

Beech Hyde Primary School and Nursery

Nurseries Road, Wheathampstead, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL4 8TP

Inspection dates

2–3 February 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders and governors have not ensured that safeguarding is effective. Statutory safeguarding guidance has not been followed closely enough. As a result, recruitment procedures are not sufficiently robust and practices around the use of volunteers in the school are not rigorous enough.
- Governors do not hold the school's leaders to account effectively. They have not fulfilled their responsibilities in regard to meeting safeguarding requirements and do not adequately steer the process of school improvement.
- Leadership of curriculum subjects is underdeveloped and has little impact on outcomes in individual subjects.

The school has the following strengths

- The school provides an acceptable standard of education because the quality of teaching in the school is good and pupils achieve well.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are a particular strength and classrooms are happy and productive places as a result.
- All groups of pupils make good progress from their individual starting points in reading and mathematics and across a wide range of subjects. Although progress in writing is good, it is weaker than in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils behave very well and display good attitudes to learning. They are polite, well-mannered and welcoming to visitors.
- Pupils feel safe at school. They know about bullying and what to do if it should happen to them.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to diversity. They have a firm belief that all people are equal and that prejudice is wrong.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership so that it is effective and all responsibilities are met by ensuring that:
 - statutory safeguarding guidance is followed consistently and in full
 - governors have sufficient knowledge and understanding of their roles to enable them to hold leaders to account effectively
 - the roles of subject leaders are developed, so that they have greater impact on improving their individual areas of responsibility and the school has a complete and accurate understanding of how well pupils are doing in each curriculum area
 - school development planning is sharply focused to enable governors to hold leaders to account fully
 - performance management is robust and rigorous and has an evident impact on improving the school.
- Develop further the quality of the teaching of writing, particularly by increasing opportunities to write in subjects other than English, so that more pupils make rapid progress.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leadership is inadequate because the school's governors and leaders have not ensured that safeguarding is effective and that statutory safeguarding guidance is followed. Leaders have not demonstrated the capacity to discharge their responsibilities in this regard, despite the fact that the school as a whole provides an acceptable standard of education for its pupils.
- Improvement planning is weak because the school's development plan lacks the precision and rigour necessary to have an impact on improving the school, and governors cannot use the plan to hold leaders to account. The lack of timescales makes it difficult for leaders and governors to ensure that the plan remains on track and that actions are taken in a timely fashion.
- There are weaknesses in the leadership of curriculum subjects. Leaders have not ensured that there is a sufficiently robust assessment system in place to enable them to check whether pupils are making good progress in subjects such as history and music. Although some monitoring work is undertaken by subject leaders, this is underdeveloped and has little impact on raising standards in individual subjects.
- The school's systems for the performance management of staff are not sufficiently well developed to have an impact on improving standards. Performance targets are set for, and with, teachers but they are not sufficiently sharply focused. For example, a target might be set for a teacher to 'raise standards in reading and writing' but without specifying how much of an increase is expected or acceptable.
- The pupil premium grant is spent effectively overall because disadvantaged pupils are making good progress. However, governors do not monitor spending of the grant closely enough, or ask challenging questions about the effectiveness of the way money is spent. Leaders do not monitor the attendance of disadvantaged pupils closely enough.
- Parents' views about the school are mixed. Just under three quarters of the parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, said that they would recommend the school to others. Just over half said that they think the school is well led and managed and that the school responds well to concerns that are raised. A small number of parents spoke to inspectors to express their concerns about the weaknesses in the results of the 2016 national tests.
- Many parents are positive about the school. Parents who spoke to inspectors described the school as 'nurturing' and said that their children are happy at Beech Hyde.
- The school's curriculum is suitably broad and balanced and includes all the subjects in the national curriculum. Subjects are taught discretely rather than as elements of a broader topic. The school uses specialist teachers to teach subjects such as French and physical education. Pupils are offered the opportunity to take part in instrumental music lessons as well as a good range of extra-curricular activities.
- The primary physical education and sport premium is spent effectively. The school uses the additional funding to broaden the range of sporting opportunities, including clubs,

that are offered to pupils.

- Additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is spent effectively. Teaching assistants are deployed well to support pupils, as required. This support is effective in ensuring that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress.

Governance of the school

- The school's governors are not effective. They have not ensured that statutory requirements are met and that safeguarding arrangements are secure. As a result, a number of statutory safeguarding guidelines have not been followed and the school's website does not contain all the information that is required.
- The governing body does not hold the school's leaders to account effectively. Minutes of meetings of the governing body show that governors challenge leaders but do not follow up on the responses they receive. For example, governors made a decision that they should audit the school's single central record, but this has not taken place and it is not compliant with statutory requirements.
- Governors are highly committed to the school. Many governors are new to their roles and they are keen to develop their knowledge and understanding.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Processes around the safer recruitment of staff, to ensure that only suitable people are employed to work with children, are not robust. Some of the required checks have not been made. Leaders have not followed the latest statutory guidance closely enough and this means that safeguarding at the school is not as secure as it should be.
- The school's approach to working with volunteers is not good enough. Leaders have allowed a number of volunteers to work in the school without the necessary checks having been made and without sufficient supervision being in place. Similarly, they have not ensured that all contractors have been thoroughly checked. Leaders have not ensured that they are appropriately supervised on the school premises.
- The school has not checked thoroughly enough that it has not employed any disqualified people. A form has been issued to all staff to check whether they, or anyone they live with, is disqualified. However, leaders have not checked that all the forms have been returned and several have not. This means that the school's leaders have not taken reasonable measures to ensure that they are not employing a disqualified person.
- Leaders have not ensured that all members of staff have had appropriate safeguarding training. The school's overview of which staff have received training shows that a number of staff have not received safeguarding training.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching at Beech Hyde is good and, as a result, pupils make good progress from their individual starting points. Relationships between staff and pupils are particularly strong and lead to productive and supportive classrooms where everyone does their best.
- Teachers plan well to meet the learning needs of individual pupils. They know the pupils in their classes very well and ensure that lessons are engaging.
- Reading is taught well. There is a strong reading culture in the school and pupils are encouraged to develop a love of reading. Pupils are well supported through links between school and home and read frequently as a regular homework task.
- Teachers follow the school's marking policy well. Pupils' books show clear evidence that they use their teachers' comments to help them move on and make good progress. Teachers' comments are constructive and pupils find them useful in knowing what to do next to improve their work.
- Routines in classrooms are clear and well established. This enables pupils to be more independent in their learning because they know where to find support and what to do next when they finish their work or are stuck. Resources are used well by teachers as a means of providing additional support or structure when pupils are unsure.
- Teachers and teaching assistants encourage pupils to explain their work and their thinking during lessons. Teachers frequently use mini-plenary sessions to stop the class, ask challenging questions and check whether pupils have understood or to deepen their understanding.
- Teachers demonstrate clearly and explain new information explicitly. This means that pupils understand both what they are doing and what they are learning about.
- Teaching assistants are used well to support individual pupils and small groups. They work closely with teachers and are fully informed about lessons and pupils. This means that they are effective in supporting pupils and ensuring that they make good progress.
- The teaching of writing is improving. The school recently introduced a new approach to teaching writing and leaders say that this is already having a positive impact on improving standards in the subject. Pupils told inspectors that they feel more interested in writing since the new approach started.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to write other than in their literacy lessons. This means that they do not write frequently enough and are not given enough opportunities to develop their ability to write accurately and well. The work in pupils' exercise books indicates that expectations of pupils' writing are not as high in subjects other than English.
- Assessment in subjects other than English and mathematics is not well developed. Although individual teachers know their pupils well, there is a lack of consistency between classes and across year groups. This means that it is difficult to track pupils' progress and to be sure that pupils are making good progress in a wide range of subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate. Leaders and governors have not ensured that the school's safeguarding arrangements are effective so pupils' welfare is not secure.
- Pupils display very good attitudes to learning. They enjoy school and are keen to find out more about the subjects that they learn about. Pupils are confident and self-assured.
- Pupils have been taught well about what bullying is and what to do if it should happen to them. They use the acronym STOP to remind them that bullying is something that is done 'several times on purpose' and also that if it happens they should 'start telling other people'. Pupils feel safe from bullying and they have great confidence that staff would sort it out if it were to occur.
- Pupils show excellent attitudes to equality and difference. They know that it is wrong to judge someone on their personal characteristics, such as their skin colour or religion. Pupils described racism as 'a horrible thing to do' and were very clear that Beech Hyde teaches them that 'everybody's equal'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Staff have high expectations of how pupils should behave and they respond accordingly. The school rules are clear and applied consistently.
- Pupils behave well in their classrooms and disruption is rare. Pupils respond quickly to instructions so that little time is wasted. Classroom routines are well established and this enables pupils to be more independent in their learning.
- Pupils are very polite, friendly and well-mannered. They are welcoming to visitors and enjoy talking about their learning and their school. Staff are good role models for pupils and this is reflected in pupils' behaviour.
- Pupils attend school regularly and on time. Leaders have put clear procedures in place to encourage good attendance and to tackle absence. As a result, persistent absence has improved and is now below the national average. Overall attendance figures are above the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Children join the school with skills and abilities that are broadly typical of their age. They make good progress during their time in early years. The proportion of children who have reached a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year has been in line with the national average for the last three years.
- Pupils make good progress in learning phonics. The proportion of pupils who have reached the expected level in the Year 1 phonics screening check has risen steadily

over the last three years and is in line with the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who reached the expected level by the end of key stage 1 was broadly in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics in 2016. The proportion of pupils who attained at a greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics was above the national average.
- The work in pupils' exercise books, the school's assessment information and observations of teaching and learning in classrooms show clearly that current pupils are making good progress in English and mathematics, and a wide range of other subjects. Expectations are high and pupils respond accordingly.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making good progress. Although there is variation between year groups, throughout the school pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making at least the expected rate of progress and most are making more rapid progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are making good progress. Although, in some year groups, disadvantaged pupils' attainment is below the expected level for their age, many are now making the more rapid progress necessary to enable them to catch up.
- Pupils in upper key stage 2 who were low attainers when they were in key stage 1 are making good progress. Many are now making the rapid progress needed to enable them to catch up with their peers.
- The most able pupils attain well and are making good progress. The results in the 2016 national tests do not reflect the good progress that this group of pupils are making. Expectations of what they can and should achieve are high and pupils try hard as a result.
- Results of the 2016 key stage 2 national tests indicated that pupils did not make good progress in writing and mathematics and that overall attainment was lower than expected. Current assessment information and the work in pupils' exercise books indicate that this does not reflect the good progress that pupils make at Beech Hyde.

Early years provision

Good

- The school's Nursery class gets children's school life off to a good start. The new nursery building provides a large, attractive classroom space that is used well by the staff. The very large outdoor area has been completely overhauled and is an excellent facility. A good range of activities are provided, covering all the areas of learning in the early years curriculum in both the indoor and outdoor areas.
- The reception classroom is smaller than the nursery and the outdoor area is very much smaller. This restricts what the staff are able to do, particularly in terms of outdoor learning. However, provision is good and staff do what they can with the limited space available. Plans are in place to improve the outdoor area in the Reception class.
- Children's behaviour and attitudes are very good. They learn the school's rules and routines very quickly and follow them well. Staff are consistent in their approach and this helps children to know what is expected of them. Children take part in activities well, whether independently or with an adult, and persevere over long periods of time

when tasks are of particular interest.

- Early years is effectively led and the provision is improving as a result. The early years leader has a good understanding of the quality of provision and is clear about what needs to be done next to make it better. The staff work well together as a team and the quality of teaching is good as a result.
- Staff track the progress that children make carefully. Children's learning journals are detailed and thorough, and show children's developmental journey through early years clearly. Assessment information is used well to plan next steps in children's learning.
- Safeguarding is effective in early years. Visitors to the Nursery class are required to use a buzzer in order to gain entry. The layout of the Reception class means that staff are easily aware of visitors entering the classroom. All visitors, including volunteers, are supervised throughout the time that they spend in the early years classrooms.

School details

Unique reference number	117301
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10023478

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	280
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Neil Pleasants
Headteacher	Hazel Millard
Telephone number	01582 832661
Website	www.beechhyde.herts.sch.uk/
Email address	head@beechhyde.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22–23 May 2013

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information on its website about: key stage 2 results, the curriculum, behaviour policy, pupil premium, physical education and sport premium for primary schools, special educational needs and disability information, governors' information and duties, charging and remissions policy.
- Beech Hyde is an average-sized primary school. The school provides part-time sessions in its Nursery class. Pupils attend the Reception class full-time from September of the year in which they reach statutory school age.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is similar to the national average.
- Most pupils are of White British origin. Other pupils come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. A very small proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to the national average.
- The school meets current floor standards. These are the minimum standards set by governors for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching and learning over time, including observing part of 19 lessons.
- Inspectors looked closely at the work in pupils' exercise books. They listened to pupils read and talked to them about their work.
- Inspectors looked at a range of the school's documents, including assessment information.
- Inspectors checked the school's single central record of pre-employment checks and other documentation concerned with safer recruitment of staff and volunteers.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other leaders, a group of pupils, governors and staff. Inspectors spoke with pupils throughout the day and with parents before school in the morning. The lead inspector spoke with representatives of the local authority on the telephone and in person.
- Inspectors took into account the 71 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 34 written comments.

Inspection team

Wendy Varney, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Simon Webb	Her Majesty's Inspector
Sue Pryor	Ofsted Inspector
Liz Kissane	Ofsted Inspector

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

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 and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

© Crown copyright 2017