

Beckmead School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101853
Local Authority	Croydon
Inspection number	363662
Inspection dates	20–21 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Mel Blackband

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	52
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Barbara Alcaraz
Headteacher	Jonty Clark
Date of previous school inspection	30 June–1 July 2010
School address	Monks Orchard Road Beckenham Kent BR3 3BZ
Telephone number	020 8777 9311
Fax number	020 8777 6550
Email address	office@beckmead.croydon.sch.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 10 lessons involving 13 teachers. Meetings were held with pupils, staff, members of the governing body and a local authority representative. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school's development planning, governing body minutes, curriculum documents and the school's information on the progress of pupils. The inspectors also scrutinised the pupils' attendance and behaviour records, and policies relating to the safeguarding of pupils. They also took into consideration the questionnaires completed by one parent, 26 staff and 25 pupils.

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

- How well the pupils are making progress in all key stages and subjects.
- How well the pupils behave and attend and how the school is seeking to improve standards.
- How well the teachers meet the needs of each pupil through appropriate teaching, assessment and adaptation of learning materials.
- How well the school's leaders at all levels have addressed the issues raised during the previous inspection.

Information about the school

Beckmead is a specialist school for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. At present, there are no girls on roll. Most of the pupils have additional learning difficulties such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. The local authority looks after a minority of pupils. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is significantly higher than in most other schools. Almost half the pupils are from African or Afro-Caribbean descent but none speaks English as an additional language. The school has had many staff changes, both in teaching and leadership, since the previous inspection when it was given a notice to improve. A temporary headteacher took over in September 2011.

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

3

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. This is because there has been sustained improvement in all the areas identified as causing concern in the previous report.

Although there are a few, mainly older, pupils with high absence rates, the attendance of the vast majority has improved considerably since the previous inspection and is now average. This has in turn enabled pupils to learn more consistently, with the result that their progress has improved and their attainment has risen to be average. The large majority of pupils with additional learning needs have made equally satisfactory progress. Pupils' behaviour has improved substantially this term. The newly appointed acting headteacher has ensured that the school has been extensively refurbished. All classrooms have been made secure places for learning. The pupils report that they feel safe and relaxed and ready for work. As a result, classrooms are quiet and learning is purposeful. The older pupils, particularly, can sometimes become challenging at the end of breaks and lunchtimes but these incidents are dealt with quickly and effectively. Adults are always on hand and vigilant. Pupils are helped to calm down and usually return to their class with their problems resolved. The quality of safeguarding for pupils and the overall care and support they receive are good.

The teaching overall is satisfactory. Teachers maintain good relationships with pupils and this has been improved further by new arrangements so that teachers spend more time with a specific group. Lessons are generally interesting because the teachers plan thoroughly and deliver their lessons with enthusiasm and at an energetic pace. There are inconsistencies, however, in the quality of assessment of pupils' work. Teachers do not always set focused 'small step' targets or adapt activities sufficiently for the needs of each pupil, which can slow down the pace of learning. Standards of marking vary too much across the school. As a result, pupils sometimes do not have a clear idea of how well they are doing or how to improve their work. The curriculum has been strengthened since the previous inspection. It is now broad and balanced and effectively meets the needs of pupils in the primary and lower secondary stages. It is less effective for pupils aged 14 to 16 years. The range of accreditation courses has been increased to give pupils a wider opportunity to study GCSE and Entry Level qualifications. However, there are still relatively few opportunities for pupils to develop suitable vocational skills or to exercise any choice in the subjects they study. The 'community learning team', which has been set up

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very recently, is starting to play a valuable role in involving a small group of disaffected older pupils in community-based and vocational activities.

The expertise, experience and enthusiasm of the current headteacher, supported by a strong, newly formed management team, have enabled him to make significant positive changes to the environment and to the expectations of staff and pupils about their work, attendance and behaviour. Morale is high among both staff and pupils. Leaders are well aware of the need to monitor teaching standards and pupils' progress and well-being more closely than at present and specific detailed action plans are in place. The management team has quickly 'steadied the ship' after a prolonged period of uncertainty in the school's leadership and staffing. As a result of rigorous self-evaluation, there have been many positive changes in the three weeks since the term started. There has been a positive upward trend since the previous inspection and as a result, there is satisfactory capacity to improve further.

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?

- Raise the attainment and accelerate the progress of all pupils by:
 - improving the use of assessment information to ensure that work is consistently well matched to pupils' individual needs
 - ensuring that pupils have clear short-term individual targets which they understand and which show them how to improve their work.
- Develop and extend the curriculum for pupils in the 14 to 16 age range to provide a suitable range and variety of vocational and community-based courses and accreditation.
- Monitor and support those pupils with high rates of absence to ensure their attendance reaches nationally expected levels.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Many pupils enter the school with low levels of attainment and a large majority have additional learning needs. Despite this, most pupils leave the school with a range of GCSE and Entry Level qualifications, albeit at the lower grades. Most pupils enjoy their education and their achievement is satisfactory. The school is successful at teaching reading and those having difficulty make good progress towards becoming independent readers. Pupils' progress, particularly in English and mathematics, is satisfactory and the school's data show a consistent trend of improvement since the previous inspection. There is no significant difference in the achievement of pupils with additional learning needs. Their learning is enhanced through the extra reading tuition they receive. However, the prolonged absence of a few, mainly older, pupils

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significantly slows their progress. Pupils make the best progress when they are motivated by good teaching and find the work suitable to their ability and interests. This was seen in a Year 10 English lesson where pupils were introduced to the text of 'Romeo and Juliet'. Through skilful teaching, which addressed the uncertainties of the individuals, the pupils were confident by the end of the lesson in their ability to look at 'Old English' words and sentences. They understood the main elements of the play and had been introduced to the major characters. This work also contributed well to their speaking and listening skills. In this lesson, their behaviour was excellent, they enjoyed the lesson and achieved well.

Pupils feel safe because classrooms are secure and trusted adults are always on hand to support them. The pupils also support others by helping to calm them down. In this and many other ways, they make a good contribution to their community. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is further enhanced through the newly formed 'nurture groups' in each class. These ensure that a close community is formed where pupils support and care for each other. Older pupils are gradually forming strong links with pupils in other schools and with the local community. Pupils have a good understanding of the value of healthy eating and the benefits of physical activity. The school provides balanced meals and there are well-developed opportunities to take part in sport and to follow a GCSE course in physical education. The pupils are prepared satisfactorily for the next stage in their education. They make satisfactory progress in developing basic skills and their attendance and punctuality have improved considerably. They are well prepared for college life and last year all the Year 11 pupils went into further education.

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	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
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

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How effective is the provision?

Teachers plan effectively to interest and motivate the pupils. In the best lessons, they work well with support assistants so that pupils benefit from the high level of adult support. This gives pupils the confidence to try new things and to make better progress. Staff know their pupils well. This enables them to support the pupils' behaviour effectively. The occasional outbursts are managed well and there are now very few instances where poor behaviour disrupts lessons. Teaching is most successful when pupils have their work marked and assessed carefully and they are made aware of how to improve their work in small steps. This effective practice is not yet consistent across the school and in some lessons, teachers do not always successfully match activities to the pupils' level of learning.

The curriculum is effective in the primary department because of the well-balanced links between different subjects. Although the secondary curriculum is suitably broad and meets National Curriculum requirements, there are few links between subjects. The curriculum for older pupils has significantly improved so that they are able to take a range of GCSE and Entry Level work. A strong focus is placed on the basic skills of English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. There are, however, insufficient opportunities for the older pupils to exercise choice in their examination subjects or to follow vocational courses. Recent work to introduce community-based and vocational learning for some Year 10 and Year 11 pupils is successful but not yet extended to the whole age range.

Pupils are cared for and supported well. They receive good careers guidance, which has resulted in almost all going on to further education or training. The recent creation of 'nurture groups' gives pupils the opportunity to work in small, secure teams with staff who know them well and who can support them through learning or emotional difficulties. These groups eat and work together for most of the day. This has led to good improvements in their personal development and well-being. For instance at lunchtime, the pupils are sociable and relaxed, and table manners and politeness are excellent. Those with the most challenging behaviour and the most vulnerable are supported well. These pupils have individual care plans and staff work closely with the pupils' families and a range of outside agencies.

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

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How effective are leadership and management?

The newly formed leadership team is well aware of the challenges and opportunities which face them. Since their arrival, there have been many positive changes which have had a successful impact on the morale and well-being of staff and pupils. The changes have been fully supported by the active and experienced governing body. Governors are fully informed about the strengths and weaknesses currently in the school and they are directly involved in setting appropriate priorities for the school's development. Leaders at all levels have contributed to detailed action plans which address the school's issues for improvement. Their overriding priorities, indicating effective self-evaluation, include plans to continue to improve teaching standards and pupils' behaviour and well-being, and to establish rigorous monitoring procedures to ensure the pupils' progress. The school has an increasingly effective procedure for gathering the views of parents and carers. The parents' forum has been reactivated and questionnaire responses are becoming more positive as parents and carers see the benefit of changes to the school's procedures. Parents and carers contribute to their children's education at annual reviews and in individual education plans.

Partnerships are developing with other special schools and local secondary schools. These partnerships add value to the pupils' curriculum through opportunities for vocational experience, not least the chance to work on a city farm. There are strong policies to combat racism and bullying. The lack of substantial monitoring arrangements at present, such as the relative progress of different groups of pupils, mean that teachers do not have the information to make equal opportunities even better. Governors are particularly vigilant in monitoring the good safeguarding arrangements. A nominated governor makes regular monitoring visits followed by reports to the whole governing body. The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. There is a developing cohesiveness in the school and pupils are beginning to experience events in the local community such as visits to London landmarks, other schools and through sports fixtures. This area of work is, however, at an early stage of development.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

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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

Views of parents and carers

Only one parental questionnaire was returned but this was positive about most aspects of the school’s provision and impact on their child. There were no comments on the child’s progress or the standard of teaching. Parents and carers are regularly consulted through telephone calls, meetings and their contributions to annual reviews and the pupils’ individual education plans.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Beckmead 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 one completed questionnaire by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 52 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	0	0	1	100	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)	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	1	100	0	0	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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 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.



22 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Beckmead School, Beckenham, BR3 3BZ

Thank you for welcoming my colleague and me into your school. We could see that you like all the recent changes to the school and that you respect your new environment. Judging from the school's records and our own observations, your attendance and behaviour are also much improved. We judge that the school is giving you a satisfactory standard of education which is an improvement from the previous inspection. Well done! You have made a big contribution to this success.

These are the main things that have improved or are already good.

- You are making better progress in your work than you were during the previous inspection. This is because your behaviour and especially your improved attendance mean you concentrate for longer and achieve more.
- The school staff make sure you are safe. For instance, the recent changes to the locks in the school mean that security has been improved.
- The school staff provide you with a good standard of care and support. You say you can always talk to a trusted adult and that adults listen to you and help you.

We have asked the headteacher and staff to do three things to improve the school still further.

- Mark and assess your work very carefully so that you are given targets to aim for and which help you to understand how to make your work better.
- Provide pupils in Years 10 and 11 with a wider choice of relevant courses which will prepare them better for moving into further education or training.
- Work even harder to make sure that those of you with poor attendance come to school much more often as it will have a really beneficial effect on your progress and confidence.

You can help the school by continuing to improve your behaviour and working to the best of your ability.

Yours sincerely

Mel Blackband
Lead inspector

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