

# Inspection of a good school: Beacon Hill School

Rising Sun Cottages, Wallsend, Tyne and Wear NE28 9JW

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Inspection dates: 17 and 18 May 2023

## **Outcome**

Beacon Hill School continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are kind and get on well with each other. Pupils like the outdoor gym area, hydrotherapy pool and lunches. Many pupils have complex special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They receive high-quality support from staff so they can access a range of opportunities designed to meet their needs. Staff have high expectations of what pupils can do and achieve.

Staff make sure that pupils are kept safe. At morning drop-off time, a one-way system has been designed to help taxis navigate through the building works. Every pupil is warmly greeted by at least one member of staff. Staff understand pupils' needs in detail, as a result, pupils receive personalised care and support.

Pupils are friendly and polite. Classrooms are calm, well organised and purposeful. Pupils can learn without disruption from others. High staff-to-pupil ratios mean that support is available to help pupils manage their behaviours and emotions.

Pupils are tolerant and respectful of each other. In lessons, they take turns, listen to others and respond positively to teachers. Pupils use a range of communication systems so they can use their voice and be included in all aspects of school life.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Beacon Hill is more than a school. High-quality work between school staff and health professionals ensures that pupils receive tailored, personalised provision to meet the targets set on their education, health and care plans. Staff see every pupil as unique. Personalised learning goals identify exactly what support pupils require. This means that staff know how to get the best out of pupils.

Leaders embrace challenges, of which there are many. Recently, pupil numbers have risen sharply with more complex pupils requiring a specialist placement. There is ongoing building work to expand and improve the current main site. There has been some staff

turnover and a number of temporary staff currently work at the school. However, leaders manage all of these challenges with positivity. Their focus is always on the pupils and how to give them the best possible school experience.

Leaders are in the process of adapting the curriculum. The current formal, informal and semi-formal pathways do not provide sufficient curriculum breadth to meet the increasing range of pupil needs. Additional pathways are being designed so more support will be included in the curriculum to meet these additional needs. To support curriculum improvements, leaders have recently introduced a way of collecting academic, emotional, pastoral and health information about pupils. The new 'evidence for learning' tool enables health, school, other agencies, parents and carers to contribute to an individual's profile. Leaders are then able to plan the best next steps effectively with regard to an appropriate pathway of learning and what wider support might be required.

Joint working with the school nurse team, physiotherapists and speech and occupational therapists is invaluable. Pupils benefit from their expertise. For example, electronic devices with personalised language packages are extensively used to give pupils a voice. Other forms of technology such as switch devices and eye-gaze communication systems are used to support pupils, including those with profound, multiple learning disabilities.

Pupils' personal development is embedded in every part of the school day. The curriculum is designed to engage pupils and develop independence. In addition, as pupils move into key stage 3, there is a formal careers plan in place. Leaders work with external services that provide specialist guidance and support for pupils with SEND. Pupils visit the local community. At key stage 5, students are taught how to shop, manage money and interact appropriately with unfamiliar people. Leaders have organised a club where older students can develop their people skills in a real-life environment. Pupils in key stages 3 and 4 run a café at the Langdale centre. Here, they purchase the food, prepare, cook and serve it to parents and local authority staff. Leaders are determined to prepare pupils for future education, training or work.

Governors have an accurate understanding of the strengths and challenges the school faces. They visit the school to meet with staff and pupils, which gives them the opportunity to hold leaders to account for the actions they take. Staff enjoy working at the school. They feel well supported by leaders and welcome the recent decision to focus the curriculum more on pupils' individual needs.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The safeguarding team meet weekly to discuss any concerns that have been raised. Leaders analyse information and quickly spot where additional school or external agency support is required. Staff receive ongoing training and guidance, particularly around the additional vulnerabilities of pupils with SEND. Leaders track attendance closely and provide home and school support when required. Staff teach pupils how to stay safe online and in the community. School leaders and health professionals work closely together to share relevant safeguarding information. This ensures that swift action can be

taken to help pupils and families. All classrooms are fitted with an emergency alarm so if a pupil suddenly becomes ill, the health team can be immediately alerted.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Due to the recent increase in pupils with more complex needs, the current semi-formal and informal curriculum does not provide enough scope to cover evolving demands. This means that some pupils do not receive a curriculum that is fully tailored to their needs. Leaders should continue to develop learning pathways so pupils can access a bespoke, purposeful curriculum.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in December 2017.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

## **Further information**

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	131544
<b>Local authority</b>	North Tyneside
<b>Inspection number</b>	10255903
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Foundation special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	232
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	35
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Barbara Mills and Deborah Ismay
<b>Headteacher</b>	Justina Terretta
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.beaconhill.org.uk">www.beaconhill.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	5 and 6 December 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school operates across three sites. The Langdale site caters for pupils in key stages 3 and 4. The Linkskill site caters for pupils in the sixth form.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school is North Tyneside’s specialist provision for educating children and young people with severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties, and autism spectrum disorder.
- When required, pupils receive respite care at St Oswald’s Hospice in Newcastle.
- The school is part of the North Tyneside Learning Trust.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic

began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspectors did deep dives in the following subjects: communication and interaction, physical development and personal, social, health and relationships education. The inspectors spoke to leaders about the curriculum and met with teachers from the lessons visited. The inspectors looked at pupils' work and spoke to pupils.
- Inspectors toured the main site and visited pupils at the Langdale and Linskill sites.
- The inspectors listened to a range of pupils read from different year groups.
- The lead inspector met members of the local governing board and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at the single central record and spoke to leaders, teachers, governors and pupils about safeguarding.
- The inspectors considered the responses made by parents to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including any free-text responses. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire and responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.

### **Inspection team**

David Milligan, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

David Penny

Ofsted Inspector

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