

Belmont Church of England (Controlled) Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114227
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	325968
Inspection dates	25–26 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Jackie Barnes

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	164
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Patrick Holroyd
Headteacher	Mrs Alison Keddie
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2006
School address	Buckinghamshire Road Belmont, Durham County Durham DH1 2QP
Telephone number	0191 384 4178
Fax number	0191 384 0806

Age group	7–11
Inspection dates	25–26 June 2009
Inspection number	325968

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is situated on a campus shared with an infant school and arts college. It serves a mainly advantaged catchment area which includes a diverse social and economic community. The school community is stable and entitlement to free school meals is low. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about average. Special provision for a small number of pupils with impaired vision is fully integrated with the school's daily life. The headteacher leaves at the end of the term. A new headteacher has been appointed for September 2009.

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. The pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Their positive attitudes to learning, together with their care for each other, contribute much to the happy and successful atmosphere of the school. Their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good, supported effectively by the school's curriculum and links with the church community. Pupils know how to live safe and healthy lives, and can develop a convincing argument to support their views and decisions. They clearly enjoy their activities and say they feel safe because they know staff will help them to solve their problems and make sure they come to no harm. Parents appreciate the good care and support their children receive, especially those with children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The behaviour of almost all pupils is excellent. The few who find it difficult to behave well have good support from the school and other agencies, and also from the pupils who have an understanding and tolerance that shows remarkable maturity for their age.

Pupils' standards on entry to the school in Year 3 are above average overall, with wide differences between individual pupils. Achievement is good and pupils leave school with well above average standards. The results of national tests in 2008, showed that almost all Year 6 pupils attained the Level 4 expected for their age in English, mathematics and science, although fewer than expected exceeded this level. The progress of the more able pupils has improved in the current year although a few more able pupils could still make more progress especially in writing.

Teaching and learning are good overall. A combination of the pupils' eagerness to learn and the supportive approach of staff create a confident atmosphere for the discussions and questions in lessons. Teachers have good subject knowledge and teaching points and resources are well prepared. The best lessons are exciting and clearly planned to ensure all pupils are actively engaged throughout, and assessment is used to ensure pupils' experiences are well matched their needs. However, this close attention to planning pupils' learning is not consistent throughout the school, and on occasions this reduces the pace of learning for some pupils, especially the most able.

The school's curriculum is good. It includes a variety of opportunities for pupils to develop their personal and academic skills during school hours and beyond. These include regular provision for literacy and numeracy, cultural development, sports, arts and a residential opportunity for older pupils. The pupils make good use of the after-school provision which they, and their parents, say has improved significantly over the last year and is greatly enjoyed. The academic provision for the most able pupils is limited at present but is in the process of further development.

Leadership and management are good. The school's welcoming and supportive environment for pupils, and the development of their outstanding personal skills, owes much to the headteacher's leadership. The governing body is active in supporting the school, providing specialist expertise and a critical eye when needed, and governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. Pupils make an informed contribution to decision making, including in the appointment of the new headteacher. The school's assessment and tracking system is generating useful information, but is not yet fully used to ensure all pupils are making suitably brisk progress. Subject leaders are active in their subjects, but are not fully involved in promoting improvement. The school's capacity for further improvement is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use assessment more rigorously to raise standards for the most able pupils especially in writing.
- Increase the impact of the subject leaders on improving the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are well above average. Pupils' standards when they enter school are above average. However, they vary between year groups and particularly, between individual pupils. In the last three years, the school's national test results at the end of Year 6 have been consistently above average and in 2007 were significantly above average. In 2008, almost all pupils attained the Level 4 expected for their age in English, mathematics and science, but fewer than anticipated attained the higher Level 5. Currently, standards have risen to well above average and the attainment of the more able pupils has improved. However, a few more able still do not make enough progress, especially in writing. Success in reading is a particular strength of the school and provides a good basis for further improvements in standards in English. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well, helped considerably by the support they receive from their assigned teaching assistants. Most attain well above their national group, and a few attain at least as well as other pupils. The school's resourced provision works particularly well for those pupils with visual impairment.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils develop positive attitudes to cultural and religious diversity through the specific programmes of study and by supporting charities such as 'Children in Need'. They are particularly knowledgeable about the lives of people in other countries. Pupils state that they feel very safe from bullying and racial harassment and they appreciate the robust procedures in operation to ensure their welfare and safety. They say that there are always people available to help them if they need support and consider that this is a real strength of the school. Pupils greatly enjoy school and attendance is above average. They make good use of opportunities to take responsibility, for example, being a member of the school council and they are encouraged by knowing their opinions are taken into account. They also value their roles as 'Buddies' and good progress has been made in developing this initiative. The behaviour of pupils is excellent, both in the classrooms and around school. Pupils respond positively to the school's clear expectations. They are very aware of the importance of a healthy and safe lifestyle and, when given the opportunity, they make good decisions. A significant number of pupils are involved in the range of extra-curricular activities after school which enables them to develop their skills of leadership and self-reliance. Pupils' personal skills, attitudes and good basic skills prepare them very well for the next step in their education and good links with the local comprehensive school enhance this position.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall. Pupils are keen to learn, and are attentive and cooperative in lessons. The excellent relationships between staff and pupils, and between the pupils, encourage confidence to participate in lessons and most pupils contribute well to discussions. Written planning for lessons provides a clear sequence of teaching points and identifies the range of pupils' activities. In the best lessons, which are outstanding, the lively introductions and resources capture pupils' imagination and keep them highly motivated. In these lessons, pupils' learning has been carefully considered to ensure pupils of different abilities have well matched teaching and tasks. As a result, most make at least good progress. On some occasions, the attention given to planning learning across the broad range of pupils' attainment and ability works less well for some pupils than others. Generally, the attention given to the pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very effective. However, the level of challenge for the most able pupils is less successful. In some year groups, they spend too much time reinforcing skills and knowledge in which they are already proficient. This slows their progress. Assessment information is used effectively to group pupils, to identify those who need specific support, and in setting targets for most pupils. It is used less effectively in checking that progress is sufficiently brisk, especially for the most capable pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets all statutory requirements and provides a good basis for pupils across the ability range to develop their skills and understanding. There is clear provision for literacy and numeracy in all year groups and a wide range of practical and sporting activities. Suitable programmes successfully support the development of pupils' personal skills and contribute to the excellent relationships in the school community. Opportunities are available to support the varying needs of pupils, although there are too few for the most academically able pupils. The overall arrangements for curriculum planning ensure that pupils in mixed-age classes do not repeat previous work. A broad range of enrichment opportunities, including visits and 'special' days about, for example, Fair Trade and the Global Community, add to pupils' enjoyment and knowledge, and to their contribution to community cohesion. An understanding of the wider world is achieved successfully, through visits and visitors who share their cultural traditions. After-school activities and residential visits contribute well to the enjoyment and promotion of a healthy lifestyle. Attractive displays celebrate the wide range of pupils' work and support pupils' views that learning is fun.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Provision for pupils' care, guidance and support is good. Pupils and parents are appreciative of the high quality care and attention given by all staff. Exemplary procedures for the safeguarding of pupils, including child protection, health and safety and appropriate risk assessment are in place. The governing body plays an active role in the development and updating of all relevant policies. The guidance provided for pupils' personal development is excellent. Very good relationships with adults mean pupils feel confident they have someone to go to, should they feel troubled. All staff consistently praise pupils' achievements and pupils

take great pride in their work. Guidance for pupils' academic development is less secure because the links between assessment information and the planning of pupils' learning are not yet consistent through the school. However, the school's tracking system is now providing information on how well pupils are achieving, and significant improvements in the marking of work are increasingly helping pupils to recognise their strengths and weaknesses. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A coordinator for gifted and talented pupils has been recently appointed and is reviewing procedures to ensure the more able pupils are making suitably brisk progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The well respected headteacher provides the clear and effective leadership that supports the school's caring and welcoming approach to pupils of all abilities, and creates an excellent environment for their personal development. Equality of opportunity is vigorously promoted and pupils are encouraged to respect and value diversity. Parents have confidence in the school. The school makes strong efforts to support cohesion in the local community and the curriculum raises pupils' awareness of cultures that differ from their own. The school's self-evaluation includes the views of pupils and parents, and the governing body take an active part in ensuring these are incorporated into the school's priorities for development. Staff are committed to further improvement, and morale is good. Subject leaders, with the help of the deputy headteacher, are increasingly involved in monitoring the impact of whole school initiatives in their subjects, such as the new strategies for assessment, including the quality of the marking of pupils' work. However, they do not yet have a systematic and rigorous approach to checking and developing the teaching, learning and progress in their subjects. The school's assessment system enables pupils' progress and attainment to be tracked and analysed, although some data linked to checking pupils' progress is not yet easily accessible. The management of the education of those pupils with visual impairment is very good. The governing body takes an active interest in the school and has good knowledge of its strengths and development needs.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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 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

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

29 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Belmont Church of England (Controlled) Junior School, Durham, DH1 2QP

Thank you for making me and my colleague so welcome when we inspected your school. We think you go to a good school. Your personal development is outstanding and you helped us to see your excellent behaviour in lessons and around the school, and how you look after each other. We were very pleased to hear that you have good attendance records. You told us you enjoy school, especially in lessons when you are involved in practical work which is exciting, and also in your sport and art clubs. You have a good curriculum which provides lots of interesting activities that successfully help you to increase your knowledge and skills, as well as helping you to grow into mature young people. You also told us you felt safe and happy because you know the staff will take good care of you, and help you if you have a problem.

The teaching and learning in your school are good. Your teachers have a challenging job planning your learning in lessons because as individuals you have so many different needs. However, you are keen to learn, which is very helpful, and you maintain generally good progress in your work.

We feel more of you could make even better progress, so we have asked your school to take the following action. You could help by keeping up your good attendance, excellent behaviour and positive attitudes to learning and enjoyment.

- Raise standards especially in writing for those of you who are close to being above average.
- Check more rigorously how well each of you is making progress using the school's assessment data.
- Enable those teachers who have special responsibilities for English, mathematics and science to use their knowledge and skills to make sure teaching in learning is always of the highest quality.

Very best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Jackie Barnes

Lead inspector