

Beacon Academy

Woodthorpe Road, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 2NF

Inspection dates

24–25 October 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not yet done enough to secure good levels of progress and attainment for all pupils in the school. The pace of improvement has not been fast enough.
- Some middle leaders are relatively inexperienced. They do not yet have the skills necessary to monitor teaching and learning effectively.
- Governors and leaders have not checked on the impact of additional funding well enough, such as that for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- The quality of teaching and learning across classes and subject areas is inconsistent. Adults' expectations of pupils are not consistently high.
- The most able pupils, and those who have SEN and/or disabilities in the specialist provision, do not always receive enough challenge to enable them to make sufficient progress.
- Pupils' standards in reading are below that in other subjects. Teachers do not plan sufficient opportunities for pupils to practise their comprehension skills.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to write independently for extended periods.
- Over time, pupils have not attained well enough in reading, writing and mathematics in key stages 1 and 2.
- Some lessons are hampered by the inappropriate behaviour of a small proportion of pupils. Adults do not always deal with this consistently.
- Pupils' attendance remains below the national average despite some recent improvements.
- In the early years, teachers do not plan activities that consistently engage children in their learning, particularly outdoors.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher is ambitious for the school and is striving for Beacon Academy to 'make its best better'.
- The headteacher, senior leaders and governing body have an increasingly sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Pupils are provided with a wide range of extra-curricular activities to develop their interests and sporting skills.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective and pupils feel safe at school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - making regular checks on the quality of teaching and learning and using these to hold teachers to account for pupils' progress and ensuring that school procedures are followed
 - developing the role of middle leaders in the monitoring of teaching and learning, the coaching of less experienced staff, and the use of internal and published pupil performance information
 - ensuring that the curriculum provides pupils with an appropriate balance of all primary subjects
 - ensuring that the additional funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is spent to best effect so that the attainment and progress of these pupils further improves in key stages 1 and 2.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, so it is consistently good or better, by:
 - ensuring that work is better matched to pupils' abilities, particularly the most able and in the early years, so that they make accelerated progress
 - refining and extending adults' questioning to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding
 - planning and consistently delivering appropriate tasks for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, especially in reading and writing in the specialist provision, to help move their learning forward quicker
 - enabling children in the early years to build their independence by planning greater opportunities to learn outdoors.
- Improve the outcomes achieved at the end of all key stages by:
 - ensuring that all pupils, particularly the most able and those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, consistently make progress that is at least good in reading, writing and mathematics
 - improving pupils' comprehension skills to help support their understanding when they read
 - developing pupils' skills so they produce better quality independent writing across the curriculum.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - building on the positive work started with parents to further improve pupils' rates of attendance and reduce the number of pupils who are persistently absent
 - ensuring that all staff instil a positive, enabling ethos to help to raise pupils' aspirations and reduce low-level disruption in lessons.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership and management requires improvement because the actions and initiatives introduced by leaders to improve all aspects of the school have not had sufficient impact on the attainment and progress of pupils.
- Leaders' monitoring of lessons has not secured consistently effective teaching and learning across the school. Initiatives introduced by leaders to improve teaching and learning have not improved standards rapidly enough since the previous inspection.
- Senior leaders have not yet secured consistency in the quality and impact of middle and subject leaders. Consequently, not all subjects are equally well led or monitored. Curriculum planning suggests limited coverage of subjects such as modern foreign languages, music and religious education.
- Additional funding to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is not always used effectively. Some of these pupils do not achieve as well as they could from their starting points.
- Leaders have improved their links with parents and have introduced many initiatives, including a reward system, to improve pupils' attendance. These are proving successful as there have been notable improvements in rates of attendance and in reducing persistent absence.
- The headteacher and senior leaders show an increasing understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are slowly building on the improvements seen at the monitoring visit that took place last year.
- Leaders have recently developed a coherent assessment system. They are using this to compare the progress and attainment of pupils throughout the school. Leaders now review pupils' progress and attainment at least half-termly and use the information generated to provide targeted support for individual, and groups of, pupils.
- The school helps prepare pupils for their lives in modern Britain. There are opportunities for pupils to vote for peer representatives on a number of pupil-led initiatives. There is a democratic school council where pupils can practise their organisational skills. Playground 'buddies' help support other pupils so that they can make positive choices at playtimes.
- Leaders work with staff to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education well. Pupils' experiences are widened by a variety of visits and visitors, including a recent residential trip to North Wales for the Year 6 classes. Pupils are encouraged to take on responsibilities and enjoy fund-raising opportunities.
- The physical education and sport funding is spent well. Pupils enjoy a richness of activities to improve their physical well-being, including the use of a professional sports coach.
- Pupils say that they enjoy the opportunities to swim weekly throughout the year in the school pool.
- School leaders have developed effective systems to manage pupils' behaviour. They keep detailed records and quickly address instances of inappropriate behaviour, in and

out of classes, which are becoming far less frequent.

Governance of the school

- Governance of the school is increasingly supporting and challenging leaders as they seek improvements.
- The academy trust representatives show a developing understanding of the school's strengths and they are committed to addressing previous underachievement; however, the impact of this work has not been quick enough.
- The trust has not held leaders sufficiently to account for the impact of additional funding to support pupils.
- The academy trust undertakes regular monitoring visits and audits to ensure that the school's outcomes are improving since being identified as a coasting school. Initiatives include instigating teaching and learning audits and supporting leaders to develop an effective system for pupils to extend their thinking skills.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have developed a caring environment, in which pupils feel safe.
- Staff and governors' training is thorough and up-to-date. Staff show a clear understanding of safeguarding systems.
- Leaders keep parents informed well about safeguarding procedures. The vast majority of parents who spoke with inspectors or completed the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, were positive about the safeguarding systems in place.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning are apparent across the school. Where learning is less effective, pupils are not fully engaged in their learning and lack enthusiasm to move their learning on.
- There is a lack of challenging work in some lessons, and teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. This leads to some pupils not making as much progress as they should. This is particularly apparent for the most able pupils, who are not making the accelerated progress of which they are capable in English and mathematics.
- Adults are inconsistent in their use of questions to deepen pupils' knowledge and thought processes. Opportunities to extend pupils' thinking and understanding are missed and pupils' progress slows as a result.
- Staff do not consistently set appropriately challenging work for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. This is particularly the case in English lessons in the specialist provision. Consequently, these pupils' learning is slowed in reading and writing.
- Teachers do not provide pupils with enough opportunities to develop their comprehension skills. This limits the impact of the effective teaching of phonics that is

becoming well established throughout the school.

- Opportunities for pupils to practise and consolidate their writing skills in different genres, and across the wider curriculum, are not consistently evident in planning or pupils' books.
- Teachers in parallel classes plan lessons and year group themes together, with less confident or inexperienced teachers being able to learn from colleagues. A system of coaching and the sharing of best practice has been introduced to help address the inconsistencies found in teaching and learning. This is not yet embedded fully throughout the school.
- The teaching of mathematics is enhanced by the use of a five-step approach to problem solving. This provides an effective framework for pupils to develop their reasoning skills and deepen their understanding.
- Where teaching is effective, pupils engage well in their learning and work with enthusiasm. Staff and pupils have positive relationships in classes, which leads to an encouraging and happy learning environment.
- Teachers plan frequent opportunities for pupils to practise their handwriting skills. Pupils take pride in the presentation of their written work. In mathematics, pupils present their work neatly, routinely using rulers to ensure accuracy in the setting out of calculations, and during shape and measuring tasks.
- Teachers provide pupils with accurate and targeted feedback on their work. The marking of pupils' work follows the school's marking policy and identifies what pupils need to do to improve. This consistent approach is beginning to having a positive effect on the progress that pupils are making.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- A small proportion of pupils do not appear to value their education and show limited aspirations for their futures. Adults' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not consistently high. Leaders are increasingly focusing on raising these pupils' aspirations and improving their attitudes to learning.
- There is an acceptance by pupils that there are a few instances of bullying in the school. However, they report that senior leaders deal with these effectively. Leaders have developed opportunities for pupils to voice their concerns and to help lead anti-bullying activities.
- There have been a small number of fixed-term exclusions this year and in previous years. Senior leaders have taken appropriate actions when deemed necessary. Such instances are reducing over time.
- The personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils in the specialist provision are positive. Adults support the welfare of these pupils well, caring for their individual needs. Adults help integrate the pupils well into whole-school activities, such as

assemblies and lunchtimes.

- School staff and visitors are encouraged to recognise and reward pupils' positive values. They can award 'Beacons', which are tokens that pupils collect towards small prizes or certificates. These are popular with pupils and are proving effective in promoting a positive ethos.
- Pupils feel safe in school and know who to speak with if they have any concerns.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- The behaviour of pupils in lessons is not consistently positive. Some low-level disruption is apparent in some classes. When it occurs, it detracts from the learning of these pupils and other pupils who become distracted. Some inconsistencies are evident in the ways in which staff deal with minor behavioural issues during lessons.
- Leaders have developed proactive initiatives to improve pupils' attendance. Attendance has improved, although it remains just below that of all schools nationally. Senior leaders are continuing to work positively with parents to instil the importance of pupils attending regularly.
- The rate of persistent absence is above the national average. The school's analysis highlights that some of the most vulnerable pupils are those who have the most absence. Leaders acknowledge that they need to do even more to support these pupils to attend school more often.
- The school has introduced a breakfast and after-school club. This is popular with families. It is helping to both reduce absence and improve punctuality.
- Sensible behaviour is generally evident as pupils move around the school. They are generally polite and well-mannered.
- The school's records show that incidents of poor behaviour are recorded and analysed thoroughly. It is apparent that these incidents have decreased in recent years.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- There has been a history of underachievement at the end of key stages 1 and 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2017, provisional national test data showed that pupils' progress remained below average in reading and mathematics at key stage 2. Pupils' attainment was below average in reading, writing and mathematics at the expected level and at greater depth.
- In 2017, pupils in key stage 1 attained below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics, both at the expected level and at greater depth.
- Information about these pupils' performance shows that the most able pupils do not attain as well as they should, in reading, writing and mathematics. Their outcomes are lower than for similar pupils nationally.
- The attainment in reading and writing of those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities remains low in relation to their starting points, particularly for those pupils in the

specialist provision. Pupils in the specialist provision achieve less well from their starting points than pupils in the main school.

- School information shows that progress in reading is improving, particularly for older pupils who have needed to catch up due to their historical underachievement.
- Disadvantaged pupils now achieve in line with other pupils in the school and the gap with other pupils nationally is starting to close. There is a focus on ensuring that staff are trained well to provide quality support so that disadvantaged pupils achieve similarly to pupils nationally.
- Standards in all subjects at the end of key stage 1 have shown improvements recently. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard is close to other pupils nationally, although reading standards are slightly below those in mathematics and writing. The proportion of Year 1 pupils reaching the expected level is now above the national average.
- The school's current assessment data shows an increasingly positive picture. There is evidence in each year group that rates of progress are accelerating, particularly in mathematics and writing. More pupils are now making good progress and a considerable proportion are progressing at faster rates. This is apparent in pupils' books.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children's skills on entry to the school are generally low in comparison to those typical for their age. The amount of progress they make by the time they finish the Reception Year varies. As a result, the proportion of children attaining a good level of development as they move to key stage 1 is lower than that seen nationally.
- Inconsistencies in the provision in the Reception classes are apparent, which reflects the inconsistent progress children make. Staff do not ensure that they match learning activities consistently well to children's abilities. Some activities do not inspire the children, nor hold their attention.
- There are limited opportunities for children to enjoy the range of activities planned inside and, particularly, outdoors. This limits children's step-by-step acquisition of skills across the early years curriculum, especially in developing more independence.
- Leaders' analysis of the school's and national data lacks some rigour regarding the impact of the initiatives introduced and the progress of different groups of children in the provision. This limits leaders' effectiveness in ensuring children's good progress overall.
- The Nursery provision is effective. Children settle in quickly and experience a variety of activities throughout the day. Leaders of the early years are knowledgeable about the early years curriculum. Adults working in the early years promote a caring and inclusive environment. They are positive and capable role models.
- Additional funding to support disadvantaged children and children who have SEN and/or disabilities in the early years is used well. These children mostly make good progress from their starting points.
- Children in the early years are supported well to develop their personal, social and

emotional skills. The children behave well and sensibly overall. They are encouraged to share resources and to offer praise and thanks to other children.

- Parents are positive about the information they receive from the school to help their children settle well in the early years provision. This includes all families receiving home visits prior to children starting at the school. Parents can access and contribute to the online learning records, and enjoy seeing detail of the activities their child has experienced.
- Safeguarding procedures are effective and statutory requirements are fully met. Children are kept safe.

School details

Unique reference number	139005
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10036084

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	340
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mike Gee
Headteacher	Louise Bussell
Telephone number	01509 212227
Website	www.thebeaconacademy.org
Email address	contactus@thebeaconacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	18–19 November 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- Beacon Academy is larger than the average-sized primary academy. It is a member of the Academies Enterprise Trust.
- The school meets the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 2 academic performance results in 2014, 2015 and 2016.
- The school has exceeded the government's current floor standards at the end of key stage 2.
- The majority of pupils are of a White British background. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above that of schools nationally. There is an increasing

number of pupils who speak English as an additional language.

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average.
- The school has a specialist provision for 30 pupils with moderate learning difficulties. The provision is currently over-subscribed.
- The early years provision includes a Nursery which provides pre-schooling for 90 children from two to four years of age in addition to the school roll reported. Children from Reception Year to Year 6 are taught in two parallel classes for each year group.
- The school runs its own breakfast and after-school clubs.
- Since the previous inspection report, there have been several staff and leadership changes. The current headteacher joined the school in January 2016 and became substantive headteacher from September 2017, when a new leadership team was fully established.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team comprised two inspectors for two days and one inspector for one day.
- During the inspection, lessons were observed in every class. Joint observations were carried out with members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors observed pupils at different times of the school day, including playtimes and at lunchtimes.
- The inspectors talked with pupils about their school and looked at pupils' books. A sample of pupils' books was scrutinised to gain information about the progress that pupils are making and the impact of the teaching they have received.
- Inspectors observed the teaching of early reading skills and pupils were heard to read.
- Inspectors spoke informally to parents at the start of the school day and considered 29 responses to the Ofsted online parent questionnaire, Parent View. They considered 48 responses to the staff survey.
- The inspection team looked at a range of documents, including: the school's self-evaluation; improvement and action plans; records showing the monitoring of teaching and learning; the most recent information on the achievement and progress of pupils; and information relating to the safeguarding, behaviour and attendance of pupils.

Inspection team

Yvonne Watts, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Claire Stylianides	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Moore	Ofsted Inspector

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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.

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