

Beaconhill Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122193
Local Authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	334904
Inspection dates	15–16 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Linda Buller

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)	247
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 Richard Woodhouse
Headteacher	Mrs Amanda Forbes
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2007
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Langdale Drive Beacon Hill Grange Cramlington Northumberland NE23 8EH

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	15–16 June 2009
Inspection number	334904

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is similar in size to other primary schools nationally. Since the last inspection the school has changed status from a first school catering for pupils age 3 to 9 to a primary school for pupils age 3 to 11. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The area which the school serves is one with above average levels of economic and social disadvantage. A well above average proportion of pupils claim a free school meal. The proportion of pupils who are identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, although a larger proportion than in other schools nationally have a statement of their special educational needs. The school provides education for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage 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. It has a number of good features. The school has a warm, welcoming and happy ethos, which helps pupils to feel safe and secure. The pastoral care and support of pupils is a strength of the school and is much appreciated by parents, particularly those whose children have additional physical, emotional or learning needs. All staff are successful in ensuring the health and well-being of pupils while in their care. A key strength is the support which staff give to all pupils, which enables them to greatly enjoy school and to be soundly prepared for their next stage of education.

Pupils' personal development is good. They are polite, considerate and work well together. They contribute well to the harmonious atmosphere in school. Pupils have a good understanding of the need to eat a balanced diet and the benefits of taking regular exercise. They also show a good awareness of how to stay safe, such as in the way they move responsibly in and around school. Pupils behave well; levels of attendance have improved and are in line with the national average. Promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory, especially within the school and local community where everyone is treated fairly. An audit of provision is directing curriculum change and improving pupils' understanding of their place in school, local and wider communities.

Overall achievement is satisfactory. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1; however, the standards they achieve are just below the national average. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2 although this varies from year to year. For example, the current Year 6 group have made good progress and standards are broadly average. A key factor in improving pupils' progress is how well teachers help pupils to take responsibility for their own learning by clearly explaining the learning intentions for each lesson. In writing activities, this is enhanced by the good quality support and guidance provided to pupils on how well they are doing and what they need to do next to improve further.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Through improvements to the monitoring and evaluation of pupils' progress implemented since the last inspection, leaders at all levels now have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have rightly prioritised the need for improve the curriculum to raise standards and achievement at the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 4. Where this has been implemented through good quality teaching, for example, in writing through out the school and in Year 4 across the curriculum, the rate of pupils' progress has increased and standards are rising. Consequently, the capacity for further improvement is good. However, the monitoring of the actions taken to address these key priorities is not frequent enough. As a result, although satisfactory overall, some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and curriculum provision remain. For example, some subjects are given too little time during the year. Consequently, despite good progress in some lessons, pupils' achievement remains satisfactory overall.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage as a result of well-managed provision. Children's skills and experiences when they start Nursery are below those typically expected and well below in communication language and literacy skills. Several have delayed speech and few attend any early years' provision before starting Nursery. Provision for children's

learning and development is good. Adults plan a varied range of exciting and challenging activities for children to do. Planning is currently more successful in identifying children's next steps in learning during adult-led activities than in those which children choose for themselves. Staff generally interact well with the children, asking appropriate questions to develop understanding and promote children's speaking and listening skills. Overall, children make good progress and standards are broadly average by the end of Reception, although generally still weaker in literacy and numeracy. Due to excellent teaching of communication and literacy skills progress is accelerating in the children's ability to link letters and sounds to read, write and speak clearly. Most are now on track to reach average standards by the time they enter Year 1. The welfare of children is given thorough attention. Consequently, children make particularly good progress in developing their personal, social and emotional skills, which provides a good foundation for their development in the main school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Strengthen the monitoring of the school's work so that the impact of initiatives to improve teaching and marking are carefully checked and inconsistencies are picked up more quickly.
- Provide sufficient time to teach all subjects to fulfil pupil's entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum.

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

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory from below average starting points. Standards were below average in Key Stage 1 in 2007 and 2008, but pupils in Years 1 and 2 are currently making satisfactory progress overall and good progress in developing their writing skills. As a result, standards are rising and are currently just below average in all three subjects. Standards are also improving steadily in Key Stage 2. The school's data shows that current Year 6 pupils are on track to reach just below average standards by the end of the year. Although this represents satisfactory progress from their starting point at the age of seven, pupils have made good progress from the significantly below expected standards reported when they were in Year 4. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress over time. However, as a result of increasingly well targeted support they are beginning to make better progress towards their challenging targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school is a happy community where pupils have positive attitudes towards school. They enjoy lessons, settle to work quickly and concentrate well. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and the school operates as a harmonious community. Pupils consider each other's opinions and feelings well and they encourage and help each other in lessons. Behaviour in lessons and around school is good and pupils show consideration to others and are polite and friendly to adults. Attendance is in line with the national average. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and safe. They participate enthusiastically in sport and discuss knowledgeably the benefits of eating a healthy diet. Pupils know about the dangers they may face in the outside world and understand that school rules contribute to

keeping everyone safe. Membership of the school council leads to pupils gaining a secure understanding of how a community should cooperate and enables them to influence what happens in school. The standards they achieve in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, together with their ability to cooperate with each other are a satisfactory preparation for future life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Relationships between teachers and pupils are strong. As a result, pupils have positive attitudes to their work. Pupils are provided with a varied range of interesting activities which encourages their participation in lessons and add to their enjoyment of learning. The teaching of English is good throughout the school. Accurate use of assessment helps teachers to plan the next step which each pupil needs to take to make good progress. Teachers consistently share learning intentions and assessment criteria with pupils. These strengths are not yet consistent in the teaching of all subjects. When teaching is good lessons move at a fast pace and expectation of what pupils can achieve are high. However, in some lessons teachers do not effectively use their assessment of pupils' knowledge and understanding to ensure that pupils are fully challenged or moved on to new learning at an appropriate pace. The quality of marking of pupils work is variable. While used well to increase the rate of pupils' progress in English, opportunities for pupils to revisit, consolidate and improve their work in other subjects are inconsistent.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. Learning is enriched well by a good range of activities and a wide variety of well attended after-school clubs. Involvement in the Sports Partnership enriches the provision for additional sports and contributes well to pupils' ability to lead healthy lifestyles. Knowledge gained during visits to places of interest is used well in lessons as a real focus for learning. A number of innovative changes have been made to curriculum provision. In English this has resulted in good provision which is well matched to pupils' individual needs. Despite such improvements, this is not yet effective in all other subjects. Although the curriculum covers most requirements there are currently insufficient opportunities for older pupils in history, geography and the arts. This is because the school has needed to focus on the basic skills to overcome the legacy of lower standards attained by these pupils earlier in their school career.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Safeguarding requirements meet national guidelines. Pupils' welfare and safety are promoted very well in most respects. Parents drew a small number of health and safety issues to the inspectors' attention during the course of the inspection which were shared with the school. There is good liaison with health and other professionals. The school is very proactive in challenging pupils who miss school too often; as a result levels of attendance have improved. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported because their individual needs are effectively identified and their progress carefully monitored. Pupils who have emotional, social or behavioural problems have excellent pastoral

in-house support from a specially trained member of staff. In English, pupils have a very well developed understanding of what they need to do to improve their work as a result of very effective support and guidance. This is not yet as well developed in other subject areas.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school. All leaders are committed to improving pupils' progress; they have a shared understanding of what they should do next and the systems for self-evaluation are satisfactory. Leaders are doing the right things to improve provision and there have been many successful initiatives which have increased the rate of pupil progress in the development of their writing skills. However, some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning and in the implementation of agreed curriculum initiatives have not been picked up quickly enough. As a result, standards in other subjects including mathematics and science are not improving as well as those in English. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. The impact is best illustrated in the way in which school meets the needs of the local community resulting in increasing involvement of parents in learning alongside their children. Policies to promote equal opportunities and to eliminate discrimination are operated consistently and effectively. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive and well informed about the school. They provide a sound and improving level of challenge.

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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?	3
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 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?	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	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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?	2

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**

18 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Beaconhill Community Primary School, Northumberland, NE23 8EH

My colleague and I really enjoyed our visit to inspect your school. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful. We particularly enjoyed visiting your classrooms, seeing the work that you were doing and talking to you about your school. We found that your school provides you with a satisfactory education and that it does some things really well.

Your school has a friendly and caring atmosphere. Staff take very good care of you and provide you with good advice and support. You clearly enjoy coming to school and it is good to see that more of you are attending regularly. Teaching is satisfactory, and sometimes good. It helps most of you make the progress we would expect in lessons, and the standards you reach are improving. This, together with important changes to what you are taught, is helping you to do particularly well at improving your writing skills. You make good progress in your social and personal skills especially in the way you behave so maturely and look after one another.

Staff do a sound job in running the school. They know how to help you improve and have taken lots of important decisions to make your school an even better place in which to learn. To help with this I have asked the school to improve the progress you make by improving teaching, the curriculum and the way in which the school leaders check how well things are going.

The headteacher, staff and governors are all keen that the school should continue to improve. You can help by continuing to work hard and being enthusiastic about all the school offers you.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Linda Buller

Lead inspector