

Beck Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107044
Local Authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	309295
Inspection dates	26–27 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Carmen Markham

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	586
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Christopher Farris
Headteacher	Mr Peter Hardwick
Date of previous school inspection	30 June 2003
School address	Beck Road Sheffield South Yorkshire S5 0GG
Telephone number	0114 246 7536
Fax number	0114 257 1730

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large primary school draws pupils from an area of significant economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is double the national average. The majority of pupils are White British. The percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average but it is increasing as pupils from Eastern Europe and African countries arrive in school at different times of the year. Fifteen different languages are spoken by pupils in the school. A significantly higher than average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Inspectors do not agree with the school's view that its overall effectiveness is satisfactory. It is inadequate, and the school provides inadequate value for money. Significant improvement is required in relation to the very low standards in English, mathematics and science reached by pupils in Key Stage 2 and their inadequate progress.

Although the school has made improvements in several areas since the last inspection, it has not yet addressed the issue of inadequate achievement in Key Stage 2. Standards are low by the end of Year 2 and extremely low at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. These reflect children's weak skills on entry to the school as well as the legacy of previous underachievement. Pupils' achievement is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in Key Stage 1 but is inadequate in Key Stage 2. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress throughout the school.

Supported by the governing body, the headteacher leads an experienced team of senior and middle managers with a shared vision and desire to ensure that pupils succeed. The leadership team provides the school with satisfactory capacity to improve. It knows what the school does well and what it needs to do to improve. Appropriate priorities for improvement have been identified and a full range of strategies has been implemented to improve learning. Procedures to improve behaviour, attendance and the Foundation Stage are being implemented successfully. However, while some of the school's actions are having a positive impact on achievement, not enough focus has been given to the things which require improvement the most.

The behaviour of pupils and their personal development is good because the school makes good provision for their care, guidance and support. Pupils enjoy attending school and attendance is satisfactory. A revised curriculum, planned around the need to enrich the experiences of pupils, broadens their knowledge and ensures that learning is fun. They learn how to be responsible, form good relationships and make informed decisions in relation to their health and safety and the environment. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good as the curriculum provides many opportunities for cultural awareness and reflection. Parents recognise and value the care and support the school offers. One parent of a Year 3 child wrote, 'I like the positive and encouraging ethos of the school and feel it is building my child's confidence as well as learning.'

Until recently, the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress has been insufficiently strong to help them achieve as they should, especially in Key Stage 2. However, new teaching approaches introduced by the leadership team are increasing the effectiveness of many lessons. Teaching and learning are now satisfactory overall although the quality of teaching is inconsistent. Teachers have accurately identified pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities whose progress needs to improve. A well managed range of additional support has been set up to help these pupils. However, too many pupils in Key Stage 2 are underachieving because teachers are not using assessment data sufficiently to help them in planning lessons. Therefore, the level of challenge provided for pupils is not always as high as it should be.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Although there are individual variations, most children enter the Nursery with skills that are generally very low compared to the expectations for their age, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, and mathematics skills. They make very good progress in their personal and emotional development and good progress in developing their communication and mathematics skills. However, although the quality of teaching and learning is good, by the end of Reception few children achieve the goals expected for their age in communication and mathematics skills because they have so much ground to make up. Staff recognise this and have introduced many writing opportunities and a variety of schemes to speed up learning. Established systems assess children's development carefully but staff do not analyse this in sufficient depth to ensure that children always progress as fast as they might. The Foundation Stage is managed well. Children settle into Nursery quickly because they belong to small family groups and parents are welcome to join activities at the start of the day. This is followed by smooth transition to Reception and then to Key Stage 1. Relationships are strong. Children work and play happily together, follow school routines sensibly and enjoy the opportunity to participate in joint activities. The outdoor play area provides an exciting range of shared learning opportunities. Children enjoy their time in school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science by Year 6 and improve pupils' achievement in Key Stage 2.
- Improve teachers' use of assessment, thus enabling them to provide pupils with work that challenges them to achieve and to identify at an early stage those who are underachieving.
- Reduce the number of priorities in the school development plan so that weaknesses can be tackled more effectively to bring about improved learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Standards at the end of Year 6 have been exceptionally low in recent years. In 2007 standards were extremely low in mathematics, science and English where writing was a significant weakness. As in previous years, too few pupils reached the higher levels expected of them. School data demonstrates that pupils who have had all their education in the school do better than those who join the school part way through their primary education, but still do not achieve as well as they should. The management team has identified and implemented a range of strategies to improve standards and there is evidence that in Key Stage 1, standards particularly in writing, are beginning to rise and pupils now make satisfactory progress. However, in Key Stage 2 pupils' work indicates that achievement remains inadequate overall in English, mathematics and science. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because their individual needs are promptly assessed and the right level of support is provided in lessons to ensure that they make measurable advances in their learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. They feel safe in school because there is scarcely any bullying and their behaviour is good. A few pupils can be unsettled in lessons where behaviour management does not consistently follow the school's guidelines but the high number of pupils achieving the school's awards for behaviour and attitude demonstrate how much they enjoy school. Equally, pupils respond well to being given areas of responsibility such as being a playground friend or steward, school councillor or in charge of looking after the school guinea pigs. Pupils are proud of representing their community, for example by singing in public performances. Attendance is now broadly average and much improved, as pupils and parents have responded well to all the strategies that the school has put in place. Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and, for example, have proposed that a 'Walking Bus' would be environmentally friendly and support their road safety skills. Pupils understand that the school deals swiftly with any racial incidents such as name-calling and consider it a strength of their school that, 'No-one is left out.' Pupils' strong information and communication technology (ICT) skills, their mature use of their personal organiser and their entrepreneurial approach to money management such as awards for whole-class attendance and fundraising opportunities supports the development of their future economic well-being, but this is hindered by slow progress in the basic skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Recent whole-school training on lesson structure and planning and the continuing support of local authority consultants has substantially improved the quality of teaching; it is now having a satisfactory impact on pupils' learning and progress particularly in Key Stage 1. The development of good behaviour management systems has ensured much better behaviour in lessons so effective learning can take place. Where teaching is weaker, the behaviour policy is not used consistently. Where teaching is good, teachers plan exciting and interesting activities which are enjoyable and encourage pupils to come to school. Digging up dinosaur bones captivated the imagination of Year 3 and especially appealed to the boys. Teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn but sometimes expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough: some of the tasks set lack challenge and fail to engage pupils so the pace of learning suffers. There are good systems for assessing pupils' progress but the wealth of information gathered is not used effectively enough when planning future work. Although teachers and well trained support staff work together closely in their efforts to meet the varying needs of pupils, some teaching in Key Stage 2 is still not strong enough to enable pupils to make up for their previous underachievement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school has recently undertaken substantial and successful work to revise and improve the curriculum. This is beginning to contribute to the improved development of skills and more enjoyment of learning throughout the school but at this stage the full impact has not yet been realised, particularly for pupils in Key Stage 2, where provision is not yet enabling pupils to

achieve as well as they should. The closer links between different subjects when planning learning are helping to engage the interest of most pupils. Staff work hard to ensure that themes are interesting and exciting. Provision for music and art is good. Pupils' singing is frequently heard and the school environment is used well to display wonderful art work and engage pupils in the current topics. The school has introduced the teaching of French at Key Stage 2 and pupils' enjoyment of the subject is clear from discussions with them. The ICT curriculum has a central place within this new curriculum and is well supported by an improving range of resources. There is good provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship and this having a positive impact on pupils' personal development. Visits, visitors and a good range of out-of-school clubs and activities support pupils' learning. A number of pupils are looking forward to performing with the Young Voices at Sheffield Arena. There are good opportunities for sport through the Arches project.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school cares very well for all its pupils. Those who are most vulnerable or who have only recently come to this country are particularly well looked after. Pupils who struggle to socialise, either in class or at break times, are provided with welcoming and safe havens throughout the school. Child protection procedures are very well established and safeguarding procedures meet current requirements. Health and safety arrangements, including risk assessments, are good. Through the learning mentor and pupil support officer, the school provides a wide range of support for pupils and runs a successful breakfast club to provide pupils with a healthy start to the day. Pupils feel secure and happy in school. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are securely underpinned by extensive links to outside support agencies. Monitoring the impact of the work of structured support and intervention programmes in school is recent. The procedures to monitor and track pupils' progress towards their targets are well established but are not consistently used to inform teacher's planning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher is working diligently and effectively to bring about improvement. He leads a recently reconstructed team of experienced and newly appointed senior and middle managers. Together, with supportive governors, they provide satisfactory leadership and management and firm direction for the school. Appropriate priorities for improvement have been identified and a wide range of strategies has been implemented to improve provision and learning. This has already successfully led to significant improvements in behaviour, attendance, teaching, the curriculum and the Foundation Stage. These improvements and the strength of its leadership team show that the school has satisfactory capacity to improve further. However, some of the strategies relating to learning are at an early stage of implementation and are not yet significantly impacting on pupils' achievement. At present the school gives inadequate value for money. There are too many areas for development in the school development plan so the main focus and drive for improvement is sometimes lost. Leaders and managers make good use of external services; they seek and listen to advice and act on it as appropriate.

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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
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	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

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	3
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	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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?	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of Beck Primary School, Sheffield, S5 0GG

On behalf of the inspection team I would like to thank you for making us so welcome in your school. You helped us to find our way around the school and we enjoyed looking at the beautiful displays of your work in the building. We also enjoyed talking to you and finding out about your school council and the work you do in lessons. You behave well, respect each other and visitors and take good care of your school.

You know what your targets are and what you need to do to improve your work. You also know how to stay healthy and safe and make the most of all the activities before and after school, including sport, art and singing. Most of you attend school regularly and arrive on time so that you do not miss any lessons. This is important as teachers are working hard to improve learning in school so that standards can improve and they can't do this if you are not there.

In spite of all the good things about the school, the standards you reach in your work are not high enough and some of you do not make enough progress so you are not getting as good an education as you should. We decided that the school needs extra help to improve. Your school will be given additional support and inspectors will visit again soon to see how it is getting on.

One of the reasons for our visit was to see what else your school can do to improve. We have asked your teachers to help you do better in English, mathematics and science. They should also use information about how well you are doing to plan lessons more carefully so that the work they give you is not too easy or too difficult. The information should also be used better to make sure that you are all making enough progress so you can have extra help quickly if you need it. Finally, we have asked teachers to look carefully at all the new ideas they would like to introduce to the school to see if they can reduce the number of these. This will help them to concentrate on the most important things that will help you to learn better.