection.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, priorities for development, achievement data and documents relating to safeguarding children.

Inspection team

Paul Edwards, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Cliff Mainey	Additional Inspector
Shahnaz Maqsood	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Beech Green is larger than the average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average as is the proportion supported through school action.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium (additional money provided by the government for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and those from service families) is average. There are no looked after children in the school and a very small number from service families.
- The school meets the current floor standards, the minimum standards expected by the government for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A nursery, privately managed, operates on the school site and has been subject to a separate inspection. A breakfast and after school club operate from the school site. These are also privately run.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding by:
 - ensuring there is a better balance of the time taken by teachers to explain tasks and the time allowed for pupils to undertake activities
 - ensuring teachers' questioning is sharper so that pupils are consistently encouraged to explain their answers more fully
 - providing more consistent opportunities for pupils to reflect and respond to teachers' comments on their work
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to develop their independence by encouraging them to be more responsible for their own progress.
- Accelerate the progress of the above average pupils in mathematics by:
 - ensuring pupils move on to more challenging work sooner by making activities exciting and stimulating
 - improving teachers' confidence in encouraging pupils to carry out investigative and problem solving activities using real-life situations
 - teaching mathematics across other curriculum areas.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Reception classes with skills and abilities that are below those that are expected for their age, particularly their literacy and communication skills and personal and social development. As a result of effective support, good guidance and well-targeted activities, they make good progress. Their mathematical and literacy skills develop well so that they are well prepared for entry to Year 1.
- Pupils make good progress throughout Key Stage 1. A strong focus on ensuring pupils acquire the important 'building blocks' for reading, writing and mathematics ensures pupils' attainment in these areas is now above that expected for their age by the end of Year 2.
- Particularly good progress has been made in English since the previous inspection, both in reading and in writing. The 'interweaving' of reading and writing across all curriculum subjects is providing pupils with increased opportunities to improve their literacy skills. As a result, by the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in English is above average, as it has been for the last three years.
- Young children enjoy the regular teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) and this is providing them with a secure foundation for developing their reading skills. Regular guided reading sessions, encouragement to read for pleasure and more targeted activities requiring pupils to undertake research have helped to improve pupils' reading skills.
- Pupils' attainment in mathematics has been above average for the last three years, although it dipped slightly last year. The school's current information shows that the attainment of the current Year 6 pupils is on track to rise this year. However, the school rightly acknowledges that there is a small group of above average attaining pupils who are not progressing as rapidly as they should in mathematics. Occasionally, work is not sufficiently challenging, lacks relevance to real-life situations and fails to really excite pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported and make similar rates of progress to their classmates. The small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language also make similar rates of progress. There is no significant difference in the rates of progress of boys and girls.
- Pupils who are supported by pupil premium funding receive additional well-targeted support where it is required and this enables them to achieve well. In the Year 6 2012 national assessments, the gap between those eligible for pupil premium support and other pupils was just over six months in English and nine months in mathematics. Test results and the school's internal data show that the gap between the attainment of pupils supported through pupil premium and that of other pupils is narrowing across the school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now good across the school. Regular monitoring has identified weaknesses and the 'common threads' are addressed quickly and effectively so that the quality continues to get better.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are strong and, coupled with the effective management of behaviour, ensure that lessons are calm and purposeful and that there are no disruptions. There are good opportunities for pupils to work together and to support each other's learning.
- Teachers assess pupils' work carefully and they plan activities that are mostly matched to their previous learning. For example, in a good Year 6 mathematics lesson, the most able pupils found the work on probability and fractions challenging and consequently made good progress in this area. Occasionally, opportunities are missed in some mathematics lessons to move some pupils on to more challenging work more quickly.
- Teaching in the Reception classes is good. Children enjoy learning because there is a good

balance of activities directed by the teacher and those chosen by the children themselves. There is a good emphasis on problem solving; for example, they estimate how many steps a robot will have to take before landing on a particular point.

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and this has created the basis for the progress pupils have made in learning the early skills required in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers encourage pupils to ask questions and they respond confidently. In a good Year 2 history lesson, the teacher's skilful and probing questioning encouraged the pupils to think carefully about what the picture they were given could tell them about the past. Occasionally, however, explanation of tasks and questions are too long and this leaves too little time for pupils to work to complete tasks.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly and frequently and pupils usually know what they have to do to improve their work, particularly in English. Pupils are not always given the opportunity to reflect and respond to teachers' comments and to be responsible for their own progress.
- Teachers are particularly good at planning reading and writing activities for work in other subjects and that enthuse pupils. Pupils in Year 3 said how much they were enjoying learning about school in Victorian times. There is evidence that some teachers are beginning to introduce mathematical activities that involve problem solving and investigative work across different subjects but these are not yet embedded or planned to ensure a systematic approach to problem solving.
- Additional adults are used very effectively to support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Well-planned individual and small group interventions ensure these pupils make good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are well-behaved both in lessons and around the school. They are polite and attentive and respond positively to the teachers. This has a significant impact on the ethos of the school, which is warm and welcoming.
- There are good relationships with adults and pupils say they feel safe and are confident that poor behaviour is dealt with promptly and effectively. Most parents responding to Parent View and to the school's own survey believe behaviour to be good, and pupils agree. Pupils are fully aware of the behaviour policy and they know what is expected of them. They value the system that rewards good behaviour.
- Pupils take on roles and responsibilities enthusiastically and take seriously their roles as members of the school council. They are kind and considerate and play together happily at break times and lunchtimes. Older pupils are proud to act as buddies for their younger schoolmates.
- Pupils from different backgrounds get on well together. There are no recorded racist incidents and the number of exclusions is low. Pupils know what constitutes bullying, including that involving mobile phones and cyber-bullying. Pupils feel that incidents of bullying are rare and are confident that if there is an issue, it is dealt with well.
- Attendance is broadly average and absences by those pupils who do not attend as often as they should have reduced considerably. Parents are reminded of the importance of regular attendance by their children. Support staff follow up non-attendance speedily and this has helped to significantly reduce the amount of absenteeism.

The leadership and management are good

- Since the previous inspection, there has been a continuous drive to raise standards and improve the quality of teaching. This drive has been very well led by the headteacher and he has been

well supported by senior leaders. All staff subscribe to the desire to improve. This has resulted in significant improvements since the previous inspection in the rates of progress and the eradication of weak teaching.

- Senior leaders are very clear about what needs to be done to improve and have set clear and appropriate priorities. Their focus on getting the 'basics' right has ensured that pupils' key skills in mathematics have improved and provided them with a good foundation for more rapid improvement.
 - Leaders are determined to improve teachers' skills further through opportunities to work with colleagues who demonstrate outstanding practice and to provide staff with opportunities to observe quality teaching in partner schools. Leaders regularly monitor the quality of teaching and learning in lessons and provide guidance on how their practice might be improved. Progression along the salary scale is linked closely to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Staff are pleased with the quality and range of training opportunities which they say have helped them to improve their teaching.
 - The progress of individual pupils is tracked closely by senior leaders and ensuing progress meetings with class teachers ensure pupils who are at risk of underachievement are identified quickly so that interventions can be put in place.
 - Senior leaders are rigorous in ensuring there is no discrimination and that all pupils have equal opportunity to take part in all that the school offers.
 - The curriculum is good and there is a clear focus on raising pupils' literacy and mathematical skills. It provides a broad range of activities that enrich their experiences both inside and outside of school. The school is rightly proud of the artwork produced by the pupils, the quality and range of which is displayed throughout the school. The leadership is aware of the need to encourage teachers to provide pupils with a greater range of interesting and stimulating mathematical problems to improve their progress further.
 - The school develops the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Assemblies provide opportunities for the pupils to think about their lives and those of others. For example, as they listened to music sung by Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong, they were able to gain an insight into their lives and what drove them to succeed.
 - Relationships with parents are positive and the school is keen to involve them further in their children's learning.
 - The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements.
 - The local authority currently provides light touch support for this good school.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body provides good support for the school and governors question senior leaders robustly to ensure pupils are achieving as well as they should. They have a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, including the quality of teaching, and demonstrate a secure knowledge of the school's data on performance and how it compares with other schools. Governors are fully aware of how the pupil premium funding is allocated and can explain its impact. They recognise that performance management must support improvement in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement and that this should be linked to pay rises. Governors regularly take up training opportunities to improve their understanding of information on pupils' progress and to further their skills. They make sure that all statutory responsibilities, including financial and safeguarding, meet requirements.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	115600
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	401525
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	412
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carl Beech
Headteacher	Chris Stott
Date of previous school inspection	2–3 December 2009
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