

Belmont Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111662
Local Authority	Redcar and Cleveland
Inspection number	289020
Inspection dates	8–9 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Rosemary Rodger

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	393
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Michael Bloomfield
Headteacher	Mrs Brenda Urwin (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2002
School address	Lauderdale Drive Hunters Hill Guisborough TS14 7BS
Telephone number	01287 635332
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This above average sized school is on a small estate in Guisborough. The area served by the school is advantaged socially and economically. Many pupils attend the school from outlying areas. A below average proportion of pupils are eligible for a free school meal. There is a below average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most pupils are White British. The school is currently led by a temporary headteacher who will be replaced by a permanent headteacher at the start of the autumn term. The school has breakfast, day care and after school clubs running on site. The cluster extended schools' group provide a holiday play scheme. The school has achieved national awards including; Investors in People, Basic Skills Quality Mark and Healthy Schools.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Belmont school is an effective and improving school. Good improvements made recently to the quality of teaching have resulted in marked improvements to achievement, particularly in Key Stage 2 which has been an area targeted for development. Leadership and management are good, particularly that of the temporary headteacher. This has had a good impact on improving teamwork, raising standards and providing training for staff. Standards are above average and progress is good, based on the children's above average standards by the end of the Foundation Stage. Parents are fulsome in their praise of the school. They say, 'we are proud to say our children attend Belmont school', and 'we know our children will reach their full potential ...' A few parents expressed concerns about the unavoidable mixed-age classes for some year groups.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They enjoy all the creative aspects of their learning, particularly the good range of activities linked to the forthcoming singing and dramatic performance. Behaviour is consistently good and pupils take their responsibilities sensibly and maturely. Their obvious enjoyment of school is captured well in their excellent attendance levels. Good teaching promotes successful and enjoyable learning. Pupils and parents praise the approachability and helpfulness of all staff. Pupils' work is presented well and the attention to this good presentation is clearly the result of the high expectations in the teaching they receive. The good curriculum is varied and ensures that pupils learn to lead a healthy life because of the high priority to healthy eating and keeping fit. The opportunities provided by the extended schools' activities, arranged in collaboration with the cluster schools, contribute well to enriching after-school clubs and the sporting curriculum. Pupils are well cared for and supported in school. They value that their opinions are important because they, 'get a say as to what we think should happen'. The systems to track the progress pupils make as they go through school are complex and time-consuming without giving staff easy access to the information they need.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has worked successfully to develop a healthy and productive school environment, to initiate improvements and to challenge previous underachievement. Relationships at all levels are good. Governors fully hold the school to account for its performance and showed a good level of determination to appoint the best person available to become the next permanent headteacher. Subject leaders vary in the efficiency with which they carry out their roles and responsibilities therefore this aspect of leadership and management is not as consistently good as it could be.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Quality and provision in the Foundation Stage are good. Two Reception classes and a Nursery class share work together well. Children start school with skills that are broadly typical for this age. They make good progress throughout the Foundation Stage and reach above expected levels in all areas of learning by the time they start in Year 1. Achievement in communication, language and literacy is particularly good. Children demonstrate competent writing skills with several able to write fluent stories. Ideas from popular stories are used well to extend learning outside, for example, to measure the depth of water when objects of different weights are placed in it. Younger children count and match numbers with accuracy, sometimes demonstrating their understanding of adding numbers together. Teaching is good and generally balances

independent learning inside and outside with more focused adult-led small group activities. Occasionally, children work in large groups for too long. Links with parents are excellent: they are visited at home prior to their children starting Nursery and share the experiences of a school lunch with their child. Children develop particularly good personal, social and emotional skills because of the interesting environment and supportive and caring staff. Leadership is good. Children's records and assessments are updated and assessments are appropriately completed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Introduce an assessment scheme that clearly tracks the progress of pupils as they go through school.
- Expect subject leaders to be more accountable for standards in the subjects they are responsible for.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children start Year 1 with standards that are above nationally expected levels in all areas of learning. They are particularly high in personal, social and emotional development. Standards by the end of Year 6 are above average and achievement is good. The results of national tests in the past two years show that pupils were making significantly less progress than expected in Key Stage 2. This situation has improved as a result of the impact of the recent actions to improve teaching and learning. Current standards in lessons are well above those typically seen and are reflected in the recent national test results which indicate that prior underachievement has been addressed successfully. Standards in Key Stage 1 are generally above average, although recent national assessments show a fall in the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well and benefit from well planned intervention lessons that they thoroughly enjoy.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils relate positively to each other and as a consequence their behaviour is good. Pupils feel valued as individuals. They feel safe in school because they are confident that any difficulties that arise, such as bullying, will be dealt with promptly and effectively. A contributory factor in this is that pupils are aware of the needs of others and are prepared to take steps to safeguard them for example 'buddy stops' at playtime and the 'worry box' that enables them to share and discuss concerns in confidence. Pupils also show awareness of others through their charitable fund-raising and involvement in the community. Attendance is outstanding and reflects pupils' undoubted enjoyment of school. As they said, 'Belmont is kind of like my family now.' Pupils know what is needed to live healthy lives, including the importance of exercise. They understand how to make healthy eating choices. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good and the use of music as a vehicle to promote these is a strength. Cultural diversity is celebrated through music and regular performances. Pupils readily accept responsibility and contribute to the school community, for example, through membership of the school council. This prepares them well for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good with some outstanding features. In the most effective lessons, teachers' good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter and of how the pupils learn underpins pupils' progress. Teachers know precisely what they want the pupils to learn and their explanations and questions probe and extend pupils' understanding very skilfully. Planning is clear and learning objectives are routinely shared with pupils. Pupils express their views of their enjoyment of learning enthusiastically in comments such as, 'lessons aren't dull and gloomy; we get involved in things' and 'teachers work with us individually if we do not understand'. All pupils make good progress and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from the work of teaching assistants who are well deployed to support pupils' learning. Teachers and support staff work very effectively to ensure that all pupils are integrated as fully as possible into the life of the school. Pupils enjoy lessons, behave well and show good attitudes towards their work. Throughout the school, relationships between teachers and pupils constitute a real strength that is used well to give the pupils confidence to explain, for example, their understanding of complex mathematical calculations. Parents are very pleased with the progress their children make.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and meets all statutory requirements. In both key stages, pupils have the opportunity to learn French. Provision for music and sports is a strength of the school. There is a strong focus on literacy, numeracy, science and information and communication technology. Programmes are in place which successfully contribute to learners' personal development. The curriculum is effectively enriched by a wide range of after-school and lunchtime clubs. It is further enhanced by educational visits out of school and visitors to the school. These activities play an important role in developing pupils' good attitudes, skills and self-esteem. Effective opportunities for learners to contribute to the local community are provided through links with the local church, fund-raising charity events and carol singing at the senior citizens home. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop the skills to equip them for their future lives and work. Examples of this are provided when pupils help to organise special events such as the school performances and involvement in the annual money week, which last year was linked to the international market.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support for pupils are good. Pupils feel well cared for, safe and are confident about approaching staff with concerns. Arrangements for protecting and safeguarding pupils are in place. Rigorous steps are taken to maintain the high levels of attendance by rewarding pupils for good attendance and making prompt contact with parents when there is unexplained absence. Systems to monitor pupils' academic progress are complex and variable. They do not easily show the rate of progress pupils are making throughout their time in school. Links with external agencies to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are effective and greatly appreciated by parents.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The temporary headteacher, in post for less than a term has taken prompt action to raise standards by introducing additional support in all classes for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and by providing intensive 'booster' support for Year 6 pupils to prepare them for their national tests. Teamwork is developing well across both sites and a high priority has been given to developing staff skills and expertise. Subject leaders are beginning to take more responsibility for raising standards, although this is less evident in English and mathematics than in other subjects. Governors are equally supportive and challenging because they are well informed and very knowledgeable about the areas needing to be improved. The school's self-evaluation and the more recent action plan are accurate in that they identify where standards need to be improved and what is being done to raise them. Target setting accurately reflects the expectations for the current Year 6 pupils. Steps to provide more challenge for higher attaining pupils are evident in the quality and standards in their current work and in the unconfirmed 2008 national test results. The school has met its targets for pupils meeting national expectations and exceeded them for those reaching the higher levels. This indicates that the school has a good capacity to make necessary improvements because actions taken have had a beneficial impact without the school relying only on preparation for the tests. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

10 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Belmont Primary School, Redcar and Cleveland, TS14 7BS

Thank you all for making my inspection of your school so enjoyable. It was a pleasure to witness so much musical talent and to watch the rehearsals for your African performance. You made everyone very welcome and your helpfulness and politeness were appreciated very much. You attend a good school. I am writing to let you all know what was so good about your school and what needs to improve.

You all work hard and behave extremely well. Your hard work has been well rewarded for those of you in Year 6, with really good results in the recent national tests. The work in your books shows that you all work hard and make every effort to produce good quality written work, especially some of your science investigations. Well done!

You all said how much you enjoy school because of the care and friendliness of your teachers. There was so much happiness, from the Nursery children doing their brain gym exercises to music and Year 6 practising for their performance. Your curriculum is exciting and you learn all the basic literacy, numeracy and ICT skills very well.

Your teachers work hard too and have been helped well by your temporary headteacher. I have asked school to make sure that there is a good system in place to show how well you are working throughout school and to help teachers with special jobs to carry them out really well.

Good luck to you all and best wishes.

Yours sincerely

Rosemary Rodger

Lead inspector