

The Beacon Church of England Primary School

Heyworth Street, Liverpool, Merseyside, L5 3QG

Inspection dates 26–27 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Outstanding leadership has created a purposeful learning ethos where pupils flourish academically and their wellbeing is carefully nurtured.
- Pupils make outstanding progress as a result of teaching which is consistently good and much that is outstanding. All pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The school has successfully encouraged a love of reading in pupils through many innovative strategies.
- A particular strength of the school is the outstanding teaching in the many small group and one-to-one lessons. This ensures that all pupils, especially, those who are disabled and have special educational needs, make outstanding progress.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic about their learning and make every effort to succeed. Their behaviour is exemplary and they are a credit to their school. Pupils feel safe.
- Work is marked extremely well in English and mathematics but not to the same standard in other subjects. Pupils do not always use the comments teachers make to improve their work.
- The headteacher is very well supported by the deputy headteacher and subject leaders. Senior leaders check the achievement and behaviour of pupils in a meticulous manner.
- Governors understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have been highly effective in supporting senior leaders in their drive for improvement.
- The curriculum is exciting and rich in memorable experiences. It provides pupils with a wide range of opportunities to improve their basic skills.
- All members of staff are highly valued and have every opportunity to improve their own practice and become leaders of the future.
- All staff exhibit a strong desire to see the school improve still further and they are committed to helping all pupils achieve their full potential.
- This school has greatly improved since the previous inspection. Carefully implemented actions have increased achievement and improved the quality of teaching. Parents are very positive about all aspects of school life and would rightly recommend the school to others.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons and parts of lessons taught by 10 teachers.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and looked at pupils' exercise books.
- Discussions were held with representatives of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, senior leaders, managers responsible for leading specific subjects and other staff and pupils.
- Inspectors analysed the school's documentation to help gain an accurate view of its performance, safeguarding policies, the school development plan, governing body minutes, behavioural records and displays around the school.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of information on how the school checks the progress of the different pupil groups.
- Inspectors took account of the 14 responses on Parent View (the online questionnaire) and the most recent questionnaire sent out to parents by the school.
- Inspectors analysed 21 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Desmond Stubbs, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Pamela Davenport

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- In 2013, the school was awarded the ICT Mark, Basic Skills Quality Mark, Gold Sing-Up Award and the International Schools Award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that work is marked to the same high standard in all subjects and encourage pupils to use the comments teachers make to improve their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Children join the Nursery class with knowledge, skills and understanding that are typically well below the levels expected for their age. Teachers have very high expectations of the youngest children. Most children were able to count beyond 20, recognise numbers and their value and are beginning to discuss their work with each other. Progress is rapid from their starting points and this continues in the Reception class. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage attainment is only slightly below national expectations.
- Pupils continue to make excellent progress throughout Key Stage 1. Previously, attainment has been below the national average due to pupils very low starting points. Standards are improving significantly and currently, many Year 2 pupils are working well above their expected levels. This is again due to the very high expectations of pupils' progress and not a minute of learning time being wasted in this school.
- By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have made outstanding progress from their individual starting points. The proportion of pupils making and exceeding their expected progress is well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics although progress in reading was not quite as strong in 2013. High quality teaching and leadership of literacy, has ensured that this has been thoroughly addressed since September and currently, over half of Year 6 are on course to exceed their expected progress.
- The attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is rapidly improving and moving to above average because currently, many more pupils are working above their expected levels and well above by the time they reach Year 6. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Attainment in English and mathematics is accelerating rapidly. The very effective teaching of phonics (linking letters to sounds) has much improved progress in reading and writing. Many more pupils are now on track to reach the expected level in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Many pupils read fluently and with expression throughout the school. Writing is presented well and often imaginative. Pupils use their mathematical skills to confidently solve complex problems.
- Pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, make outstanding progress. Their attainment is about a term behind other pupils in English and about two terms behind in mathematics. The difference in attainment between pupils eligible for a free school meal and other pupils is much less than is found nationally and the gap is closing.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is outstanding as a result of the outstanding teaching they receive from both teachers and teaching assistants in the many small group and one-to-one lessons. These pupils reach standards that are well above similar pupils nationally.
- The most able pupils make outstanding progress with more pupils reaching high standards in reading, writing and mathematics. These pupils told the inspectors that they are constantly busy and provided with extra challenges. They talked enthusiastically about teaching that ensures work moves them on such as when solving algebraic equations and calculating the circumference of a circle.
- School leaders carefully check the progress all pupils make. They then report this to governors who are able to make informed decisions on how best to use any additional funding. This ensures the school provides excellent equality of opportunity in all subjects.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and over time it is consistently good and much is outstanding. The impact of this is that pupils now make outstanding progress. Teachers have created a working climate where from the very beginning of every day not a moment is

wasted. Relationships are strong between teachers and pupils and the many incentives teachers use encourage pupils to do their best. Pupils are very enthusiastic about their lessons.

- Children get off to a flying start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The learning environment is carefully designed to develop their independence with activities structured to promote curiosity and a love of learning. Handheld electronic tablets are used effectively by teachers and children to make learning exciting, such as, when the Nursery class went to the moon! One child recorded his mathematical thinking and number sentence using an electronic device. This is checked later and information used successfully to plan future activities to promote progress.
- As a result of high quality training, teachers have excellent subject knowledge. Furthermore, where teachers have a specific expertise this is utilised across other classes. Teaching is outstanding in these subjects and has made a significant impact on standards in English and mathematics in Years 5 and 6 and in computing across the school. Teaching assistants also provide excellent support.
- Mathematics teaching is strong throughout the school. Pupils have daily opportunities to practise their basic skills. Teachers use a wide range of resources to engage pupils and make learning fun. Work is challenging. In Year 6, pupils were set work at a much higher level than would be expected for their age. Books are marked thoroughly.
- The teaching of reading is very effective and staff has introduced a wide range of innovative strategies to encourage a love of reading. All Year 6 pupils use a handheld reading device and there are regular opportunities for everybody in school to read for pleasure. Teachers also share their own reading book with the children and explain why they are enjoying it. This has had a significant impact on the standards of current learners.
- The teaching of writing is excellent. Careful planning ensures pupils have regular opportunities to share ideas with each other and improve their vocabulary which they then use in their writing. When writing, pupils have a checklist of things they must try and include and this helps pupils to be independent when writing and have a clear idea of what is required. The marking of writing is consistently of a high standard.
- Pupils' books show that teaching over time is consistently good and often outstanding. In English and mathematics teachers provide pupils with precise instructions on how to improve their work and they clearly understand what is expected of them. Pupils have time to read their feedback during 'Pit Stop' (Pupil Improvement Time) but they do not always use the advice given as effectively as they could. The marking in other subjects is not of the same quality as in English and mathematics.
- Homework is set regularly and all parents agree that what their child receives is appropriate. These tasks give pupils further opportunities to practise the skills they have been learning in school and share how they learn with their parents.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They behave extremely well in class, on the playground and in the dining hall. Pupils are very polite. They open doors for adults and show great care for their school.
- The school's behaviour records show that the conduct of pupils is excellent. Any incidents which do arise are analysed and reported to governors. Pupils were unreservedly positive about standards of behaviour when talking to the inspectors. They say that incidents of poor behaviour are rare and are dealt with quickly.
- There is much to keep the children occupied during their leisure time and they are well looked after. Pupils clearly understand how they should behave and the expectations adults have of them. Parents and staff agree with the inspectors that pupils' behaviour is outstanding.
- Pupils' attitudes towards their learning are outstanding. They are very keen to learn and do their best. They enjoy the many experiences they have in school. Years 5 and 6 particularly enjoyed their visit to London and the many extra-curricular activities that are on offer.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils understand the different

types of bullying and say that incidents of bullying are rare. They also say that there are 'no places where I don't feel safe.'

- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe on the internet. The pupils have made their own film about it and further advice can be found around school and on the school's website.
- With the risk of local waterways, the school is committed to ensuring that every pupil can swim. All classes swim each week including the reception class. This is an excellent use of the new primary school sport funding.
- Attendance is above average. The school constantly stresses the importance of good attendance to parents with letters home about their level of attendance. Classes are very keen to be the first to complete their 'Mr Potato Head' as a reward for having the best attendance of the week! The school's strengths in raising attendance are recognised and staff provides training for other local schools on how to improve attendance.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher is relentless in her drive for continuous improvement. She is ably supported by the deputy headteacher, subject leaders and the governing body. Senior leaders receive outstanding support from all staff members and morale in school is high. They have an accurate view of how they can improve further and are extremely well placed to sustain the many strengths in the school. Issues raised at the previous inspection have been addressed. All aspects of the school's work are now outstanding.
- Middle leaders are very effective. They are involved in the rigorous checking of teaching and pupils' progress. As a result, they have an excellent understanding of how well pupils achieve in their subject and what needs to be done to raise standards further. They readily share their ideas and practice with colleagues. The English subject leader has recently implemented innovative strategies to improve opportunities to read for pleasure that have led to improved standards at the end of Year 6.
- Senior leaders meticulously check the achievement of all pupils. The system which they have devised themselves is highly effective. Pupils needing support are quickly recognised and support provided. The impact of the support they receive is carefully measured and reported to governors to ensure value for money.
- The school is a reflective school. This is very evident in every aspect of its work. Senior leaders frequently check the performance of teaching in many different ways. It is made very clear to teachers what they are doing well and what they must do to improve.
- Performance management is robust. Teachers are given lots of opportunities to improve their teaching as a result of high quality training and also develop their own leadership skills in order to become leaders of the future.
- The curriculum provides many memorable experiences for pupils who talk about them enthusiastically. They confidently use their basic skills not only in English and mathematics but are also able to apply them in other subjects. Opportunities for art, drama, music and sport are varied. The close partnership with the church and the Christian values which permeate the school ensure that the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is outstanding.
- The primary school sport funding has been used effectively to improve the skills of teachers and pupils. Pupils now have many more opportunities to take part in competitions. All pupils swim every week and even the youngest children are becoming confident in the water.
- The school shares its outstanding practice with other schools and also benefits from its involvement in the North Liverpool Teaching School Partnership by providing and receiving training.
- The local authority provides the school with light touch support.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding and child protection meet requirements.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governors have an excellent understanding of all aspects of the school’s work. The information which senior leaders and teachers share with governors about teaching and achievement is of a very high quality. It allows governors to make informed decisions and ask challenging questions. The budget is managed most efficiently. Governors review data and have used the pupil premium funding effectively. They have measured the impact it has had on the progress of these pupils. They ensure that good performance by staff leads to appropriate salary progression. Effective training makes sure that pupils are safe in school. Governors are committed to ensuring pupils at this school have many amazing experiences that will stay with them as happy memories.

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	131311
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	440881

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	217
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pamela Peel
Headteacher	Sally Aspinwall
Date of previous school inspection	9 September 2010
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