

Beaconside Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112423
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	332778
Inspection dates	6–7 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Geoffrey Yates

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	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	500
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	Mrs Kathleen Storton
Headteacher	Mr Timothy Glendinning
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	Hutton Hill Penrith Cumbria CA11 8EN
Telephone number	01768 242172

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	6–7 May 2009
Inspection number	332778

Fax number

01768 242173

Age group	3–11
------------------	------

Inspection dates	6–7 May 2009
-------------------------	--------------

Inspection number	332778
--------------------------	--------

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school was formed by an amalgamation of two schools which took place in September 2008. It is of an above average size for primary schools nationally. It serves a wide area and is situated just outside the centre of Penrith. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. A below average number of pupils receive free school meals. The school has Early Years Foundation provision in the Nursery and Reception classes.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with good features. The headteacher and governors have led and managed very successfully the recent amalgamation of two schools, with the minimum disruption to pupils' education. Pupils' personal development is good and the school's caring and nurturing ethos ensures that pupils enjoy learning. This manifests itself in the above average attendance levels. All members of staff ensure that pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are fully included in school life. There are good links with the local community. Parents are highly supportive of the school. One parent sums up the views of many: 'I feel that the staff are very helpful, they listen to any concerns and try to resolve them as much as possible.'

Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall and standards are average. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage but their attainment is below that expected for their age on entry to Year 1. Good progress in Years 1 and 2 ensures pupils meet the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The rate of progress in Years 3 to 6 is variable but satisfactory overall. The school has convincing evidence to show that standards in Year 6 are average in English, mathematics and science but there are weaknesses in writing.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, although there are examples of good teaching and learning throughout the school. In these classes, pupils are consistently challenged to achieve their best and respond accordingly. In Year 2, for example, pupils confidently use and apply their numeracy skills in solving challenging problems. Classrooms are managed well and a good feature in all lessons is the high quality of relationships between staff and pupils. Where teaching and learning are not as strong, the pace of learning is slow, pupils are not sufficiently challenged and assessment information is not used well in setting work that is challenging.

Pupils enjoy their lessons and behave well both in class and outdoors. They talk sensibly about the importance of healthy eating and are very aware of how to maintain their own safety and protect that of others. Parents confirm what pupils say with regard to pupils feeling safe in school. The school's safeguarding procedures meet national requirements. Pupils are given a good range of opportunities to take on responsibility. The curriculum is satisfactory with good provision for pupils' personal development and very good use made of the school's grounds, visits and visitors to enhance provision. Sometimes pupils develop their writing skills well in other subjects as, for example, in an exemplary project linked to a residential visit to Edinburgh. However, this is not consistent across the school.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher, supported well by two deputies, ensures a strong ethos in which pupils achieve well in their personal development. The new senior leadership team recognises academic achievement needs to improve. Assessment systems are in place but the information collected is not always used effectively. Subject leaders are improving their role, but not surprisingly in a newly amalgamated school, are only just beginning to influence standards. Community cohesion is satisfactory but there are too few links with communities across the country and globally. Governors are very supportive of the school and the Chair is very much involved in school life. The school hall building project demonstrates the governors' commitment to improve the environment for learning. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve because of the clear direction by the headteacher and the willingness of staff to embrace change. It provides satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make a really good start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage. On entry, their skills are much lower than is typical for their age. They achieve well as a result of good planning and teaching. However, by the time they enter Year 1, their attainment is still below that expected of five-year-olds. Teaching is good and children experience a wide range of exciting and stimulating activities, which help them to learn. There is a good balance between activities that children choose themselves and those that adults lead so they have plenty of opportunities to independently explore and investigate, following their own interests. Assessment is good but there are missed opportunities to observe and record steps towards the early learning goals when children are engaged in their own tasks. Children learn to share, work and play together, and how to be part of the school family. Carefully chosen snacks and drinks encourage healthy eating habits and the opportunities to play outside promote fresh air and exercise well. However, children do not always remember to wash their hands after playing outdoors or before eating snacks. Children are learning how to be responsible and enjoy 'tidy up time' or taking the register. Their welfare needs are met well. They make good progress in early literacy and numeracy skills because tasks that adults lead are well matched to the needs of children with widely varying abilities. Creative use is made of the large shared Reception area; it is an attractive, stimulating learning environment. Leadership and management are good. All children including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are effectively included and there are good partnerships with parents and other professionals.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in writing by providing more challenging opportunities for pupils to use their skills in other subjects.
- Use information from the monitoring of teaching to improve the quality of teaching.
- Ensure that assessment information is used consistently well across the school to ensure that work is consistently challenging.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are average in English, mathematics and science which reflects satisfactory achievement. From starting in Year 1 below average, pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 as a result of good teaching. By the end of Year 2, standards are average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. The school's statistics indicate average results for the current Year 6, in reading, mathematics and science but below average results in writing. There are very good opportunities for older pupils to apply their information and communication skills in other subjects. While there are some good examples of writing skills being used well this is not consistent across the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from effective support which ensures they make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and lessons are often fun. On this large school site, they move about safely and behaviour is good. They feel school is a friendly place to be, that bullying rarely happens but if it does they are very confident it is quickly resolved. They say they feel safe and are well looked after and know that all adults are approachable, friendly and ready to help them if they feel upset or worried. Pupils learn about ways to stay safe, for example through road safety, cycle safety and learning about the dangers of drug or alcohol abuse. They are good at considering the needs of others through charity fundraising or visiting senior citizens in care homes. They appreciate the opportunities through the good number of residential visits to make friends with new people, learn different skills and face new challenges. Pupils take on a range of responsibilities such as becoming a school council representative and are rightly proud of the contributions they have made to improve the outdoor play areas and school meal menus. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. However, pupils are not sufficiently aware of the diverse nature of multicultural Britain. They have good opportunities to learn about business through young enterprise schemes and older pupils have good skills in information and communication technology. Skills in literacy and numeracy prepare them satisfactorily for life as adults.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Very good relationships and good classroom management are good factors in most classes. Consequently, pupils want to learn. Where teaching is of a good quality, with examples in both key stages, the pace of lessons is good and work is very well matched to pupils' needs. As a result, learning is good because pupils know what they need to do, are capable of doing it and enjoy being challenged to use their skills well. Where teaching and learning are less successful, the pace is too slow, activities are not sufficiently interesting or challenging to ensure good progress and marking is inconsistent. In these classes, assessment data is not used well to match work closely to pupils' needs and this is a major reason why writing skills are not high enough. Throughout the school, pupils have good opportunities to discuss their work with each other and this contributes well to their speaking and listening skills. For example, pupils in Year 3 were keen to discuss with a partner what information was relevant or irrelevant in helping to solve mathematical problems. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have the right support to help them achieve their personal targets.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It has strong features in the provision for pupils' personal and social development which has a positive impact on the ethos of the school and pupils' well-being. The school rightly recognises the need to devise a more creative curriculum, so that pupils can develop their basic skills through different subjects. There are not enough opportunities, for example, for older pupils to practise and develop their writing skills across the curriculum. By contrast, there is good provision for information and communication technology in Years 3 to 6. There is a very good level of enrichment provided through visits, visitors and a well planned programme of residential activities. The extensive range of school clubs, including animation,

cooking, sporting clubs and the singing orchestra are well attended. Close links with residential centres, an urban study of Edinburgh and the involvement of students from a local college make outdoor education a real strength of the school. A satisfactory range of additional activities including philosophy for children and the teaching of French promotes enjoyment of learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides a good level of personal care. Parents are very happy with the support their children receive. Child protection and all other risk assessments are of a robust quality. Pupils say they feel very safe and secure in school and know there is always an adult to turn to with any worries. This is because there is a very caring ethos, and very good relationships. Good procedures have led to attendance being above average. A very caring pastoral team ensures the needs of any vulnerable pupils are sensitively met. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported, aided by good links with outside agencies.

The tracking of pupils' academic progress, while satisfactory overall, is variable across the school. This is because the school's systems of checking on pupils' progress are not rigorous enough to enable teachers to identify at an early stage where extra support or challenge is needed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership has a real determination to raise standards. However, the school is not yet in a position to demonstrate that changes have had more than a satisfactory impact on pupils' achievements. The headteacher, with the support of his new leadership team and governors, has successfully brought together all staff and pupils to create a positive ethos right across the school. The school is rightly focused on the need to raise pupils' achievements and managers have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Tracking procedures are now in place but as yet the results of these assessment and tracking processes have not yet resulted in improved achievement for older pupils. Inclusion is promoted soundly and the inclusion leader carries out their duties well. Parents and pupils are strongly supportive of the school. The school's provision for community cohesion is satisfactory. There are many positive links with local community organisations, including visits to a local care home and links with the residents' association. However, although the school has begun to reach out to wider national and international communities, work in these areas is limited at present. Governors fulfil all their statutory responsibilities and are well acquainted with the school's strengths and challenges.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

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

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	2
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?	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?	3

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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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**

10 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Beaconside CofE Primary School, Cumbria, CA11 8EN

Thank you for the very friendly welcome you all gave us when we inspected your school recently. We really enjoyed our time with you and seeing you in lessons. The photographs on display of the residential visits you have attended and the comments you made about how much you enjoyed them were a delight to see and hear. I am pleased to tell you that I agree with your school that you receive a satisfactory standard of education.

I agree with you that all the adults working in your school make lessons interesting and that if you need help you get it. You make good progress in your work and reach standards that are typical for your age, although your writing is not quite so good. You work hard in lessons and behave well; I was very impressed with how polite you were. You told me that you feel safe in school and that if problems occur an adult will sort it out quickly when you tell them about it. Staff certainly take good care of you. The school council is busy on your behalf and members enjoy being able to take new things forward to make life better for you. Your headteacher, staff and governors have done well to bring your two schools together so smoothly.

There is one special thing I would like you all to do and that is to work extra hard so that you do even better when you are asked to write. I have asked your school to make sure that the information they have about your progress is used to make sure that you are always challenged to do your best. You can all help yourselves by taking notice of any comments that are written in your books to help you to improve.

The final thing I have asked your school to do is to make sure that all the teaching you receive is of a good quality. Keep on working hard so you can continue to play a big part in ensuring that your school continues to improve.

Yours faithfully

Geoffrey Yates

Lead inspector