

# Beckermets CofE School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112345
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	357086
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 July 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Clive Petts

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	93
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Alan Shepherd
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Barbara Mayer
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 July 2011
<b>School address</b>	Mill Lane Beckermets Cumbria CA21 2YD
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Inspectors visited seven lessons and observed four class teachers. They held meetings with members of the governing body and spoke to staff and groups of pupils. They analysed the responses to inspection questionnaires completed by staff, a group of pupils and returned by 44 parents and carers. The inspectors also looked at: data about pupils' progress and achievement; intervention and support programmes; documents relating to the safeguarding of pupils; school policies; and plans for improving the quality of learning. They scrutinised pupils' current and past work and spoke to the local authority's School Improvement Partner.

The inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work. They looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The quality of learning and the rate of progress made by pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils who are more able, especially in English.
- How well the school is using assessment data to secure improvement for all groups of pupils.
- The effectiveness of senior leaders in bringing about and sustaining improvements; in tackling issues; and in enriching the quality of learning and the curriculum.

## Information about the school

The school is much smaller than the average primary school; it serves Beckermat village and the surrounding villages and outlying farms. All the pupils are of White British heritage. A low proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. A below-average percentage of pupils has special educational needs and/or disabilities; and no pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of a small group of children of Reception age. A number of children arrive in the Reception class with limited pre-school experience. The headteacher was appointed in September 2010.

**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?****4****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****3**

## Main findings

In accordance with Section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. As a matter of urgency, significant improvement is required to ensure that the school site provides safe learning environments, and safe working routines which meet requirements.

The school's self-evaluation correctly identifies strengths and key actions for improvement. The effectiveness of middle leaders is adding to the momentum of school improvement. All staff share the headteacher's ambition to improve the richness of learning, for example, forming a brass band to foster music talent. Robust systems for checking pupils' learning and development are now in place. Yet, the governing body has not challenged the school rigorously or consistently enough to ensure statutory requirements are met. There are insufficient systems in place to assess the effectiveness of school practice, for which the governing body is responsible. This has resulted in ineffective arrangements to ensure that all pupils are always kept safe. As a result, the effectiveness of the governing body is inadequate. However, the positive action that the headteacher, middle leaders and staff have taken, such as the developments in the quality of provision, the improved outcomes for pupils and some crucial improvements in the care and protection of the pupils, show that the capacity for further improvement is satisfactory.

As a result of the concerted action taken by the headteacher since her appointment, pupils' progress and achievement are accelerating with attainment rising significantly. The attainment gap between English and mathematics is closing quickly. Overall attainment is above average and recent Year 6 national test results show improvement, particularly in mathematics. This represents good and accelerating progress over time from pupils' broadly-average start points. More-able pupils are presented with more thought-provoking activities and as a result are reaching higher levels. This is the impact of the school's firm focus on improving the richness of learning and making certain that pupils take more responsibility for managing their own learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good and in individual cases outstanding progress because of the effective quality of intervention and classroom support they receive. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive; they particularly appreciate being able to play a part in their children's development. One parent wrote 'I really feel welcomed and appreciated now'. This view summed up the views of many parents and carers.

Assessment practice is good, although teachers' written comments pinpointing clear steps for further improvement are not provided consistently. Pupils are keen to learn and this is evident in their high attendance and good and often exemplary behaviour. Teaching is good and occasionally inspiring, especially when approaches are imaginative and create a

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'buzz'. Occasionally, when tasks are less skilfully matched to age and ability, and approaches lack that essential spark, progress can slow a little, such as in Year 3 and Year 4. Pupils report that they feel safe and all have an excellent grasp of how to stay healthy and fit. They make a very strong contribution to the school and wider community. Pupils take great pride in their role, deciding how to improve the school and eagerly take part in local events, such as the 'Rock Challenge' with nearby schools.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Ensure that the governing body fulfils all statutory responsibilities in providing a safe learning environment and safe working practices meet safeguarding requirements and recommendations in full by:
  - ensuring, as matter of urgency, that pupils are safe on the school site
  - making certain that all health and safety requirements for equipment and services are met fully
  - ensuring that the senior leaders have a much greater impact on school effectiveness by increasing the rigour of their quality assurance systems to monitor the site and risk assessment routines.
- Continue to accelerate the rate of pupils' progress and improve their achievement, especially in Years 3 and 4 by:
  - Making use of and building upon the effective and inspiring practice that already exists in the school, and increasing the proportion of teaching that is outstanding
  - providing more activities that use thought-provoking approaches that inspire pupils
  - ensuring that teachers are consistent in providing pupils with written feedback and well-defined steps for further improvement.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Pupils make good progress and thoroughly enjoy their learning. Results in recent Year 6 tests, supported by inspection evidence, show that attainment in English and mathematics is continuing to rise. All pupils are exceeding what is expected of them including the more-able. In lessons, pupils are challenged to think for themselves and apply their skills to problem-solving situations. For example, pupils were observed to be totally absorbed in identifying graphical and number sequences. When activities were not so well matched to age and ability and the teacher's questioning did not probe understanding sufficiently, progress slowed. On these occasions, pupils were seen to become a little restless. Initiatives to promote more imaginative and accurate writing are successfully improving skills, although the presentation and layout of pupils' work often lacks refinement and sophistication.

The pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is apparent in the good and sometimes excellent relationships they have with each other and with adults. Older pupils display exemplary attitudes when listening to each other's ideas.

Pupils report that they feel safe and this is reflected in a pupil's comment, 'Kids here are nice and friendly'. They have a good understanding of how to stay safe and are safety

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conscious, such as when learning to ride their cycles along the road proficiently. They benefit from active playtimes and almost all enjoy a healthy school meal. They happily take on responsibility. A good example is the pride shown by older pupils as they organise play activities for younger pupils. High levels of attendance; responsible behaviour; and the confident use of basic skills, all help to prepare pupils well for when they transfer to secondary school.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

<sup>1</sup> 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?**

The quality of teaching is good with some imaginative approaches observed, which visibly capture pupils' interest and test their thinking. Classrooms are lively, friendly places and reflect the headteacher's ambition to develop rich learning opportunities. For example, pupils were observed outdoors, totally absorbed, recreating artists' and naturalists' images with natural materials. When progress is quickest, effective use is made of thought-provoking questions. These are carefully shaped by staff to match pupils' interests and to enhance their understanding. Occasionally, when not quite enough is expected of pupils in lessons and there is less variety in the activities, progress slows. Pupils' work is regularly and positively marked. More and more emphasis is placed upon developing pupils' self- and peer-assessment skills, but step-by-step written guidance for improvement is not consistently provided.

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The good curriculum is increasingly more effective as richer learning opportunities and more memorable experiences are provided for pupils. For example, using theatre groups such as 'Play in a Day' to stimulate their communications skills. The developing use of themes to link subjects together is effectively promoting the use of more inspiring activities, such as using Shakespeare's texts in an animated, computer-generated presentation. Collaborative working within the local small-schools group and with ambassadors from the nearby Sellafield plant, add to the quality and variety of pupils' experiences and their personal development.

Pupils' learning is supported well and this boosts their good personal development. Good links with support agencies helps the school to customise approaches to make certain intervention precisely pinpoints what support each pupil requires. Staff can point to some striking examples in helping pupils and their families overcome difficulties and barriers to learning in order to achieve even better progress. Recently-introduced family lunches, part of the headteacher's 'open' practice, enable parents and carers to play an active part in their children's development.

Many aspects of care, guidance and support are good, including the help and guidance for those whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. However, the major shortcomings in relation to ensuring pupils' well-being and safeguarding result in this aspect of provision being inadequate.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>4</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

A strength of the headteacher's leadership her drive and ambition for improving the quality of teaching and learning. She has established a positive and richer learning climate because she has successfully galvanised the commitment and confidence of staff. Their talents and skills are being steadily nurtured. The increasing confidence of middle leaders is adding to the sharpness of self-evaluation. However, senior leaders recognise the need to build on and share the existing effective and inspiring teaching that is in the school to increase the proportion of outstanding teaching. Equality of opportunity is promoted well and there is no discrimination. The systematic checking of pupils' development is informing planning effectively and helping to eliminate any variations in pupils' progress and attainment. Staff work diligently to ensure that all pupils share the same happy experiences, so that they can achieve their full potential. This is evident in the accelerating rates of progress and the rising attainment. Community cohesion is promoted well with strength in its links with the local and wider community. The school's engagement with

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parents and carers is good and the headteacher has taken positive action to involve them more in their children's development.

The headteacher, ably supported by staff, has worked purposefully to tackle weaknesses. A good deal of success has been achieved in improving the quality of pupils' learning. For example, working collaboratively on the 'Rocket Challenge' with a local secondary school to enrich the quality of the pupils' scientific and technological experiences. However, despite important improvements overcoming the backlog of safeguarding inadequacies, senior leaders have not acted swiftly enough to tackle site, building and equipment safety issues. The governing body is supportive and has much experience and expertise but is not yet holding the school sufficiently to account. The systems and procedures for keeping pupils safe are ineffective. Consequently, the governing body has failed in its duties of ensuring that all safeguarding procedures comply with statutory requirements and recommendations.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

**Early Years Foundation Stage**

All children settle happily and confidently into their mixed-age class. A large majority of children has pre-school experiences, although a small minority does not. All make good progress in all areas of their learning and development from their typically average start points. By the time children enter Year 1, all are working at the levels expected for their age with a small number exceeding what is expected. Lively, fun learning captures the interest and curiosity of children in a range of thought-provoking tasks and activities. Children are happy to explore and investigate the interesting environment around them, both outdoors and indoors.

Regular practising of sounds and letters promotes good early reading and writing. For example, children enjoyed sitting on the grass with Pooh Bear and Frog, sounding out



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letters and then words, before writing the names of each utensil needed for a picnic. Seamless progression to child-initiated activities enhances the use of their language skills, for example using a floor map to give verbal and written directions to Teddy, so that he can get some food. The good engagement of parents and carers enables them to play a positive part in their children's development, although this is not always fully exploited when working on their 'learning adventure'. Children's good behaviour is characterised by their thoughtful attitudes towards each other and their good self-control when playing together. Welfare requirements are met. Secure systems are in place to observe and assess children's development and well-being systematically. As a result, assessments are accurate. The 'learning adventure' incorporates much evidence of their day-to-day learning, for example, using a range of brightly-coloured textiles creatively to design 'Snazzy Socks'. However, not all learning evidence that is collected is held together in the 'learning adventure' journal. The developing confidence and skills of leadership and management is illustrated in the emerging quality and range of inspiring activities which are well-matched to the children's needs.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

**Views of parents and carers**

Just under one half of parents and carers returned the questionnaire to express their views of the school. This is well above the national average level of returns for primary schools. All parents and carers are happy with their children's experiences at school. They feel that the school is well led and managed; helps their children to enjoy a healthy lifestyle and prepares their children well for the future. All These views are in line with those of the inspection team. A very small number of those who responded made comments about the site. Although improvements have been made in line with recommended practice, the weaknesses that remain require urgent attention, and have contributed to the school being given a notice to improve.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Beckermat CofE 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 44 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 93 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	29	66	15	34	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	23	52	20	45	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	18	41	21	48	1	2	3	7
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	48	22	50	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	23	52	19	43	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	43	21	48	4	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	66	15	34	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)	24	55	14	32	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	22	50	22	50	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	36	21	48	2	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	41	20	45	2	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	30	68	11	25	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	29	66	14	32	0	0	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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](http://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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



18 July 2011

Dear Pupils,

**Inspection of Beckermat C of E School, Beckermat, CA21 2YD**

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we inspected your school. We really enjoyed our time at Beckermat, especially the talks we had with you and your teachers. I would like to tell you about some of the positive things we found.

- The school staff work hard to make certain you are happy in school.
- You like school and this is reflected in your good and sometimes exemplary behaviour and high attendance. You know how to stay safe, and you keep fit and make healthy choices.
- The school enjoys excellent links with the local community and local schools and works really positively with your parents and carers.
- You enjoy helping your school to improve.
- The progress you make is good and sometimes outstanding because the school staff work hard to continually improve the way you learn.

Although your school is improving, it needs to make some important changes and improvements to make sure you are always kept safe. It is therefore given a 'notice to improve'. Another inspector will come to check how things are going. The governors and leaders have been asked to quickly make sure that all areas in which you work and play, especially outside, are as safe as they possibly can be.

We have asked your senior leaders and staff to look at more ways of helping you to make faster progress. We think that some of your lessons could be made even more interesting. We have also asked senior leaders to make sure that you are given clear written guidance in your books on how you can improve your work.

You can all play your part by continuing to work as hard as you can.

Very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Clive Petts

Lead Inspector

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