

Belmont Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112974
Local Authority	DERBYSHIRE
Inspection number	289478
Inspection dates	3–4 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Ian Nelson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	427
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Louise Petcher
Headteacher	Mrs Sue Walker
Date of previous school inspection	24 June 2002
School address	Belmont Street Swadlincote Derbyshire DE11 8JZ
Telephone number	01283 217782
Fax number	01283 229092

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is considerably larger than most primary schools nationally and is situated on two sites either side of a road. Most pupils come from the immediate surrounding area. Their social and economic circumstances broadly reflect those nationally. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds and none have English as an additional language. The proportion who have learning difficulties is about average, although few have statements of special educational need. Attainment on entry to Reception is broadly average, as it was at the time of the last inspection. The school has achieved Investors in People and Basic Skills awards and very recently, Healthy Schools Award in recognition of its efforts to promote healthy and fit lifestyles among its pupils.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that has improved well since its last inspection and gives good value for money. Children achieve well and reach consistently above average standards by Year 2 and Year 6. They get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage and reach the standards expected of them by the time they enter Year 1. They continue to make good progress throughout the school because teaching is good and the staff give children a good range of interesting practical activities to help them to learn. Staff found that boys did not do as well as girls by Year 6 in the 2006 national tests and responded positively by planning lessons of a more active nature which have improved boys' enthusiasm and rate of progress. The impact of these changes is evident in children's responses when they say 'we learn something new every day' and they are 'never left to work through textbooks'. The school has good systems for checking how well children are doing in English and mathematics. However, systems for checking their progress in other subjects are not as advanced yet.

Because children enjoy school so much their attendance is above average and their behaviour is good. They pay attention in class and conduct themselves sensibly around the school. Although a very small number of children find it hard to behave well all the time, overall personal development is good. This is because the school provides good care, support and guidance. Staff know the children well and go out of their way to support those who need extra help with their learning or behaviour so that the school is a happy and harmonious place. Consequently, children feel safe and secure. They say that teachers 'listen to our problems and then do something to help' and 'teachers keep a really close eye on us as we cross the road'. Children love taking responsibility. For example, younger ones enjoy being helpers at lunch time and looking after play equipment.

The school's success arises from good leadership and management. Staff and governors know their school intimately and have good systems in place for checking how well it is doing. Governors meet often and have a good grasp of how well children are learning and where the priorities for improvement lie. Leaders at all levels play a strong role in promoting school improvement. Most parents think positively of the school but a significant number expressed concerns in the inspection questionnaire. These were mainly about its leadership, behaviour and the way the school responds to parent's views. Evidence from the inspection shows that these concerns are unfounded. The headteacher has quickly gained an accurate view of the school and is successfully building upon its strengths. The school has established good systems for checking how well children are doing in English and mathematics, it has improved standards in information and communication technology (ICT), enhanced the roles of teachers in charge of subjects and maintained above average standards. It is therefore well placed to continue improving.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the systems for tracking how well children are doing in English and mathematics into manageable procedures in other subjects.
- Work with parents to raise their appreciation of how good the school is and ensure they have realistic expectations of how it deals with their concerns.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Children start school with broadly average skills and knowledge overall, although they are a little behind in communication, language and literacy. Good provision in Reception ensures that children progress well and reach the standards expected in all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. Throughout the school progress continues to be good so that standards reach above average in English, mathematics and science by Year 2 and Year 6. Although standards in science at Year 6 are above average, they lag slightly behind those in English and mathematics. The school has closed the gap between the achievement of boys and girls by planning more active learning experiences that have increased boys' motivation. Children who need extra help with their learning receive good support, particularly from teaching assistants, and they make good progress. As a result of the above average standards children reach and the good skills they acquire in working together in lessons, they are well prepared for the next stage of education and the world of work. The 'mini enterprise project' and 'money week' develop these aspects particularly well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's personal development and well-being are good because moral values and spiritual awareness are fostered well. Children's cultural development is satisfactory. Guidance about becoming responsible members of society is good. Consequently children leave Belmont as sensible, well adjusted young people.

Children display positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy lessons and work hard. As a result behaviour is good because the vast majority of children are eager to learn. The school works well with a small number of children who, on occasions, find it difficult to manage their behaviour.

Children know how to keep safe because the school places a strong emphasis on this through personal, social and health education (PSHE). This also helps them to understand about healthy lifestyles so that they talk enthusiastically about the benefits of exercise and good diet. They take responsibility, as shown within the effective school council, because staff encourage them to contribute to the school and wider community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Children make good progress and learn well because teaching is good. Typical comments from children included 'we like learning because teachers are very nice, they make lessons fun and they are firm but fair with you'. Teachers respond well to the different ways each child learns best and provide creative approaches to engaging learners which are effective. For instance, music is often used as a calming backdrop in lessons and 'brain gym' re-energises children when needed. Boys' learning is much improved because practical activities are included in lessons such as English and mathematics. Behaviour is managed well. Good relationships are promoted well by adults resulting in effective teamwork between children. Teaching assistants make a good contribution in the classroom and support learning well. The outstanding lessons seen

were well structured, brisk and challenging. However, assessment information is not always used effectively enough in planning work at different levels for children of all different abilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Good personal and social education supports children's personal development very well. For instance, children who find learning hard, benefit greatly from work in the 'sunshine room' because activities improve their self confidence. Good chances to learn about health and safety help to ensure children's well being. Enrichment activities include Spanish, sports and music which children all enjoy. Visiting specialist music teachers work with children regularly. ICT is much improved since the last inspection. There is a good range of popular after school clubs. Many educational visits make learning more interesting and visitors often give talks in lessons, or lead assemblies which enhance learning. The school does not make effective enough use of links with the wider community to provide more multi-cultural experiences for children so they can further appreciate the rich diversity of our society.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. All the procedures to ensure children's health, safety and welfare are in place. There is a strong commitment from all staff to the care of children. They know the children well and offer good pastoral support and academic guidance. Children who find learning hard are supported effectively and they make good progress and achieve well. Those identified as needing specific, additional support to help them to achieve attend a very effective 'nurture group' in the 'sunshine room'.

Close attention is given to checking how well children are learning, particularly in English and mathematics. This means that they are given effective guidance about what to do to improve in these subjects. As a result, children are aware of, and talk about working towards their personal learning targets in those two subjects. Procedures for checking their progress in other subjects are not as rigorous.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good at all levels. The headteacher has worked closely with governors and all staff to set a clear vision for the future so that there is a very strong team spirit. Senior staff and governors are all involved in checking how well the school is doing and teachers in charge of subjects play a key role in raising standards. Although the school works hard to seek the views of parents, the response to its own questionnaires is sometimes very low, in one case with only 4% of surveys being returned. However, the inspection questionnaire brought a much better response with over 180 forms returned. Comments on them indicate that most parents are pleased with the school. Despite a small number who feel they are not listened to, many feel that the staff do listen and deal with their concerns. For example, one commented, 'Belmont School provides opportunity for both parents and children to have their concerns heard'. Many parents help voluntarily and there is a thriving parents' association. The school has good links with a wide range of other schools, organisations and the business world which widen children's experiences and enhance their education.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

7 May 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Belmont Primary School, Swadlincote, DE11 8JZ

What a pleasure it was to visit your school recently and see how well you behave and how hard you work. The inspectors were very impressed with the way you made us so welcome and looked after us. This letter is to tell you what we found out about your school.

You told us that Belmont is a good school and we agree with you. Your teachers give you interesting things to do in lessons and in after-school clubs. This is one of the reasons you do so well in your learning and in your tests in English, mathematics and science. Teachers check how well you are doing in your work, particularly in English and mathematics, which helps them to know how hard to make the work they give you. We have asked them to improve the systems for checking how well you do in other subjects.

All the staff care for you very well and help you when you need support. This helps you to feel safe and well looked after in school. The 'sunshine room' is a particular success. Although one or two of you find it hard to behave well all the time we think behaviour overall is good. You have good manners and are polite and helpful.

Most of your parents think the school is good but a few have some worries. We have asked the staff and governors to work closely with those parents to help them to understand better how the school is dealing with their concerns.

I am sure the school is well placed to get even better still. You can play your part by continuing to work hard and behave well.

Yours faithfully

Ian Nelson

Lead inspector