

# Beechwood Primary School

Rockfield Avenue, Southway, Plymouth, PL6 6DX

## Inspection dates

5–6 February 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- Pupils achieve well and work hard in lessons. They enjoy coming to school and the good teaching ensures they make good progress.
- The executive headteacher provides the school with strong leadership and, along with highly effective leaders and teachers, has ensured the school has rapidly improved. A culture now exists within the school where high expectations and a shared desire to continue to improve are the accepted norm.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage benefit from good provision and achieve well. Good teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes ensures that children are prepared well for the start of their school life.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Their attitudes towards learning are consistently positive and this results in lessons that are full of pupils with a zest for learning. They respect each other and their teachers well.
- The substantial improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection has led to securing and sustaining the improvements in pupils' achievement.
- Lessons are well planned, with interesting tasks that reflect pupils' needs and aspirations well. This, along with good support provided by teaching assistants, has ensured that the pupils, including those with a disability or special educational needs, all make good progress.
- Governors provide good challenge to the school leaders and have supported them fully in their endeavours to refocus and improve since the previous inspection. Governors have worked hard to seek out appropriate training needs to increase their capacity and have successfully challenged teachers to improve their teaching.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers, especially in Key Stage 1, do not always use information about pupils' prior understanding and use of basic literacy and numeracy skills to quickly address any weaknesses.
- Pupils, particularly the more able, are not always clear about what they have to achieve to be successful by the end of the lesson.
- Teachers do not always plan lessons that provide pupils with enough opportunities to think and learn completely independently.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with half a day's notice and took place over two days.
- Inspectors visited 22 lessons and observed 15 teachers. The head of school joined an inspector for a number of observations. In addition, inspectors made a number of short visits to small group work to look at the impact of the programme supporting pupils' understanding of linking letters and sounds (phonics) on their progress in reading and writing.
- Discussions were held with the executive headteacher, head of school, staff, pupils, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school improvement plans, priorities for development, achievement data and documents relating to safeguarding children.
- An inspector listened to a number of Key Stage 1 children read.
- Inspectors took account of the 20 responses to the on-line Parent View survey, a small number of letters from parents and the 11 responses to the staff questionnaire during the inspection. They also spoke to a number of parents at the start of the school day in the playground.
- A breakfast club is managed by the governors and was part of this inspection.

## Inspection team

John Cavill, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Paul Rushforth

Additional inspector

Kevin Wright

Additional inspector

Howard Dodd

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Beechwood is a larger-than-average-sized primary school and was relocated into new buildings in 2010.
- It is led by an executive headteacher and, following a reorganisation of primary education in the area in 2008, is federated with another local primary school to form the Southernway Federation.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in Nursery and Reception classes. There are two Nursery settings on the school site that operate as a single unit. One is funded by the local authority, managed directly by the school and was inspected as part of this inspection. The other is independently managed as part of the school's community interest company and is inspected separately. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is slightly above average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for children from armed service families, is higher than average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A children's centre and the local authority funded ICAN unit for pupils with speech and language difficulties are both located within the school but are inspected separately.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding overall and so raise pupils' achievement by:
  - ensuring teachers, especially in Key Stage 1, use information about pupils' prior achievements in order to rapidly address any weaknesses in their basic literacy and numeracy skills
  - making sure that all pupils, particularly the more able, have a clear understanding of how much work they are able to complete by the end of the session in order to accelerate their progress
  - ensuring teachers plan lessons which increase opportunities for pupils to think, learn and work by themselves, thus promoting independent learning.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children usually join the school in the Nursery class and arrive with skills and abilities generally well below what would normally be expected for their age. This is especially the case for their communication, language and literacy skills.
- Children settle well and the good teaching in the Nursery class ensures they make a good start to school. This good achievement continues throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage and children leave Reception with skills and abilities that are broadly in line with what would normally be expected for their age. However, for a significant proportion of children their literacy skills are still below expected levels when they join Key Stage 1.
- Significantly improved teaching across the rest of the school is resulting in all pupils, including those who are disabled or have special educational needs, making good progress and achieving well. This is especially the case in Key Stage 2.
- The slightly slower progress in Key Stage 1 is largely due to pupils' basic skills being weaker. Actions to resolve this are not always taken quickly enough and results in pupils making slower progress.
- Additional support is targeted well to support the work being done in lessons, ensuring all pupils are fully included, and promoting equality of opportunity.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is still below the national average due to some underperformance linked to weaker teaching in the period prior to the relocation of the school. However, the school's data on current pupils' performance indicate that the upward trend is continuing and the current Year 6 pupils are working at average, or better, levels.
- Standards in reading are slightly below average at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2. The school has successfully used a programme to support the learning of letters and sounds with regular sessions in small groups. Pupils are able to blend letters well as they read and transfer this skill into their writing.
- Pupils in a Year 2 class were writing opening paragraphs to their stories in a similar style to the *Horrid Henry* series of books. They were able to successfully use their story plans to develop sentences and edit them to make them more exciting.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics. In a Year 6 numeracy lesson, progress for all pupils was good because pupils worked independently setting up a scale to calculate distances using a complex series of operations. Any weaknesses in their understanding were quickly identified and resolved by the teacher. However, the practice of encouraging pupils to work independently is not widespread enough across the school.
- Pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium make good progress. Additional funding for personnel to support pupils, who are in receipt of free school meals, with their behaviour and emotional needs is removing any barriers to their learning and helping close the gap and improve their attainment. Pupils in receipt of free school meals attained a Key Stage 2 average point score of 26.3, which although below the national average represented an improvement in progress made over previous years and good progress against their starting points.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently good, ensuring that progress is good. It has improved since the previous inspection because school leaders have high expectations of the teachers, check their performance regularly and have successfully challenged inadequate teaching and supported teachers to improve.
- Good teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that achievement is good. In a Reception class lesson children enjoyed the challenge of creating a dog agility course with blocks

and hoops following the visit to school by a staff member's dog. They were able to work together well and independently of adult help. This reflects a successful focus on developing individual confidence and creative thinking.

- Teachers plan lessons well and use their good subject knowledge to ensure that learning tasks are well matched to pupils' ability. However, not all teachers check pupils' understanding of the basic skills in literacy and numeracy rigorously enough. This is especially noticeable in Key Stage 1 where, for example, a significant proportion of the pupils have not yet fully mastered how to write letters and numbers correctly. This is affecting their ability to complete tasks successfully and make faster progress.
- Teachers ensure pupils' learning is well supported by clear learning intentions, and success ladders are well understood by the pupils so they can self-assess their work. This helps them to be independent and learn by themselves. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to work completely independently as much of the work is done in pairs or small groups. This is slightly restricting their readiness to move on to the next stage of their education.
- In the best lessons, learning is good or better because teachers are skilled and able to personalise the learning well. In a Year 6 literacy lesson, pupils were writing about 'flash backs' with the teacher monitoring their progress well to reshape learning. Pupils were very clear about how much they had to complete by the end of the session and were working hard to achieve this. However, in some lessons this is not made clear to pupils and consequently some, especially the more able, do not complete enough work.
- A small minority of parents who responded to the questionnaire raised some concerns about the quality of teaching at the school. Parents who spoke to an inspector said teaching was good and this is in line with the inspection. Pupils stated that learning was fun.
- Teachers' regular marking of pupils' work provides clear next step advice and ways to improve their work further.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes ensure that the pupils are ready to learn.
- In lessons, pupils work hard and are respectful. The relationships between pupils and adults are strong. Pupils fully understanding right from wrong. Very infrequently, there is some silly or inappropriate behaviour, but this is rare and is quickly and effectively managed by the teachers.
- Behaviour around the school is good, especially when pupils are playing outside together or moving around the school. Pupils are keen to undertake responsibilities such as looking after the school chickens. They are eager to take part in extra-curricular activities and enjoy representing the school in the many sports teams.
- All pupils, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, say that they are very happy and feel safe at the school. The majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire or spoke to an inspector agreed that behaviour and safety are good.
- A few parents raised some concerns regarding bullying at the school. Pupils were clear about what constitutes bullying and had a good understanding of the different forms of bullying, including physical, emotional and cyber bullying. They said that this happens very infrequently but knew that teachers and other adults would sort out the problem quickly and resolve any other problems they may have.
- The school works closely with parents to emphasise the importance of good attendance and punctuality. Attendance is average and pupils are punctual arriving at school and getting to lessons. Behaviour in the breakfast club is good and the club provides a good range of activities for the pupils to participate in together, encouraging a calm start to the day.

**The leadership and management are good**

- The executive headteacher provides the school with clear direction and focused leadership. Together with other leaders and governors, all are fully committed to continue the substantial improvements already made at the school in teaching and pupils' achievement, ensuring that they are sustainable.
- Leaders monitor and challenge the performance of teachers well to ensure there is a good match between how much teachers are paid and how well pupils learn. Staff training needs are monitored well by leaders to ensure that training is used to ensure the individual and school improvement needs are met and impact on the outcomes for pupils. This has been further strengthened within the federation, which offers some availability for teachers to develop their skills across the two schools.
- Leaders track regularly how well pupils are doing. Challenging targets are set to continually improve the performance of individuals and groups, including those with a disability, special educational needs or those who are supported by pupil premium. Regular pupil progress meetings are used to identify any underperformance and target where additional support is required. Additional support activities are monitored well to ensure that they are effective.
- The curriculum is supported by a wide range of additional events, such as 'Fatima's Tent' to enhance pupils' understanding of a multicultural society and the visit from an Olympic torchbearer during the whole school topic on the London 2012 Olympics. Assemblies and a focus on the 'virtue of the week' along with topic work, such as the chicken project, provide a wide range of experiences to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school engages well with parents and provides a wide range of activities, from parent forums to adult learning and benefit advice, to support families in the local area.
- Leaders robustly manage all statutory requirements relating to the safeguarding of children.
- The local authority has provided some focused support during the early stages of the federation but now provides light touch support to this good school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body has supported the executive headteacher's drive to improve teaching at the school by successfully challenging teachers where their teaching is not at least good. Governors understand how this impacts directly on pupil outcomes and are able to reflect on how well the school is doing when compared to all schools nationally. They monitor the progress of the pupils regularly and know how well they are doing. Governors share the same high expectations that leaders make of teachers, and review performance to ensure that any salary progression reflects the quality of teaching and leadership responsibilities. They use self-evaluation procedures well, both to judge the school as well as themselves. This highlights where improvements are needed and improvement planning is precise with a focus on improving pupils' achievement. Governors monitor all funding to the school well, especially that received through the pupil premium to ensure that pupils receive value for money. They work closely with leaders to understand the impact that spending at the school is having on pupil outcomes, for example the improving achievement for pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding following some spending on activities focused to include this group.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135145
<b>Local authority</b>	Plymouth
<b>Inspection number</b>	402796

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

<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>	422
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Pat Lopez
<b>Executive Headteacher</b>	Andrea Norris
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 November–1 December 2009
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