

Beaufort School

Stechford Road, Hodge Hill, Birmingham, B34 6BJ

Inspection dates

6–7 December 2012

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.

- The school has raised its game in all areas since the last inspection, as senior leaders have firmly and persistently focused on improving teaching and raising pupils' achievements.
- Pupils make outstanding progress, from very low starting points. They make exceptional gains in their communication skills and pupils with the most profound learning difficulties respond well to the vibrant and stimulating experiences offered to them.
- Teaching and learning are outstanding and have improved significantly over the last twelve months. An excellent feature of teaching is the way signing, symbols and technology are used with pupils to help their understanding and communication.
- Pupils have outstanding opportunities to mix and socialise with other children on the mainstream campus.
- The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding. Their independence is encouraged superbly. Pupils find their way confidently around a busy school with minimal fuss.
- The leadership and management of the school, including governance, are outstanding.
- The new arrangements for a federated governing body with another special school are working well and have expanded the management capacity of the school. They give the benefit of sharing expertise and staff with the partner school.
- The school provides a warm, positive learning environment, with high expectations, where pupils flourish and the subjects and experiences offered to pupils are both lively and well matched to their needs and abilities.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons, most of which were joint observations with different members of the senior leadership team.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders of the school, members of the governing body, the School Improvement Adviser and a representative of the local authority.
- There were no responses from parents from the online questionnaire (Parent View), but the inspector took account of the school's recent survey of parents' views.
- The inspector looked at a range of school documentation including the school's information on pupils' progress, its self-evaluation, development plans and information relating to safeguarding of pupils.

Inspection team

Frank Price, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Beaufort School is a special school for pupils with severe and complex learning needs.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. An increasing number of pupils have complex learning needs, including pupils who are on the autistic spectrum disorder, sensory impairments and medical needs.
- The majority of pupils are from Pakistan. Other pupils come from a mix of other ethnic groups.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for additional funding known as the pupil premium, is above average.
- The accommodation is modern and purpose built.
- The school is co-located with a mainstream primary school.
- The school federated with a partner primary-aged special school with one executive headteacher and governing body for both schools. These arrangements commenced in September 2012
- The school has gained various awards including Artsmark Gold, Sing Up silver award, and an award for information and communication technology.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of lessons where teaching is outstanding and pupils make outstanding progress by providing more-able pupils with more opportunities to learn on their own.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Children make better than expected progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children join the school at various points at this age. In general, the longer children attend the Early Years Foundation Stage, the more progress they make. Progress is strongest in numeracy and literacy and in children's personal and social development. 'Learning journey' records children's time at the school and show significant milestones in children's development such as when one child was able to sit unaided for a period of five minutes.
- A large proportion of pupils are operating at early developmental levels, even when compared to similar schools. However, across the primary phase, pupils make outstanding progress. Pupils, irrespective of background, special educational needs or gender, make equally excellent progress. This is because learning is specifically tailored to meet their needs and the right amount of adult support helps them to achieve well.
- Pupils for whom the school receives additional funding are enabled to make equally impressive progress. For example, additional funding has allowed the school to provide smaller groups for literacy and numeracy so that their needs can be met more effectively.
- Pupils' progress in developing their communication skills is exceptional. This is because of the strong focus on promoting a wide range of communication strategies across the school. This includes the use of signs, symbols and technology.
- Pupils, who are able to read simple words or stories, know how to put two letters together to make one sound. One pupil enjoyed reading his letter from Santa on a computer and was able to write key words on a wipeable board. Two pupils take their literacy lessons in the mainstream primary school.
- Pupils are highly engaged in lessons. Their attention is captured superbly through stimulating activities. In one class, less-able pupils responded exceptionally well to shaving foam on their desks to encourage them to reach out and feel for objects hidden in the foam.
- Parents are delighted at the progress their children make. One parent commented that she was 'wonderfully happy with the school'.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- There are numerous outstanding features to teaching. Teaching is lively, enthusiastic and gains and maintains pupils' interest and attention well.
- Teaching often takes place in small groups and teaching assistants are deployed well to support pupils' learning. The small literacy and numeracy groups in particular that take place each morning have proved to be particularly effective.
- Staff are skilled at using a range of techniques. These include excellent management of pupils' behaviour and consistent application of alternative methods of communication.
- Learning activities are often sensory based. For example, activities to encourage pupils to track

objects take place in the dark room where they can focus on coloured bubble tubes or younger children take part in water play which is coloured with dye and glitter to encourage them to explore.

- Technology is used smartly. Large plasma screens are used by teachers to enhance teaching and learning and smaller tablet notebooks are used innovatively to motivate pupils to look at photographs of themselves or to read simple text off the screen.
- Learning for pupils is highly personalised. Teachers have a clear understanding of what levels their pupils are working at and identify precisely the next steps for learning. The school is keen to explore ways for more-able pupils to learn for longer periods of time on their own.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and they know how to get the best out of pupils. For example, one pupil would respond best if he was only addressed in a particular way.
- The high-quality accommodation and resources supports teaching and learning well. For example, teachers identify specific lessons for more able pupils, for whom it is appropriate, to spend some time learning with peers in mainstream lessons. The juxtaposition of special school and mainstream classrooms enables this to happen easily.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' attitudes to learning and each other are outstanding. They enjoy lessons, because learning is stimulating and fun.
- Lunchtimes are tremendous opportunities for pupils to develop their self-confidence and personal and social development. Pupils confidently choose their food from the servery and clear away their trays when finished. They happily mix with pupils from the co-located primary school. This does much to establish high expectations and maturity in pupils.
- Pupils feel very safe and this is evident in the relaxed and happy disposition they display in and around the school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is exceptional. The school strongly promotes this through its excellent range of creative and performing arts. The diversity of staff and pupils is celebrated well, so that the school is a positive and happy community. Pupils' attendance has improved since the last inspection and the school has stressed the importance of good attendance to parents and carers. Although attendance is below average, this is due largely to ill-health or hospitalisation of pupils

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The executive headteacher together with a highly effective senior leadership team have prioritised the improvement of teaching as a key area. This has been achieved well and through coaching, regular monitoring and supportive advice, previously identified weaknesses have been addressed. They have set high expectations to which staff have responded very positively.
- Newly qualified teachers receive exceptional support and they are already teaching to very high standards.
- The performance management of teachers is excellent. There are clear objectives set out for

them to improve their work. Leaders' lesson observations have encouraged and supported better teaching and led to substantial proportion of outstanding teaching. Senior leaders are keen to extend the amount of this high-quality teaching. All staff have received a good range of training, for example to extend their knowledge of specific methods in teaching those pupils with most severe and complex needs. The fruit of this is evident in the consistent approaches staff use, such as signing throughout the school.

- The spending of additional funding for pupils in vulnerable circumstances has been well judged. This has enabled these pupils to close gaps in achievement in their basic skills and communication.
- The federated arrangements benefit the school. The school is able to work in close partnership with its partner school to share strengths, staff, ideas, training and resources.
- The local authority rightly views the school with confidence and has operated light-touch support. The co-location of the school on a primary campus has been exceptionally well planned and works extremely well and benefits pupils from both schools.
- The range of subjects and activities has been improved since the last inspection. It is imaginative and meets the needs of all pupils well. Specialist strategies are used for those pupils who are on the autistic spectrum disorder and clear routines are established for them. Pupils also benefit from specialist facilities such as sensory rooms and a hydrotherapy pool.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have contributed exceptionally well to the outstanding leadership of the school. They have overseen the successful federation of the school and this has provided stability and consistent leadership and has increased the capacity of the school to improve further. They have an excellent grasp of teaching and learning at the school. They accurately identify its strengths and what could be improved. They are knowledgeable and supportive. Focused visits have ensured that they know the work of the school at first hand. They know exactly what additional funding has been spent on and how pupils have benefitted from this. They are actively involved in the performance management of staff and see this as strength of the school. They have ensured that pay and promotion relates to appropriate performance. They provide constructive challenge for the school. They have received good levels of training for safeguarding and other aspects of the school's work.

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	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. 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.

School details

Unique reference number	103627
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	400634

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community Special
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	42
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lynda Thomas
Headteacher	Fiona Woolford
Date of previous school inspection	11 February 2010
Telephone number	0121 675 8500
Fax number	0121 675 8499
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