

# Beacon Hill Community School

Market Square, Aspatria, Wigton, Cumbria, CA7 3EZ

## Inspection dates

4–5 June 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that has serious weaknesses.

- Students' achievement is inadequate. Not enough students make the progress they should, particularly at Key Stage 4.
- The improving progress identified at the last inspection did not have time to impact on students' examination results at the end of Year 11 in 2013 or eliminate completely the underachievement across the different subjects for the current students.
- The achievement of Year 11 students who left the school in 2013 was significantly below the national average in English, mathematics and science. Too many students do not make enough progress from their starting points.
- Teaching requires improvement. It is not yet consistently good and too little is outstanding to enable students to make rapid enough progress needed to eliminate their previous underachievement.
- Teachers do not always take account of the range of abilities in each class. This hampers the progress of some students, particularly boys and the most able.
- Students are not given consistently good feedback in teachers' marking about how to improve. They do not make use of the feedback they are given.
- Although senior leaders recognise what needs to be done to improve the school, not all leaders are equally rigorous in monitoring the quality of teaching to bring about the rapid improvement needed in the school's overall effectiveness.

### The school has the following strengths

- The school's leadership has a clear and detailed understanding of where improvement is required and action plans are targeted accurately. These actions are bringing about improvements in teaching and students' learning, particularly through effective support programmes.
- Students achieve well in English literature, chemistry, physics and design and technology.
- The behaviour of students is good. They show good levels of maturity in lessons and around the school. They say they feel safe. The school has strong systems to support students.
- Relationships between staff and students are very good. Students value the wide range of opportunities available to them for learning beyond the classroom.
- Governors provide good support and challenge to the school. They are united in their determination to improve the school.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 17 lessons and parts of lessons. Two observations were conducted jointly with the members of the leadership team.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, members of the leadership team, three groups of teaching staff, including middle leaders, two governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and two local authority representatives.
- Inspectors spoke to many students in lessons and at breaks and during lunchtimes. They also listened to students read in Year 7 and spoke formally to two groups of students.
- The inspectors looked at a range of evidence including the school’s improvement plan, the school’s own evaluation of its work, data for tracking students’ progress, students’ work, and documents relating to safeguarding, the quality of teaching and teachers’ professional development.
- Inspectors took into account the responses of the school’s own surveys from parents and students and 25 responses to the staff questionnaire. There were no responses to Parent View, Ofsted’s online questionnaire for parents.

## Inspection team

David Griffiths, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Patrick Feerick	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Beacon Hill Community School is much smaller than the average secondary school. The number on roll is similar to the previous inspection.
- The proportion of students supported through the pupil premium is above the national average, although the number of students in each cohort is small. The pupil premium provides additional funding for children in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- A well-below average proportion of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds, and none speaks English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students identified with special educational needs and supported through school action is average.
- The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school uses the alternative provision provided by the West Cumbria Achievement Zone for a very small number of students in Year 11.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

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

- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching, so that it is good or better, in order to raise students' achievement by:
  - widely sharing the good practice that already exists in the school
  - making sure that the work set is consistently of the right level of difficulty for all students, including the most able, and fully engages them in lessons
  - providing opportunities for students to explore what they are learning about in greater depth
  - ensuring teachers check that students fully understand what they are learning during the course of the lesson and adjust their teaching to challenge or support when necessary
  - ensuring marking and feedback provided to students are of a consistently good quality so they know exactly what they need to do to improve, with an expectation that they act on such advice.
- Increase the rate of students' progress in English, mathematics and science, particularly for boys and the most able by:
  - raising teachers' expectations of students' capabilities and ensuring that the targets for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 are sufficiently clear and challenging
  - giving students more opportunities to develop their extended writing skills in different subjects
  - ensuring that writing tasks provide a good stimulus for, and hold the attention of, boys in developing their writing skills
  - providing further training for staff on the use of assessment information so there is greater consistency in their expectation of the progress students will make
  - improving achievement and strengthening teaching in science.
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers to accelerate the pace of improvement by:
  - making sure that the systems to track students' progress are more effective in helping to secure improvements in achievement

- ensuring that leaders at all levels, including subject leaders, are equally rigorous in monitoring the quality of teaching and are able to contribute fully to the improvement of performance in their areas of responsibility
- ensuring that weaknesses in the leadership and teaching of science are urgently addressed.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is inadequate

- Students enter the school with standards that are below and often well below national averages in English and mathematics. Each year group is very small and, consequently, the ability range of each cohort impacts considerably on the school's overall measures of students' attainment.
- The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE grades A\* to C including English and mathematics improved slightly in 2013 but remained well below the national average. The progress for these students from their starting points in Year 7 was inadequate. Although students' progress was said to be speeding up at the last inspection there was not enough time for this to have sufficient impact on the examination results in 2013.
- Results in 2012 and 2013 showed that the school failed to tackle the gap between the achievement of boys and girls, and both groups underachieved. Boys in particular underperformed in English, mathematics and science in 2013. Current data show that targeted work with boys is having some impact, although this remains inconsistent. For example, although improving, the progress of boys in English and mathematics in Year 8 and Year 9 is still inadequate.
- Whether students make enough progress in lessons depends upon how well teachers use assessment information to prepare lessons. Some staff use this information well so that activities are matched closely to the students' next stage of learning and, consequently, they make good progress. When teachers do not consider students' differing needs and abilities, this results in all students being given the same work and the progress, particularly of the most able, is limited.
- Students' progress across subjects is too variable. In some subjects students achieve well, including English literature, design and technology, chemistry and physics. However, the school has not analysed the reasons why students make better progress in these areas and, as a result, good practice has not been shared widely enough to help support improvements in other subjects where students do not do as well.
- The achievement of students supported by the pupil premium funding in 2013 was inadequate. Although the numbers were very small only one out of five made expected progress in English and none in mathematics. Those students who left school in 2013 and were known to be eligible for free school meals were almost three GCSE grades behind other students in English and three-and-a-half grades behind in mathematics. The current progress of students supported by pupil premium funding, although inconsistent in mathematics in Key Stage 3, is improving, and attainment gaps between these students and those students not supported by the funding are narrowing because of the carefully targeted intervention that is now in place. This improvement can be seen in the records held by the school and in the progress seen in students' books during the inspection.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are doing better than the previous Year 11 group and currently slightly better than their peers. This is because of the effective interventions and programmes of support which are more tailored to meet their needs. They are now making progress closer to the levels expected nationally for all students and some are doing better than that.
- The school leaders have improved the use of the Year 7 catch-up funding (additional government funding for those entering secondary school with below-average standards in English and mathematics). To accelerate the learning of students who are behind in Years 7 to 9, the school is providing an effective reading recovery programme and extra help with mathematics. The programmes are proving successful and there are a number of examples, particularly in Years 7 and 8, of improvements in numerical skills, word recognition and comprehension skills.
- The school makes use of alternative provision provided by the West Cumbria Achievement Zone for a very small number of students. School records show that students who attend this provision are kept safe and make expected progress.
- The progress of current students is improving, as observed in lessons, school data and students'

work books. A more detailed analysis of students' progress by leaders is helping them to identify underachievement more quickly and is leading to successful interventions.

### **The quality of teaching**

### **requires improvement**

- Over time, the quality of teaching has not been consistently good enough to ensure students make at least the progress expected of them, particularly in English, mathematics and science. While inadequate teaching has been eliminated there is relatively little outstanding teaching. Therefore, teaching requires improvement overall.
- While the majority of teaching is helping students to make better rates of progress, overall it is not consistently strong enough to promote good progress for all students in Years 7 to 11. Students spoken to say that teaching has improved over the last year although they too recognise that quality varies between subjects.
- In several lessons observed by inspectors, teaching failed to take account of the range of students' abilities in each class or the next steps needed to take the learning forward. This is most obvious when all students are given the same standard of work to complete and results in a lack of challenge for the most able. This was also evident in some of the students' books, although overall work in books points to better progress currently being made.
- Expectations of what students can achieve in writing are not always high enough. Students do not have enough opportunities to write at length in other subjects to practise and extend their writing skills. Writing tasks do not always provide an effective stimulus to hold the attention of boys to promote better writing skills.
- Teachers do not always consistently check students' understanding during the course of the lesson and adjust their teaching to challenge or support students appropriately. This also means that sometimes students are not given enough time to fully understand the work and deepen their thinking before they are moved on to another activity.
- Students make good progress when teachers use the information about what students already know to adapt their teaching effectively to maintain an appropriate level of challenge. For instance, in English in Year 8, activities were carefully planned to ensure that students focused on what they needed to do to improve. The teacher's support and guidance ensured that learning moved at a rapid pace and students made good progress.
- Students' progress in reading is speeding up, particularly in Key Stage 3, because teaching ensures reading is a priority across different subjects. Strategies to support those students who fall behind are helping to improve the reading skills of individuals.
- Although the quality of marking varies from excellent to weak, teachers do generally indicate to students where they have made errors and how they can make improvements. However, the process often stops there because teachers do not routinely give students sufficient opportunity to act upon the advice they have been given before they move on to new work.
- Teaching assistants are generally deployed effectively to support students' learning. Their skills are used well to support those students who may be struggling and those with special educational needs.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

### **are good**

- The behaviour of students is good. Staff and students are very positive about behaviour in lessons and around the school. Students move around the school calmly and are polite and helpful to each other. This is underpinned by the school's ethos, which places a high emphasis on mutual care and respect. Students have good attitudes to learning: they work well on their own and with others and strive to do their best. They arrive promptly to lessons and are very quick to settle.
- Students are well prepared, bring the right equipment and are eager to learn. As a result of this, the majority of lessons flow smoothly without interruption.

- Students are proud of their school. They take care of the buildings and grounds, which are free from litter and graffiti. There is good adult presence around the school at breaks and lunchtimes.
- Attendance is improving as a result of the effective systems in place for checking on absence and intervening to support families. Attendance is now average and rates of persistent absence have reduced.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Inspectors talked to many students during the inspection and they say they are happy and feel safe in school. Students understand the potential risks of alcohol, drugs and the internet. Staff take advantage of the small size of the school to ensure they have a good understanding of the needs of the students and their families.
- Students understand the different forms of bullying, such as racist and homophobic comments. They say that bullying is rare and, if it does occur, it is dealt with swiftly and effectively.
- Students are encouraged and are keen to take responsibility. For example, Key Stage 3 students who do not yet read as well as they should greatly value the support they receive from the reading buddies in Year 10 and 11. One student commented that, 'It has really boosted my confidence in reading and I feel like I have improved my English.'

### **The leadership and management**

### **requires improvement**

- Leadership and management require improvement because they have not yet ensured that the improvements in achievement and teaching identified at the last inspection are consistent across different subjects and year groups.
- The headteacher and senior leaders show great determination in driving forward improvement, tackling underperformance and accelerating students' progress. However, not all departmental leaders or subject leaders are contributing fully to the evaluation and improvement of teaching and achievement in their areas of responsibility.
- The leadership of teaching is improving and there is now more good and better teaching. Weaker teaching is being tackled well.
- Systems for tracking students' progress are strengthening and helping to identify more quickly those students who are not doing well enough. The school uses this information to provide a wide range of effective strategies to support students' learning.
- Support programmes and wider professional training are closely matched to the needs of the school and the teaching staff. Teachers spoke highly during the inspection of the good professional opportunities that are made available to them and the impact this is now having on improving the quality of their teaching.
- Curriculum options at Key Stage 4 provide students with a suitable range of academic and vocational choices. Progression routes into further study, training or work are being managed well and reflect strong partnerships with local colleges. In 2013, records show that only one student left with no recorded destination. The leaders are revising the structure of the Key Stage 3 curriculum to promote greater focus on developing students' literacy and numeracy skills in order to strengthen progress in English and mathematics.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effectively promoted regularly through assemblies, form periods and in lessons. Students across the school access a wide range of opportunities that enable them to develop their confidence and experiences, including by becoming reading buddies or young sports leaders.
- The school works successfully to engage its hard-to-reach families and, as a result, this has a good impact on behaviour and attendance. There are a range of initiatives in place to promote good social development, raise self-esteem and support students who have challenging behaviours.
- Many staff completed the voluntary questionnaire for the inspection. The very positive responses are a testimony to the sense of purpose and positive ethos the headteacher has created.
- All safeguarding policies and procedures meet requirements.
- The local authority provides effective support to the governing body. It has ensured it has

access to support and advice so that governors are better placed to hold senior leaders to account.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are highly supportive, knowledgeable and united in their determination to improve the school. As a result of training they have accessed they now know how well the school is doing and what still needs to be improved. They know how well students do at GCSE in relation to other students nationally.
- Governors challenge managers effectively and professionally to ensure that performance-management arrangements are robust and salary progressions are merited. They understand how the school uses pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding and know where gaps in attainment are closing.



## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	112375
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	442415

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	166
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Trevor Gear
<b>Headteacher</b>	Julie Richardson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 May 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01697 320509
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