

The Beacon Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131311
Local Authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	360252
Inspection dates	9–10 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Clare Henderson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Kate Wharton
Headteacher	Miss Sally Aspinwall
Date of previous school inspection	8 October 2007
School address	Heyworth Street Liverpool Merseyside L5 3QG
Telephone number	0151 263 4206
Fax number	0151 263 1583
Email address	b.thompson@beacon.liverpool.sch.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 14 lessons taught by eight different teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documents relating to safeguarding, pupils' progress and attainment, the curriculum, the school's development plan and the way in which the school evaluates its own performance. The views of parents and carers, through 61 returned inspection questionnaires, and the opinions of staff and pupils were analysed.

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

- Achievement of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the more-able in mathematics.
- Quality of teaching and assessment in enabling all pupils to achieve their potential.
- Quality of the curriculum and its impact on pupils' achievement and enjoyment of school.
- Impact of changes in leadership and management on pupils' overall learning and achievement.

Information about the school

This school is smaller than the average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is high. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. A few pupils are from minority ethnic heritages. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school, other than at the beginning of the school year is high. The school has gained National Healthy School's status, Artsmark Gold, Eco Bronze, Activemark, Advanced Inclusion Charter and Dyslexia Friendly Level 2 Awards. The deputy headteacher is acting headteacher whilst the headteacher is on maternity leave. Fifty per cent of the teachers have been appointed during the past two years.

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

This is a good school. It is inclusive and welcoming and provides outstanding care, guidance and support for all pupils and especially those who are vulnerable or who join the school other than at the beginning of the school year. Exemplary safeguarding procedures are in place, ensuring that pupils' safety and well-being are promoted extremely well. Most pupils begin school with skills which are below age-related expectations and particularly low in communication and social skills. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because of the high priority adults give to developing their language and social skills. This good rate of progress continues for all pupils as they move through the school. Consequently, by the time they leave in Year 6, their attainment is average.

Achievement is good and pupils' current work and the school's own data show that rates of progress are generally good across the school. The close attention teachers have given, since the last inspection, to extending pupils' reading and writing skills is paying off, with attainment in English rising to above average for all pupils in 2010. Pupils' attainment in mathematics is average. However, not all learning tasks in the subject are set at a sufficiently challenging level to meet every pupil's individual needs.

Pupils say they feel very safe and that they thoroughly enjoy the wide range of exciting opportunities provided to them within the curriculum to develop their musical, sporting and creative interests and talents. This enjoyment is reflected in above average rates of attendance. Pupils develop a good understanding of what is needed to lead healthy lifestyles. Furthermore, the contribution they make to their school and wider community and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Senior leaders, supported by an effective governing body, provide strong leadership. The good track record of improvement and well measured management of staff changes since the last inspection illustrates well the ambition and drive that the senior leadership team and governors provide. Through rigorous self-evaluation, the school is aware of its strengths and areas for development. It plans carefully to address these issues. It demonstrates a commitment to developing staff by sharing good practice and through their involvement in monitoring and evaluating progress towards agreed priorities. This illustrates well the good capacity that the school has to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and accelerate progress and learning in mathematics further by ensuring that:
 - – all staff consistently plan and set challenging tasks in lessons tailored to meet

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pupils' individual needs.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' achievement is good and most pupils concentrate well and work hard in lessons. Good learning is seen where teachers effectively use assessment information to plan suitable activities that enthuse and motivate pupils of differing abilities. Pupils are keen to learn, particularly when lessons are practical or involve the use of information and communication technology (ICT). For instance, in a Year 5 history lesson pupils researched and confidently reported back to their classmates the key facts about life for children in Victorian times. In such lessons, they are challenged to think, reflect and express themselves effectively, using skills previously learned. Such practical learning gives a boost to pupils' self-confidence and provides a high level of challenge for the more-able pupils. Discussion with pupils and scrutiny of their books shows overall progress, from their below age-related starting points in the Early Years Foundation Stage, is good throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and vulnerable pupils make good progress and their work in small groups with adult support has a positive impact on their learning.

Pupils say they understand why they have to adhere to school rules and say that any concerns they have are taken very seriously and dealt with by staff. Behaviour is good and most pupils demonstrate high standards of conduct. Any instances of inappropriate behaviour are managed very well, sensitively considering the needs of all. Pupils know about eating healthily and have been so keen to share this knowledge they have created their own cookery book, 'The Healthy No Need to Be Wealthy Recipe Book'. Pupils enjoy taking positions of responsibility and, as members of the school council or as prefects, carry out their duties effectively. Attendance is above average and the high number attending the exciting and well planned breakfast club reflects their enjoyment of school. Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is reflected in their positive attitudes to school and their respect for the views of others.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	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

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

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

In lessons, relationships between teachers and pupils are extremely positive. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use resources well. Where teaching is best, pupils respond well to clear expectations, lively activities and high levels of challenge. They learn quickly in such lessons through discussion and focused tasks. Regular feedback is provided so that all pupils are aware of their success, helping them to move to the next stages of learning. Learning is less rapid in a few mathematics lessons when the tasks set are not challenging enough or matched clearly enough to pupils' individual learning needs.

The curriculum focuses well on the development of basic skills in English, mathematics and in ICT. It also enriches pupils' personal development and experiences through a good range of themed based activities. One example, with a focus on extending citizenship, involved pupils in learning about a range of religions and traditions other than their own. Good attention is paid to pupils' personal development through the teaching of social and emotional aspects of learning. Provision is enhanced by a good range of extra-curricular activities that are well attended by all groups of pupils.

The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding. Vulnerable pupils are extremely well supported. Well targeted and sensitive support under the strong leadership of the learning mentor helps pupils to overcome emotional issues.

One-to-one and small group support provided to targeted pupils whose progress may be slipping behind that of their peers is also of a high quality. Links with services to support vulnerable pupils are excellent. Transition arrangements between Year 6 and the high school are effective and pupils are provided with high quality guidance and support to prepare them well for the next stages in their education.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
	2

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The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The drive for improvement is guided by a clear vision, which is led by senior leaders and shared by all staff. The work of the school is kept under constant review and new members of staff quickly become effective within the team. Lessons are observed, assessments are carefully analysed and information is gathered from parents, carers and pupils to identify strengths and weaknesses. Areas to improve are carefully prioritised and challenging targets are set and pursued by leaders across the school. These measures resulted in improved standards in English and mathematics in 2010, good progress and a continuing rise in pupils' attainment.

The governing body provide good support and challenge. It knows the school's areas for development well and is involved in strategic planning. This enables it to hold the school to account effectively. Good partnerships with parents, carers and outside agencies ensure that pupils' well-being is promoted very strongly. Outstanding safeguarding procedures are in place, ensuring the safety and well-being of pupils. A robust equality policy challenges stereotyping, ensures that there is no discrimination and adjusts teaching and the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils from different ethnic groups well. Community cohesion is promoted well and evaluated effectively. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to visit other schools, to share experiences and learn about other religions and cultures.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

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Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get off to a good start in their learning in this happy environment. This is because adults provide high quality care for each child and pay close attention to developing children's social, speaking, listening and writing skills. A wide range of opportunities is provided, both indoors and outdoors, which develop children's physical and creative skills well. This is despite limited, though soon to be improved, outdoor facilities. Many children are new to the provision and the older Reception children help them join in play and begin to learn to share and take turns. Planning is based around children's interests and focuses on enriching their life experiences. For instance, a child finds a caterpillar and this sparks a discussion on what a caterpillar eats and how it will, one day, change into a butterfly. Another group explores the properties of magnets, with an adult on hand to extend children's mathematical and scientific knowledge and skills effectively. Such activities similarly develop children's personal development and knowledge and understanding of the world well. All adults take excellent care of children and ensure that all welfare requirements are met meticulously. The school works hard to engage parents and carers so that they have an active role to play in their children's education. Leadership is good and all adults work together as an effective team. They use observations effectively to track children's progress. Although outcomes in most areas of learning for the large majority of children are generally below the level expected when they move to Year 1, given their low start, this reflects good progress.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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

Most parents and carers are happy with all aspects of the school's work and its effectiveness. Most agree that the school keeps children safe. A few parents and carers felt that pupils are not making enough progress and that they do not receive enough information about their children's progress, that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour, that they needed more help supporting their children's learning, and that leadership and management could be better. Inspectors found that the needs of all pupils are considered very carefully when dealing with any behaviour issues, which are managed well. The school provides a wide range of information about pupils' progress. Pupils are making good progress and considerable advice is offered to help parents and carers support their children's learning. The quality of leadership and

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management is good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Beacon Church of England Primary 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 61 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 205 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	36	59	22	36	1	2	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	33	54	27	44	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	24	39	30	49	5	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	41	27	44	5	8	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	30	49	28	46	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	38	31	51	6	10	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	52	24	39	4	7	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)	26	43	29	48	4	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	39	31	51	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	36	27	44	9	15	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	28	32	52	8	13	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	27	44	25	41	6	10	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	29	48	28	46	1	2	1	2

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



13 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Beacon Church of England Primary School, Liverpool, L5 3QG

I would like to thank you for the help you gave the team when we inspected your school. We especially enjoyed listening to you as you sang so tunefully and confidently in your assembly. Now I would like to share with you what the inspection found out about your school. It is a good school. These are some of the best things about it.

- You have lots of fun and enjoy learning while you play in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- All adults take outstanding care of you and you told us that you feel very safe in school.
- You make good progress and reach above average standards in English and average standards in mathematics by the time you leave Year 6.
- Your behaviour is good and your attendance rates are above average.
- You have a good range of opportunities to engage with pupils from different religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.
- The school provides many exciting things for you to do and learn, such as playing a musical instrument or having fun at the breakfast club.

To make the school even better, I have asked teachers to:

- make sure that they consistently plan tasks in mathematics lessons which match your individual learning needs.

We hope you will play your part by continuing to work hard and do your best to help The Beacon become an even better school.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Clare Henderson

Lead inspector

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