

# Beacon Primary School

Davis Rd, New Invention, Willenhall, WV12 5HA

**Inspection dates** 27–28 February 2013

| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | Previous inspection: | Satisfactory                | 3        |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
|                                | This inspection:     | <b>Requires improvement</b> | <b>3</b> |
| Achievement of pupils          |                      | Requires improvement        | 3        |
| Quality of teaching            |                      | Requires improvement        | 3        |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils |                      | Good                        | 2        |
| Leadership and management      |                      | Requires improvement        | 3        |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The pupils' achievement is improving, but not all groups are yet making fast enough progress.
- Too much teaching requires improvement and pupils are not given enough opportunities to work independently.
- Whilst the rate of progress throughout each Key Stage is improving, there is too much uneven progress within lessons.
- The monitoring of school performance by leaders has not led to effective action to consolidate necessary improvements in some aspects of teaching and achievement.
- Some leaders lack the necessary skills and knowledge to drive improvement sufficiently rapidly.

### The school has the following strengths

- The school provides a caring and nurturing environment which enables pupils to behave well, feel safe and have positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils develop good reading skills and enjoy a wide range of reading material.
- The school has built strong relationships with parents and carers, who express a great deal of support for the school.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and readily take part in the wide range of learning experiences offered. They behave well and feel very safe.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the development needs of the school.
- The school makes good use of its partnership with the local authority.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 37 lessons or part-lessons.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff, members of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority, and account was taken of the response to the staff questionnaire.
- Informal discussions took place with parents, and account was taken of the 19 responses from parents via the on-line questionnaire Parent View.
- Inspectors met with a representative of the on-site Children’s Centre and their parent training advisor.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a range of documentation, including national assessment data, the school’s own assessments, pupils’ work, the school’s development plan, minutes of governing body meetings, safeguarding information, leaders’ reports and action plans.

## Inspection team

|                                |                      |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Lynne Bradbury, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Amanda Simpson                 | Additional Inspector |
| Shahnaz Maqsood                | Additional Inspector |

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are White British.
- Children enter the school in the Nursery class in the September after they are three years old and then move into the Reception class the following September.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium is well above average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free meals. There are no children from service families in the school.
- A higher than average proportion of pupils is supported at school action. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or supported by school action plus is below average.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which are set by the government as minimum expectations for pupils' progress and achievement.
- There is a Children's Centre on site and this works closely with the school. The most recent report of the Children's Centre is on the Ofsted website.

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

- Raise the quality of teaching to at least good so that pupils of all abilities make faster progress in key subjects by:
  - planning more carefully to meet individual needs and providing high levels of challenge for pupils of all abilities, particularly in letters and sounds (phonics) lessons and for the most able in mathematics
  - improving teachers' questioning skills to promote independent thinking at a deeper level for pupils of all abilities, and give them more time to work on their own
  - encouraging more active engagement of pupils throughout lessons, particularly by providing practical equipment to support learning in mathematics
  - ensuring that all teachers help pupils know what their next steps in learning should be.
- Improve the impact of the work of leaders on learning by:
  - ensuring that urgent action for improvement, once identified, is carried out effectively in all areas
  - ensuring that all subject leaders understand and address, quickly, the need for improvements in their subjects.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Children start the Nursery class with skills which are generally well below those expected for their age, especially in communication and language, and their personal, social and emotional development. The learning environment, and care and support of staff enable the children to become confident and to approach learning enthusiastically. Staff are developing skills in joining in children's play to guide and challenge their learning.
- Grouping of children for literacy and mathematics in the Reception classes ensures that staff have a clear understanding of their learning needs. By the time they start Year 1, standards are below those expected for their age. This is because some of the tasks set do not offer sufficient challenge, particularly for the most able, to drive their learning forward rapidly in mathematics.
- Pupils attain standards in line with those seen nationally at the end of Year 2 in literacy, but progress in Years 1 and 2 in mathematics is not fast enough as the pace of learning is often too slow. Pupils who were in Year 1 last year did not meet the expected standards in the national screening test in phonics (letters and sounds).
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve in line with their peers nationally.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium achieve levels above their peers nationally. Funding is used to offer one-to-one and small group support, educational visits, extra support assistants, including a parent support assistant. Based upon average points scores, those pupils receiving this funding are attaining higher standards and making better progress than their peers in English and mathematics.
- Attainment at the end of Year 6 is in line with standards expected nationally except for the most able pupils in mathematics. This is improving as teaching for the older pupils has improved.
- Pupils enjoy their reading for a range of purposes and attain high standards in this area.
- The teaching of key skills in mathematics across the age range lacks rigour and therefore higher attainers are not always provided with work which is sufficiently challenging.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is too uneven in the school and in too many lessons progress is not good enough, particularly for the most able pupils.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, staff are developing skills in joining in with children's play to ask well-focused questions and to develop greater understanding. As a result, children make secure progress in most of the areas of learning.
- In lessons which require improvement, teachers talk for too long and do not engage pupils in developing higher level skills and understanding. They restrict pupils' opportunities to explore mathematics through practical equipment and they do not use questioning well enough to challenge the most able pupils.
- Pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to use targets or steps to success. As a result, they do not have a clear enough understanding as to how they can improve their work.
- In mathematics, the over-reliance on a published scheme of work results in teachers not giving more able pupils work that is hard enough.
- Where teaching is good, teachers match the challenge of the work to pupils' ability through planning based upon careful checking on past progress. Pupils are given opportunities to explain their thinking and to explore problems together. Teachers challenge pupils to think at higher levels.
- Where teaching is good, pupils are allowed to make decisions and choices about their learning. For example, in a mathematics lesson, pupils were encouraged to choose which processes and equipment to use to help them to solve problems.

- Some teachers' marking gives good feedback so that pupils understand what will help to improve their work, but this is uneven across the school, and there are few opportunities for pupils to follow this up.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to work, and warm and supportive relationships at all levels support pupils' progress well. Teachers use praise, rewards and humour to encourage pupils to develop confidence and self-esteem.

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

- Pupils enjoy coming to school and are enthusiastic about their learning in all subjects. Pupils say that behaviour in school is good and this was evident during the inspection.
- They are aware of the different forms of bullying, including cyber bullying, and how to protect themselves or get help. They say that very little bullying takes place in school and that staff deal with it well if it happens. Pupils are also aware of the dangers outside school and how to stay safe.
- Relationships at all levels in school are warm and supportive and there was very little evidence of any disruption to learning or behaviour difficulties on the playground.
- Attendance is average.
- The majority of parents express positive views about behaviour and safety in school.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive, and behaviour in lesson and around the school is good. They are tolerant of differences, and are polite and respectful to each other, adults and visitors.
- Pupils make a good contribution to school life as helpers and in supporting younger pupils.
- The promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is a strength of the school and ensures that pupils show care for their environment and each other, and respect those from other backgrounds or who have disabilities.

### **The leadership and management requires improvement**

- Areas for improvement are not always addressed with sufficient urgency and the vision for improvement is not understood clearly enough by all leaders and members of staff.
- The drive for improvement in teaching has not yet addressed all areas of low performance.
- Tracking of pupils' progress does not always ensure that teachers plan effectively for next steps in learning, particularly for the most able pupils.
- Planning in mathematics across the school age range does not build skills well enough to support higher-level problem solving for pupils.
- Subject leaders are not all sufficiently skilled to drive improvement in their subject area.
- Training and management of staff performance are addressing priority areas, though not always rapidly enough. Support from the local authority is helping to focus these areas.
- Governors and school leaders have established an ethos based upon care and support, and where learning is valued by pupils, staff and parents. Equality is promoted and discrimination is tackled effectively.
- Leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses identifies appropriate areas for development and there is a clear development plan focused upon raising achievement. There is good evidence of literacy skills being developed through other subjects.
- The pupil premium has been used effectively in raising achievement for those eligible for this funding.
- The curriculum offers a broad range of experiences, including the use of sports coaches, which are enjoyed by the pupils and are effective in motivating interest and hard work. The school choir gave an exceptionally high standard performance of an unaccompanied two-part song in

assembly.

- Links with parents and the Children’s Centre have established a supportive partnership. Some parents are taking up the opportunity to share in learning at their own level and this is having a positive effect upon their children’s progress.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is committed to supporting the school and giving the very best care and nurture to its pupils. It is working hard to hold leaders to account for their work. It has ensured that the pupil premium monies are used effectively and it has established high expectations of all members of staff through the appraisal policy. The performance management of the headteacher is robust. Training and development are enabling the governors to use the management of performance to address priority areas for improvement and to reflect this in their policy of linking staff pay to their performance. Governors know the areas of strength and weakness in teaching. They fulfil their statutory obligations with regard to safeguarding. The governing body has a secure overview of the school’s finances.

## 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> | 131580  |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Walsall |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 402481  |

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> | 284                           |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body            |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Christine Myatt               |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Charmain Hitchin              |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 11–12 November 2009           |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01922 710874                  |
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