

Beaconhill Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122193
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	380418
Inspection dates	5–6 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Margaret Armstrong

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	179
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Woodhouse
Headteacher	Amanda Forbes
Date of previous school inspection	15 June 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 11 lessons, taught by eight different teachers, and held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors looked in detail at the following: the school development plan and safeguarding policies; the school's data on pupils' progress; and systems for monitoring the quality of teaching. They also analysed and scrutinised responses in 74 questionnaires returned by parents and carers. Staff and pupils' questionnaires were also scrutinised by the inspection team.

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

- How well children achieve in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The quality of teaching and learning and its effectiveness in accelerating pupils' progress and raising achievement for all pupils, particularly the more able.
- How effectively leaders and managers monitor, review and evaluate the impact of their actions on outcomes for pupils.

Information about the school

This is smaller-than-average sized primary school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, although a higher-than-average number of pupils have a statement of special educational needs. A very small number of pupils are looked after by the local authority. The school has achieved Healthy Schools status and the Activemark.

There is a children's centre located on the school site, which is managed independently of the school and did not form part of this inspection. A separate report on this provision can be found on the Ofsted website.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school where every child really does matter. The headteacher's success in sharing her ambitious vision for the school is demonstrated by the good team spirit which has developed and the rapid improvements which have been made since the last inspection. Strong relationships and excellent pastoral care result in pupils' good behaviour and enthusiasm for learning. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and feel safe and secure. Consequently, their attendance is above average. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay healthy. They participate very enthusiastically in sporting activities and talk knowledgeably about their involvement in special events such as the Million Meals project. The contribution pupils make to the school and wider community is outstanding. For example, they are very proud of the work they have done to improve the school's grounds. The school's engagement with parents and carers is good and most are very appreciative of the work of the school. They speak highly of the 'caring environment where all children are supported to achieve their potential'.

From starting points that are well below those expected for their age, pupils make good progress and achieve well. As a result, attainment is average by the end of Year 6 and improving strongly. The good start children make in the Early Years Foundation Stage continues and accelerates through the school, building successfully upon previous achievement towards challenging targets. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils who are vulnerable due to their circumstances progress as well as their peers as a result of effective support. This is a result of high expectations and consistently good teaching. Mostly, teachers' assessments are accurate and support learning well. However, teachers occasionally do not make effective use of information from assessments to plan sufficient challenge for the more-able pupils, particularly in writing. The well-organised, imaginative curriculum enables pupils to follow their own enquiries and make personal choices. This fosters pupils' engagement, interest and desire to learn. However, the curriculum does not yet provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in other subjects.

Leaders at all levels are involved in monitoring the performance of the school and in taking steps to improve it. As a result, teaching is improving rapidly and attainment is rising. The school evaluates itself well. Consequently, areas for improvement identified at the last inspection have been tackled successfully. Good partnerships with specialist agencies, the parish church and partner schools contribute to the good

outcomes of the school. All of these successes indicate the school has good capacity to sustain improvement. Resources are managed well to secure good outcomes for pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and accelerate progress in writing by:
 - ensuring that teachers make better use of information from assessments to plan a higher level of challenge for the more-able writers
 - broadening the range of curriculum opportunities to enable pupils of all abilities to practise their writing skills in all subjects.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy school and have good attitudes to learning. They arrive punctually, respond well in lessons and take a pride in their work. Pupils work productively and are interested in their learning. Exemplary relationships ensure that pupils behave well and are motivated to learn. In lessons they tackle new challenges with energy and a keenness to succeed. As a result, achievement is good. From well below expected starting points, pupils make good progress and reach average levels of attainment in reading and mathematics. Attainment in writing is not as high, particularly for the more-able pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress due to the carefully tailored support they receive.

The dedication of the school in providing an environment in which pupils can improve their self-esteem has been very effective. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the interesting experiences the school offers them. They thoroughly enjoy the wide range of physical activities and have a good understanding about the importance of keeping safe within school and within the local community. They have an excellent understanding of what makes a healthy lifestyle. Pupils are very proud of the contributions they make to the school. They act very responsibly as 'buddies' and 'play leaders' and actively support community events. School councillors make an exemplary contribution to the work of the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils fully understand the school's expectations which underpin the positive ethos of respect and consideration for others. They are sensitive to the needs of others, have a strong sense of right and wrong and understand differences.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2

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

The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers set high expectations for all pupils. They understand how their pupils learn best and in lessons provide a good balance of teacher input and pupil activity. Consequently, pupils have regular opportunities to learn independently or to take the lead in learning. Pupils are eager to learn because teachers use a range of exciting activities and resources. For example, they use information and communication technology (ICT) expertly to reinforce key teaching points. As a result, lessons have good pace and pupils engage well. Teachers are skilled at intervening when pupils need individual support. They are quick to pick up any misconceptions in their learning and provide clear guidance to enable pupils to achieve well. Teaching assistants are well-trained and provide good support for individuals and groups. Generally, teachers make good use of their knowledge of pupils' previous learning to ensure tasks are smartly tailored to pupils' needs. Occasionally, teachers do not use this information effectively enough to ensure the needs of the more able are met fully.

The curriculum has been developed well to enhance pupils' motivation to learn. It is adapted carefully to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There is a consistent approach to teaching literacy, numeracy and other key skills across the curriculum. However, the curriculum does not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to practise and develop their writing skills in other subjects. An extensive range of activities is available to all pupils during the school day. These include opportunities to participate in exciting projects for dance, art, sport and 'geocaching'. Pupils benefit from a good range of experiences outside school. They talked excitedly about visits to Hawkthirst Activity Centre and their involvement in sports festivals. The partnership with other schools and external providers is supporting the school well in developing its curriculum. As a result, pupils benefit from specialist support in areas such as 'boxercise', tag rugby and golf.

The outstanding pastoral care pupils receive from the headteacher and staff results in good behaviour and a very caring atmosphere in and around school. Well-established lines of communication ensure that parents and carers are well-informed, and opportunities for them to engage with and support their children are effective. For example, the work of the experienced emotional literacy support assistant has been instrumental in extending links with home and school. The strongly inclusive ethos of the school and teachers' excellent knowledge of pupils ensures that concerns are quickly tackled. Very close working with external agencies means that support for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable is rapid and effective, involving a breadth of specialist expertise. Transition at all stages is a very positive experience and ensures pupils settle quickly into new surroundings.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's success in communicating high expectations is demonstrated in the good team spirit which pervades the school. The school's positive reputation in the community and the good outcomes for pupils are due to the effective support of staff and governors who share the headteacher's values and ambitions. As a result, the school is effective in promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination. Leaders make good use of a range of monitoring activities to improve the quality of teaching and other aspects of provision. For example, they have been successful in making effective use of data to track the progress of those pupils at risk of poor attendance and to target support where it is most needed. As a result, attendance is above average and rising.

The school promotes community cohesion well. Leaders succeed particularly well in ensuring that pupils thrive in a cohesive school community. Good partnerships with specialist agencies and the parish church ensure that pupils are supported well. Action is being taken to raise pupils' awareness of different cultures in the United Kingdom. The governing body has extended its role in holding the school to account and is influential in determining the strategic direction of the school. There is a clear understanding of key responsibilities, especially of those which require robust assurance checks. As a result, safeguarding arrangements are good, ensuring the safety and well-being of pupils and staff.

These are the grades for the 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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle well when they first start in the Nursery and quickly adapt to the daily routines. This is because adults are attentive, listen to the children and create conditions in which children feel welcomed, safe and secure. From well below expected starting points children make good progress and achieve well. Nevertheless, their attainment is still below the level expected by the time they leave the Reception year, although this does vary from year to year depending on children’s ability and readiness to learn.

Parents and carers are pleased with the progress their children make. Induction arrangements are good and parents and carers appreciate the ‘learning journals’ which ensure that there is effective dialogue between home and school. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are integrated fully and benefit from high-quality support. Teaching and learning in the Nursery and Reception class are good. Activities, both inside and outside, are interesting and motivate children, helping them to enjoy their learning. For example, children in the Nursery thoroughly enjoyed the ‘water toys’ activities which were set up in one of the outdoor learning areas. Occasionally, opportunities to extend learning through activities children choose for themselves are missed. Relationships are very positive so children interact well with each other and with the dedicated staff. Leadership and management are good and there are appropriate plans in place to develop provision further. Arrangements for the health, safety and welfare of the children meet requirements.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	2
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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The response rate from parents and carers to the Ofsted questionnaire was significantly higher than the national average for primary schools. Parents and carers were extremely positive about the school. They hold the headteacher and her staff in very high regard and greatly appreciate the care and support given to their children. They were particularly impressed with the way the school responds, not only to their children’s needs, but also to the needs of parents and carers. They were confident that any concerns were listened to carefully and acted upon quickly. The school received much praise for the efforts it makes to provide a very caring environment in which pupils achieve very well. For example, one parent noted, ‘The school is very good at supporting children to develop their talents and skills.’ A few individual concerns were not shared by the vast majority of parents and carers. Inspectors investigated these and during this inspection found no cause for concern.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Beaconhill Community 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 74 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 179 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	52	70	21	28	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	43	58	30	41	0	0	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	42	57	31	42	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	50	33	45	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	45	61	28	38	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	42	57	31	42	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	41	55	31	42	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)	41	55	28	38	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	39	53	33	45	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	37	50	29	39	5	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	46	35	47	3	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	41	55	32	43	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	43	58	31	42	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 is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and is 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 up 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.



7 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Beaconhill Community Primary School, Cramlington, NE23 8EH

Thank you very much for making our recent visit to your school so enjoyable. We were made to feel very welcome and you looked after us very well indeed. We enjoyed talking to you and especially liked the way in which you care for each other and your school. Yours is a good school and we found it to be a happy place where people get on very well and work closely together. We know the adults in your school make sure you are well looked after and we know you feel safe in school. You should be very proud because you are polite, respectful and your behaviour is good. You have an excellent understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle and you make an outstanding contribution to your school and local community. We were particularly interested in the way you take responsibility as members of the school council and organise fundraising. Your teachers know each one of you very well and find lots of interesting ways to help you learn and develop. As a result, you make good progress and achieve well. You clearly enjoy your learning and your attendance is improving. Well done!

The headteacher, staff and governors have your best interests at heart and they are dedicated to making sure you do well. It is clear you have many lovely experiences at school but I have asked your headteacher and governors to help you even more. I have asked them to make sure your teachers plan more challenging work for those of you who are working at a higher level, particularly in writing. We also think you all need more opportunities to practise your writing skills in other subjects.

You can continue to help by coming to school regularly, working as hard as you can and by helping each other in and around school. Thank you again for welcoming us to your school. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Margaret Armstrong
Lead Inspector

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