

Belmont Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114137
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	338303
Inspection dates	13–14 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Mr Gordon Potter

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	5–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	112
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Irene Wilkinson
Headteacher	Mrs Janice Wynn
Date of previous school inspection	June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons taught by five teachers and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at school policies and documentation, pupils' work, assessment data, monitoring records and strategic planning. They also scrutinised 69 questionnaires returned by parents and carers as well as questionnaires from staff.

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

- the rates of pupils' progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1
- the effectiveness of strategies to close the attainment gap for boys
- the school's capacity to improve in the light of the recent appointment of the headteacher.

Information about the school

This is a small infant school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. Almost all pupils are from White British heritage backgrounds. The proportions of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and of those with a statement of special educational needs are above average. The school has achieved Healthy Schools status, Artsmark and Page: 3 the Intermediate International School awards. The headteacher has been in post since April 2010.

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

In this good school, pupils have an outstanding influence on matters which are important to them through the excellent school council. Behaviour and achievement are good. They make good progress overall because teachers try to make learning fun and show outstanding care and support which ensure that pupils' well-being and personal development are promoted extremely well. As a result, pupils are happy, feel safe and are extremely well aware of how to stay healthy. Pupils are keen to learn and are stimulated by a range of increasingly interesting activities, especially in philosophy, art, and information and communication technology (ICT) where their skills are high. While teaching is good overall, occasionally teachers talk too much, opportunities are missed for pupils to learn together and the pace of learning drops, particularly for boys. This applies also in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where activities are not always closely enough matched to learning goals. There are effective procedures to involve parents and carers in their children's learning so that most parents and carers are highly supportive of the school and the way in which it supports pupils' social, moral and academic development.

Standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 are above average overall. Girls' attainment is high and they make outstanding progress. Changes to the curriculum, introduced to improve boys' learning and progress, are ensuring that boys now make good progress given their starting points, although their standards of attainment remain well short of those of the girls. This is because of the high proportion of boys who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The new headteacher has swiftly established strong relationships with the effective assistant headteacher. Together, they have a clear view of how to develop even further those strategies which have enlivened the curriculum and had an impact on boys' progress. Leaders at all levels are excited by the opportunities afforded to them for further involvement in the school's self-evaluation and improvement. Given the good outcomes for pupils and the success of the school's strategies for improving standards after a dip in 2008, the school's capacity to improve is good and it provides good value for money.

Pupils say that teachers help them so that they know how to improve their work. They make an extremely strong contribution to the local community and have good understanding of other faiths and cultures, of life in other countries and of the multicultural make-up of society in the United Kingdom.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By 2011 raise the attainment of boys by ensuring that:
 - the school further develops those strategies which support boys' learning, including practical work, investigations and collaborative techniques
 - activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage are more closely linked to learning goals so that boys can make more rapid progress.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The extent to which pupils achieve and enjoy their learning is good. Pupils behave well, are courteous, have good attitudes and relationships in lessons and show great keenness to do well in their work. Pupils show good achievement in the arts and ICT where they show great skill in still-life painting, analysing data and creating computer art. They enjoy their learning, especially when they are involved in challenging and lively activities, such as thinking together about the right way to behave or using role play to explore a story.

From starting points in the Early Years Foundation Stage which are broadly in line with national expectations, pupils reach above average standards of attainment by the end of Year 2. Girls make outstanding progress to attain standards which are high compared with the national average. Historically, boys have made satisfactory progress, although recent curriculum initiatives are ensuring that their progress is now more rapid. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are extremely well supported and show good progress.

Pupils are highly aware of the importance of a healthy diet and of taking plenty of exercise. This is reflected in their keen involvement in physical education, their joy in using exercise equipment in the playground and the high take-up of healthy school meals. They care for one another well, have great respect for each other and for the adults in the school, and say they feel safe. Pupils are confident that they know exactly what to do in the event of a concern.

Pupils willingly take on roles as mini-buddies and class council members. They make an extremely positive contribution to the school community through the highly influential school council. They have made improvements to playground equipment and school meals, and contributions to the appointment of the new headteacher. There are strong links in the local area through a range of charities, participation in community competitions and activities with older residents and with the local churches. Pupils have a good understanding of different faiths and they have researched what it is like to live in India. Their understanding of the multicultural make-up of society in the United Kingdom is well developed because the school gives great value to the cultural origins and beliefs of the few pupils from different cultural groups who attend the school. Pupils are well equipped for their future economic well-being because they have good skills in working collaboratively, above average basic skills in English and mathematics and great confidence in the use of ICT.

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	2
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	2

How effective is the provision?

Lessons are well planned so that pupils are given opportunities to learn through practical and investigative activities, including games, drama and using ICT. Teachers make it clear to pupils what they will learn and how they will know if they have succeeded. They use questions well to ascertain what pupils already know and encourage pupils to discuss ideas and to think for themselves. Marking is well done so that pupils are clear about what they have achieved and know what they have to do to improve further. Teachers use interactive whiteboard technology well to engage pupils and to stimulate their thinking, for example when a teacher used a Venn diagram to reinforce understanding of multiples. Teachers and teaching assistants are effective at supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Occasionally, teacher direct learning too much and so reduce opportunities for pupils to get on with their work either independently or with their friends.

While girls have thrived on the curriculum opportunities afforded to them, it is only recently that the school has adopted topics and active learning strategies that are helping boys make more rapid progress. There is a very strong focus on developing pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics, and tasks are well matched to pupils' individual needs so that they achieve well in these areas. There are many opportunities for pupils to use their design technology skills and to write in subjects other than English, for example when they carry out research, make models of Stuart houses and write about The Great Fire of London. There is a strong focus on learning about life in other countries, including links with a school in Chennai, and about religious celebrations in Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam. Pupils enjoy visits from representatives of these faiths and from people who tell them about their jobs. All pupils enjoy physical education, philosophy, drama and art. The school provides many activities which enrich pupils' learning, for example their visits to places such as the Mayor's Parlour and Durham City. They participate enthusiastically and successfully in extra-curricular activities such as multiskills and dance.

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

There is excellent provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for those with complex medical needs. This is extremely well managed so that there are effective programmes for intervention and support so that these pupils make good progress. All staff know pupils well and there is close liaison with parents and carers to ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable pupils are met. There are well-established practices to involve parents and carers when their children enter school and good procedures as pupils move through school and on to junior school. The school informs parents and carers regularly about pupils' progress and gives information so that they can support learning at home.

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 school's leaders have a clear view of what needs to be done to make the school even better. Initiatives to improve the learning experience for boys have already brought about improvements in the curriculum and there are detailed and appropriate priorities to effect further refinements in the use of activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school knows itself well and plans for improvement are clearly delineated in the school development plan, to which all staff and governors contribute. While the plan has detailed information about responsibilities and timescales, it lacks rigorous success criteria related to outcomes for pupils. Staff welcome the way their professional development is becoming closely linked to school priorities.

The school is proud of its inclusive nature and has close links with outside agencies to support the individual needs of the many pupils who have complex needs, showing its commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and tackling stereotypes. However, the gap in attainment between boys and girls means that the school's promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The governing body offers strong support and has developed effective strategies to challenge the school and monitor its work. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet government requirements and are rigorously applied. Some issues about access and traffic management which were discussed during the inspection are being addressed by proposed alterations to the building and through consultation with the local authority. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. Pupils learn about their own locality, about life in different faiths and cultures and about caring for those with complex needs because the school takes opportunities to celebrate the uniqueness of its pupils.

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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children feel safe, are confident, happy and settled and enjoy activities in all areas of learning. They share games, work together and behave well. The school provides a well set out and stimulating learning environment both indoors and outdoors and children are enthused by the hatching chicks which help them learn about life cycles. Teachers use the local area as a resource for children's learning through well-planned walks and visits further afield to farms. A range of healthy snacks and drinking water help children develop a good understanding of how to stay healthy. Staff ensure that requirements to ensure children's safety are met. The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage has a clear understanding of how children learn and there is a team ethos so that new initiatives and use of clear assessment ensure that children make good progress from starting points which are mostly at a level typical for their ages. Teaching is most effective when adults interact with children in group activities although, as yet, some activities are not clearly enough related to learning goals, particularly for boys. In whole-class sessions, teachers occasionally direct learning too much and boys, in particular, become distracted. There are effective partnerships with parents and carers and a range of early years settings so that children settle quickly into the Reception classes. Arrangements for transition into Year 1 are well developed and children benefit from working alongside older pupils in mixed-age classes.

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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

A majority of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. The respondents support the school very strongly. Almost all like the way the school helps pupils to feel safe and enjoy their learning. Parents and carers are strongly supportive of the

leadership and management of the school, the quality of teaching and the way the school meets their children's needs. Inspectors agree that these are positive features of the school. However, a few parents and carers indicated that they believed the school could give more information about their children's progress. Inspectors do not consider that this is a significant area for improvement.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Belmont Infant 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 inspector received 69 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 112 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	45	65	23	33	0	0	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	46	67	23	33	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	38	55	29	42	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	36	52	30	43	1	1	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	39	57	30	43	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	37	54	31	45	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	38	55	30	43	1	1	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)	30	43	33	48	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	34	49	30	43	2	3	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	38	40	58	1	1	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	41	38	55	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	33	48	31	45	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	44	64	23	33	1	1	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	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 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 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.



14 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Belmont Infant School, Durham, DH1 2QP

On behalf of the inspection team, thank you so much for making us welcome when we inspected your school.

You go to a good school which knows what to do to make itself better. The staff care for you extremely well and listen carefully to the many suggestions you make to improve the school. Teachers help you learn well because they try to make your lessons fun. You take pride in your tasks and you work hard in lessons. You attain highly in mathematics, art and design, and information and communication technology. You behave well, show respect for one another and look after one another admirably. You are polite and helpful and look forward to coming to school because you like your teachers and appreciate the activities the school provides for you, such as visits and sports activities. Your parents and carers like the school very much.

However, girls do better than boys, so to help your school improve even more I have asked your teachers to:

- make sure that the youngest children in school, especially the boys, have plenty of exciting activities to develop their skills
- make sure that all your lessons are as exciting and involve you as much in your learning as the very best lessons in the school.

You can help by continuing to do your best and attending regularly. I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr Gordon Potter
Lead inspector

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