

Beamish Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114021
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	357467
Inspection dates	11–12 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Margaret Shepherd

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	64
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Catherine Irwin
Headteacher	Mrs Wendy Edwards
Date of previous school inspection	29 April 2008
School address	Co-Operative Villas Beamish, Stanley County Durham DH9 0QN
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Six lessons were observed; all four teachers were seen; meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, the headteacher, the Beamish school staff, the federation senior leaders and the special educational needs co-ordinator. Some discussions with parents took place. Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised pupils' work and documents relating to self-evaluation, safeguarding, tracking information and teachers' planning and assessment. They also analysed 30 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- What the rates of progress are throughout the school and how well the teaching and curriculum matches the needs of the pupils in the different classes.
- The effectiveness of the leaders and managers of the federation partnership and the school's capacity for improvement.
- Whether the Early Years Foundation Stage is steadily improving and the effectiveness of the new Reception and Nursery organisation.
- Standards of behaviour and pupils' understanding of keeping safe and healthy.

Information about the school

The school serves the very small villages of Beamish and No Place and is much smaller than most primary schools. The size of year groups and ability levels vary considerably between different year groups, with some being as low as a single pupil. The school has been in a federation partnership for two years with a much larger neighbouring school. This includes a shared governing body and senior leadership team. Well over half of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is average, as is the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage.

There have been significant changes since the previous inspection. A new federated headteacher took up her post at the beginning of last year and works in the school for part of the week. For the remaining time an assistant headteacher from the larger school is now based permanently at Beamish School. The federated senior leadership team now work in both schools and Beamish staff attend shared staff meetings and professional development activities with the larger school. Several new governors and a new Chair of the Governing Body are now in place. There has been a considerable increase in the number of pupils moving in and out of the school, particularly in Key Stage 2 where most pupils did not begin their education. The number of children in Reception has also increased in the last year. As a result, the school rearranged the accommodation for the foundation stage and employed an additional teacher. These arrangements had been in place for only four days when the inspection took place. For four children in the Nursery it was their first day at school at the beginning of the inspection.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school that is rapidly improving. This is due to the determination and vision of the headteacher and governors to work in close partnership with the federated school to raise standards and develop provision. The headteacher is extremely effective in embedding ambition and driving improvement. The use of the federation senior leadership team to drive change in this smaller school is a very efficient way of providing regular additional expertise to the small team of teaching staff. The staff relish this involvement in their development and respond very positively to the improvements identified. Everyone has a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, which is based on thorough analysis by senior leaders. Despite the challenges facing the school since the previous inspection, there is a positive attitude to developing the work of the school, which pupils and parents appreciate. All these features are beginning to have a major impact on the improving the quality of teaching and increasing the rate of pupils' progress. This gives the school a good capacity for improvement.

Despite the changes to the Early Years Foundation Stage being at a very early stage, the teaching teams work smoothly together and children make satisfactory progress, with good progress in personal and physical development. Outdoor learning is well-organised and stimulating, but indoor provision is not as effective. There are a range of assessment systems in place for children, but they are not based systematically enough on the different areas of learning.

Pupils make satisfactory progress overall. Progress is better in Key Stage 1 because of good quality teaching and the good use of assessment information that matches work to individual pupils' needs. Staff miss opportunities to refer to individual pupils' targets in lessons. Progress slows in Key Stage 2 and is satisfactory. This is partly because most pupils entered the school in the past two years, which disrupted their education. It is also because assessment information is not always used effectively to meet different learning needs and pupils do not receive enough feedback on their progress in lessons. Some long-term targets are not clear enough for pupils so they know what they need to do to improve. In some lessons the rate of learning in whole-class sessions slows at the end of sessions. Teaching assistants provide good quality support and work closely with teachers. This ensures that the pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to the rest of the class. A new curriculum is in place that provides balance and breadth across different subjects.

Strength of the school is that staff takes advantage of its small size to provide good quality care, support and guidance. They know each pupil and their families well. Pupils and parents greatly appreciate this. The older pupils value the opportunities to look after the younger children. Behaviour is good, whether this be in lessons, around the school or in the playground. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy.

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Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - using assessment information more effectively in Key Stage 2 to provide work that matches pupils' learning needs
 - providing more regular feedback on progress in lessons in Key Stage 2
 - providing clearer individual targets in reading, writing and mathematics so pupils are clearer about what they need to do to improve
 - providing consistently challenging whole-class sessions at the end of lessons.
- Increase the rate of progress and the quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - providing more effective activities for indoor independent learning to challenge the more mature and support the less mature children
 - planning assessment activities systematically across the different areas of learning and using findings more effectively to plan future learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1. In lessons they enjoy the tasks and are keen to explain to adults what they have learnt. More able pupils relish opportunities to compete with each other to be the first to complete a task, such as working out the sequence of a story. Less able pupils are confident carrying out tasks in front of their peers and are delighted to receive the teacher's praise. Pupils listen carefully to questions and do their best to answer. Progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 2 where pupils are not as confident in answering questions. They work steadily at their group tasks and enjoy the practical aspects of their learning. Achievement is satisfactory. Children enter the school with skills below the level of those typically expected for their age and some are well below this level. Attainment varies considerably between the different age groups because of the great variations in the numbers and levels of ability in each cohort. In several year groups, attainment is below average. At the end of Year 6 attainment is usually below average although this varies considerably depending on the cohort of pupils. Reading standards have been lower than those for writing but have risen and are now at least as good as the writing. There is some higher attainment in Year 2 in writing. For example, some pupils produce sentences that contain imaginative vocabulary and write in sequences of sentences.

Pupils work and play happily together. They appreciate the importance of keeping healthy. All pupils have a healthy school lunch, which is a civilised and harmonious occasion. They understand the role of exercise and thoroughly enjoy the whole-school 'wake up shake up' sessions, with older pupils setting a good standard for younger pupils. Pupils are very confident to talk to adults about any concerns and they have a good awareness of internet safety. Contributions to the school community are good and are developing well in the locality. For example, pupils were televised on a recent visit to the Beamish museum.

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Their contribution to national and international contexts is not as effective. Attendance rates have improved since the previous inspection and are now average. Pupils are respectful during prayers and know their school prayer well. The quality of behaviour is strength of the school and contributes well to creating a positive attitude to learning. Pupils readily cooperate with each other to achieve their goals.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teaching teams work well together to support the needs of the different age groups. Staff manage behaviour well and provide a calm context for learning. In Key Stage 1 teaching is good. Lessons are well planned and staff use very well focused questions to support pupils' understanding, particularly with any new learning. Although assessment data is used to plan for different group tasks in Key Stage 2, it is not used consistently well to match individual pupil's needs throughout the lesson. Marking is detailed and of good quality. Staff, however, do not set clear individual targets so pupils know what they need to do over the long term to improve their work. Whole-class sessions at the end of lessons review learning systematically, but opportunities are missed to make this learning consistently challenging.

Provision for the reading curriculum has improved with new reading resources, additional time being allocated and well-focussed assessment. This is having a positive impact on progress. The school has put a new curriculum in place, which is ensuring that different

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subjects are covered systematically but it is at an early stage of implementation. Child protection arrangements are of good quality. The discipline system works well There are thorough procedures in place to support pupils' whose circumstance may make them vulnerable pupils, which are carried out sensitively by all staff.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The leaders and managers of the federation are having a significant impact on this school because they provide a wider range of professional expertise on a more regular basis than would otherwise be possible in such a small school. The headteacher has very well-organised systems to make this arrangement work efficiently. She communicates her ambition and drives improvement skilfully, which is evident in the enthusiastic attitudes of staff at all levels. The monitoring of teaching and learning is well focussed and has had a good impact in Key Stage 1. Staff appreciate the weekly shared staff meetings which extends their understanding of how to develop their expertise.

Senior leaders have a good understanding of the school's needs and are effective in supporting staff in implementing change. The governing body has a good range of expertise. It plays a valuable role in determining the strategic direction of the school. There are clear policies to tackle discrimination. There is now a very clear system for tracking progress and identifying different pupils' needs. The promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory. Although some pupils are making good progress, others currently make only satisfactory progress. The school ensures that safeguarding systems are thorough and are understood by all staff. Opportunities for extending community cohesion in the locality have improved, but this is less evident in wider national or international contexts. Partnerships with parents and carers and with external agencies, such as the local authority, work well.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Senior leaders and managers from the federated school are having a significant impact on this provision. This is particularly evident in the outdoor environment where staff provide exciting and challenging activities and provide well-focused support for individual children. This results in good progress in physical development, aspects of creative development and improvements in their investigational skills. For example, children thoroughly enjoyed playing with dinosaurs in a simulated muddy swamp. The teaching team work well together. They provide good quality care and welfare arrangements resulting in good progress in children's personal development. Induction arrangements work particularly well, with new children settling in very quickly. Children make satisfactory progress across the rest of the curriculum and leave Reception with below-average standards. The new arrangement of splitting the Reception and Nursery children in the morning sessions is working well. Independent activities indoors are not planned as effectively as for the outdoors and do not provide enough challenge for the most mature children whilst supporting the needs of the least mature children. There is a range of assessment strategies in place, but they are not based systematically enough across all the required areas of learning or used well enough as a basis for planning across the curriculum. Provision for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good and children make good progress in relation to their capabilities.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Half of the parents and carers returned the questionnaire and a great majority are positive about the school. A typically positive comment was 'My son...loves attending and would come at a weekend if he could.' All agree that the school is well led and managed, that the school helps their children to have a healthy lifestyle and that they are kept safe. Parents and carers also agree that their children enjoy school. Inspectors endorse these views. Some parents and carers think that they do not receive enough information about their child's progress and a very small minority is concerned about Reception children working with Nursery children. The inspectors discussed this with staff and judge the communication between staff and parents to be good. They observed Reception children's learning alongside the Nursery children and judge that the practice is working effectively.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Beamish Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 30 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 64 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	19	63	10	33	0	0	1	3
The school keeps my child safe	21	70	8	27	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	18	60	8	27	4	13	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	60	10	33	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	19	63	10	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	60	10	33	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	73	8	27	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	17	57	10	33	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	67	8	27	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	50	10	33	1	3	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	60	9	30	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	20	67	9	30	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	20	67	8	27	2	7	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



13 January 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Beamish Primary School, Co-Operative Villas, Beamish, Stanley
DH9 0QN**

My colleague and I would like to thank you very much for giving us such a warm welcome when we came to your school. We enjoyed talking with you and listening to your views. We would like to tell you what we found.

You go to a satisfactory school that is improving. You make satisfactory progress as you move through the school and good progress in Years 1 and 2. Your behaviour is good and the older pupils are very good at looking after the younger pupils. We thought this was particularly good at lunchtimes. You settle down to learning quickly in lessons. You told us all about keeping safe and healthy and you have a good understanding of these issues. We enjoyed watching you do your 'wake up, shake up' sessions in the hall together. Teaching is satisfactory, with some good features. Teaching assistants work well with the teachers, particularly in group work.

We have asked your staff to make sure that you have clearer targets so that you understand what you have to do to improve your reading, writing and mathematics. We have also asked them to make the end of lessons more interesting. For the Key Stage 2 class we have asked staff to match your learning more closely to your different needs. You can do your best to understand how to improve your work and try to reach your next target. You can work especially hard at the end of lessons in future.

Children in the Reception and Nursery make satisfactory progress indoors but better progress in their learning outdoors. We have asked you school to make sure indoor learning is as good as it is outdoors and to make better use of information from checks on your progress. The senior teachers that come from Pelton School are helping your staff to make it a better place to learn. We wish you well in your future learning.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Shepherd

Lead inspector

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