

INSPECTION REPORT

BEVERLEY MINSTER CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Beverley

LEA area: East Riding of Yorkshire

Unique reference number: 117971

Headteacher: Mr B. Scott

Reporting inspector: Ms. B. Pollard
OFSTED Inspector Number: 1838

Dates of inspection: 27th – 29th March 2000

Inspection number: 190078

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Voluntary Controlled

Age range of pupils: 5 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: St Giles Croft
Beverley
East Riding of Yorkshire

Postcode: HU17 8LA

Telephone number: 01482 869947

Fax number: 01482 886018

Appropriate authority: Local Education Authority

Name of chair of governors: Ms Janet Walker

Date of previous inspection: 07th October 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	
Ms. B. Pollard	Registered inspector
Mrs. B. Moore	Lay inspector
Mr. J. Barley	Team inspector
Mr. A. Woodward	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

Lincolnshire Education Associates

The Innovation Centre
Europarc
GRIMSBY
North East Lincolnshire
DN37 9TT

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The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Beverley Minster Primary School is a Voluntary Controlled Church of England school with 655 pupils on roll, which makes it much bigger than most other primary schools. Children start school just before their fifth birthday and leave at age eleven. The size of the school has grown considerably since the previous inspection because of new housing and is set to increase until a planned new school is built which should reduce numbers. Three per cent of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and 13 pupils have English as an additional language. The number on the school's register of special educational needs is 85 - 13 per cent of the total roll and is below the national average; ten have statements which is broadly in line with the national average. Most children come from homes in favourable economic and social circumstances and assessment undertaken soon after they join the reception year shows that around a third are above average in ability, the rest being average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is very effective school with some excellent features in important areas such as teaching and learning, leadership and pupils' attitudes. Pupils achieve very good standards by the time they leave and the quality of education provided is high. The school provides very good value for money. The strengths of the school greatly outweigh the minor weaknesses.

What the school does well

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are very good by the time children leave the school.
- The quality of teaching is a great strength of the school.
- The visionary leadership of the school provides clear direction.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are excellent.
- The quality and range of learning opportunities are very good.

What could be improved

- There are inconsistencies in the provision and content of homework.
- The outdoor facilities for those children who are not yet five years of age are inadequate.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has addressed all the issues for improvement in the last report and has made very good progress since the previous inspection in October 1996.

Better consistency in teaching methodology has been achieved by the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, involvement in an Effective Teaching and Learning Project and the introduction of Accelerated Learning techniques through staff training. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching are carried out through classroom observations by the head and senior staff. Assessment skills have improved and teachers are better able to set precise targets for progress in learning. Project work focuses effectively on study skills and includes all the required elements of the National Curriculum.

Teaching and standards in information and communication technology are improving as confidence grows, through the effective management of the co-ordinator, involvement in the National Grid for Learning and major purchases of resources. Plans to provide further for design and technology, although not yet fully in place, are on target.

More efficient use of teaching time has been made by speeding up the time taken between lessons, moving around school and altering the swimming timetable. The length of the school day has increased for Key Stage 2.

The governing body is more proactive and takes a keen interest in the school.

The school development plan provides a long-term vision yet it is practical and is the result of extensive consultation.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	A	B	A	B
mathematics	A	A	A*	A
science	A	A*	A	A

Key

very high A*

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The school's performance coded A* means that standards are in the top five per cent nationally. Five year olds nearly always reach the targets set for their age and often exceed them, particularly in social and personal development, language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. At age seven, standards are well above average in reading, above average in writing and mathematics and average in science. At age eleven, standards are well above average in English and science and very high in mathematics. The improving trends over time are broadly in line with the national average. The work seen during the inspection confirms these standards. When compared with schools with similar characteristics (based on entitlement to free meals) standards are above average in English and well above average in mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2. At the end of Key Stage 1, standards are above average in English and average in writing and mathematics when compared with similar schools. This shows that pupils make good progress as they move through the school. The number of pupils reaching the higher Levels 3 or 5 of the National Curriculum at the end of key stages is, generally, above average and in most instances is well above average or very high which shows that the school makes good provision for the faster learners. It was not possible to see all the other subjects of the National Curriculum during the inspection but of those seen, attainment in information and communication technology is improving; it is good in history and geography and there are particular strengths in art and singing. The school is meeting the challenging targets it has set in a steady trend of improvement.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils are eager to learn and work very hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent. Pupils respect others and can be trusted.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Pupils are mature, independent and responsible.
Attendance	Good. It is usually at over 95 per cent and there is no unauthorised absence.

A particular strength is the ability of the older pupils to put forward coherent, well-reasoned opinions which demonstrate their ability to understand issues such as the environment and the consequences of actions.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very good	Very good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

In all the lessons seen, teaching was at least good or better. It was very good in 40 per cent of lessons and excellent in 45 per cent. It is a great strength of the school and is one of the reasons why standards are so high. It is consistently very good in both key stages and in the reception unit. Particular strengths are the confidence and expertise of staff and their willingness to work together to make the best possible provision for the children. Literacy and numeracy are taught very effectively and help to enhance the standards in other subjects. A significant factor is the high expectations of teachers, which result in demanding work. This principle applies to all children whether they have special educational needs or are exceptionally talented. There is a pupil ethos of always striving to do better and the older children are remarkably well informed about their levels of attainment and what they need to do to improve them. The only minor weakness is the inconsistency in the provision of homework between classes and among year groups.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum is broad and balanced and is enriched by a wide range of educational visits and activities. There is a need for a clearer policy on homework and better provision for some aspects of physical development for the five year olds.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The very good provision and support enables pupils to make good progress and they are well integrated into school life.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. Teachers follow the programmes provided by the support services and classroom support assistants help pupils to make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school has close links with the church and there is a strong Christian ethos which emphasises moral and spiritual aspects. School assemblies make a significant contribution.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good care is taken of pupils and staff know the children very well.

The school is committed to the development of the arts and art and music feature prominently in its curriculum. The distribution, content and amount of homework varies and this causes confusion among parents about expectations. The outdoor play area for the five year olds is on a difficult site and consequently there are limited opportunities for physical activities using large and small equipment. The school has plans to address this.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent leadership and teamwork provides clear direction for the work of the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors make a very good contribution to the management of the school and are actively involved.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There are many strategies to monitor and evaluate how well the school is performing and rigorous targets for improvement are set as a result.
The strategic use of resources	These are used very effectively and efficiently to raise standards.

The leadership and management are particular strengths. The rise in pupil numbers and the introduction of developments have been managed very successfully and staff respond positively to them because they can cope with the pace of change and the excellent team spirit provides support when it is needed. The school knows how to get best value when making decisions.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are expected to work hard and do well • Children like school • Parents find the school approachable • Behaviour is good • Teaching is good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A better range of activities outside lessons • Closer working relationships with parents • Homework varies in amount and content • More information on their children's work • More approachable leadership • Reduction in pupil numbers

Inspectors endorse the positive comments made by parents. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities and an interesting curriculum both in and out of classrooms. Inspectors saw parents helping in classrooms and the children's diaries show that there is an ongoing communication between home and school. There is evidence of confusion among parents about the homework policy which needs clarification. A wide range of information is provided for parents through newsletters, regular parents' meetings and annual written reports of the work of the school. There were complaints over the tone of some of the communications from school but the inspection team examined a range of these and judged the information to be written in a, generally, straightforward and clear way. The school is willing to discuss any matter of concern with parents but there are instances where, despite efforts on both sides, the school has been unable to satisfy some parents over the issues raised. A significant proportion of parents, at the meeting prior to the inspection and in comments on the back of the questionnaires, expressed unhappiness with the overcrowding in school because of the rise in numbers. This should be resolved when a proposed new school is built to serve the rapidly expanding housing estates in the town. The current situation is not having a negative effect on standards because it is so well managed.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Standards in English, mathematics and science are very good by the time children leave the school.

1. By the time they leave the school pupils achieve high standards in mathematics and science and are above average in English in their National Curriculum tests. They are also good at art and singing.
2. In the reception class, children are introduced to demanding work that enables them to move on quickly to the formal aspects of reading, writing and number where they establish firm foundations for literacy and numeracy. In both Key Stages 1 and 2 this early work is built on in a very well structured way that helps children to make steady progress towards the independent learning skills they acquire by Year 6. They read fluently and with understanding, using their considerable phonic skills effectively. They write imaginatively, using appropriate punctuation and a very good range of vocabulary and spelling strategies. Speaking and listening skills are particular strengths and these enable pupils to take part in debates and discussions where they show their competence in putting forward their own opinions based on balanced and reasoned arguments when, for example, discussing the issues surrounding tourism and the environment in St Lucia.
3. Pupils develop a good understanding of the relationships in mathematics and they are confident when applying their numeracy skills in a variety of situations. They bring their own ideas to solving problems - for example, in shopping sums. In Key Stage 1, mental arithmetic skills are developed well and children are knowledgeable about shapes and their properties. In Key Stage 2, pupils work accurately and have a good understanding of place value. They can talk about the various methods they have used and show initiative in developing their ideas.
4. In science, pupils show a very good knowledge of the need for fair testing and they can review their findings intelligently based on their initial hypotheses and predictions, as seen in work on materials and friction. They remember what they have been taught and therefore build up a very good knowledge of scientific processes based on previous learning.
5. The very good literacy and numeracy skills are used very effectively in other areas of the curriculum such as history, geography and science and this helps to raise standards in these subjects. Children use information and communication technology skills to produce statistical analysis of their findings. They understand the impact of events in the past through studies and comparisons of ancient societies such as Athens and Sparta and they are well aware of issues such as stewardship of the environment and the effects of humans on the landscape.

The quality of teaching is a great strength of the school

6. In the reception year and in Key Stages 1 and 2, teaching is consistently very good and is often excellent. In the reception year a wide range of carefully structured and attractive activities help to make learning fun and children enjoy role play in the house of the three bears while developing a love of literature and extending their

vocabulary. Through tasks such as cooking, shopping, measuring and counting they are taught the relevance of mathematics to daily life. Staff provide a high quality learning environment and are constantly seeking to improve the quality of education by evaluating the effectiveness of what they are doing.

7. In both Key Stages 1 and 2, teachers have high expectations and present children with demanding tasks that provide a challenge whatever the capability of the child. Teachers are confident and knowledgeable about how children learn and use a variety of highly effective methods to keep pupils motivated and interested. They are highly skilled at questioning children to test what they know and understand and to extend their thinking. The pace of lessons is brisk and they are very well planned and evaluated.
8. Support staff are deployed very effectively and they make a significant contribution to the standards achieved, as they are well briefed and clear about what children should learn from lessons.
9. The very good teaching helps children to learn at a fast rate and make good progress. Pupils help to set their own targets for learning and are encouraged to monitor their progress towards them. Teachers ensure that children are clear not only about what they are learning but why they are learning and as a result the older children are aware of long-term goals and are well motivated.
10. Teachers are not complacent and seek ways of improving their skills through initiatives such as a Teaching and Learning Project with a teacher training institution and involvement in Accelerated Learning training.

The visionary leadership provides clear direction

11. The strong leadership of the headteacher and key staff is supported very well by an active and committed staff and governing body. There is a 15 year development plan which tries to forecast the skills needed by society in the future and this is broken down into shorter-term goals and priorities which will equip pupils well for future learning. Team spirit is excellent and there is a cohesion throughout the school which is a credit to the management of the many changes introduced and the expansion in numbers.
12. Targets for improvement are set as a result of extensive consultation and progress towards these is regularly reviewed. Those with responsibilities are clear about their roles and confident in carrying out the work required. The pace of change is appropriate but staff are expected to work hard. This is a dynamic school which is confident in the direction in which it is moving.

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are excellent

13. Children develop very positive attitudes to learning in the reception classes and their social and personal development is a strength as they learn to co-operate with classmates in games and activities and take responsibility for taking out and clearing away equipment. Enthusiasm for learning is maintained in Key Stages 1 and 2 and by the time they leave school they are mature and thoughtful students.

14. Concentration levels are high and pupils rise to the challenges set by teachers. They pay close attention to instructions and work hard. They abide by the rules of the classroom and apply the principles of the school's motto Making the Most of Life. The older children show care and consideration for younger ones and they can be trusted to work independently without close supervision. Pupils cope very well with the overcrowded playgrounds as they show respect for others and an awareness of how to share the space amicably.

The quality and range of learning opportunities are very good

15. The curriculum is broad and relevant to pupils' needs. It provides a rich variety of interesting activities both in and out of class. A focus on the arts, through projects such as an arts week and performances to parents, balances the more academic subjects such as literacy and numeracy and this is helping to raise the attainment in art and music. There is a wide range of educational visits and visitors, which includes a residential visit to the Yorkshire Dales.
16. Religious education is given due prominence and acts of worship make a significant contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of the curriculum. There are close links with the local church. Subjects such as history and geography help children to appreciate their own culture and respect that of others.
17. The school makes particularly good provision for children with special educational needs whether this is for learning difficulties or for the acquisition of English for those pupils for whom it is an additional language. A lot of attention is also paid to those children who learn faster than others and their needs are met through extension to activities in lessons, more demanding targets and higher challenges.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

There are inconsistencies in the provision and content of homework

18. The school does not have a clear policy on homework and consequently it is left to the discretion of individual teachers. It is evident from the diaries which pupils keep that some classes are expected to do more homework than others and this occurs not just across year groups but within year groups. The most frequent homework is reading, spellings and tables and sometimes children are asked to do some personal research for a topic. Parents, in the parental survey and at the meeting held prior to the inspection, demonstrated confusion over what is expected and what their role is. They are anxious to help but unclear about what children should be doing and for how long. In classes where homework is handled effectively, it extends the classroom work, good guidance is given, it is marked and feedback is provided for pupils.

The outdoor facilities for those children who are not yet five years of age are inadequate.

19. The difficulties of the site and the need for all playground areas to be utilised because of the large numbers of pupils using them prevent the youngest children in school from having sufficient access to the kinds of equipment that develop their large

muscle co-ordination. The edge of their playground slopes away and is unfenced so it is unsuitable for small apparatus such as balls and hoops and wheeled toys such as bikes and scooters. There is direct access to the school's car park, as there is no restraining gate. The reception classes are timetabled to use the school's hall but only receive a half-hour per week because of the pressure of the large number of classes that have to share it. The school has a site plan for the improvement of outdoor play facilities and provision for the youngest children is included. There is money set aside for this development and the under-fives should be a priority.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

20. The school should:
 - i. establish a clear policy for homework that takes account of the changing needs of pupils as they move through the year groups;
 - ii. give priority to the outdoor play facilities for the reception classes in the site development plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	20
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	18

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
9	8	3	0	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	655
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/A	44

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	85
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	10

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	13

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	26
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	48

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.9
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	54	36	90

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	50	47	53
	Girls	31	33	35
	Total	81	80	88
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (81)	89 (86)	98 (89)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	49	52	49
	Girls	33	35	32
	Total	82	87	81
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (83)	97 (88)	90 (90)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	35	48	83

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	32	33	34
	Girls	44	45	47
	Total	76	78	81
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	92 (84)	94 (83)	98 (93)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	33	34	35
	Girls	44	45	45
	Total	77	79	80
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	93 (83)	95 (85)	96 (94)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	569
Any other minority ethnic group	18

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y7

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	23.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28
Average class size	30

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: YR – Y7

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	358

Financial information

Financial year	1999
	£
Total income	899799
Total expenditure	894111
Expenditure per pupil	1395
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	5686

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	655
Number of questionnaires returned	230

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50	42	6	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	41	47	8	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	30	61	5	1	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	19	53	23	4	1
The teaching is good.	40	51	7	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	48	20	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	44	48	6	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	47	46	3	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	17	51	27	3	1
The school is well led and managed.	19	53	14	8	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	30	56	9	3	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	12	38	26	13	10