

Beaufront First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122222
Local Authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	301690
Inspection dates	20–21 November 2007
Reporting inspector	David Earley

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	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	63
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Tony Smith
Headteacher	Mrs Susan Carpenter
Date of previous school inspection	1 April 2003
School address	Sandhoe Hexham Northumberland NE46 4LY
Telephone number	01434 602903
Fax number	01434 602903

Age group	4–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized school serving a rural community near Hexham in Northumberland. There are no pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. Most pupils are of White British origin. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school which gives excellent value for money. Exemplary leadership by the headteacher and a shared drive and determination by staff and governors to excel in all that they do results in pupils reaching very high standards and achieving extremely well. The view of one parent typifies the views of the vast majority, 'This is an excellent school and all my children are thriving and doing very well.'

Children make rapid progress in the Foundation Stage and many exceed the goals expected for their age by the end of Reception. By the end of Year 2 standards are significantly above average in reading, writing and mathematics and by the end of Year 4, standards are well above expectations in English, mathematics and science.

Personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. This provides a very firm basis for the pupils' outstanding academic achievement and excellent behaviour. Pupils are confident and have high self-esteem. They enjoy coming to school and feel safe and secure. This is because relationships are excellent and they are extremely well cared for and looked after. This is evidenced by their above average attendance. Pupils have a very good understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles and are extremely well prepared for the next stage in their education. Pupils are eager to help in the school and take part in local and wider community events. For example, they take part in local festivals, raise funds for charities and help to care for the environment.

Teaching and learning are excellent. This is a significant factor in the excellent achievement. Teachers ensure that learning is fun. For example, pupils in Key Stage 1 extended their speaking and listening and note taking skills when they took on the role of police officers and interviewed a teacher in the role of Red Riding Hood's grandmother. Teachers make very good use of assessment to ensure that pupils are challenged according to their ability. They adapt their teaching to the interests and learning styles of pupils. Complementing teaching and learning is the excellent curriculum. It is rich and stimulating so that pupils want to learn. Planning is very thorough and ensures that pupils extend their basic skills in other subjects. For example, older pupils extended their handwriting skills when they linked their work to a local study in geography and historical work involving the Lindisfarne Gospels.

Care, guidance and support are excellent. Each pupil is well known, valued and respected. There is an extremely caring, family atmosphere and very close links with parents and carers. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is excellent and procedures for safeguarding children are securely in place. Assessment and tracking systems are used very effectively to ensure that pupils know what they need to do in order to improve.

Leadership and management are excellent. There is a shared vision for improvement and a very cohesive commitment to raise standards. A very strong staff team share high aspirations to provide only the best for each pupil. Governance is also excellent. Governors know the school extremely well and play a significant part in supporting the school and holding it to account for its performance.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Provision in the Foundation Stage is outstanding. This leads to excellent progress and provides an extremely firm foundation for future learning. This is because teaching is excellent. Teachers

keep very careful records of each child's progress. This information is used to challenge and extend the children's knowledge and skills at the appropriate level. Relationships are excellent and there are very good links with parents and carers so that children settle in very quickly. Children want to learn and they develop self-confidence and independence because the curriculum is very well planned and work is stimulating. The Foundation Stage is very well managed and there are very good links with Key Stage 1 to ensure continuity of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- There are no significant areas for improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement and standards are both outstanding. Most pupils, whatever their ability or background, make excellent progress. This is because teaching is excellent and pupils' outstanding personal development prepares them very well indeed for learning.

Standards on entry to the Foundation Stage (Reception) vary from year to year but are generally above what is typical for children of this age. They make excellent progress so that by the time they enter Year 1 most exceed the goals expected for their age. This excellent start to school life continues in Key Stage 1 where progress continues at a rapid pace. In 2006, teacher assessments in reading, writing and mathematics showed that pupils were performing at levels significantly above average. This has been the case for the last five years. The unconfirmed results of the 2007 tests were still high but not quite as good as in previous years. This is because of the impact on standards of a high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. School data and inspection evidence indicate that the current Year 2 pupils are on track to reach significantly above average standards in 2008. The excellent progress continues in Key Stage 2. By the end of Year 4, pupils reach standards that are well above national expectations in English, mathematics and science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are excellent. This underpins pupils' excellent academic achievement because they have very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils have a very good understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles, reinforced by lots of opportunities to eat healthily and take exercise. They say that they enjoy coming to school, as evidenced by their above average attendance, and that they feel safe and well cared for. Behaviour is excellent and because pupils are involved in helping to devise school rules they have a very clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. Pupils learn to collaborate effectively and develop confidence and high self esteem because relationships are excellent. There are many opportunities to develop enterprise skills and preparation for life after school is outstanding. Pupils play an important role in the life of the local community. For example, they participate in the Apple Show, harvest festivals, music festivals and have many opportunities to care for the environment. The school council is very active in the life of the school and pupils are quick to take the initiative and accept responsibility.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are excellent. Teachers know pupils very well and make excellent use of assessment in order to provide suitably challenging work in the mixed age classes. Lessons are typically brisk in pace and fun so that pupils work hard and enjoy learning. For example, in the Reception class, children increased their understanding of number sequences when they played a giant game of snakes and ladders that they made themselves. Because teachers have very good subject knowledge they provide pupils with challenging questions and make it very clear what pupils should learn. Consequently pupils' understanding is deepened and they know what is expected of them. Teachers work very closely with support assistants, particularly in support of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Individual education plans are clear and used effectively so that these pupils progress at the same rate as others. Relationships are excellent and so pupils are keen to engage in discussions with teachers and peers about their work which helps them to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is excellent. It is very well planned to meet the different abilities and ages of pupils in mixed age classes and inspires pupils to learn. There is an extremely good focus on developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). These skills are extended by their very effective use in other subjects and this gives a purpose and relevance to learning. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of visits and visitors, extra-curricular activities and by use of the school grounds and woodland. There are very good links with outside agencies and other schools in order to extend the curriculum. Learning is further enhanced by the use of theme and subject days such as science days involving the fire brigade and days focused on art led by a visiting artist. Pupils have a very good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle because there is an extremely effective programme of personal, social and health education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are excellent so that pupils thrive and make excellent progress academically and personally. This is an extremely caring school. Each pupil is well known to all staff and there are excellent links with parents and carers. There is a very strong family atmosphere where pupils feel safe and secure. Adults provide excellent role models and most parents are happy with the care shown to their children. A parent commented that, 'The individual attention given to each child is superb.' This is extended by regular pupil meetings with the headteacher where pupils discuss their work and indicate how happy they are at school. There are systems in place for child protection and health and safety and the school carefully follows government recommendations for safeguarding children. Very effective assessment and tracking procedures lead to very clear targets for improvement which are well known by pupils and teachers, leading to excellent progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are excellent. The inspiration and dedication provided by the headteacher are exemplary. She has an extremely clear vision for raising standards and improving provision. This is shared by staff and governors and leads to high achievement and excellent personal development. Staff work very well together as a team, sharing their expertise and commitment to meeting challenging targets and to provide the best for each pupil in their care. Excellent evaluation of performance, shared with staff and governors, contributes to well informed and clear strategic planning. Careful analyses of pupils' progress contribute to the setting of challenging targets for the performance of pupils across the school. All targets are met.

Governance is excellent. Governors know the school very well. They are very supportive and insightful in holding the school to account for its performance and helping to shape its direction. The budget is managed astutely in order to help to raise standards and improve provision. For example, the school has rightly identified the need for extensions to the accommodation in order to support the curriculum, particularly in physical education. These developments are supported by careful financial planning. Most parents are very positive in their views of the school and are fully involved in their children's education. A parent commented that, 'My children are developing into well rounded individuals thanks to Beaufront.'

Issues from the previous inspection have been successfully tackled and given the current circumstances, the school has an excellent capacity to improve in future.

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?	1
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

22 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Beaufront First School, Northumberland, NE46 4LY

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited you recently. Your school is outstanding and I was not surprised when you told me that you are very proud of it. I was pleased to see that you know about the importance of eating healthily and getting plenty of exercise so that you keep fit. I really enjoyed talking to you about your school and was impressed by your politeness and courtesy and by the way you try to look after each other. I was also impressed by the way you take part in festivals nearby and help to look after the environment. It was good to see how you enjoyed your lessons and learned a lot at the same time. You improved your English when you interviewed Red Riding Hood's grandmother. You also learned about numbers by playing snakes and ladders and, when you looked at the Lindisfarne Gospels, this helped to make your handwriting better.

These are some of the things your school does well:

- you try very hard and do really well in your work
- lessons are fun so that you want to learn
- the school council and buddies do a very good job in looking after others and helping to make the school a better place
- your school takes very good care of you and is like a big family
- the teachers and governors work very hard to improve the school and help you to do well.

Thank you once again for making me so welcome. I hope the school council's plans for the Christmas Fayre result in you all having a good time and raising lots of funds.

Yours sincerely

David Earley

Lead inspector