

Belmont CofE (Controlled) Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114227
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	378816
Inspection dates	2–3 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Kate Pringle

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	152
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Philip Radcliffe
Headteacher	Debra Murphy
Date of previous school inspection	25 June 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Twelve lessons and eight teachers were observed. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, assessment information, policies and procedures, school development plans and updates of pupils' progress. Views of stakeholders were also considered through questionnaire responses from 62 parents and carers, 9 staff and 121 pupils.

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

- How effectively teaching and learning promote good, or better, progress for all pupils and groups of pupils across the school by ensuring that the needs of all are effectively met.
- How well the newly-developed curriculum engages and motivates pupils, providing them with opportunities to be independent learners and making the best use of their basic skills, including information and communication technology (ICT).
- How successfully the school's engagement with partners and other agencies supports the care, guidance and support of pupils.
- How effectively all leaders and managers monitor and evaluate their individual areas of responsibility to secure good and improving provision and outcomes for pupils.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than others of a similar type. It shares a campus with an infant school and a community college. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than average. There are few pupils from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities who are supported by the school without input from external agencies is lower than average. However, the proportion of pupils receiving external support or with a statement of special educational needs is double the national average. The school supports a number of pupils with visual impairment from across the authority. It hosts the resource base for vision impairment for the local authority.

The school holds a number of awards, the most recent being for Enterprise, Investors in Children, Fairtrade accreditation and enhanced Healthy Schools status.

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 which is constantly improving because of the considerable vision and ambition of the headteacher. She is effectively supported by a challenging governing body and enthusiastic, empowered leaders, who work together to forge exceptional links with other partners and improve provision and outcomes for pupils. The school provides exceptional care for pupils and this is recognised and greatly appreciated by parents and carers. One parent summed up the views of many by commenting, 'I am able to air any concerns about my child's progress and well-being and know that my views will be listened to and valued, working together to find solutions to any difficulties.' As a result of such quality of care, pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. They engage in numerous responsibilities across the school demonstrating an excellent understanding of the needs of others and how they can influence change for the better. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school promotes excellent partnerships to promote pupils' learning and well-being.

Most pupils enter school with attainment that is broadly average. They achieve well to reach above-average attainment by the end of Year 6. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good and occasionally outstanding. Pupils enjoy their lessons because the majority of teaching is good. Teachers collect accurate information about how well pupils are progressing in their skills of literacy and numeracy. However, such information is not used consistently by all teachers to ensure that pupils are working at appropriate levels. The recently-revised curriculum is of good quality and is engaging pupils' interest through increasingly practical and investigative activities. This motivates learning but teachers do not yet plan sufficiently well to cater for pupils' differing abilities in other subjects, such as history and science. This means that pupils may be over-challenged, or under-challenged, by the tasks they are set.

Since the last inspection there has been concerted and effective action by all leaders and managers to raise attainment and extend the richness of pupils' learning experiences. There is open, reflective and accurate evaluation of strengths and key areas for improvement. Middle leaders can provide evidence of the growth and impact of their work and they add much to the drive towards improved provision and outcomes. As a consequence, the school has a good and increasing capacity for continued improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning, and use of assessment information, so that all lessons are at least good, and more are outstanding, by:
 - consistently using assessment information to shape activities to meet individual needs and pinpoint exactly what skills need to be strengthened
 - ensuring that challenging targets and well-defined steps for improvement are shared with pupils and drive achievement.
- Ensure teachers' planning for subjects other than English and mathematics consistently provides pupils with the best opportunities to develop their skills in these subjects.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils achieve well and enjoy their learning, becoming increasingly confident and independent learners as they progress through the school. They are well-prepared for the next stages of their education. Active learning is providing more opportunities for pupils to be creative and investigative. Pupils say that they want to come to school and this is evident in their above-average attendance. Improved attainment over the past three years indicates the positive impact of the better use teachers are making of their knowledge of pupils' abilities and what they need to learn next. In lessons where activities are not as well-matched to individual needs and abilities, progress can be slower and more variable. Evidence from data and from lesson observations indicates that more pupils are achieving at the higher levels by the time they leave Year 6. While attainment in reading and mathematics remains stronger than that in writing, recent action to develop writing skills has been very effective and is driving up attainment as more interesting approaches better capture pupils' interest. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make at least as much progress as that of their peers. A number of pupils with visual impairment benefit well from the work of specialist teachers from the resource base. These pupils achieve in line with their peers by the time they leave and in some cases make exceptional progress from their starting points.

Positive relationships are central to the success of this school. Behaviour is good because pupils respond readily to the positive role models exemplified by staff. Pupils are adamant that staff care greatly for them and they appreciate the opportunities they have to increase their personal responsibility, for example through e-safety training. Pupils demonstrate an excellent understanding of action and consequence both in school and in the local community. They have considerable responsibilities about the school and in the community. They regularly read to young children from the infant school. They work as 'eco-warriors' and play an integral part in the school's drive to maintain and further improve attendance. Pupils' very good knowledge of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle enables them to take a sensible approach to their diet and many choose to participate in a range of after-school physical activities. They show particular consideration in what snacks to provide in their tuck shop. One request for chocolate-covered peanuts was duly considered and

granted in the form of a yoghurt coating as that was deemed to be a more healthy option.

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	2
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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is good as teachers increasingly motivate pupils' learning through more exciting and imaginative approaches. Good relationships are well-established and contribute greatly to pupils' enthusiasm for learning because they want to please their teachers and do well. Grouping pupils according to their ability has increased challenge for them, which is evident in their improved outcomes. Teachers use assessment effectively to determine the levels at which pupils are learning. However, the use of this information to maximise challenge for individual abilities is inconsistent across the school. Marking is positive and reflects the learning objectives set, but pupils are not always told where they have succeeded against their targets or what they need to learn next.

The newly-developed curriculum is being constantly enriched as activities are presented in increasingly exciting ways. A good range of visits and visitors enhances pupils' first-hand knowledge and understanding of the wider world, adding to their interest, enjoyment and achievement. At present, not all teachers plan to the same level of detail for all aspects of the wider curriculum as they do for developing the skills of literacy and numeracy, particularly writing, where many such opportunities are planned. This variation means that teachers sometimes miss opportunities to ensure that pupils fully develop their wider range of subject skills. For example, during a research lesson, similar outcomes were expected for all pupils in both history and in ICT and this reduced the level of challenge and therefore progress for some. Pupils have worked with those from other schools to develop their enterprise opportunities, making and selling produce at school fairs. A recent residential visit to a partner school in France enabled pupils to increase their independence, increasing their self-esteem and confidence as well as enabling them to practise their French.

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

The quality of care, guidance and support is exceptional. This is a highly-inclusive school and staff ensure that pupils of all abilities and backgrounds are given the best of opportunities to achieve well. The school is able to highlight clear examples where pupils have been helped to overcome difficulties and barriers to their learning. Excellent links to a range of specialist services, in particular with the visual impairment team, facilitate specific provision for the needs of families and pupils, some of whom are vulnerable because of their circumstances. Much has been done to improve transition between the three schools on the campus and pupils now have an almost seamless move between stages in their education.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
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 and enthusiasm of the headteacher has been effective in motivating staff and members of the governing body to work together and improve expectations for the school. Senior leaders work successfully to engage all members of staff to improve the quality of learning and improve outcomes for pupils. Secure systems are in place to track how well pupils are progressing and the use of this information is being used to increasing good effect throughout lessons. However, some inconsistencies remain regarding the use teachers make of this information to increase pace and challenge in lessons. Self-evaluation is accurate and there is a good understanding of areas of weakness, which are systematically addressed.

Members of the governing body use their experience and expertise to challenge leaders, questioning programmes for development and offering alternative suggestions for consideration to shape the direction of the school. They ensure good procedures for safeguarding, which fully meet requirements. The majority of parents and carers has close and positive engagement with staff, with whom they can share the progress their children are making. The school provides a range of experiences for pupils to promote community cohesion and to understand the diversity of the world about them through well-embedded links with the local community and church, and with schools and other groups world wide. This includes work with the Fairtrade Foundation, the local hospice and the integration of pupils with visual impairment. The continual improvement in the consistency of pupils' progress, rising attainment and outcomes for pupils of all abilities and backgrounds is testament to the school's good commitment to promoting equal opportunities. The school provides good value for money.

These are the grades for the 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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were highly positive about the school. They greatly appreciate the care given to their children and are extremely confident that their children are happy and safe and that teachers meet their children's needs well. Few issues were raised by parents and carers and there was no obvious pattern to those raised. All were fully investigated and form part of the evidence base used to arrive at the inspection judgements.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Belmont CofE (Controlled) Junior 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 62 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	25	40	36	58	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	34	55	28	45	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	18	29	34	55	8	13	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	26	35	56	7	11	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	22	35	33	53	4	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	29	35	56	7	11	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	39	37	60	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)	21	34	32	52	3	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	32	34	55	4	6	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	27	39	63	3	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	34	29	47	5	8	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	32	52	27	44	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	48	27	44	3	5	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 are 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 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.



4 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Belmont C of E (Controlled) Junior School, Durham DH1 2QP

On behalf of the other inspectors, I would like to thank you for the warm and friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We thoroughly enjoyed talking to you.

You go to a good school. It has a number of outstanding features, many of which are about you and your personal development. For instance, we think that you have an excellent understanding of how to be a good citizen. This is shown in the number of roles and responsibilities you take up around the school and the community. You identify where things can be improved and then find ways to do just that. You understand very well that there is a need to keep safe and healthy. As monitors, buddies and eco-warriors, you help other children to understand how to keep safe and healthy by, for instance, making sure that produce you sell in the tuck shop promotes a healthy alternative to chocolate. We found that you behave well and that your attendance is good because you enjoy coming to school.

We could see that you enjoy lessons best when you are fully involved in finding out things. We want your teachers to help you to understand even more how well you are doing and how you can improve more quickly. We would like them to make sure that they always provide you with activities which match your individual learning needs and to tell you when you have achieved your targets. This means that all of you will be challenged further. When you meet your targets, teachers then need to tell you what you need to learn next. We feel that this needs to be done, not only in literacy and mathematics, but also in lessons like history and ICT so that you can make the best possible progress with your skills in these subjects too.

We hope that you all continue to try hard and continue to be an excellent help to your teachers.

Yours sincerely,

Kate Pringle
Lead inspector

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