

Beech Hyde Primary School and Nursery

Nurseries Road, Wheathampstead, St Albans, AL4 8TP

Inspection dates 22–23 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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.

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is good and there is a determined drive to make it better. The best teaching moves learning on rapidly because work is challenging for pupils of all abilities.
- Pupils are motivated by their work, are well behaved and safe. They say they like school and are proud and happy to be there.
- Relationships throughout the school are very positive and pupils' personal skills are well developed. Pupils who need the most help are warmly welcomed and very well supported.
- The curriculum provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Good leadership and management are resulting in measureable improvements to teaching and pupil progress. In the last year the school has made a marked improvement.
- The school accurately evaluates how well it is doing and where improvements need to be made.
- The governing body has a wide range of skills which are used well to hold the school to account and shape its direction.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A few weaknesses in some lessons prevent teaching from being outstanding overall, and pupils' progress from being consistently rapid.
- In particular, teachers do not always use assessment data to plan work that is pitched at the right level for all pupils.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in practical situations across different subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with staff, pupils, governors and a representative of the local authority who supports the school’s improvement.
- They looked at a range of evidence, including the school’s self-evaluation, information about current pupils’ progress, records of the monitoring of teaching, the work pupils were doing in their books and the school’s documentation regarding safeguarding.
- Teaching and learning were observed in 18 lessons or part lessons, across all year groups. Eleven teachers were observed teaching.
- Inspectors took account of the 58 responses from parents to Ofsted’s online questionnaire (Parent View), the school’s own survey, several letters from parents as well as speaking with parents during the inspection.
- Inspectors analysed the 24 questionnaires completed by school staff.

Inspection team

Susan Thomas-Pounce, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Kate Robertson	Additional Inspector
David Gutmann	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children from families in the armed services and for those looked after by the local authority, is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards that set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- There have been several changes in leadership since the previous inspection. The headteacher and deputy headteacher were both appointed in 2011.
- The children's centre on the school's premises is subject to separate inspection arrangements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching from good to outstanding to raise pupils' achievement by:
 - making full use of assessment information so that work is well matched to the age and ability levels of different groups
 - making sure that pupils have more opportunities to use and apply their mathematical knowledge and skills to solve problems in practical situations and in different subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that vary from year to year. School records indicate that recent attainment on entry has been lower than expected for this age group. Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly in their attitudes. They begin Year 1 with broadly average skills.
- The school's own data clearly show that pupils currently make good progress from their different starting points and achieve well throughout the school. This is confirmed by inspection evidence from lesson observations and work in pupils' books.
- Standards in 2012 dipped but the school was quick to respond. Strong and active leadership swiftly tackled this blip. This year, the way in which pupils acquire key skills across the school has improved significantly. Work seen during the inspection confirms a faster and more secure rate of progress has been made. In Year 2 and Year 6 current standards are slightly above average.
- Pupils have regular opportunities to read and show a great enjoyment of books. They make good progress in developing phonics skills (linking sounds and letters) to help them with their reading. In 2012 the proportion of Year 1 pupils who reached the expected standard in the national phonics check was above average.
- There has been a whole-school focus on writing, which has led to improvements in teaching and achievement. Pupils have many opportunities to write in a range of styles in different subjects.
- In mathematics pupils make good progress and their basic skills are sound. However, they do not have enough opportunities to use and apply these skills in practical situations and to solve problems both in mathematics lessons and across different subjects.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Their needs are accurately identified and they receive effective support in lessons or small-group sessions. As a result they achieve as well as the other pupils.
- Pupil-premium funding is used effectively to provide extra teaching and support for the group of pupils entitled to free school meals. In 2012, those pupils in Year 6 who were eligible for pupil premium funding were about a year behind similar pupils nationally in English and mathematics. The gap between these pupils and their peers has narrowed this year as a result of better use of the funding. The school's data show that all pupils are on course to achieve better outcomes this year.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils say that they enjoy lessons. They have positive attitudes to learning and are keen to do well. Almost all parents who responded to Parent View agreed that their child was well taught and made good progress, and inspection evidence confirms this.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, adults are good role models for children providing opportunities for them to make choices about their learning which is effective in promoting independence.

- Teachers generally have high expectations, requiring pupils to work hard, concentrate, and achieve well. An example of this was seen during a lesson where pupils were making well thought-out presentations to their peers. They not only provided information in a range of media, but they talked with confidence and assurance about their own interests such as playing cricket, learning karate and experiencing white-water rafting.
- The class listened with respect as they carefully assessed each other's presentations. As well as making helpful and informed comments, they asked well thought-out questions showing their ability to reflect and think. This was an example of the teacher skilfully using what pupils already know and can do. It provided a different focus for groups of wide-ranging abilities to be challenged and developed.
- Training has placed a greater emphasis on identifying what makes effective teaching and staff have a common understanding of this. Most staff use questions well, both to check what pupils know and identify what else they need to learn. However, some teachers do not use assessment information effectively enough to pitch work at the right level for pupils of different abilities and ages. This means that sometimes the work is either too easy or too difficult.
- In most lessons, teachers effectively provide individual pupils with work that is challenging. This results in pupils making rapid progress. Across the school, the marking of pupils' work is completed conscientiously and targets are used to help identify what needs to be improved.
- Teaching assistants work in partnership with teachers to support groups and individuals, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. They also support pupils eligible for the pupil-premium with a growing emphasis on making sure that these pupils are well challenged.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour throughout the school is good, and at times outstanding. There is a very inclusive and orderly atmosphere and pupils have very good relationships with each other and their teachers. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are particularly well supported. Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is above average.
- Pupils say that they feel very safe in school and are well cared for. They have a good knowledge of how to keep themselves safe in different situations and a good understanding of different types of bullying. They recognise that cyber-bullying and other types of mistreatment can be very hurtful.
- Although pupils say bullying is very rare in the school and upsets are mostly to do with minor arguments, they have every confidence that adults would deal with any issues very promptly should they arise. This is because procedures for managing behaviour are clear, consistently applied by staff and understood and trusted by pupils.
- School behaviour logs show that the very rare instances of poor behaviour are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Inspectors saw good and occasionally outstanding behaviour in lessons, in the playground, in assembly and during lunch.
- Although some concerns about the school were voiced by very few parents, the majority including several who wrote as well as responding to Parent View, were positive about the different ways in which the school supports all aspects of their children's development. Comments included, 'great teaching, nurturing environment, incredible dedication and unstinting support from all staff'.

- Pupils are keen to undertake responsibilities such as being members of the school council. They are eager to take part in extra-curricular activities and enjoy representing the school in community, sporting and musical events.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders and managers at all levels are united in their ambition to see that all pupils have an equal chance to succeed. The school has made considerable improvements in many areas this year. This is largely because staff, under the strong leadership of the headteacher, were motivated to act following the recent dip in standards. The local authority supported the school in a review of teaching and learning and this helped leaders to correctly identify where improvement was needed.
- Following this review, the staff improved assessment procedures so they could more carefully track the progress of individuals and groups of pupils. Well-planned actions to improve the quality of teaching through training, coaching and mentoring have meant that pupils' progress has accelerated and achievement has increased.
- There are effective systems to monitor how well teachers are doing. These take account of pupils' performance and this is considered when making decisions about teachers' salary progression. The school's evaluation of its effectiveness is accurate.
- Pupil-premium funding is now used well to make sure that individuals get the support they are entitled to. Extra teaching and support staff are employed to help accelerate learning. The school now evaluates the effect of specific expenditure through data which show that pupils receiving additional help are making better progress than in previous years.
- The curriculum provides a broad range of learning opportunities for pupils at all levels of attainment, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Pupils' learning is enhanced by a variety of clubs, activities, trips and visits. These make a strong contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The local authority provides 'light-touch' but effective support in reviewing the performance of the school and the headteacher.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a range of skills and expertise and are trained well. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and what it needs to do to improve. They support the school well, and hold it to account for pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching and behaviour and safety. They are reflective, and ask questions about the information they receive on pupils' progress across each age group using average point scores. They keep an eye on the targets that are set to improve teaching. They know where teaching and learning are stronger or weaker. They also know what the school is doing to reward good teaching and to tackle any underperformance. They make sure that pupils' performance is taken into account when making decisions about teachers' pay. They understand how pupil-premium funding is spent, and check that the management of financial resources is effective. They make sure that the school fulfils its statutory requirements, including those related to safeguarding.

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	117301
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	412478

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	268
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Katy Cheetham
Headteacher	Hazel Millard
Date of previous school inspection	26 November 2007
Telephone number	01582 832661
Fax number	01582 834384
Email address	admin@beechhyde.herts.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

