

# Benwick Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	110627
<b>Local authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	378134
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 June 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Martin Beale

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	92
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Stewart Lacey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jackie North
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 March 2007
<b>School address</b>	High Street Benwick March PE15 0XA
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<b>Fax number</b>	01354 677266
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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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<b>Inspection number</b>	378134



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Martin Beale

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Over five hours were spent observing teaching and learning in parts of 11 lessons taught by three members of staff, holding discussions with pupils about their learning and hearing pupils read. The inspector held meetings with staff and members of the governing body including the chair. The inspector observed the school's work and scrutinised pupils' books, assessment data and case studies of specific pupils. He also looked at evidence of the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning. He analysed 27 responses to the questionnaire returned by parents and carers.

## Information about the school

Most pupils in this small primary school are from White British backgrounds. There has been a sharp increase this year in the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, to a broadly average level. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, is above average. Their needs are mostly associated with moderate or specific learning difficulties. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Reception class along with Year 1 pupils. The remaining pupils are taught in two mixed-age classes. The school has received the International award for the third time and the Basic Skills award. The school meets the current floor standards, which set the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The headteacher has been appointed since the last inspection as have several other teachers.

The school shares its site with a privately run pre-school. This provision is not managed by the governing body and as such is inspected separately.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

## Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. It is not good because not all lessons are well taught, boys do not achieve as well as girls in writing, and marking does not give pupils sufficient guidance to improve their work. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- The good progress made by the children in Reception is not built on consistently across the rest of the school. Pupils make satisfactory overall progress; attainment is average and rising by the end of Year 6. Progress is good in reading, particularly in the pupils' knowledge and application of letters and sounds. However, boys do not always find writing interesting and there are few opportunities for developing writing across subjects.
- Teaching is more effective in Reception and Year 1 than in other classes. The best lessons are well organised so they meet pupils' needs well and move learning forward at pace. When less effective, teachers talk for too long and do not use questions to probe and extend pupils' thinking and to ensure that they are all engaged and focused on their learning.
- Although most pupils are keen to learn and show respect and consideration for others, some pupils lose focus when teaching does not grab their attention. This is either not picked up or teachers have to stop their lessons to correct them. Pupils say that they feel safe in school.
- Regular monitoring of teaching through classroom observation, scrutiny of work and data analysis enables the headteacher to identify where action is needed to improve teaching. However, the action taken has not always been concerted and rigorous enough so that all teaching reaches the quality of the best.

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

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- Raise the achievement of boys in writing by:
  - consistently providing interesting and motivating contexts to stimulate the imagination
  - planning greater structure to the development of writing across subjects.
- Bring greater consistency to teaching and increase the proportion of good and better lessons by:
  - introducing a rigorous programme to develop staff expertise, including sharing of good practice, and monitoring its impact
  - developing teachers' questioning skills
  - setting clear expectations in classrooms for pupils' independent work
  - ensuring that teachers achieve a better balance between their talk and pupil engagement in learning.
- Implement a policy for marking that:
  - sets clear targets for improvement of pupils' work
  - provides effective feedback on the steps pupils need to take to meet their targets
  - provides time for pupils to reflect on and respond to their teachers' marking and other feedback.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Children make good progress in Reception from skills below those expected for their age on entry, although attainment remains slightly below average by the time they enter Year 1. They become increasingly independent and learn to collaborate well when following their own ideas. Many opportunities are provided for developing their writing as this is the weakest aspect on entry. Several children showed great interest when writing sentences to describe what they could see in seaside postcards.

Reception children make good progress in their understanding of letters and sounds as seen when identifying the 'igh' sound in words such as 'bright'. This good progress continues at Key Stage 1 and pupils apply their understanding well when meeting unfamiliar words. Attainment in reading is broadly average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils generally enjoy reading and can talk about the type of books and the authors they enjoy most.

The consistently good learning in Reception and Year 1 leads to the rapid development of new skills, such as learning the value of coins when working out the cost of their food 'grab bags'. Pupils in all classes apply their number skills to solve problems, but at times the accuracy of their basic number skills lets them down. As a result of early assessment, often through close links with the pre-school, support is targeted carefully to meet the learning difficulties of disabled pupils and those with

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special educational needs. Their progress varies; some pupils are very successful while others make progress in quite small steps.

Parents and carers feel that their children make good progress, although inspection evidence indicates that this is not consistently the case and progress is satisfactory. Year 6 test results have followed a rising trend and were broadly in line with the national average in 2011. Results were higher in reading and mathematics than in writing. Current attainment is at a similar level, with writing still the weaker aspect, particularly for boys. The school has very recently introduced work in English based on graphic novels and comic book heroes. This is engaging boys more and stimulating their imaginations, but is in its infancy and is yet to have a sustained impact on their achievement in writing.

### **Quality of teaching**

Reception children are taught well in an environment with good resources where learning is linked successfully between activities inside and out. They are challenged by working with Year 1 pupils, particularly during very effective adult-led sessions developing literacy and numeracy. Every opportunity is taken to reinforce these skills and to encourage children to use their imaginations. The adults are skilled at knowing when to intervene to move learning forward and when to stand back to let the children develop their own ideas.

Parents and carers as well as pupils who responded to the questionnaire are mostly of the view that teaching is good. However, the inspection found that consistently good teaching is not a feature in all classes. In a good mathematics lesson for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6, looking at multiplication methods, the teaching planned activities at several different levels and included a challenging practical activity for more able pupils. Skilled questioning, such as when the teacher in a well-taught session for Reception and Year 1 targeted her questions to challenge the thinking of specific pupils, is not a consistent feature all lessons. Furthermore, some introductions are too long and leave insufficient time for pupils to undertake activities in order to develop and practise their skills. The other adults in each classroom are briefed and deployed effectively, particularly when undertaking specific activities for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Teachers enable pupils to develop team-work skills by working collaboratively either on particular activities or in discussion when they share their ideas with each other. They encourage them to think creatively such as when responding to books they are reading individually or studying as a class.

Reading is taught well through carefully-structured sessions teaching letters and sounds, which are matched closely to pupils' needs and give plenty of opportunity to practise their new skills. Pupils' daily reading at home is supplemented by younger pupils reading each week to an adult in school, and more frequently for those falling behind the standards expected for their age. Well-planned guided reading sessions provide opportunities for the pupils to discover new authors and styles and develop more advanced skills of research and comprehension.

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A minority of pupils said that they did not always know how well they are doing or what to do to improve their work. Marking does not consistently give pupils clear steps to be taken so that they can meet their targets. Where suggestions are given, pupils do not always have the time to take them on board and teachers do not routinely check that their comments have been followed through.

**Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Most pupils behave well in lessons and conduct themselves considerately around the school. Almost all pupils have good attendance levels and are punctual to school. Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities such as helping newcomers settle into school. They are interested in learning and doing their best, greatly valuing the praise they receive when they do well. The rewards system is consistently applied by staff, but they do not always make their expectations clear when pupils are working independently. Individual pupils lose concentration when lessons do not engage their interest and do not persevere when set tasks to undertake by themselves or with others. This reflects the mixed views of parents, carers and the pupils about behaviour in the school.

Pupils feel safe in school, which is a view overwhelmingly supported by their parents and carers. 'Bikeability' and e-safety training help pupils to identify and cope with potential risks they might face. Pupils say bullying is rare and dealt with effectively by staff. Incidents tend to be when friends fall out with each other and need help to get back together again. However, there have been a small number of incidents of racist name-calling by pupils who did not always understand the significance of what they had said and were apologetic when they realised its implications.

**Leadership and management**

The headteacher and deputy headteacher work well together. They give the school a clear direction and have overseen improvements in achievement in Reception, progress in reading and Year 6 test results. Sharper monitoring and self-evaluation have enabled them to identify with greater precision where further action is needed. However, although there are some good features to teaching, there has not been sufficient impetus in the drive to move all teaching up to this level and so teaching is only satisfactory overall. There are few opportunities for teachers to observe good practice and so improve their own performance. Subject leaders have not been sufficiently proactive in supporting the drive to move teaching to a consistently good level. This means the school has only satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

The governing body has undergone significant changes in membership recently and has struggled to recruit a full team. However, by changing the pattern of meetings and working methods, governors have been able to keep checking the progress of the school and challenging it to improve further. The governing body has been closely involved in supporting improvement planning such as the re-opening of a fourth class from September 2012. Governors also ensure the safety of pupils and

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that procedures for safeguarding their welfare are implemented by staff as required.

The curriculum is planned carefully to meet the needs of pupils in mixed-age classes, and makes a sound contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The International award reflects the school's emphasis on recognising and celebrating other cultures and its success in broadening the pupils' knowledge of the wider world. Links between subjects are tenuous and the development of key skills across subjects, such as writing, is not planned coherently. This partly accounts for the lower achievement of boys. The progress of all pupils is checked carefully, but the gender gap in writing shows the limitations of the impact of the school's work to promote equality and tackle discrimination.



## 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



21 June 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Benwick Primary School, March, PE15 0XA**

I would like to thank you all for making me so welcome when I visited your school. You were very polite and keen to tell me all about your work and your school. Your responses to the questionnaire also gave me a valuable insight into your thoughts. I would also like to thank the Year 6 pupils who showed me around on the first morning. They were great ambassadors for your school.

I have judged that Benwick is a satisfactory school. Everyone works together to help you to stay safe. Almost all of you attend well and are punctual to school. The youngest of you have a good start in Reception and Year 1 because teaching is consistently good. Your progress is satisfactory across the rest of the school, but you make good progress in reading and clearly have found particular types of books that you enjoy.

I have identified three main areas where I judge the school can improve. Therefore, I have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to:

- help boys to do better with their writing
- improve the quality of teaching so that you can all learn more rapidly
- make marking more helpful in the guidance it gives you to improve your work.

You can play your part in this, particularly as some of you could concentrate and work harder in lessons.

Yours sincerely

Martin Beale  
Lead inspector

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