

Beaucroft Foundation School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113956
Local Authority	Dorset
Inspection number	338268
Inspection dates	5–6 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Denise Morris

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	152
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	3
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Botterill
Headteacher	Paul McGill
Date of previous school inspection	3 November 2006
School address	Wimborne Road Colehill Wimborne BH21 2SS
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons, and held meetings with leaders, staff, governors, groups of pupils and partners. They observed the school's work, and looked at curriculum planning, assessment and tracking documents, governors' plans, the school development plan and pupils' records. Ninety-two parents responded to the questionnaires and several pupils also completed questionnaires either in print or in symbols.

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

- the use of assessment to identify weaknesses
- the quality of monitoring and its effectiveness in promoting achievement by all the different groups of pupils at the school
- the impact of procedures to improve achievement in Years 10 and 11
- the quality of governors' planning to secure improvements.

Information about the school

Beaucroft is a school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, many of whom have additional complex difficulties and/or disabilities, mainly autistic spectrum disorders or sensory impairments. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The school provides specialist provision for the eastern region of Dorset. Of those pupils who attend, 28% come from neighbouring local authorities. A very small number of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision for children from the age of four. There is a new sixth form for students aged 16 to 19 that has been open for eight weeks. The school has gained many awards including Healthy School status, Active Mark and Investors in People. It has recently been awarded specialist status for communication and interaction.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school. It has maintained high quality achievement since the last inspection. Excellent leadership and management, and in particular the very clear vision of the headteacher, has resulted in pupils achieving, and often exceeding, their expected targets. As a result they make better than expected progress. The headteacher, ably supported by other leaders and staff, is clearly focused on embedding ambition and driving improvement in all areas of the school. This is evident in the way the school undertakes exceptionally rigorous assessment and tracking of each pupil's achievements to ensure that they achieve as well as they can. As a result the school has an excellent capacity to continue improving. Every parent who responded to the questionnaire said that they are pleased with their child's experience at the school. 'Beaucroft is an excellent school with very committed staff willing to go the extra mile', wrote one parent.

Almost all groups of pupils make outstanding progress during their time at the school. Higher-attaining pupils have exceptional opportunities to study GCSE courses successfully with the local secondary school. The effective use of a wide range of communication strategies, including the 'Picture Exchange Communication System' (PECS), as well as 'Signalong' and other visual resources, enables students with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) and those with more challenging behaviour and/or learning difficulties to make the same levels of progress as other pupils and develop very good communication skills.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Their extremely good behaviour is reflected in their excellent moral and social development. They are polite and friendly to each other and to adults and visitors. Their understanding of how to lead healthy lives is exceptional and is evident in the way that they clearly explain their reasons for bringing fruit to school every day and in their high levels of enthusiasm and attendance at the many extra-curricular sports activities. Pupils clearly know right from wrong and work extremely hard to manage their own behaviour. They say that there is absolutely no bullying at the school. Pupils regularly work with the local community and are fully involved with other local schools both through inclusion activities and through joint working relationships. Pupils are extremely well prepared for their futures.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage benefit from outstanding provision that enables them to make very good progress during their Reception Year. Provision for three Year 12 students in the sixth form is good. It is a new resource for the school and good progress has been made in a very short time to ensure it meets the needs of the students. Leaders are aware that the accommodation in the sixth form is not as appropriate as it could be in ensuring that students are able to benefit from the full

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range of requirements for their age, particularly in relation to developing their independence skills.

Almost all pupils benefit from outstanding teaching. The collaborative approach of teachers and teaching assistants, all of whom have specific expertise in developing pupils' communication and interaction skills, contributes considerably to pupils' excellent progress and high quality personal development. The excellent curriculum includes a very good therapy and support package ensuring that individual needs are fully met. Pupils are extremely well cared for. Safeguarding arrangements, including child protection, are particularly robust. Governors fully meet their statutory responsibilities and successfully plan to keep improving. They provide high levels of support and challenge to the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Work closely with the local authority to improve the accommodation for pupils in the sixth form so that their independence skills accelerate.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is low compared to the national picture due to their special needs. Nevertheless the progress that all groups of pupils make in relation to their starting points is outstanding. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 make excellent progress as shown by the broad range of accreditation that they achieve. By the time they reach Year 11 many are working at National Curriculum levels and some are able to take entry-level examinations, Asdan qualifications and GCSEs. In the most recent tests three pupils attained GCSE English, ICT and/or art. Pupils achieve exceptionally well and there is no significant difference in the achievement of the distinct groups of pupils at the school. Those with additional needs such as hearing or visual impairments and those with behaviour difficulties or ASD make very good gains in learning because of the skilled and highly effective way that they are supported by the teaching assistants and because of some specific strategies that help them to learn. Pupils achieve very well in information and communication technology and exceptionally well in music. This was evident during a session in which older pupils played African drums. They showed excellent awareness of rhythm and dynamics as they copied each other's complex patterns accurately and with enjoyment. Pupils achieve good standards in art and this is evident in the many effective displays around the school, showing how pupils emulate real artists such as Seurat and Monet in their work.

All groups of pupils behave exceptionally well in and around the school. Older pupils regularly help younger ones and many take on simple responsibilities. Their social and moral development is outstanding. Even the youngest children take the register to the office on a daily basis, crossing the playground confidently to do so. Pupils say that they really enjoy school and feel safe and secure. This is evident in the way that they come to school regularly and join in fully with all the activities offered. They particularly enjoy their residential activities and many commented in their questionnaires on the fun they

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have on these trips. Pupils contribute exceptionally well to the local community. They take part in performances and local events on a regular basis and raise funds for many different charities. They benefit from many opportunities to reflect on their own lives and show empathy with others. Their spiritual and cultural development is good. Meaningful links with pupils from other local schools help to promote very positive social skills. Pupils are also learning about other countries through links with a school in New Zealand. Pupils share emails and photographs with pupils from that school. Links have also been established with a school in Scunthorpe but meaningful links for pupils have yet to be developed.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	*
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Careful planning enables each individual pupil to make excellent progress. This is particularly evident in communication and interaction. For example, pupils in the junior

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

* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

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department proudly and confidently use their communication symbols to make choices at lunch and dinner times and to help them talk with adults and peers. Very purposeful and collaborative working between teachers and teaching assistants ensures that pupils are extremely well supported and regularly challenged in lessons. All staff are skilled in using visual approaches such as timetables with pictures or symbols to ensure that pupils understand what is expected of them. Teachers make exceptional use of the high quality assessment and tracking system to measure and monitor small steps of progress. This enables them to quickly spot any pupil that is falling behind and put strategies in place to provide support and encouragement. Pupils benefit from the outstanding range of curriculum activities that are tailored to meet their individual needs. They talked excitedly about the many after-school sports clubs and were really keen to show the awards they have won in inter-schools sports activities such as football, rugby and running. 'I really love the residential trips', wrote one pupil, a sentiment that was echoed by many more. Partnerships with local schools enhance provision through shared working practices and increased opportunities for most pupils to study alongside their mainstream peers.

All pupils have individual education plans that detail their own specific targets. These are regularly reviewed and updated and where possible pupils are fully involved in assessing how well they are doing. Pupils are taught as effectively as possible to stay safe and to manage their own feelings and behaviour. This has a very positive impact on their excellent personal development and well-being and on the harmony seen around the school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The impact of excellent leadership and management at Beaucroft is evident in the schools' sustained success since the previous inspection and in the improvements made over that period. The school has acquired its specialist status through rigorous attention to detail and through the driving ambition of the headteacher who has exceptionally high expectations of all pupils. For example, careful attention to monitoring the way that teachers record the tiny steps of progress made by all groups of pupils in their academic and personal development is having a very positive impact on the school's success. It ensures equality of opportunity for all. Accurate self-evaluation and careful planning for the future, as well as excellent teamwork between leaders, governors and staff,

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demonstrate clearly that the school has an excellent capacity to continue improving. Governors provide high quality support and challenge, particularly in relation to the impact of resources on outcomes for pupils. They are well aware that there is more to do to improve facilities for the oldest students in the sixth form and are working hard to do so.

Governors are rigorous in keeping the school safe and secure. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are exceptionally robust and risk assessments are fully in place. Partnerships are a major strength in promoting enrichment for pupils and enabling joint working relationships. The school is developing a good strategy for community cohesion and has exceptional local links which bring many visitors to the school from a wide range of different communities. Links with schools in wider Great Britain have been forged but are not yet as productive for pupils as those with local and international schools.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Outstanding provision for the youngest children in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that they make at least good, and often outstanding progress. Children benefit from skilled teaching and support and some exciting resources that enable them to develop their academic and social skills and achieve very well. They really enjoy school. The extensive outdoor facilities and activities enable them to be healthy and improve their physical skills as they climb and run around the adventure playground. Staff make very effective use of communication strategies such as signing, symbols and PECS to

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encourage children to understand language and begin interacting. Children enjoy stories. They join in with familiar phrases with enthusiasm and constant repetition is helping them to remember different sequences. For example, in one lesson they were eagerly able to join in with familiar phrases as they listened to a story.

Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is excellent. Records of children's achievements are comprehensive and show many examples of small steps to improvement as children develop their learning skills. Procedures to keep children safe and secure are robust. Links with parents are excellent and they value the thorough induction procedures and the regular information that they receive.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Sixth form

The new provision in the sixth form is good and developing well. It has only been operating for eight weeks and a good start has been made. Teaching and support are of a high quality and staff know the students very well. Their needs are effectively met and through their appropriate accredited Asdan course they are being well prepared for their futures. For example, there is a course that enables students to develop social skills so that they are more easily able to make friends. Teachers focus carefully on the development of functional literacy to enable students to communicate as well as possible with others. This is helping students to develop personal skills that will give them confidence as they go into the wider world. They regularly visit the local shops to buy ingredients to cook their own lunches and they make good progress in all aspects of learning.

Students enjoy the informal approach in the sixth form and take pride in keeping their room tidy. The lack of appropriate accommodation for this group of students, particularly for leisure and cooking, limits their independence because they have to use the school facilities. Leadership and management of the sixth form are good. Students' achievements are regularly assessed and tracked to ensure that they achieve well. Leaders have developed a good programme of work and are liaising closely with other agencies to improve the accommodation.

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These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

The school has excellent relationships with parents and carers. Parents are very supportive of the school's work and all the parents who responded to the questionnaires said that teaching was at least good at the school. They particularly like the way that the school keeps their children safe and secure and the way that it promotes healthy lifestyles. Almost all parents feel that they are kept well informed about their child's progress and feel that their children are doing well at the school. 'Since being at Beaucroft my child has made the most progress in all directions than in the whole of her school life. She is treated like a real person and the school takes her needs and feelings into account', wrote a parent.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Beaucroft Foundation 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 inspection team received 92 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 152 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	72	78	19	21	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	68	74	23	25	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	60	65	27	29	4	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	57	62	29	32	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	71	77	19	21	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	59	64	28	30	4	4	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	65	71	27	29	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)	57	62	26	28	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	69	75	21	23	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	63	68	24	26	2	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	57	62	29	32	4	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	65	71	24	26	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	72	78	20	22	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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



9 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Beaucroft School, Wimborne BH21 2 SS

Thank you for your help when we came to your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you and hearing about your school. You told us that you like school very much. This letter is to tell you about some of the things we found out about your school.

- Beaucroft is an excellent school.
- You behave very well and help each other.
- You eat healthily and keep very fit.
- You do well in your lessons.
- Teachers give you lots of exciting things to do.
- You really like the trips that you go on.
- Your teachers check your work every day.
- Leaders of your school look after you and keep you safe.

We are asking your school to improve the accommodation for the oldest students in the sixth form so that they can be more independent and have their own kitchen to cook their lunches.

Thank you again for your help.

Yours sincerely

Denise Morris

Lead inspector

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