

Beamont Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135161
Local Authority	Warrington
Inspection number	329042
Inspection dates	25–26 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Paul Bamber

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	406
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Steve Roberts
Headteacher	Mr Ivor Morgan
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	O'Leary Street Warrington Cheshire WA2 7RQ

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	25–26 March 2009
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Beamont Primary came into existence in September 2007 as a result of the amalgamation of an infant and a junior school. It is considerably larger than most primary schools. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds but with many residing in an area of socio-economic disadvantage. A larger proportion than average have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A lower than average proportion are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also below average. The school's Early Years Foundation Stage consists of a Nursery and Reception class. A private company provides before- and after-school care. Such provision is not the subject of this inspection. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools Award, Gold Healthy Tuck Award and the Activemark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school, which is well managed, enables pupils to achieve well overall and to develop into positive young citizens. It cares for and supports them very well and provides an enriched curriculum.

The headteacher and his senior leadership team have very successfully managed the amalgamation of an infant and a junior school into one primary school. The staff work harmoniously as a team and have quickly established effective whole-school practices. These have ensured that most pupils make good progress, behave well, enjoy their learning and attain competent basic skills by the time they leave Year 6.

Overall, children enter the school with skills well below those expected. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage but their progress slows in Years 1 and 2 and standards in reading and writing are well below average by the end of Year 2. Of particular concern is the slow progress of boys in reading. In Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress, enabling them to leave Year 6 with broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science (core subjects).

Pupils' personal development is good. Most behave well, particularly in lessons. For those who find it more difficult to conform to the school's expectations, both in and out of the classroom, any misbehaviour is well managed and sensitive support provided. Pupils have a good sense of community. They help out in school, befriending more vulnerable pupils, taking responsibilities and fundraising for a range of charities. They contribute effectively to school decision making and are positive ambassadors for the school when they go on visits or represent the school in sports competitions.

Good teaching promotes pupils' enjoyment in learning and provides a positive role model for establishing warm relationships. It is more consistently good in Key Stage 2, promoting pupils' consistently good progress. The good achievements of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is in no small part due to the sensitive, well focused support they receive from teaching assistants and to the effective management of their provision.

The enriched curriculum is a big factor in pupils' enjoyment of all aspects of school life. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are particularly excited about the residential visits they make in each of those year groups. Such experiences contribute significantly to pupils' good spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. In particular, they develop independence, learn to work cooperatively on tasks in groups and to test their self-confidence by taking on challenges. The curriculum promotes pupils' basic skills appropriately overall, but it is less effective in enabling Key Stage 1 boys to progress fast enough in reading. The arts are promoted well and the vibrant displays of pupils' excellent artwork are testament to this very effective aspect of the school's work. Pastoral care is very strong and the support given to more troubled and vulnerable pupils has a very positive impact on their ability to achieve well and to play a full part in school life. The extremely strong partnerships the school has with outside agencies is a considerable factor in pupils' welfare and sense of well-being. Systems to track pupils' achievements have improved over the last two years, but still lack rigour in identifying the progress made by different groups of pupils. This has meant that the school has not identified the slower progress of boys who spent the least time in the Nursery and their subsequent underachievement in reading in Key Stage 1.

Leaders and managers communicate clear vision for the school, which focuses correctly on raising standards. Self-evaluation is predominantly accurate and provides the senior leadership

team with an appropriate focus for school improvement. There is a whole-school determination to provide an even better education for pupils. The many recently introduced management systems are already having a positive impact on raising overall achievement and improving standards in writing in Key Stage 2. The school has done well to balance a tight budget to direct resources to fund those areas most in need of improvement. Value for money is good. Given all the factors listed above the school demonstrates a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and well managed. Parents are warmly welcomed into the school and early links are forged between the home and school. Staff ensure that children's care has an exceptionally high priority and that all welfare requirements are met. Parents express their approval of the school's efforts and the care and support their children receive. Children are encouraged to develop positive relationships in school and an awareness of others in the class.

Attainment on entry is well below that expected. Children make good progress, particularly in the areas of knowledge and understanding, creative and physical development and more recently in communication, language and literacy. This can be attributed to good teaching and effective classroom support. When children leave Reception, writing and reading remain a particular weakness. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified early and make good progress, responding positively to the individual support provided.

Activities are well planned and balanced between ones led by adults and those children choose for themselves. Classrooms are well resourced, safe and provide a stimulating environment for the children. Children's achievement is celebrated through high-quality displays as well as positive encouragement. Outdoor provision is improving and recent developments have impacted positively on children's learning. However, the Early Years Foundation Stage lacks an outdoor covered area and any adverse weather restricts effective delivery of continuous provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in reading and writing in Key Stage 1.
- Enable boys in Key Stage 1 to make faster progress in reading.
- Make systems for tracking pupils' achievement more rigorous to better identify the progress made by different groups of pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Overall, pupils achieve well, leaving Year 6 with average standards in the core subjects.

In Key Stage 1, pupils' standards are well below average in literacy and a significant minority of boys make poor progress in reading. Although standards are well below average in writing, all pupils make better progress in this subject. In mathematics, a relative strength throughout the school, standards are broadly average and pupils make good progress. Too few more able pupils reach the higher Level 3 in reading, writing or mathematics because they are insufficiently challenged.

In Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress in all subjects, but especially boys in literacy. In the 2008 Year 6 national tests, for example, unvalidated results indicate that boys performed better than boys nationally in all three core subjects. They made very good progress in writing through

Years 3 to 6. Effective challenge for the more able pupils in Key Stage 2 enables an average proportion of pupils to reach the higher Level 5 in all subjects. Good support for pupils who speak English as an additional language and those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities ensures that they achieve well. Standards in art are above expectations throughout the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils have a keen sense of right and wrong, show empathy to those who are less fortunate than themselves and relate well to each other. Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive and most are keen to participate in all the school offers, both in and out of the classroom. Pupils are very aware of the need to act safely, to keep out of harm's way and of the benefits of a balanced diet and regular exercise. This awareness played no small part in the school's Healthy Schools and Gold Healthy Tuck Awards. Pupils like to help out in school, taking on various monitoring roles and acting as play leaders and as buddies to younger or more vulnerable pupils. Attendance is broadly average. Pupils have a satisfactory awareness of the business world and are equipped with the expected basic skills by the time they move to secondary school. They have a good awareness of democratic processes through voting for school council members and as a result of taking office and representing their electorate.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to outstanding and is good overall. It is strongest in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1, despite some good teaching, the quality is not consistently strong enough to ensure that pupils make any better than satisfactory progress, especially in reading. Lessons here are sometimes no better than satisfactory, pace is rather slow and the tasks set insufficiently meet the needs of different groups of pupils. Better teaching of letter sounds and more focused support for pupils, especially boys, who struggle with reading, is just beginning to improve their attainment in this skill. Throughout the school, in lessons where teaching is at its most potent, pupils are left in no doubt about what and how they will learn nor about the expectations of the quality and quantity of their work. Resources, including information and communication technology, are used very well to stimulate interest and pupils are involved fully in their learning. Pupils work well together when given opportunities, for example in a Year 6 science lesson, when they shared knowledge to identify accurately facts about the working of the human body. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those who speak English as an additional language or those who have behavioural difficulties. This enables them to play a full part in lessons and for most to make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum substantially meets the needs of pupils well. It is very successful in promoting effective achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage, in Key Stage 2 and in ensuring pupils' good personal, social, health and citizenship education. It is less successful in enabling Key Stage 1 boys to achieve well in reading or the more able pupils in that key stage to achieve

as well as they might. A particular strength of the provision is the extensive range of residential experiences available to all Key Stage 2 pupils. These have an extremely positive effect on pupils' personal, social and cultural development. Pupils' understanding of global issues and of different cultures is also enhanced well as a result of the school's link with a school in South Africa. Face-to-face contact with staff from that school and the exchange of letters and emails make pupils aware of the differences between and similarities with a very contrasting culture. Pupils have a wide range of after-school clubs to choose from, which provide opportunities for them to develop physically and to experience activities which they may wish to pursue in later life. Excellent links with outside agencies enhance pupils' sport skills, improve their proficiency in speaking and understanding French and Spanish and promote their excellent work in art.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care is a strength of the school. It is promoted well by staff and through the strong partnership with parents. The school is very proactive in forging links with parents and with external support agencies, which result in pupils being extremely well looked after and supported. All pupils benefit from this, but those who are more vulnerable, who find behaving well difficult or who have emotional difficulties find this support invaluable. Family learning sessions and drop-ins to the Beamont café also cement relationships and provide advice on how parents can support their children's learning. Parents understandably speak highly of the induction arrangements in Early Years Foundation Stage and for transfer to secondary schools. The school ensures that all procedures for safeguarding pupils and for child protection are in place and meet current government requirements. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Target setting is prevalent in literacy, but less so in other subjects. There are some excellent examples of marking but again the quality is patchy across the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher, ably supported by his senior and middle management teams, has carefully prioritised and actioned developments which have brought about the smooth integration of the two schools into one. Parents attest to this and to the positive ethos of the new school, with comments such as, 'The school has greatly benefited from the amalgamation. It is more of an open school now.' Senior leaders have worked very successfully to bring about harmony and cooperative working between members of staff from the two schools. The assessment coordinator has implemented a more robust system to track pupils' progress than formerly existed. This gives senior staff and class teachers information about pupils' achievements. As yet, however, the system is not used effectively enough by leaders to track the progress made by specific groups of pupils.

The management of the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those who speak English as an additional language and those who have behavioural difficulties is very effective and makes a significant contribution to the good progress most of these pupils make. Plans for improvement are effective and based on good self-evaluation. Senior leaders ensure that continuing professional development is appropriately matched to both the staff's personal needs and ambitions and to school priorities. For example, training for all staff on a method of teaching writing has resulted in pupils achieving much better in this skill over the last year.

Governance is satisfactory. The new governing body has supported the transition to one school well, continues to carry out its statutory duties appropriately and has managed a difficult budget situation prudently. It now acknowledges that it needs to acquire the knowledge and skills to enable it to challenge the school's performance more rigorously. The school works successfully to promote community cohesion and equality of opportunity. It does all it can to eliminate discrimination. The close working partnership with members of the local community, together with international links, make pupils aware of the wider world and to value diversity.

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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	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?	No

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

I would like to thank you on behalf of the other inspectors and myself for the warm welcome you gave us when we inspected your school just before the Easter holidays. You were most polite and friendly and we enjoyed chatting with you about your work and about what you thought of the school. Certainly, the members of the school council said the school was great!

You go to a good school which helps most of you to get on well with your work and helps you to grow into well behaved, sensible and concerned young people. These are the things we found to be particularly good about your school.

- The children in the Nursery and Reception classes get off to a lovely start to their education.
- You all do well in mathematics and boys do particularly well in Years 3 to 6 in all subjects.
- Most of your teaching is good and in some lessons you make very good progress.
- Most of you behave well and enjoy school.
- The residential visits you go on in Years 3 to 6 give you lots of exciting things to do. They also help you to get on well together, be more independent and gain self-confidence.
- Your headteacher and the other adults who run the school do a good job and are always looking for ways to make the school even better for you.

It is part of my job, with the other inspectors, to suggest ways in which the school can improve. These are the things I have asked to be done to help with this.

- To make sure that those of you in Years 1 and 2 improve your reading and writing. This is most important for the boys who should be helped to get on faster with their reading.
- When teachers find out how well you are doing with your work, they should look more carefully at how different groups of you are getting on.

Thank you for being so friendly during our inspection, keep on working really hard. I hope you had a super holiday and didn't eat too many Easter eggs!