

Beechwood School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	208/6366
Unique Reference Number	100649
Inspection number	316907
Inspection dates	13-14 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Neville Grenyer AI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Beechwood School was founded in 1987 by its principal Mrs. M. Marshall. Over the years, the school has moved its location in Streatham three times until a decision was made to move to its present location in 1996. The school has 85 pupils this year. There are eight year groups ranging from ages 2+ to 11 years, all in small classes. Children reflect the ethnic make-up of the local community and are mainly from Black Caribbean backgrounds. Two pupils have statements. The school aims to be distinctive: *proud of its cultural make-up with a strong ethos combining high expectations and respect for each other, in a lively atmosphere. It positively promotes the well-being of all children, boys or girls, who are all expected to have high standards in all areas.*

Evaluation of the school

Beechwood School is a good small school which achieves its aims very well. The atmosphere is caring and friendly, and pupils show an interest and motivation to learn. There are effective policies in place, aimed at ensuring that the school can properly and smoothly exercise its functions. The school is very much a part of its local community. Pupils' welfare is very important in this school, where every child really is well known and does matter. Good teaching means that by the time children reach the upper part of the school, they have made good progress in many areas including reading, mathematics, science, art, and music. The children benefit from more than just an academic education; they also receive a moral education which many parents feel is just as important.

Quality of education

The school's curriculum is good, broad and balanced with subject matter well suited to the ages and aptitude of its pupils. Pupils in the Nursery and Reception classes have access to the six areas of learning in the Foundation Stage. There is planned education out of doors as seen during the inspection with the visit to Crystal Palace ground, and the use of the school grounds for a nature trail. Role-play is effectively included in planning at this level.

Pupils in the higher classes in Key Stages 1 and 2, study subjects in line with the National Curriculum and the requirements of the independent secondary schools'

entrance examination. There are good schemes for English, mathematics, science, history and geography, modern languages, information communication technology (ICT), physical education including gymnastics, dance, and games as well as swimming. The schemes are well matched against the *Every Child Matters* agenda and the five outcomes of staying healthy, staying safe, achieving and enjoying, economic well being and making a positive contribution. Provision for Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) is woven into the fabric of the school day. Although this is also true of citizenship, the school is planning a more formal and specific provision for the subject. There is a good range of after school activities including gym and homework clubs. The option of supervised play with daily care facilities up to 5.45 pm is provided.

The curriculum policy is well set out and is supported by planning and schemes of work which are kept on file, and supervised by the principal to ensure that they are implemented effectively.

The two pupils with statements of special educational need are very well integrated into their classes; their individual education plans are well implemented. They benefit from the individual attention provided by the small classes and make good progress.

Teaching at all levels is well planned and with a coherent structure of learning activities. Nursery and Reception classes, show a good balance of activity across the six areas of learning. Staff interaction with pupils is mostly good with high levels of one to one attention where identified as necessary. Teachers make useful observations that are transferred to a reliable assessment system. Good sessions were seen at this level where the class cooperated to make 'shape' salads from cucumber, sweet peppers and apples. Careful attention is given to the introduction of a range of *Every Child Matters* themes, including staying safe, being healthy and making a positive contribution. The children show pleasure in learning and their achievements. The overall quality of teaching and assessment is good and pupils make good progress.

In the classes at Key Stages I and 2, lessons seen were all at least satisfactory, and more than half were good with two outstanding. This reflects the quality of the lesson planning and the experience and enthusiasm of the teachers. There is very good rapport between teachers and their pupils. PSHE star charts displayed in the classrooms have a positive effect on pupils in those lessons where each child has added his or her own personal target to achieve. In another lesson, effective use of a PSHE poster presented pupils with a range of strategies that they could employ to help them to solve problems that they might meet in and outside of class. Although there is no use of National Curriculum assessments, nor any formal system of pupil tracking, the standards achieved by pupils and their strengths and weaknesses are very well known to their teachers and, often, well recorded. Year 3 pupils make very good use of Cusenier Rods to help their fundamental understanding of place value in mathematics. In an outstanding art lesson, which was both well planned and very well delivered, pupils worked well together to produce a collage of drawings and

paintings that showed the Victorian buildings of Streatham and the modern multi-cultural uses to which they are now put. The high quality of the drawing and the excellent progress that these pupils were making were a direct result of the enthusiasm and expertise of the teaching. Singing of part songs and rounds was of a high standard in music; the children obtained particular enjoyment from the songs that included elements of Caribbean patois. In many of the best lessons pupils readily accepted the challenges provided and the need for practice and training required, for example, when learning spelling. While not all lessons were of this high standard, the school has a core body of teachers who could provide good role models for the development required to bring all lessons up to the standard of the best.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The rich provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They are encouraged to form part of the school community and the school develops pupils' self-esteem and confidence successfully. Pupils are proud of their achievements and their contribution to school life and the wider community. Daily collective worship contributes significantly to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Besides assemblies, each class has a system of class monitors where each pupil accepts a set of responsibilities. Relationships within the school are excellent. Pupils and teachers treat each other with respect. They have a strong sense of identity and the pupils' self-confidence is expressed in the way they interact in all aspects of school life. The welcoming ethos of the school extends to the pupils' behaviour, which is outstanding. Pupils are very polite to each other, holding doors for visitors and for their classmates as a routine. Pupils enjoy their learning; sometimes this is evident from their own comments: an unprompted exclamation of "This is fun!" is not unusual but more often it is shown by the enthusiasm with which pupils go to work on a task and the pride with which they share their achievements. The work in ICT lessons was seen by pupils as explicitly useful in promoting their economic well being. The parental questionnaires gave evidence that pupils enjoyed their school and that children receive more than just an academic education: "They also get a moral education which we feel is just as important."

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school's provision for the welfare, health and safety of its pupils is good.

There are good policies on child protection, bullying, health and safety, including conducting out of school visits. Members of staff are aware of the child protection policy and how it should be applied. The principal is the designated member of staff for child protection.

Appropriate policies are in place to support pupils' health and safety. The school has a record book available for any future sanctions imposed for serious disciplinary offences. Pupils are supervised well. Health education issues are addressed in

physical education, science and PSHE. They were seen to be addressed in lessons involving the nursery and reception class preparing salads, through the care taken when moving children about the school and ensuring that they prepare for meals. There is however scope for further improvement in the boys' toilet area

The school has a clear anti-bullying policy which identifies the measures that the school will take to prevent such incidents. Pupils understand how to report bullying to teachers. They report that the system is effective and that they feel safe in this school. The school has a good first aid policy with one trained First Aider.

Appropriate policies are in place to support pupils' health and safety, although the school does not yet conduct any regular, formal health and safety survey of its premises and accommodation. The school has a record book available for any future sanctions imposed for serious disciplinary offences. Pupils are supervised well. The school has an up to date fire risk assessment document approved by the local fire officer. Regular fire practices are well recorded.

The school provides guidance on marking the registers so that authorised and unauthorised absences are recorded. Registration takes place in the morning and the afternoon in line with the regulations.

The school it has devised a three year plan which conforms to the Disability Discrimination Act. It is planning to carry out a very useful evaluation of its site involving pupils in assessing where difficulties exist.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school has a very good and effective teaching staff with a broad range of experience. They are ably assisted by classroom assistants. All staff and volunteers have been checked against List 99 and the school has been scrupulous in its checking of references and other requirements. Despite the fact that a number of staff have been in full employment by the school since long before the regulations came into force, it has followed good practice to check with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) to confirm their suitability to work with children. The school has made all the necessary checks on its staff and has separate records in files to show that it has in fact made them.

It has drawn up a single central record in line with recent changes in the regulatory requirements; however as yet this is incomplete: despite showing the CRB checks, it does not yet show where other necessary checks have been carried out.

School's premises and accommodation

The school is located in a very large house in suburban Streatham. Classrooms are large enough to cope well with current numbers. A large school hall is used

effectively for assemblies and physical education. An ICT suite has been created and all classes, except the two in the Foundation class, use it every week.

There is good use of wall display to promote learning. Although it is early in the term, pupils' work is carefully mounted, is eye-catching and accessible to read. The display contains elements of reference materials, stimulus materials and celebration of pupils' work as well as work in progress which children can enjoy seeing grow and develop.

There is scope for brightening up the nursery and reception class areas and for using the good space more effectively for Foundation Stage children. There is at present no sick bay as is required by the regulations. Toilet provision for boys and girls is adequate for current numbers but lacked soap and were in need of proper cleaning. A small, enclosed playground provides outdoor play space for the pupils. More frequent sweeping would benefit the pupils as some areas had heaps of leaves that might conceal hazards. The gardener's storechest is in need of repair to make it secure and to ensure that pupils have no access to weedkiller and its other contents. Staggered playtimes ensure they have sufficient space and there is good provision of play equipment for older pupils. The brickwork on the playground walls needs re-pointing and checking.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

Appropriate information is provided by the school for its prospective parents, pupils and others. It publishes a prospectus in which the aims of the school and other essential information are clearly set down. The school provides full written reports twice a year at the end of the autumn and summer terms. In the spring term, parents' evenings are held. The school operates an open door policy and parents are always welcome to talk to members of staff. Parents in the nursery have daily contact. There are also useful notice-boards and newsletters, while the school's excellent website is a valuable help and has been recently updated to meet the regulations. About half the parents responded to the Ofsted parental questionnaire and their response was overwhelmingly supportive. A very few parents said that they were not sure that they understood the school's complaints procedure.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school's complaints procedure meets the requirements of the regulations. Copies of the procedure are available for prospective parents. The school has a good system ready to record any complaints, but has received no formal complaints in the last year.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- Keep a register of all staff which shows details of checks made against the requirements of the regulations, including the date on which each check was completed or the certificate obtained (paragraph 4C(2 and 3))
- Keep a register of all supply staff which shows that written notification has been received from the employment business that appropriate checks were carried out against the requirements of the regulations, together with the dates when they were completed or certificates obtained. Show the date when such written notification from the employment business was obtained (paragraph 4C(4 and 5))
- Keep a register of all persons named as the proprietor which shows details of checks made against the requirements of the regulations, including the date on which each check was completed or the certificate obtained (paragraph 4C(6 and 7))
- Keep the register in which the information recorded is capable of being reproduced in legible form (paragraph 4C(9)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- Improve safety by replacing the padlock and repair the damaged gardener's store so that pupils have no access and improve the cleaning of the boys' toilets on the lower ground floor. (paragraph 5(j))
- improve the accommodation by providing appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill (paragraph 5(l))
- Ensure that the classrooms, pupils' toilets and playground are kept clean and tidy (paragraph 5(n)).

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- The school would benefit from a monthly formal survey of its premises and accommodation site to check maintenance and that potential hazards have not developed.

School details

Name of school	Beechwood School		
DCSF number	208/6366		
Unique reference number	100649		
Type of school	Primary		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	January 1987		
Age range of pupils	2-11		
Gender of pupils	MI		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 39	Girls: 32	Total: 71
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 5	Girls: 2	Total: 7
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 2	Girls:	Total: 2
Annual fees (day pupils)	£6219 - £6813		
Address of school	55 Leigham Court Road Streatham London SW16 2NJ		
Telephone number	0208 6778778		
Fax number	020 8769 2472		
Email address	mm@beechwood.com		
Headteacher	Mrs Marcia Marshall		
Proprietor	Mrs Marcia Marshall		
Reporting inspector	Neville Grenyer AI		
Dates of inspection	13-14 September 2007		