

Beckstone Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134739
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	381725
Inspection dates	20–21 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Adrian Francis

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	325
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gary McKeating
Headteacher	David Warbrick
Date of previous school inspection	14 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons and observed 13 teachers. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at samples of school documentation, including development plans, tracking and assessment records, policies, safeguarding documents and samples of pupils' work. The inspectors considered the views of 95 parents and carers who returned questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether the quality of teaching and learning is good enough to continue improvements for all pupils, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Whether or not the school's judgements relating to pupils' personal development are accurate.
- The extent to which leaders and managers take effective steps to evaluate the achievement of all groups of pupils as they move through the school.

Information about the school

Beckstone Primary is larger than the average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is slightly higher than average and the proportion identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. Ten of the twelve classes contain pupils of mixed-age groups. The school has received a large number of awards in recognition of its work, including Investors in People, Healthy School Status, Artsmark Gold award, a Community award and a Respect Education award.

Inspection judgements

Main findings

Beckstone Primary School provides a good education for its pupils. It has some outstanding features, including excellent care, guidance and support, the extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and the effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers. Work with a wide range of partners makes a consistently excellent contribution to pupils' good achievement and well-being. Behaviour is excellent in lessons and around the school. Strong links with the community, effective teaching and a good curriculum give pupils a good start to life. As one parent expressed it: 'Beckstone Primary is a fantastic school. The staff are friendly and very professional and my child is very happy there'.

Pupils make good progress in their learning. They enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills generally well below those expected for their age and have made good progress by the time they enter Year 1. However, the quality of provision is stronger in Nursery than in the Reception class. Pupils' learning continues to be good across Key Stages 1 and 2 and by the time they leave the school, pupils' attainment is broadly average.

Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are conscientious and want to learn. They gain a good understanding of their own personal safety and have an excellent understanding of what they need to do to stay fit and healthy. They take on responsibilities in school well and have good opportunities to be involved with their local community. Pupils are punctual and their attendance is above average. As a result of how well pupils develop their enterprise capabilities, they are well-prepared for their future economic well-being.

Teaching is of good quality with some excellent features and pupils learn well. Where teaching is most effective, teachers demonstrate a good understanding of how well pupils have progressed and assess their learning throughout lessons, often talking to pupils about their perceptions of how well they are doing. The curriculum is good and links are identified across a range of subjects. Especially strong is the range and quality of the extension and enrichment activities in place, with the school actively seeking out partners with whom they can work in order to make a positive contribution to pupils' personal development. The school's pastoral support and guidance for pupils are outstanding and lead to all pupils, including those who are potentially more vulnerable, making good and often very good progress in their personal development.

The school has developed effective systems to track pupils' progress to ensure they are doing as well as they can. Although self-evaluation is good overall, there is sometimes a lack of clarity in middle leaders' action plans as to exactly what improvements pupils are expected to make. There are many strengths in leadership and management which are reflected in overall good and sometimes outstanding outcomes for pupils. The headteacher's drive and clear vision, along with a strong professional partnership with all staff, have been particularly successful in providing a very caring and supportive ethos for all pupils. The governing body is effective in providing a good balance of support and challenge. As a result of all these aspects and the effective improvements made since the last inspection, the school has a good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment further by ensuring that middle leaders produce more sharply-focused plans for improvement, which include clearly measurable outcomes.
- Ensure provision for Reception children is of as consistently high quality as that for those in Nursery by the more effective use of assessment in order to inform planning and future provision.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, settle quickly to their work and apply themselves well. When given the opportunity, they work well in pairs or groups and show respect for each other's ideas and contributions. Pupils develop good independent learning skills because teachers encourage them to find things out for themselves. Assessment information, pupils' work and lessons observed by inspectors demonstrate that overall progress is good for pupils of all abilities. This represents good achievement overall. Progress and the quality of learning are also good for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Behaviour is excellent and pupils say they feel safe in school. Pupils know how important healthy lifestyles are and describe many ways in which they have adopted healthy lifestyles. They eat healthily and know which foods are good for them and those that need to be treated with more caution. Vegetables from the school garden are picked by pupils and cooked for school meals throughout the year. Pupils are very willing and active participants in the full and varied package of sporting and other enrichment opportunities the school provides. A strong feature of the school is the way in which older pupils support and help the younger ones, both in their learning and at playtimes. The school council is an active group and its members regularly represent the views of their classmates and report back the decisions made by the council.

Pupils speak with enthusiasm about their local community and have contact with a range of local groups. These include the local marina regeneration action group and a disability association. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong: they know the difference between right and wrong and work co-operatively in lessons and beyond. Pupils are encouraged by staff during assemblies and other discussion times to reflect on the impact of their actions on others.

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use resources and other adults to support and stimulate learning well. In the best lessons, teachers encourage pupils to act as resources for each other, for example, through discussion in pairs to develop each other's thinking. Teachers generally provide pupils with effective feedback so they are motivated to work effectively and know what they need to do to improve. Where this is not so effective, teachers' marking is not as sharp and clear as it needs to be in order to guide pupils' improvements. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning are good enough to continue improvements for all pupils.

The curriculum enables pupils to achieve well and provides particularly well for vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The range of enrichment activities, within the curriculum and beyond, is especially strong. For example, pupils showed excitement when talking about the range of clubs on offer and the activities and events in which the school takes part, including Rock Challenge and Athletics. The timetable provides an appropriate balance between subjects, placing sufficient emphasis on literacy and numeracy, and enabling more links between subjects so that pupils have opportunities to apply their basic skills. Pupils' good achievement in information and communication technology (ICT) has been supported by the development of a wide range of up-to-date resources and extended opportunities.

The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding. The school's work has a very positive effect on pupils' personal development. Close monitoring of pupils' well-being and personal development ensures that they are supported to a high level and the provision of a strong nurturing environment is a key part of this. Relationships are respectful and very positive and links with services to support vulnerable pupils are excellent. Transition arrangements between all Key Stages are effective and pupils are well-prepared for the next stage of their education.

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has a clear and well-articulated vision for the school. He is well-supported by the deputy headteacher and by the governing body which is engaged in a focus on improving pupils' achievement and personal development. High expectations and a strong drive for improvement are clearly-visible in the school, supported by robust tracking systems and an ethos where staff work effectively for the well-being of pupils. Teaching quality is monitored well by senior staff, with a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. However, middle leaders are not always fully-involved in devising sharply-focused plans, designed to tackle specific aspects of pupils' achievement, based on their evaluation of the school's work.

The governing body has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The Chair of the Governing Body is very knowledgeable and is keen that members of the governing body further extend their role in challenging the school, tackling weaknesses and supporting the school in its drive for improvement.

Safeguarding procedures are good. Thorough checks are carried out on all staff and visitors to the school. Staff receive regular training to update them on safeguarding and child protection procedures. Risk assessments are carried out on pupils' activities and visits.

The school engages extremely well with parents and carers and with its other partners. There are many opportunities for parents and carers to engage with the school and the school is actively looking for ways to involve them more in their children's learning. There is a range of opportunities to promote community cohesion through local links. National and international links are developing well, for example, through the contacts with schools in Cambodia and Tanzania. Leaders and managers at all levels promote equality and tackle discrimination well. The use of assessment is good overall. The school holds considerable amounts of good-quality information about pupils' learning, their personal development and the standards they attain. Much work is done by staff in scrutinising these assessment records and individual samples of work in order to help all groups of pupils achieve well. Because pupils' outcomes are good the school gives good value for money:

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are generally well below those expected for their age, particularly in aspects of language and literacy. As a result of good teaching, particularly in Nursery, they make generally good progress towards the national goals, especially in their knowledge and understanding of the world. However, on entry to Year 1 their skills generally remain below average. The school works effectively to build links with parents and carers, starting in Nursery and the Educare facility where very positive relationships are formed. Children have high-quality experiences in Nursery, but there is some inconsistency in provision for Reception children because assessments do not always fully inform planning and future provision. Children quickly become secure and happy, and their confidence, motivation and skills all grow as a result. Children's abilities to work both independently and in groups generally develop well and by the end of Reception the majority of children have gained improved concentration and perseverance.

Overall, the curriculum meets children's needs well. There is a good range of activities provided over the Early Years Foundation Stage, with an emphasis on developing children's social skills. Behaviour is good and children learn to share and take turns. Their speaking skills are also given priority and staff take the opportunity to stimulate children's imaginations and to enhance their vocabulary. Children's welfare is given a high priority and staff ensure that their social and emotional needs are met well. In the Reception classes, however, there are some missed opportunities for creative and physical development. Leadership and management are good. Children's progress is monitored thoroughly and recorded in detail, with the resulting learning journals being a good record for parents and carers.

Views of parents and carers

Questionnaires returned from parents and carers were overwhelmingly supportive of all aspects of the school's work, such as how much their children enjoy school, the extent to which the school keeps their children safe and the promotion of healthy lifestyles. These views are similar to those of inspectors. Parents and carers are impressed with the quality of relationships between staff and pupils and welcome the opportunity to be engaged with the school as much as possible. They were especially pleased with the good start in life that the school gives to their children and the wide range of extended clubs and activities on offer.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Beckstone 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 95 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 325 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	68	72	27	28	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	70	74	25	26	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	54	57	39	41	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	54	57	37	39	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	62	65	30	32	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	60	63	35	37	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	61	64	31	33	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)	46	48	44	46	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	51	54	42	44	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	53	56	36	38	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	48	51	44	46	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	67	71	28	29	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	71	75	24	25	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 all 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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and is consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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 up exactly to 100. Sixth-form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



22 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Beckstone Primary School, Workington, CA14 5PX

Thank you for making my colleagues and me so welcome when we inspected your school recently. You will be delighted to know that you go to a good school. We were impressed with how well you all get on together and how proud you are of your school. Your behaviour is excellent. You make a good contribution to school life as well as being involved in the local community. The school provides you with a very good range of activities in lessons and at other times, particularly related to physical education and sports. The school provides you with extremely high-quality care, guidance and support with the result that each one of you is valued and you all feel safe. You told us that you enjoyed your lessons and we agree with you. You make good progress in your learning and achieve well. You enjoy an imaginative variety of experiences and teaching is good.

So, what does the school need to do to get even better? I have asked your headteacher and teachers to do the following.

- Improve the ways in which they plan to raise standards in the areas that are important for the school.
- Make sure that the children in the Reception classes all have the same high-quality teaching, resources and organisation as the children in Nursery.

I am sure you will play your part in helping your teachers to improve Beckstone Primary by continuing to work hard and helping each other to succeed. I wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Adrian Francis
Lead inspector

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