

# Bewcastle School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112103
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	337841
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 November 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ann Wallis

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	40
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Billy Nelson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr John Roberts
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 September 2006
<b>School address</b>	Bewcastle Carlisle Cumbria CA6 6PF
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited seven lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work, looked at pupils' books, the school improvement plan, pupils' progress data and other documentation. They also analysed 25 parental questionnaires and 16 pupils' questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the quality of individual care and support for pupils and their personal development
- the progress made by all pupils
- how effective leaders and managers are in bringing about school improvement
- how well the curriculum is matched to the needs of all pupils, particularly the youngest children.

## Information about the school

This very small school serves an isolated area of northern Cumbria where most pupils come from surrounding farms and hamlets. Below average numbers of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are no pupils from minority ethnic groups or who are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils that are eligible for free school meals is below average. The school makes provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in one mixed-age Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 class.

The onsite provision for childcare, Bewcastle Pre-school' was inspected separately and will receive its own inspection report.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Pupils say how much they enjoy learning and how very safe they feel at this welcoming and friendly school which is at the heart of the community it serves. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and greatly appreciate the good education and outstanding care it provides for their children. The school values and nurtures the skills and talents of all pupils very highly so they make good progress in their learning and achieve well. Relationships are excellent, and an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust between all pupils, parents, staff and governors pervades the school. The school has many strengths, particularly in the way in which pupils of all ages take responsibility for each other and contribute to their school and the local community. Links with communities further afield and pupils' understanding of cultures and faiths different from their own are areas for development.

Children enter the Reception class with communication and language skills which are often below expectations for their age. In this very small school, test results fluctuate from year-to-year depending on the ability of the cohort. Therefore, comparisons with national averages can be misleading. However, over recent years pupils have usually reached broadly average and, in some years, above average standards at the end of Year 6. The school tracks pupils' progress very carefully and the data show that all pupils make good progress from their starting points. This was confirmed by work seen in lessons and in pupils' books during the inspection. Pupils achieve well because teaching is good. Teachers know their pupils very well and give them clear guidance on how to improve their work. While good, the curriculum currently provides pupils with limited opportunities to work together collaboratively to problem solve or to develop their creative talents, especially in music.

The school has good capacity to improve. Since the last inspection, leaders and managers have been very effective in bringing about improvement. There is a greater focus on writing which has improved standards, new facilities have supported improvements to the curriculum for younger children and pupils' progress is tracked even more carefully. Leaders and managers know their school very well because they evaluate their work effectively and are continually striving to make learning really enjoyable and improve the already good curriculum further.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the promotion of community cohesion beyond the local area to enhance pupils' understanding of other faiths and cultures.
- Implement plans to further enrich the curriculum by:

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- increasing opportunities for collaborative learning where pupils of all ages work together across a range of subjects to solve problems and meet challenges
- increase opportunities for creative learning, especially through music.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

Observation of pupils' work in lessons and in their books showed that they make good progress in and achieve well. Pupils are enthusiastic, have positive attitudes to learning and apply themselves well to their tasks. These positive features make a good contribution to the progress they make. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants and, consequently, make the same good progress as their peers. In 2008 and 2009, standards were broadly average in English, mathematics and science. This represented good progress for the pupils concerned from their starting points when they entered Year 1.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. Most keenly contribute to lessons, behave well and work hard. Attendance is high. Pupils in mixed-age classes work very well together and older pupils are keen to help younger ones learn. Pupils are very keen to take responsibility and they work very well as part of a team. For example, pupils took the initiative in planning and organising the very successful fund-raising event, 'Splash for Cash' which raised a large sum towards maintaining the school's much valued swimming pool. These strong team-working skills, combined with good basic skills in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT), mean that pupils are well equipped for later life. Pupils know clearly the difference between right and wrong and are respectful and polite to visitors and each other. Their social, moral and spiritual development is good, but their cultural understanding is less well developed.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

<b>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</b> Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b> Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	<b>2</b>
	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good. Teachers are knowledgeable and plan lessons well. They provide a variety of interesting resources and activities to stimulate and challenge pupils so that they make good progress in their learning. In some lessons and assemblies, charismatic story telling and vibrant explanations really fire pupils' enthusiasm so that they produce, for example, imaginative, high quality creative writing. Pupils' books are marked regularly and they are also encouraged to assess their own work so that they are clear about how well they are doing and know how to improve.

The curriculum is stimulating and well matched to pupils' needs. 'Challenge Thursdays' provide an opportunity for pupils of all ages to work together to solve problems and to meet challenges. This is an approach the school has evaluated as useful and is keen to develop to improve the curriculum even further. It also recognises the need to provide better opportunities for creative learning, particularly through music. A wide range of enrichment activities contribute well to pupils' enjoyment of learning. They talk enthusiastically about using the swimming pool, the adventure playground and the outdoor classroom (which they designed), building dens in the school grounds, growing vegetables in the large polytunnel and about the specialist football and rugby coaching they get from visiting experts.

The care, guidance and support that all pupils receive are outstanding and are at the very heart of the school's work. Consequently, pupils feel very safe, feel that they are listened to and that any problems they may have will be sorted out very quickly. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are particularly well supported and thrive in this caring atmosphere.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b> Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	<b>2</b>
	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

The charismatic and inclusive leadership of the headteacher ensures that everyone who works or learns at Bewcastle Primary feels valued and is listened to. Consequently, the school is a happy place where morale is high. The school promotes equality exceptionally well so the achievement of all groups of pupils is good and aspects of their personal development are outstanding. Self-evaluation is accurate and leaders and managers have identified the appropriate priorities for improvement to move the school forward. Governors are very supportive of the school and know it well. Although they are not fully involved in determining its strategic direction, they contribute a great deal of practical help to the school which enriches the learning environment for pupils and strengthens links with the community. Excellent relationships with parents and good partnerships with other schools and external agencies, support pupils' learning well. Safeguarding procedures are all in place and meet requirements. The school makes an outstanding contribution to promoting community cohesion in the local area, and is now in the process of strengthening and developing this to the same extent nationally and globally.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

Children make good progress during their Reception Year. They enter school with language and communication skills that are often below those expected for their age. By the time they enter Year 1, most are working at the expected levels and some children exceed these. Children follow the good examples of those in Years 1 and 2 and settle well into school routines. Most quickly learn to cooperate well with each other and with

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adults. They say they feel safe and know, for example, that eating apples will keep them healthy.

Teaching is good. Lessons are lively, interesting and well planned. For example, children really enjoyed searching the outdoor classroom and using digital cameras to take pictures of patterns and stripes. However, some opportunities are missed to engage children in conversation when they are working independently. Children make good progress because the work they are asked to do is well matched to their interests and abilities. Leadership and management are good. Planning is helpful in guiding improvement. New facilities for creative play both indoors and out have supported improvements to the curriculum. Staff have created a warm nurturing environment in which children become increasingly self-confident and achieve well. Links with parents are excellent and they are kept well informed about their children's progress.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

**Views of parents and carers**

Parents and carers are fulsome in their praise for the school. Every family responded to the questionnaire and many wrote at length about how very well they felt the school was caring for their children.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bewcastle School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 25 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 40 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	18	72	6	24	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	19	76	5	20	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	19	76	5	20	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	84	3	12	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	21	84	3	12	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	76	5	20	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	84	3	12	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	19	76	4	16	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	84	3	12	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	76	5	20	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	64	8	32	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	20	80	4	16	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	84	3	12	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



11 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bewcastle School, Carlisle, CA6 6PF

Thank you so much for making us so welcome when we visited your school last week. It was a real pleasure to talk to you and find out about all the things you enjoy at school.

These are some of the main things we have said in our report:

- yours is a good school, where you make good progress because you are taught well
- the care, guidance and support you receive is outstanding
- your school is well led and managed
- your attendance at school is high, you enjoy learning, work hard and behave well.

This is what we have asked your school to do now:

- increase your understanding of other faiths and cultures
- make the curriculum you follow even more interesting by doing more learning similar to what you do on 'Challenge Thursdays'.

You can help your school to improve even further by working with your teachers to do the very best you can.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Ann Wallis

Lead inspector

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