

Beech Hill School

Mount Pleasant Avenue, Halifax, West Yorkshire HX1 5TN

Inspection dates

12–13 June 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders are passionately committed to providing an inclusive and nurturing education which raises pupils' aspirations and prepares them for the challenges of life ahead.
- Many pupils arrive at school in year groups other than the early years and are often new to English. Pupils receive highly effective teaching and tailored support to meet their individual needs. Teaching is sharply focused on pupils' language acquisition. This assists pupils' social and emotional development, in addition to their understanding of English and mathematics.
- Leaders highly value reading and prioritise it accordingly. The teaching of phonics is very successful in getting pupils off to a flying start with their reading. Opportunities to read, and be read to, are frequent. Pupils' immersion in reading experiences ignites their interest and generates a love of reading.
- Current pupils are making strong progress. An increasing proportion of pupils are starting to exceed the expectations for their age in English and mathematics.
- Leaders use staff training and the sharing of good practice effectively. Consequently, staff feel highly valued and there is a positive culture of teamwork.
- Leaders have built a strong sense of community in the school. Pupils' personal development and welfare are paramount and effective partnership is developed with parents and carers.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well, feel safe and are valued as individuals. They thoroughly enjoy school, which is reflected in their above-average attendance.
- Children have an especially positive start to their education in the early years. They make extremely strong progress from their typically very low starting points.
- Leadership of provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is highly effective in meeting the needs of these individuals.
- Leaders have ensured that the design of the curriculum is central to developing pupils' understanding of others and their interest in learning and the world around them.
- Governors do not have a secure understanding of pupils' academic achievement. This prevents them from holding leaders to account with even greater rigour.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve the impact of teaching on enabling an increasing proportion of pupils to exceed the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stages 1 and 2.
- Further improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - developing sharper systems to routinely evaluate, and share with governors and trustees, the impact of leaders' actions on pupils' achievement
 - governors accessing training to support them in understanding how to rigorously challenge leaders about pupils' attainment and progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- A large proportion of pupils leave and join the school at times other than the usual times. Additionally, many pupils are new to English and/or education when they join the school. However, leaders are determined in their actions to be welcoming and inclusive and provide pupils with a high-quality education so that they can achieve well.
- Leaders recognise that parental engagement is critical. Links with families are supporting positive relationships between home and school and are successfully improving attitudes to attendance at school. Parents are keen to take part in the regular workshops and coffee mornings and appreciate the daily contact with staff as their children enter school. The use of interpreters to support meetings with parents means that parents feel welcomed into school. Consequently, parents are very positive about the school and their children's education.
- Senior leaders have a thorough knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. A monitoring schedule keeps a close eye on aspects of the school's work and enables leaders to be immediately responsive to any emerging issues. For example, leaders have recently taken successful action to increase the proportion of pupils working beyond the expected standards for their age. The quality assurance checks, carried out by several leaders, result in the setting of appropriate future improvement priorities. These are developed in conjunction with a range of stakeholders. However, when leaders evaluate the impact of their actions, this is sometimes judged by tasks completed, rather than being specifically related to pupils' outcomes. This means that governors are not informed sharply enough about how effective leaders' actions have been.
- Several leaders are involved in providing effective staff development. Training covers a range of subjects and themes and includes input from external agencies for SEND, the school speech and language therapist and the resident artist, poet and dancer. These professionals work alongside staff to develop their subject expertise. This training, along with the regular sharing of good practice between staff, means that leadership capacity continues to develop and that teaching and learning are consistently strong.
- Leaders have appropriate plans for pupil premium spending. They have identified strategies which have been backed by research to ensure that funding is used to positive effect, for example improving attendance and making sure that teaching is effectively meeting specific learning needs for individuals. Pupil progress meetings keep a check on the progress of all pupils so that additional support can be arranged promptly when needed.
- Provision for pupils with SEND is exceptionally well led. Leaders have a very good knowledge of individual pupils and their support and development needs. A team of staff with a wealth of expertise ensures that learning difficulties are accurately identified and that provision is specifically designed to meet pupils' needs.
- Leaders have made sure that pupils' language acquisition and reading are a high priority. In the early stages of learning to read, pupils have access to 'five a day', which involves them hearing regular stories and gives them lots of practice in reading aloud

and independently for a range of purposes across the curriculum. The curriculum for English is based around key texts. The '100 book challenge' is successful in inspiring pupils to read high-quality books and develop a love of reading.

- Leaders are continually refining their curriculum. It is designed to provide meaningful links between learning in different subjects and purposeful activities which motivate pupils to develop a love of learning. Pupils have access to a wide range of opportunities and experiences, including after-school clubs. The curriculum ensures a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. Pupils' attitudes and values are approached and developed well. Consequently, a culture of respect for others permeates the school and helps to prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.

Governance of the school

- Trustees are highly committed to the school and the community it serves. They are ambitious for pupils to develop as well-rounded individuals who are well prepared for life beyond primary school.
- Governors and trustees check the accuracy of information from leaders through their regular visits to school and involvement in school life. This helps them to provide challenge and support about aspects of the school's work, for example pupils' attendance. However, they do not hold school leaders to account for pupils' academic achievement with sufficient rigour.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have created a positive culture and ethos where safeguarding is an important part of everyday life. Appropriate checks are made on staff who work at the school. All staff have received appropriate training in all aspects of safeguarding and are able to spot possible signs of concern.
- Safeguarding records are very detailed and thorough. They show a close and effective working relationship with other agencies to ensure that pupils are kept safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Excellent relationships have been established between staff and pupils, and staff are determined to make sure that pupils achieve well, both academically and personally. Staff have high expectations of the work which pupils produce and this results in effective teaching and learning. As a result of leaders' recent actions, teaching is enabling an increasing proportion of pupils to begin to access learning which allows them to develop a greater depth of understanding.
- Teachers use their ongoing assessment to ensure that activities are closely matched to pupils' prior learning and next steps. There are excellent arrangements to provide support for pupils who need extra help. New starters who join the school at times other than the start of the year often speak little or no English. Staff support them well so that they soon gain the confidence and language skills needed to begin learning to read and write. Pupils with SEND are supported exceptionally well by staff and are

included in learning alongside their peers.

- The teaching of phonics and early reading is very effective. A highly strategic and consistent approach to the development of pupils' phonics knowledge means that pupils quickly learn to decode with accuracy and automaticity. Teachers also make sure that pupils focus on developing their language comprehension. These strategies are effective in supporting pupils' reading fluency and comprehension.
- Teachers plan meaningful learning experiences across the curriculum, beyond English and mathematics. For example, pupils in Year 5 were designing a T-shirt to wear on their forthcoming visit to the theatre in London. Pupils were building on their existing knowledge of design and the use of different stitches. They were, therefore, able to secure their prior learning and extend it further.
- The teaching of foundation subjects is enhanced by specialist teaching from the resident artist and poet and music and dance teachers.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. The whole staff team works together to give pupils a rounded education with a wide range of opportunities and experiences. For example, enrichment activities such as drama, cookery and music help pupils develop their talents and interests. Consequently, pupils respond with enthusiasm and positivity, demonstrating a strong desire to succeed.
- A commitment by leaders to supporting pupils' personal development begins when children start school. Nurturing staff, supported incredibly well by the pastoral team, make sure that all pupils receive the emotional support they need to be happy and safe and, therefore, in a position to achieve well academically. Some pupils act as well-being mentors and are trained by learning mentors to be on hand to offer support to their peers.
- Pupils say that the adults in school take great care of them and make them feel safe. Anti-bullying strategies have a high profile and pupils have trusted adults they can go to if they have any concerns at all. They say that bullying is extremely rare but they know that adults will deal with any issues that should arise.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are incredibly positive. Staff make sure that the school's values are integrated into all aspects of school life. This contributes strongly to pupils' SMSC development. Pupils learn about different cultures and religions and make a positive contribution to their community through their fundraising efforts. Pupils exhibit tolerance and respect and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The curriculum offers numerous opportunities for pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe and manage risks. Consequently, pupils talk with confidence about how to stay safe when online, when crossing the road or when riding a bicycle. Pupils learn to adopt healthy lifestyles, for example by taking part in a teeth-cleaning programme. Excellent use is made of the multi-use games area, the 4G pitch, the climbing facility and the forest school to support pupils' physical development.

- The school's breakfast club effectively supports pupils' social interaction and provides an opportunity for pupils to do their homework or practise their reading. It successfully promotes a punctual and settled start to pupils' learning each day.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Leaders and teachers set very high expectations which pupils clearly understand and strive to meet with determination. Pupils respond by behaving impeccably as they move around school, including at less-structured times of the day. Pupils play happily together at social times and show consideration and respect for each other. Consequently, pupils say there are very few incidents of poor behaviour.
- Attendance has improved and was above average for the last two years. The proportion of pupils who regularly miss school is much lower than that seen nationally. Pupils are keen to be at school because they enjoy learning and value the education they receive. Leaders carefully track attendance and have built good relationships with families. This means that strategies to improve attendance are proving highly successful.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Published figures do not always provide the most accurate reflection of pupils' achievement at Beech Hill School due to high pupil mobility and the fact that many pupils join with little or no English. However, current pupils, including those with SEND and those who are disadvantaged, are making good progress in English and mathematics.
- Effective support for pupils who are new to the school is enabling them to make strong progress from their often very low starting points. A firm focus on pupils' language acquisition is instrumental to the good progress which current pupils are making.
- There is a positive reading culture throughout the school. Pupils have regular opportunities to read and they become increasingly fluent as a result. From the very start of pupils' education, they are immersed in stories, poems, rhymes and non-fiction. This helps pupils to develop their vocabulary, language comprehension and a love of reading. Older pupils understand the value and importance of reading in helping them to access and further their learning across the wider curriculum.
- Very effective teaching of phonics means that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been consistently in line with the national average. By the end of Year 2, almost every pupil meets the standard.
- Pupils' writing progress at the end of key stage 2 was in the lowest 20% nationally for the last three years. However, for pupils who spent their whole key stage 2 education at Beech Hill, progress was similar to that of other pupils nationally with the same starting points.
- Progress in writing for current pupils throughout the school is good. Work in pupils' English workbooks shows that pupils build their knowledge well over time. They revisit

previously taught material, which helps them to secure their understanding. A focus on writing at length has resulted in more pupils working beyond the expectations for their year group. However, over time, not enough pupils have reached the greater depth or higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stages 1 and 2.

- Pupils are making strong progress in mathematics. As pupils acquire the basic skills and number facts, they show increasing ability to tackle more complex calculations as they progress through each unit.
- Pupils are developing their knowledge at an age-appropriate level in the foundation subjects. They use the literacy and numeracy knowledge they have gained and apply it in a range of other subjects, which helps to further secure their learning.
- Pupils' handwriting and presentation of their work across the curriculum are of a very high standard. Pupils take great pride and care in the quality of their work.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Children make extremely strong progress from their starting points which, in many areas of learning, are well below those that are typical for their age when they enter school. By the end of Reception, the proportion of children who reach a good level of development has been consistently in line with the national average. Similarly, disadvantaged children here nearly always achieve as well as other children nationally.
- Leaders make sure that the teaching of reading is given a high priority. Children have plentiful opportunities to hear stories, develop their language comprehension and practise their own reading. There is a clear and consistent strategy for the teaching of phonics. Teachers use their ongoing assessment of what children know and can do very effectively so that teaching is directly related to children's precise stage of development. Children who are not keeping up with the pace of the phonics programme receive regular targeted support. This helps them to make very strong progress from their wide range of starting points.
- Leaders know the community and their families incredibly well. They place great importance on developing strong and positive partnerships from day one of the children's education. Parents are valued as their child's main educators and are invited into school regularly.
- Adults have established clear routines with high expectations of behaviour and learning. Consequently, there is a positive and calm atmosphere and children are happy and well cared for. Staff take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously and ensure that the legal welfare requirements are met.
- Adults know the children very well. They are aware of each child's next learning steps and help them to make the progress needed through carefully targeted small-group and individual work. Adults model language structures well so that children's speech and language are developed highly effectively. A school-based speech and language therapist means that children with significant speech and language difficulties are identified and receive specific support.
- The provision in the indoor and outdoor areas is carefully considered so that children can use and apply their newly acquired literacy and numeracy skills in a range of highly purposeful activities. For example, children could be seen applying their phonics when writing about minibeasts. Others were using doubling to find the number of legs on a spider.

When children are accessing the activities which have been set up for them, they work with high levels of independence and sustained concentration appropriate to their age.

- In the Nursery, children from the age of two are well supported to develop the characteristics of effective learning. This means that they are very well prepared for the learning experiences they will encounter throughout Nursery and into Reception. Nursery children showed their love of reading as they joined in with some of the words and were able to retell the story in their own words.

School details

Unique reference number	137337
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	10087666

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	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	617
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Chris Haddock
Headteacher	Shameem Hussain
Telephone number	01422 345 004
Website	www.beechhillschool.co.uk
Email address	shussain@beechhillschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–20 January 2016

Information about this school

- Beech Hill School is much larger than the average-sized primary school. Since the last inspection, the school has sponsored a local school and is now a multi-academy trust known as the Family Learning Trust. There have been changes in the school's leadership. Both deputy headteachers and assistant headteachers have taken up post since the last inspection and were promoted from within the school. The deputy headteachers are specialist leaders of education and support school improvement in local schools.
- The school is governed by the board of trustees. The local governing body, which includes some of the trustees, takes responsibility for monitoring the school's performance, under delegated authority from the board.
- The vast majority of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. A very large proportion of pupils do not speak English as their first language. Many of these pupils also have little or no English when joining the school. The number of pupils leaving and joining the

school throughout the year is high. Some of these pupils have not experienced an educational setting before.

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average.
- The school runs breakfast and after-school clubs and offers Nursery provision for two-year-olds.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning throughout the school. Several of the observations were undertaken jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors listened to some pupils read and talked to a sample of pupils about their experience of school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and a range of subject leaders. A meeting was held with two members of the governing body, including the chair of the board of trustees. A meeting also took place with an external school effectiveness officer and there was a telephone call discussion with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in books, along with the school's information on pupils' achievement, to determine the progress that they are making.
- A range of documentation was considered. This included the school's self-evaluation, records of the monitoring of teaching and learning, plans for improvement, information relating to the attendance and behaviour of pupils, safeguarding and child protection records and minutes from governing body meetings. Documents outlining the arrangements for the use of pupil premium funding were also considered.
- Inspectors spoke to parents informally at the start of the school day to seek their views about the school. Inspectors also spoke to a range of staff about the support and development they receive.

Inspection team

Kirsty Godfrey, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Mary Lanovy-Taylor	Ofsted Inspector
Linda Griffiths	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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