

Berwick Hills Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111626
Local Authority	Middlesbrough
Inspection number	356592
Inspection dates	21–22 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Margaret Farrow HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	329
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr R J Holland
Headteacher	Ms Louise Moore
Date of previous school inspection	16 October 2007
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Age group	3-11
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. They observed 21 part lessons involving 13 teachers, as well as observing groups of pupils working with teaching assistants and visiting professionals. Meetings were held with representatives of the governing body, groups of pupils and staff. Informal discussions with pupils took place throughout the two days of the inspection; in classrooms, in the dining hall or in the outside spaces at lunch time. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation, including pupils' assessment information, minutes of the meetings of the governing body, safeguarding and behaviour management policies and the school development plan. Inspectors spoke to one parent on the telephone and analysed 79 parent and carer questionnaires as well as those submitted by staff and pupils.

Information about the school

Berwick Hills is a larger-than-average-sized primary school. Nearly half, a much greater than average proportion of pupils, are known to be entitled to free school meals. The proportion of pupils of minority ethnic heritage is below average. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to that found nationally. The school is the first in Middlesbrough to be rebuilt as part of the local authority's primary strategy for change. Staff and pupils moved into the new school the week prior to this inspection. Since the last inspection, there have been a significant number of staff changes. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2008 and the leadership team was extended in September 2010. The school did not take part in the statutory attainment tests in summer 2010. Consequently, there is no nationally comparable information available on the performance of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 for that year. The school met the government's floor targets for academic performance in 2008 but not in 2009. In 2010, teacher assessment information indicates government floor targets were met.

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	2
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Achievement	2
Teaching	2
Leadership and management	2
Behaviour and safety	2

Does the school adequately promote the pupils' well-being?	Yes
Does the school adequately promote community cohesion?	Yes
Does the school provide value for money?	Yes

Key findings

- Berwick Hills is a good school. Pupils achieve well in this caring, friendly school community, from often much lower-than-average abilities on entry into Nursery.
- Pupils' attainment is accelerating rapidly because of leaders' relentless and successful focus on raising achievement and aspirations, eradicating previous underachievement and improving all aspects of the school's work.
- Leaders are supported and challenged well by a knowledgeable governing body, who, together with staff, are fully involved in the school's rigorous self-evaluation and improvement-planning processes.
- Safeguarding arrangements are good because leaders, including the governing body, are vigilant in ensuring pupils' safety and well-being. Virtually all pupils say they feel safe. Although they say there is occasional bullying, they are confident that any concerns will be dealt with quickly.
- Teaching is often good with an increasing proportion that is outstanding. Pupils know their targets and how well they are doing because of teachers' consistently good feedback in lessons and regular high quality marking of pupils' work which also identifies what pupils need to do reach the next level. This helps them to make good and sometimes outstanding progress in lessons.
- Occasionally, teachers' planning is not fully informed by pupils' current levels of ability. When this happens, although pupils work diligently and make good progress, they do not all make the best progress possible.
- Pupils behave well and most report they enjoy school; this is also evidenced in their improving attendance which is broadly average. They especially enjoy the many opportunities they have to take on roles of responsibility. Their team working skills, respect and support for each other, are very good. Along with their rapidly improving basic skills and good transition arrangements, such personal qualities are preparing pupils well for the next steps in their education.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by ensuring teachers' planning always take full account of pupils' current abilities so pupils are always challenged to achieve their very best from their individual starting points.

Main report

Berwick Hills is a rapidly improving school. Through good leadership and strong team work, leaders have successfully harnessed the endeavours of all staff in a shared drive to deliver higher quality teaching, so all pupils can achieve well from their individual starting points. From often very low abilities on entry into Nursery, children make good progress in their development across all early learning goals. Although their attainment remains below average by the time they enter Year 1, the gap is narrowing well due to whole-scale improvements in leadership, teaching, assessment, the way that children's communication, literacy and numeracy skills are taught and the array of exciting and constantly improving opportunities provided. Children were seen thoroughly enjoying their role-play choices, exploring castles and vampires and using the experience to develop their own writing and new vampire words and sounds. Very good relationships between adults and children build their confidence and self-esteem. Children thrive here and develop the good social skills and positive attitudes to learning that stand them in good stead as they move through the school.

Leaders' equally rigorous approach to improving reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stages 1 and 2 is reaping its rewards. Lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' books, discussions with pupils and analysis of the detailed assessment information teachers hold about pupils learning, show pupils are making good and sometimes exceptional progress in lessons. Past underachievement in 2009 has been eradicated. For example, pupils' attainment in reading at the age of six is now broadly average. This is good when taking into account their well below average abilities on entry into school. By Year 6 pupils' attainment in reading is now similar to that found nationally. Pupils become confident, expressive readers because of the meticulous way literacy is planned for and taught.

The quality of teaching is often good and increasingly outstanding. Constant strengths in all lessons observed are good relationships between pupils and teachers and pupils themselves. Pupils are keen to get on with their work and display positive attitudes; their team working skills and care for one another in class are impressive. Teachers' consistently good use of questioning helps to tease out pupils understanding, identify any misconceptions so they can be rectified, and challenges them to reflect on their work and move on quickly. Such strategies alongside good, regular and informative marking celebrates what they are doing well and helps pupils to know what they need to learn next. Pupils speak authoritatively about how well they are doing towards their individual targets for improvement. Occasionally, teachers' planning does not build on pupils' prior understanding precisely enough. On these occasions, although pupils make good progress in their lessons, they do not

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make the best possible progress.

Teachers' regular assessment of pupils' work and pupil progress meetings with leaders, make certain that any pupil at risk of underachieving is identified quickly. Teachers then provide targeted work in lessons to help them catch up. Additional one-to-one support or small group work also supports those who find learning difficult to help them achieve as well as they can. Consequently, there is little variation in the progress different groups are making. Leaders previously identified a gap between the performance of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities compared with other pupils, in Key Stage 1. This has been tackled well through an attentive approach. Current assessment information indicates the gap between pupils' achievements in Berwick Hills and that found nationally is closing rapidly and that the school will exceed their own challenging targets and the government's floor target for the percentage of Year 6 pupils achieving Level 4 or above in English and mathematics.

Developments to the curriculum, including exciting topics that are constantly adapted to meet pupils' needs and interests, capture the enthusiasm of boys and girls alike. Visitors such as 'creative partners' and 'peer-kids' enrich the curriculum well. The former, developing pupils' creativity through the use of information and communication technology and the latter, supporting in a fun-way, their good understanding of risks to their personal safety. The curriculum, visits out of school, and visitors to school contribute well to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils recall enthusiastically memorable and awe inspiring moments from such experiences and the good range of after-school activities that they can take part in. They report they enjoy school and this is evidenced in their improving attendance and good personal qualities. Attendance rates are now close to average and the number of pupils persistently absent has reduced dramatically.

Behaviour is good across the school. Pupils are polite, friendly and are generally very respectful of each other and of each other's views. These attributes contribute well to their learning and progress in lessons and to the strong sense of social and moral purpose that permeates the school. Lunch times are well supervised with many games and activities to occupy pupils and keep them fit. Playground buddies keep a watchful eye on those who need a little extra support. A few parents' and carers' and pupils' questionnaires noted concerns about behaviour. Pupils spoken to say behaviour is almost always good. Leaders know a small number of pupils manifest challenging behaviour. Teachers' consistent application of the school's behaviour management policy, including rewards for good behaviour, alongside support secured from specialists where necessary, is helping to improve these pupils' behaviour, minimise escalation of difficult situations and ensure lessons are not unduly disrupted.

Virtually all pupils and parents and carers report that pupils enjoy, and are safe in, school and that incidents of bullying are tackled well. A couple of questionnaires did express concerns about bullying. Leaders recently canvassed pupils' views and were already alert to some concerns. They are currently working with pupils to tackle

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issues and following this with an 'it's good to talk day'. Pupils also say that bullying occasionally takes place but once an adult is informed it is quickly dealt with. Leaders record and report any incident of bullying or harassment to the governing body. Incidents are followed up with those involved and dealt with appropriately.

Leaders and staff make every effort to ensure that there is equality of opportunity for all. This can be seen in the way that the identified gap between the achievement of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities in Key Stage 1 and their peers has been eradicated, and the successful narrowing of the gap between the achievements of pupils in Berwick Hills and that found nationally. The safety and well-being of pupils is also paramount, and good safeguarding procedures ensure their safety. There are strong and clear management responsibilities regarding child protection and pupils are certain that they know who to approach if they have a concern. That being said, staff and parents and carers have some current concerns about access to the new school during demolition works of the old school. Letters have been sent to families to alert them to actions that need to be taken and leaders recently secured the involvement of the local authority's road safety team and traffic wardens to come to school to talk to parents and carers to help manage congestion at the start and end of the day.

Teachers report enthusiastically about how the headteacher and deputy headteacher have transformed the school. Cohesive, energetic teamwork between senior leaders, middle leaders, staff and the governing body, together with very high expectations and a relentless focus on improvement, have eradicated weaknesses and are contributing well to the higher attainment and good progress of pupils. The extended leadership team have a very secure and sharp focus on monitoring and evaluating the work of the school to make sure everyone keeps on-track. Robust, pupil progress tracking systems are in place with formal half-termly assessment of pupils' work. Teachers talk with conviction about the difference that regular pupils' progress meetings are making to their accountability and to pupils' achievements, and say they appreciate their increased accountability and involvement in the life of the school.

Leaders have supported improvement in the quality of teaching through training, coaching and support and through strong performance management procedures when appropriate. Leaders are challenged successfully by a knowledgeable governing body, who are fully involved in the school's quest for improvement. The data and information they regularly use to evaluate the impact of the school's work is exemplary. Accurate self-evaluation involves staff and the governing body. Consequently, all have a very clear understanding of what is working well and what should be better. Detailed plans are drawn from this evaluation and these are evaluated vigorously. Consequently, there is little that the school is not already doing to improve the few remaining weaker areas. The school has moved forward swiftly over the past two years because of the strong leadership and increasingly confident, self-reliant settled school team. As a result of the improvements evident, the good progress pupils are making and the pursuit of excellence and enthusiasm across the school, leaders have good capacity to sustain the current improvements.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Berwick Hills 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 79 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 329 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Q1 My child is happy at school	37	47	39	49	3	4	0	0
Q2 My child feels safe at school	42	53	36	46	1	1	0	0
Q3 The school helps my child to achieve as well as they can	36	46	40	51	1	1	2	3
Q4 The school meets my child’s particular needs	33	42	43	54	1	1	2	3
Q5 The school ensures my child is well looked after	37	47	35	45	3	4	3	4
Q6 Teaching at this school is good	34	43	41	52	2	3	2	3
Q7 There is a good standard of behaviour at this school	19	24	49	62	8	10	3	4
Q8 Lessons are not disrupted by bad behaviour	16	21	50	64	9	12	3	4
Q9 The school deals with any cases of bullying well	20	26	47	61	7	9	3	4
Q10 The school helps me to support my child’s learning	36	46	41	52	1	1	1	1
Q11 The school responds to my concerns and keeps me well informed	30	38	41	52	5	6	3	4
Q12 The school is well led and managed	29	37	43	54	4	5	3	4

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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 achievement of all pupils. ■ Behaviour and safety. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The effectiveness of leadership and management. <p>and taking into consideration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ how well the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
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.



23 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Berwick Hills Primary School, Middlesbrough, TS3 7QH

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We were very impressed with your good team-working skills and respect for one another. Well done, you are good ambassadors for your school. A special thank you is deserved to all of you who spoke to us at different times during the inspection and to those of you and your parents and carers who completed the inspection questionnaires. You told us that you mostly enjoy school, are doing well and making good progress, and we agree. In fact the progress you are making is much better than a couple of years ago because the headteacher and her team have been working hard to improve your lessons and the things you learn in them. This means that you are catching up well with the achievements of pupils in other parts of the country. You told us about your targets and how well you are doing. Teachers track your work regularly and mostly use this information to provide tasks in lessons that meet your needs and interests and help you make good progress. Occasionally tasks are not matched precisely enough to your individual targets and we have asked your headteacher to tackle this.

We saw you behaving well wherever we went. A small number of you and your families think behaviour is an issue. The headteacher knows a few pupils have some trouble managing their behaviour. Teachers use the school's behaviour management systems properly, and gain specialist support from people outside school when necessary to reduce incidents and ensure your learning is not disrupted by a few pupils. A few parents and carers and pupils also have concerns about bullying. You told us that incidents occasionally happen but these are tackled well once an adult is informed. However, the teachers already knew that some of you have concerns and are currently doing work in lessons about bullying and they make sure if you let them know, stern action will be taken.

Once again thank you for making us so welcome, you can help the school to continue to improve by continuing to work hard in lessons and behave well.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Farrow
Her Majesty's Inspector

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