



**Office for Standards
in Education**

Inspection report

Beckmead School

Croydon Education Authority

Dates of inspection: 27-28 January 2004

This inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996 and was deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act

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Basic information about the school

Name of school:	Beckmead School
Type of school:	Community Special
Status:	Maintained
Age range of pupils:	8 to 16 years
Headteacher:	Mr K Johnson
Address of school:	Monks Orchard Road Beckenham Kent BR3 3BZ
Telephone:	020 8777 9311
Name and address of appropriate authority:	The governing body, address as above.
Chair of governors:	Mrs L Allen
Local education authority area:	Croydon
Unique reference number:	101853
Name of reporting inspector:	Mrs Glenys Fox HMI
Dates of inspection:	27-28 January 2004

Introduction

1. Beckmead School is situated in Croydon and is a day special school for boys between 8 and 16 years old who have severe emotional, behavioural and social difficulties. The school has the capacity for 85 pupils but there are currently 61 pupils on roll. All the pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need, half are eligible for free school meals and a third are from ethnic minorities. A few of the pupils have learning difficulties but most have abilities in line with the expectations for their age. However, because of their social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, most have missed periods of education through exclusion and non-attendance and, as a result, their attainments are below their potential. The school has an attached family centre staffed by a full-time worker and supported by visiting therapists.
2. The school was inspected in September 2002. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and the school was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.
3. The governors drew up an action plan to address the key issues from the inspection of September 2002. The school was visited by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (HMI) on four occasions to monitor the progress being made.
4. In January 2004, one HMI and an Additional Inspector inspected the school, assessing the standard of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of September 2002.

Main findings

5. In accordance with section 14 of the School Inspections Act 1996, I am of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures, since it is now providing an acceptable standard of education for its pupils. The main findings of the inspection are:
 - the pupils' progress overall has improved considerably since the inspection of September 2002 and is good in most subjects and in individual reading sessions. In English, progress in speaking and listening is good and several pupils have made marked advances in reading, writing and spelling. However, the general standards in literacy are too low. The pupils' progress in mathematics is good and they are developing good skills in the use of information and communication technology (ICT). Progress in science is satisfactory. Too many pupils leave school without qualifications;
 - there has been a steady improvement in the quality of teaching. It was good in half of the lessons and very good in the remainder. The teaching in one lesson was outstanding. Teachers' planning has improved and ensures that the work challenges and interests the pupils and is well paced. The teachers and teaching assistants work together well and have become much more confident in managing the pupils' behaviour and supporting their learning;
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- there has been a significant improvement in the pupils' attitudes to learning and in their behaviour in lessons and around the school. Their responses were good or very good in all but two lessons, but in many lessons, the pupils were easily distracted from their work and found it hard to sit still;
- the school endeavours to provide a suitably broad and balanced curriculum. Subject co-ordinators are working hard to develop and improve the curriculum. The assessment of pupils' progress is not yet rigorous enough;
- pupils in Key Stage 4 attend additional vocational courses at a local college and have a suitably balanced curriculum which includes work-experience placements. The curriculum is well matched to the needs of most of the pupils;
- the school provides a pleasant, safe learning environment. The pupils show respect for the staff, premises and resources. Health and safety issues have been addressed effectively;
- the school is well led and managed, morale is good and all adults work closely together as a strong team. The local education authority's (LEA's) advisers have maintained regular monitoring and advisory visits and have provided good support for the school;
- the governing body has improved in its ability to monitor and evaluate the school's performance. Recent re-organisation has enabled governors to take more effective roles in supporting the school;
- the school is making good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The pupils' personal development is promoted well by the staff who offer very good pastoral support. There are positive relationships between the staff and the pupils and opportunities are provided to reinforce the good school ethos when all pupils are together;
- there are too few links with mainstream schools to support the teachers' professional development, and too few opportunities for reintegration;
- links with parents are very good. The school staff contact parents on a daily basis, often to report good news about the pupils: this is supporting improved home/school relationships;
- procedures for monitoring attendance have improved and overall attendance has improved, although there are still a few pupils, notably at Key Stage 4, whose attendance continues to be irregular. The number of fixed-term exclusions has fallen steadily over the past year and there have been no permanent exclusions.

Key issues

6. In order to improve the pupils' quality of education further, the governors, headteacher, senior managers and staff need to:
- continue to develop links with other schools to enable greater inclusion of pupils and the development of staff;
 - continue to improve all pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and their abilities to manage their own behaviour;
 - continue to develop the curriculum and improve the assessment of the pupils' progress, and ensure that all pupils leave school with the external qualifications which they are capable of achieving;
 - continue to improve the attendance of the pupils.

Inspection findings

Standards achieved by the pupils

7. The pupils' progress overall has improved considerably since the inspection of September 2002 and is good in most subjects and in individual reading sessions. In English, progress in speaking and listening is good and several pupils have made marked advances in reading, writing and spelling. However, the general standards in literacy are too low. The pupils' progress in mathematics is improving and they are developing good skills in the use of ICT. Progress in science is satisfactory.

8. On entry to the school, the attainment of most pupils is below what is expected for their ages. End-of-Key-Stage 2 assessments and tests for 2003 show that no pupil reached the nationally expected standard. The pupils achieved better results in mathematics and science than in English. Two pupils were assessed by their teachers as achieving the expected Level 4 in mathematics. At the end of Key Stage 3, the results improved on the previous year, but six pupils were absent from the tests. Two pupils achieved the expected Level 5 in mathematics and two achieved Level 4 in English and science. At the end of Key Stage 4, seven pupils achieved a pass in GCSE mathematics at grades E-G. Some Year 11 pupils were awarded Certificates of Achievement in a limited number of subjects. The school is considering how to improve ways of recognising the pupils' achievements and to develop accreditation opportunities; this is timely as too many pupils leave school without qualifications. Entry level qualifications have commenced in art, English and maths with Year 9 pupils.

9. The pupils' reading ages are tracked more efficiently from term to term and greater attention is given to the identification of key vocabulary in lessons. Some pupils are becoming more confident in reading aloud. The library is open, well organised and used more effectively as an area for learning. There is a helpful programme of 1:1 reading sessions with the poor readers at the start of most days. The English teacher of the secondary age pupils used some good resources to interest the pupils in a Shakespeare play. The teaching of

English in all key stages has improved as a result of the better deployment of subject specialists. The teaching of mathematics and science is less secure and the school has yet to develop coherence in the curriculum across the three key stages.

The pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. The management of the pupils' behaviour continues to improve, as do the quality of teaching, the pupils' learning and their behaviour. There has been a significant improvement in the pupils' attitudes to learning and in their behaviour in lessons and around the school. Their responses were good or very good in all but two lessons. All staff are quick to recognise a pupil showing early signs of distress and they try very hard to restore the good-humoured working atmosphere which is usual in all classrooms. In many lessons, the pupils are easily distracted from their work and find it hard to sit still. Most of the teachers work well to provide a range of activities which keeps the pupils occupied and learning.

11. The behaviour policy is well understood by staff and pupils and is followed consistently throughout the school. The system for awarding points for good behaviour at the end of each lesson is starting to have a beneficial effect. It worked best when it was discussed with the pupils, with an emphasis on what had gone well. A recent training day attended by the entire school staff enabled them to gain a better understanding of how to respond in a range of circumstances and adopt a common approach.

12. Key stage co-ordinators now take more responsibility for any incident involving their pupils and the end-of-day review at which each pupil's progress is discussed and assessed works extremely well. This ensures that positive feedback to pupils and their parents takes place on a daily basis.

13. The school provides a pleasant, safe learning environment. The pupils show respect for the staff, premises and resources. The classrooms are clean and well decorated and there are good displays of the pupils' work and achievements. There are some exciting plans for further development of the school, to include the addition of four new classrooms and a sports hall. This will improve the facilities for teaching a number of subjects. Health and safety issues have been addressed well; the procedures for child protection have been strengthened, there is a named person for this area of responsibility and all new staff receive training in crisis intervention. Appropriate risk assessments are carried out efficiently.

14. The school makes good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Opportunities for reflection and the consideration of others' needs are well taken in assemblies and in lessons; good examples were seen in the Key Stage 2 assembly and in the personal, social and health education (PSHE) lesson. The personal development of the pupils is promoted well by the staff who offer very good pastoral support. There have been marked improvements the school's ethos because of the clear leadership of the headteacher and senior managers, and the improved morale of all the staff who have gained in confidence and work effectively together as a strong team. The excellent relationships which have been achieved between pupils and staff have enabled the pupils to feel safe and secure at school and this has resulted in considerable improvements in their self-esteem and their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. These aspects are further developed through the very good key stage assemblies and at other times during the day, such as the breakfast club, lunch and break periods when staff and pupils of all ages meet socially. The staff take every

opportunity to praise and encourage the pupils. There are School Councils in Key Stages 2 and 3 that engage pupils in debating a range of issues. In Key Stage 4 there is a Young Enterprise Scheme which involves pupils bidding for contracts to carry out work both in and out of school. The much improved arrangements at the end of the day enable the pupils to leave with their escorts in a friendly and orderly manner.

15. The family centre, as part of the school, offers good support for the personal development of the pupils and for links with parents or carers. Staff from the family centre work more closely with teachers and assistants to support the pupils' social and emotional development. The therapists led a very good session for the Year 8 pupils and staff using stories to prompt drama presentations which led to a good exploration of feelings and reactions.

The quality of education

16. There has been a steady improvement in the quality of teaching. It was good in half of the lessons and very good in the remainder. The teaching was outstanding in one lesson. Teachers' planning has improved and ensures that the work challenges and interests the pupils and is suitably paced. The teachers and teaching assistants work well together and have become confident in managing the pupils' behaviour and supporting their learning. The well-planned lessons ensure that work, which builds on earlier study, is ready for the pupils as they arrive. Lessons maintain a good pace, involve the pupils in making choices and use practical activities effectively. In the best lessons, the pupils attain their targets and improve their confidence, skills and understanding. Good opportunities for speaking and listening and collaborative work are provided, as well as the chance to complete tasks which have been thoughtfully differentiated to match individual needs.

17. In a mathematics lesson at Key Stage 2, the pupils had a good understanding of factors, prime numbers and the properties of isosceles triangles. Key Stage 4 pupils displayed a sound understanding of a range of units of measurement, applying them appropriately in different contexts. An English lesson at Key Stage 2 was very well taught; the teacher had prepared an interesting activity to support the pupils in learning about alternative points of view which provided a good foundation to their thinking about how arguments are constructed. A reward-time session in Key Stage 2 was outstanding. The teacher was encouraging, supportive and used high quality teaching strategies to ensure that the work was understood and completed. An art lesson in Key Stage 3 was planned and taught very well. The teacher maintained very good relationships with the pupils and used examples of pupils' work well to encourage others. In history, Year 7 pupils demonstrated a good knowledge of the causes of the Black Death and the spread and symptoms of the plague. The teachers used a range of resources well to engage the interest of the pupils. Good use was made of ICT; a particularly good example was seen in an English lesson at Key Stage 2.

18. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good; the staff are respectful of the needs of the pupils and command respect from most of them. This has had a significant influence on the improved quality of teaching. The teaching assistants provide excellent support for individuals and small groups as well as undertaking monitoring duties. They are deployed very well by the teachers; a good example was in the Year 6 PSHE lesson when they took part in role play and recorded the pupils' responses well.

19. The school endeavours to provide a suitably broad and balanced curriculum for all its pupils but currently is unable to offer music as a specialist teacher has yet to be recruited. Although music is not taught in Key Stages 2 and 3 there is music therapy for some pupils. In Key Stage 4 the off-site Education Programme includes a weekly music-based project with the Croydon Youth Development Trust. Subject co-ordinators are striving to develop and improve the curriculum. They manage the curriculum very well and its implementation is monitored by the head teacher and key stage leaders. The teachers have all worked hard to improve the schemes of work and make them more relevant to the pupils' needs. They are currently developing a common assessment and monitoring procedure for all subjects. The assessment of the pupils' progress requires more rigour and is an area which the school is seeking to address. Some good practice has developed at Key Stage 2. Homework is regularly set and the younger pupils respond positively to the opportunities to take work home and share it with their parents or carers.

20. The recent reorganisation to ensure that, as far as possible, subjects at Key Stage 3 are taught by specialists has been very successful, especially with regard to the PSHE programme. The current focus on developing and broadening the ICT curriculum demonstrates the willingness of both teachers and teaching assistants to extend their own knowledge and practice in order to enable ICT to play a greater part in lessons in all subjects.

21. The pupils at Key Stage 4 study the core subjects at school and are working towards GCSE and/or entry level qualifications. They also attend accredited vocational courses at a local college of further education, and have opportunities for work-experience placements. The range of accredited courses taught at the school is suitable for the current Key Stage 4 cohort and the co-ordinator has already begun to prepare a programme for the present Year 9 pupils, which will offer them increased opportunities to work towards a range of pre-vocational and academic qualifications.

22. Subject co-ordinators meet with consultants from the LEA who keep them up to date and help them to improve the quality of short and medium-term planning, in order to provide work which is differentiated to meet individual needs. Senior staff continue to monitor progress and provide support when required.

23. There are too few links with the local mainstream schools. There is a programme of well-established sports fixtures and a link with one other special school to support staff development. One advanced skills teacher from a mainstream school has supported the development of PSHE by working well with one teacher. However, there is scope for further development across all areas of the curriculum. There are too few opportunities for some of the pupils to start re-integration programmes. Only a minority of the pupils have re-integrated into mainstream schools from Beckmead.

24. Links with parents are very good. The staff contact parents on a daily basis, often to share good news about the pupils: this is fostering improved relationships between home and school. The staff of the family centre have regular, and usually productive contacts with the pupils' families.

25. Procedures for monitoring attendance have improved, and overall attendance has risen although there are still a few pupils, notably at Key Stage 4, whose attendance continues to be irregular. There are fewer unauthorised absences. The school has good links with the

welfare service. There were very few Key Stage 4 pupils in the school during the inspection. Some were at college and some were absent. Six pupils in Key Stage 4 attend a scheme outside school which offers an alternative curriculum. The school needs to ensure that all pupils in Years 10 and 11 maintain their links with the school until the end of Year 11 so that there are opportunities for them to leave with GCSEs or accredited qualifications. The number of fixed-term exclusions has fallen steadily over the past year and there have been no permanent exclusions. The level of exclusions has fallen because of the improvements in the management of the pupils' behaviour but still remains too high.

Leadership and management

26. The school is well led and managed, morale is good and all adults work closely together as a strong team. The headteacher has a clear strategic vision for the school and has steered the development of a range of effective policies and procedures. The LEA's officers have maintained regular monitoring and advisory visits and have provided good support for the school. The deputy headteachers have worked well to support the school's improvements, notably in the areas of health and safety and in the management of behaviour. The senior management team is committed and works hard to support the drive for improvement. Their understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school is secure and a number of improved procedures are being implemented. The headteacher monitors several school developments well, such as the end-of-day debriefings, and some aspects of health and safety, and he is steering the building programme.

27. The governing body has improved its ability to monitor and evaluate the school's performance. Recent re-organisation has enabled governors to take more effective roles in supporting the school. Governors have a good range of skills and experience to bring to their roles. The chair of governors has a good understanding of the school; she meets regularly with the headteacher to ensure effective communication.

Implementation of the action plan

28. The inspection report of 2001 required the school to address five key issues. These principally related to securing effective leadership and management; improving the teaching; improving the curriculum; improving the health, safety and welfare of the pupils and improving attendance. Overall, good progress has been made and most tasks have been completed, but there is still some work to do.

29. There has been well-targeted support for the staff and the teaching has improved considerably. Work to improve the literacy skills of some of the pupils has been particularly beneficial and the LEA's consultants have provided a helpful programme for the development of subjects and monitoring classroom practice.

30. The leadership and management of the school are now effective; the headteacher has delegated more responsibility to key stage co-ordinators; the deputy headteacher fulfils operational roles well and areas requiring further development have been accurately identified.

31. The deputy headteacher has worked effectively with the LEA's health and safety adviser to address the health, safety and welfare issues. The overall attendance of the pupils has improved and systems for tracking attendance are more efficient.

Appendix – Information about the inspection

The school was inspected under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 by a Registered Inspector and a team of inspectors in September 2002. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and, in accordance with that Act, the school was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.

The school was visited by HMI in March, June and September 2003 to assess the progress it was making to implement its action plan and address the key issues in the inspection report of September 2002.

In January 2004, one HMI and an Additional Inspector returned to inspect the school for two days. The inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996, which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act.

Seventeen lessons or parts of lessons, two assemblies and one registration session were inspected. The pupils were observed at break and lunch times and samples of their work were inspected. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior staff, the chair of governors and the LEA's assigned inspector. Informal discussions were held with other staff and pupils. A wide range of the school's documentation was scrutinised. Account was also taken of the evidence from previous monitoring inspections.

The inspection assessed the quality of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of September 2002 and the action plan prepared by the governing body to address those key issues.

Notes

