

Beechwood CE Primary School

Beechwood Road, Dudley, West Midlands DY2 7QA

Inspection dates

8–9 May 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The executive headteacher and senior leaders are successfully improving teaching, outcomes and attendance. Through accurate monitoring, they are well informed to build on strengths and tackle weaknesses across the school.
- The multi-academy trust (MAT) provides good levels of support and challenge for senior leaders and staff.
- Key stage leaders are keen to make a difference, but their skills in using monitoring and assessment information are underdeveloped.
- Pupils enjoy the interesting range of topics and curriculum activities planned. Trips, clubs and sporting activities add to pupils' enjoyment of school.
- Most teaching is good. Teachers use their secure subject knowledge to plan imaginative activities which build on pupils' prior learning.
- Sometimes, teachers do not challenge pupils well enough, especially the most able. As a result, too few pupils reach the higher standards.
- Phonic teaching and assessment are not securely good in Year 1. Home reading books are not matched correctly to some pupils' abilities.
- The use of whole-class, high-quality texts is contributing to improved outcomes in reading in key stage 2. Increased use of problem-solving and reasoning activities is also improving outcomes in mathematics.
- On occasion, teachers provide too much support in writing activities and pupils do not use their own ideas. Pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling skills are not secure.
- The contribution made by teaching assistants is variable. Some staff provide good levels of support, but others lack the skills and knowledge to aid pupils' progress.
- Pupils behave well in class and around the school. Most show good levels of respect towards adults and their peers.
- Pupils are making good progress. Attainment is rising rapidly across the school and moving closer to the national average in all subjects at the end of key stage 2.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress because they are supported well.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. They are happy and settled, and make good gains from their starting points.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve teaching, learning and assessment across the school by ensuring that:
 - teachers provide greater levels of challenge, especially for the most able, so that more pupils reach the higher standards in all subjects
 - teachers assess pupils accurately in phonics in Year 1 and teaching enables pupils to reach the standards expected
 - teachers enable pupils to use their own ideas in their writing in key stage 1 and structure their work independently in key stage 2
 - pupils have secure grammar, punctuation and spelling strategies to draw on
 - teaching assistants are used effectively and contribute to pupils' learning and progress.
- Strengthen leadership and management by developing the roles of key stage leaders so that they make an active contribution to improving the quality of teaching in their respective phases.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The executive headteacher works in close collaboration with the head of school and the deputy headteacher. They have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Together they have created a secure, caring environment in which pupils are keen to learn. Academic standards, which have been historically low, have risen significantly and are moving closer towards the national average. Most pupils are making good progress across the school.
- Senior leaders and an external improvement adviser appointed by the trust carry out regular checks on the quality of teaching. They provide clear feedback to help teachers improve their practice and identify which pupils need additional support. While key stage leaders are involved in these checks, their use of assessment information and monitoring information is underdeveloped. As a result, they are unclear about the impact of their work on teaching and outcomes.
- The leadership of SEND is effective. The leader has a clear overview of pupils and their progress. Pupils are identified early and additional support is provided where needed. The school works closely with external agencies. Pupil progress meetings focus sharply on pupils' needs. Appropriate support is coordinated well and is carefully monitored.
- Staff morale is high. Responses from the online survey show that 100% of staff feel the school has improved significantly since the last inspection. All staff are proud to work at the school. Many staff agree that: 'Leaders are very conscious of staff workload and take steps to alleviate this where possible.' Staff appreciate the open-door policy and feel they can discuss any difficulties with leaders openly.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are taught a range of subjects. Work in books, pupil comments and displays reflect this. Pupils have the opportunity to learn different skills and increase their knowledge through a range of topics. Pupils find these topics interesting and activities promote pupils' writing and mathematical skills well. Clubs, visits and visitors also contribute successfully to pupils' enjoyment of school and enrich the curriculum well.
- Leaders use additional funding for disadvantaged pupils effectively. Additional staff are employed to help support individuals or groups in the classroom. Pupils successfully access intervention programmes to improve their progress and close gaps in their learning. The school's own assessment information and work in pupils' books show that these pupils make good progress.
- Primary physical education (PE) and sports funding is used well to develop the teaching of PE. Leaders pay great attention to pupils' physical well-being. Pupils take part in an increasing range of activities and clubs, for example archery and athletics. PE has a high profile within the curriculum and pupils speak highly of PE lessons. They have a good understanding of the importance of exercise. The employment of a sports coach has helped raise the staff's confidence and expertise in teaching PE.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development threads through the curriculum and is reinforced by the school's values. Close links exist with the church and members of the clergy lead assemblies. Pupils behave respectfully in assembly, and are attentive and

reflective. Religious education teaching further supports pupils' understanding of Christian and British values. Pupils learn about different religions and cultures, and show a high level of tolerance and respect for those from different backgrounds.

- Parents have positive views of the school. They feel the school has improved vastly over the last two years. They are very pleased with the school and say their children are happy and safe. Typical comments from parents include: 'If you have a problem, you go in and it's sorted. Support systems are good and nothing is too much trouble.'

Governance of the school

- The trust provides good levels of support for school leaders and staff. An external adviser carries out termly reviews and provides robust challenge to ensure that the school continues to improve. Levels of accountability are high. Leaders and staff are positive about the benefits of having joined drb Ignite multi-academy trust.
- Extensive training is provided for all staff by the trust. This includes support for newly qualified teachers, middle leader training and regular collaboration and sharing of expertise and ideas between senior leaders. Teacher assessments are checked with other schools to ensure that they are accurate.
- Trust leaders have a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses within the school. They receive regular information from senior leaders and the trust adviser about outcomes and teaching. Minutes of meetings show that trust leaders question senior leaders thoroughly and hold them to account.
- It is not possible to comment on the effectiveness of the executive governing group tier of the MAT, as representatives were unavailable during the inspection.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's designated leaders are knowledgeable and experienced. They have ensured that all staff are provided with appropriate training to develop their understanding of specific forms of abuse, including child sexual exploitation, the 'Prevent' duty and 'county lines'. Staff have a good knowledge of policies and procedures, and know what action to take if children are at risk of harm.
- Pastoral staff are committed to providing good-quality support. Good links with parents, carers and support agencies enable leaders to access help where needed. This has had a positive impact on raising attendance.
- Records that relate to concerns about individual pupils are maintained carefully. Leaders follow up any concerns with external agencies to ensure that action is taken when needed and support is provided.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. A children's safeguarding group, Beechwood Excellence Safeguarding Team (BEST), has been established to involve pupils in promoting safety. They are on hand to advise and help pupils when needed.
- Pupils can identify risk and what they can do to stay safe, including when they are outside of school and online. They are confident that their teachers will help them if

they report any concerns or worries and will take the appropriate action as necessary. Parents feel that their children are safe in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Relationships in all classes are strong between adults and pupils. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and want to do well. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to plan interesting tasks that meet the needs of pupils and enable them to make good progress. Teachers promote subject-specific vocabulary well in English and mathematics lessons.
- Teaching is successfully developing pupils' reading ability and love of books, especially in key stage 2. Good-quality texts are used well during whole-class reading lessons. These also provide a good stimulus for pupils' writing. Older pupils read with expression and their comprehension and inference skills are developing well.
- Most teaching is good, but some inconsistencies remain. Some activities lack challenge, especially for the most able pupils. Pupils themselves commented on this in the online survey. Leaders are aware of where some practice still needs improvement, as their monitoring is regular and robust. Effective training and coaching, together with the positive climate created in the school, are helping to eradicate any remaining weaknesses.
- The teaching of phonics is not consistently good. Some staff do not pick up and address common errors and some pupils, especially the most able, are not challenged well enough in early years and key stage 1. This limits their progress. Some assessments of Year 1 pupils' phonic ability are overly generous and home reading books are not matched closely to pupils' abilities, especially for lower-ability pupils.
- Teachers provide pupils with a wide variety of writing activities. Pupils are encouraged to develop their vocabulary and use creative ideas in their work. For example, Year 6 pupils gave vivid descriptions of going through the wardrobe into Narnia following their reading of 'The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe'. However, staff provide too much writing support in some classes. This includes pupils in key stage 1 copying out provided texts and pupils in key stage 2 using simple writing frames or worksheets to structure their work. This limits pupils' ability to use their own ideas and organise their writing, and hinders their progress. Errors in pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling also reduce the quality of pupils' writing.
- Teachers provide good resources to help pupils with their visualisation skills in mathematics. Increasingly, problem-solving and reasoning are used to help pupils develop higher-order skills. Mental arithmetic and application of number skills are practised daily through short tests. Teachers collate these results to identify which areas of mathematics pupils are struggling with, and to identify if they are making progress. Pupils present their mathematics work well.
- Teaching assistants are often used in lessons to support groups of pupils or individuals. Where this is effective, pupils are clear about what they are doing and are suitably prompted when they are stuck. However, the quality of support is inconsistent. Some assistants do not pick up errors or intervene quickly enough when pupils need help. As a result, their contribution to pupils' learning is minimal.

- The needs of disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND are met well through a carefully designed combination of work in class and additional interventions. These interventions are closely monitored by the SEND coordinator. Work is matched closely to pupils' individual needs.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident and self-assured, and take pride in their work, school and appearance. This is reflected in the feedback from parent and staff surveys.
- The pastoral team provides high levels of nurture and support for vulnerable pupils and their families. Good links exist with parents, with regular contact in place. Members of staff are very caring. As a result, pupils feel well supported.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the school's Christian values of trust, justice, friendship, forgiveness, endurance and compassion. These values underpin pupils' personal development.
- Pupils understand the importance of a healthy diet and enjoy their school lunches. They enjoy the wide range of sporting opportunities offered through clubs and PE lessons.
- Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to develop their leadership skills. Pupils enjoy the additional responsibilities of being part of BEST or on the school council. Pupil voice is actively encouraged and leaders increasingly seek pupils' views on school life.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They behave well in lessons and carefully follow instructions. At breaktimes and when moving around the school, pupils conduct themselves appropriately. Many demonstrate good manners in holding doors open for visitors.
- Pupils know and follow the behaviour policy. A range of strategies and rewards encourage good behaviour. Pupils particularly enjoy 'golden time' and praise assemblies. Pupils spontaneously applaud the successes that are shared.
- Leaders monitor behaviour carefully. Incidents are recorded systematically. Records checked show that there has been one permanent exclusion this year. Appropriate support was provided by the school prior to the exclusion. A further incident which warranted a fixed-term exclusion was handled well by leaders. As a result of discussion with parents and successful reintegration, there have been no further incidents.
- Pupils are aware of different forms of bullying. They report that any conflicts which arise are quickly resolved.
- Pupils enjoy school. Attendance overall is rising and this year is much closer to the

national average, including for pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged. This is because the pastoral team and leaders work hard to emphasise the importance of regular attendance. Incentives offered include attendance awards, praise, certificates and carefully planned, exciting activities when attendance is traditionally low, for example on the day after a local election. Persistent absence is also reducing quickly due to robust follow-up of those pupils whose attendance is a concern.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils make good progress from their respective starting points. In 2018, progress at the end of key stage 2 improved significantly in reading and mathematics compared to 2017. Progress was in line with other pupils nationally in all subjects. This is as a result of effective action taken by leaders.
- The work in pupils' books demonstrates that most pupils make good progress. However, progress is less strong for the most able pupils because they are not always challenged sufficiently. Progress in writing is also slightly hampered because pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to write independently, and their grammar, punctuation and spelling skills are not secure. This reduces the quality of their writing.
- Attainment is rising across the school and is moving closer to the national average. In 2018, the proportion of pupils achieving the level expected at the end of key stage 1 was in line with the national average, but below at greater depth in all subjects. Disadvantaged pupils attained above other pupils nationally at the expected standard, but, again, were below at greater depth.
- Attainment at key stage 2 in 2018 also improved significantly, particularly in reading and mathematics. However, attainment was below the national average in all subjects due to a legacy of previous weak teaching. Current pupils are on track to achieve in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics at the standard expected, but too few pupils are working at the higher standards.
- The proportion of pupils who achieved the standard required in the Year 1 phonics screening check was below the national average in 2017 and 2018. Checks carried out during the inspection show that there remain a large number of pupils in current Year 1 who are not secure in their phonic knowledge. This is because the teaching of phonics is not consistently good, and reading books are not closely matched to pupils' abilities, especially the lower abilities.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND make good progress. This is because they benefit from individual support, which is monitored closely, and tailored intervention programmes. Pupils are assessed regularly and their progress is tracked carefully. Results show that they make considerable gains in their learning. In some year groups, disadvantaged pupils outperform non-disadvantaged pupils.

Early years provision

Good

- Children get off to a good start in Reception class. Typically, children join school with skills and knowledge which are below those expected for their age in most areas. They make good progress due to effective teaching. By the end of Reception Year, the

proportion of children achieving a good level of development is rising and is close to the national average.

- The early years leader is an effective practitioner and is knowledgeable about individual children. She is also the key stage 1 leader, so has knowledge of how children should continue to progress as they move through Years 1 and 2. However, assessment and monitoring information is not evaluated well enough. This reduces the impact of the head of key stage role on the overall quality of teaching.
- Induction procedures are managed thoughtfully. Home visits and links with pre-schools or nursery providers ensure that the early years leader gathers key information on which to plan and build when children join the school.
- Good relationships are established with parents from the outset. 'Stay and learn' sessions encourage parents to support their children at school and 'busy books' are sent home with suitable homework activities, so parents can help their children.
- Carefully planned activities, with lots of adult modelling and skilled questioning, ensure that children quickly develop their communication and language skills. Their imaginative play and physical development are also well catered for through imaginative outdoor learning opportunities. For example, children enjoyed building a stage from building blocks in the outdoor area and making 'spider cakes' in the mud kitchen.
- The teaching of early reading is effective and includes structured daily phonics lessons. Staff model how to use sounds and letters to read and write simple words. On occasion, the most able children are not challenged well enough and not moved on when they show they are ready.
- Teachers carry out regular assessments of children's abilities in all areas of learning. These assessments are used to track children's progress. A wealth of photographic evidence and examples of children's work across the year confirm that children make good progress.
- Children behave well. They take turns, share equipment and play happily with others. Children are clear about routines because behaviour is well managed by staff. Positive and trusting relationships are built with teaching and support staff.
- Safeguarding is effective. Adults ensure that the environment is safe and secure. Children are nurtured and well cared for. As a result, children gain confidence and feel safe in school.

School details

Unique reference number	142047
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	10088450

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	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	191
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	David Sheldon
Executive headteacher	Hilary Wheeldon
Telephone number	01384 816 715
Website	www.beechwood.school
Email address	info@beechwood.school
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Beechwood Primary is one of nine schools in drb Ignite multi-academy trust. It joined the trust in July 2016. The executive headteacher was appointed in April 2018, having previously been head of school at Beechwood Primary School and another school within the trust, Jervois Primary School. The executive headteacher now oversees both schools.
- The trust members of drb Ignite are the school's accountable body and are responsible for setting charitable and educational objectives, including the ethos of the trust. They delegate strategic responsibility to a trust board that oversees areas including finance and safeguarding. An executive governing group provides a community link for schools in the trust. It also operates a trust improvement board to hold leaders to account for school improvement.
- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.

- Approximately a third of pupils are of White British heritage and a third are of Pakistani heritage. Other pupils come from a range of different ethnic backgrounds.
- The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average. However, most pupils are fluent in English.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above average. The proportion of pupils with education, health and care plans is below average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed teaching and learning in all classes with the executive headteacher, head of school or deputy headteacher. Inspectors also looked at pupils' books with senior leaders.
- Inspectors observed an assembly, playtime, lunchtime and small groups of pupils working with support staff or teaching staff.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, key stage leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and the pastoral team leader. Inspectors also spoke with the chief executive from the academy trust.
- Inspectors took account of the school's own survey of parent comments and the views of parents as they collected their children from school. There were too few responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, to generate any information.
- Inspectors also considered the survey responses from 24 staff and 27 pupils.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read in key stages 1 and 2, and also checked the phonic ability of pupils in Year 1. Inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and reviewed the work in their books.
- Inspectors reviewed a number of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, action plan and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding. School improvement reports compiled by the trust adviser were considered, together with minutes of meetings held with trust leaders.

Inspection team

Heather Simpson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Wayne Simner

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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