

Beachcroft School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133923
Local Authority	Westminster
Inspection number	341414
Inspection dates	22–23 March 2010
Reporting inspector	James Bowden

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	5–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	19
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	
Headteacher	Graham Sacks
Date of previous school inspection	7 December 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

The majority of his time was spent looking at learning. He visited 10 lessons, seeing all nine teachers and instructors teach. Meetings were held with the senior leadership team, the staff, the Chair of the Management Committee, and with two groups of pupils. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at teachers' planning and assessment. He analysed 12 parent and carer questionnaires, 17 pupils' questionnaires and 14 responses from staff.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at the following:

- the progress and achievement of different cohorts groups of pupils attending the school throughout the year
- how well teaching challenges all pupils and the quality of progress they make, particularly in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT)
- the full picture of attendance for all groups of pupils.

Information about the school

The remit of the school has changed since the last inspection. It no longer provides for pupils with medical needs. The school now provides exclusively for permanently excluded pupils from Key Stages 1 to 3, pupils on a fixed-term exclusion of more than five days from Key Stages 1 to 4, and full- or part-time respite placement for a six-week period for pupils to prevent further exclusion. This latter provision is part of the Westminster Partnership Agreement. There is a high turnover of pupils throughout the year, with many only staying for short periods of time, whilst others may stay longer. In addition, the school has a 'virtual' roll of 16 Key Stage 4 pupils as part of the local authority's 'Back on track' project. These pupils do not attend the school as they are educated elsewhere. Beachcroft is the only pupil referral unit in the country to be involved in the national 'Making Good Progress' pilot for English and mathematics.

Currently, there are five times as many boys than girls on roll. Pupils come from a broad range of ethnic backgrounds, reflecting the composition of the local community. Three pupils are undergoing assessment for a statement of special educational needs. All others are at the 'school action plus' stage of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice. This is because of their behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.

The school is subject to reorganisation as part of the local authority's plans for a new building to house its three pupil referral units. It shares the same management committee as these.

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?**3****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****3**

Main findings

The school provides a satisfactory education. It does this by supporting pupils to overcome their behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, rekindling their interest in education and supporting pupils' reintegration into mainstream schools. The headteacher, ably supported by his deputy, has been successful in setting a clear vision and driving the school forward. However, the impact of some of the new initiatives introduced has yet to be fully realised. Self-evaluation is accurate and is used well to help plan and prioritise further developments. The school has a number of strengths, particularly the quality of its care, guidance and support, and aspects of leadership and management. These contribute well to improvements in pupils' behaviour and attendance, particularly when compared to that in their mainstream schools. As a result, the school is soundly placed to make further improvements in the quality of education it provides. 'It's not a bad school,' commented one pupil summing up the feelings of one of the pupil discussion groups. The positive impact of the school is also appreciated by the majority of parents and carers who completed the inspection questionnaire. One commented, 'When it seems that all is at an end, Beachcroft offers positivity and reward for good behaviour, giving my child a chance to change.'

The outcomes for pupils are satisfactory. In relation to their starting points, pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning and personal development. This eases their reintegration into mainstream schools, particularly for those permanently excluded and those on respite placements. Although pupils' challenging behaviour results in occasional outbursts, these are managed effectively by staff, which ensures minimal disruption to learning. Parents and carers report that their children are safe at the school, this being confirmed by the pupils themselves. Pupils take an active part in the life of the school community through the weekly pupil voice sessions and also have good opportunities to take part in local community activities. However, their knowledge, understanding and experience of life in the wider community are not so strong. Although satisfactory overall, some pupils make significant improvements in attendance. Rates of unauthorised absence have fallen considerably as a result of the school's effective procedures.

Satisfactory learning and teaching underpin the quality of progress pupils make in relation to improvements in the key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT. Over time, however, there have been inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. This is because of the school's inability to recruit and retain skilled staff, both teachers and teaching assistants. This has also created difficulties over time in delivering the good quality curriculum. The curriculum, with its focus on key skills and support for personal development and well-being, is matched well to the needs of all pupils who attend the

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school.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall and have resulted in improvements to the school's provision in terms of its changed remit. The senior leadership team has recognised there is further work to be done in relation to planning for the promotion of community cohesion, particularly with regard to the wider community beyond the unit. Partnership working with parents and carers and other schools, as well as with other professionals and outside agencies, is good. Parents and carers are involved as fully as possible in their children's education and informed well of the progress they make. This supports further pupils' personal development and well-being.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Recruit and retain high quality staff.
- Improve the quality of teaching to ensure greater consistency in learning and progress made by pupils, in particular by:
 - improving the level of challenge for the full range of ability
 - ensuring pupils do not determine the pace of teaching.
- Sharpen planning for the promotion of community cohesion beyond the school and local community.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Most pupils start at the school with low attainment compared with their peers nationally because of significant gaps in their education and because of their behavioural, emotional and social needs. Notwithstanding this, all are enabled to consolidate and build on previous learning and make satisfactory progress in relation to national expectations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. A few improve at least one National Curriculum sub-level during their time at the school. Progress in lessons is satisfactory overall. Pupils benefit greatly from working in small groups where they receive focused and individual attention. This, along with their rekindled interest in learning and enthusiasm for 'green achievement award slips', underpins the progress they make. In an English lesson, pupils made good progress in their understanding of sub-plots in the play they were reading but only satisfactory progress was made in a life skills lesson because there was too much information to be absorbed.

Healthy eating is promoted at the school and pupils take part in a range of planned physical activities off-site during the week. They also benefit from opportunities for supervised physical activity at morning and lunchtime breaks. In one of the discussion groups with the inspector, pupils commented on their enjoyment of the weekly visit to help serve lunch at a club for local elderly residents. One added, 'You feel you've really done a good deed.' Improving attitudes and behaviour and improvements in their basic skills helps ease return to school for the respite group pupils and reintegration for permanently excluded pupils into mainstream schools.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together and any instances of misbehaviour are dealt with in a calm and sensitive manner. As a consequence, disruption to learning is minimised. Although lessons are well planned, resources and tasks provided are not always effective in ensuring that the needs of individuals, considering the range of their capabilities, are appropriately addressed. This means challenge is not always as effective as it could be. On some occasions, pupils tend to dictate the pace of lessons by engaging teachers in conversation not directly linked to the lesson. Teachers' use of ICT is effective, which enlivens learning in, for example, media lessons and art lessons. At whole-school level, pupils' progress is tracked rigorously and they are aware of their individual learning and behaviour targets in lessons. However, there is an inconsistent approach to informing pupils of the next steps for improvement.

The well-planned curriculum supports pupils' learning and personal development well. There is a comprehensive programme of activities to improve pupils' social skills and well-being. Staff recruitment and retention difficulties have meant that the full impact of

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

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the curriculum has yet to be fully realised. A good range of local off-site enrichment activities broaden pupils' learning experience effectively.

The school provides a safe and caring environment for all pupils. Their individual needs, including those of the most vulnerable, are assessed carefully and progress towards targets set are monitored closely. One pupil commented on the support the school was planning to provide him to help choose his GCSE subjects in preparation for his return to mainstream school. Close working relationships with outside professionals and support agencies contribute substantially to the overall care and support the unit provides for all pupils and their well-being.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and the deputy lead and manage the school very well. They have a clear vision for improvement and are proactive in ensuring that teaching is effective. Current staff are supportive of the ethos they have created. The school's commitment to equal opportunity and tackling discrimination results in a strong ethos of inclusion for all. Safeguarding procedures and practice, including child protection, are robust and effective and, at the time of the inspection, met current statutory guidelines. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion, promoting cohesion well within its own community and engaging with a number of partnership schools, although school leaders are fully aware of the need for further development in this area. The management committee, under the guidance of a new but experienced chair, is developing well its role as a supportive yet critical friend of the school.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2

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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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

Almost all parents and carers who returned the questionnaires are very pleased with the school's provision. They believe the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour, keeps them well informed of the progress their children make and that their children are safe. This inspection confirms their views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Beachcroft 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.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	8	67	2	17	1	8	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	8	67	4	33	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	9	75	3	3	25	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	7	58	3	25	1	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	7	58	4	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	10	83	1	8	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	6	50	5	42	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)	5	42	4	33	1	8	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	6	50	4	33	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	7	58	4	33	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	7	58	3	25	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	6	50	3	25	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	6	50	4	33	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 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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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:	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. ■ 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 pupil's 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.



25 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Beachcroft School, London W9 2EL

Recently I visited the centre to report on how well you are doing and to see whether I could suggest anything to make things better. I enjoyed meeting you in lessons, chatting to individuals and meeting formally with two groups of you to talk about your thoughts on the quality of education you receive. Here you suggested that you thought staff were sometimes inconsistent in the use of the 'green achievement' slips. I have passed this comment on to the headteacher. I was pleased to see how many of you have improved your attendance since joining the centre. I think the following are some of the good things about the centre:

- the headteacher and the deputy lead the school well and they have plans to make things even better for you
- all the staff have your best interests at heart and ensure you are safe and well cared for
- staff give you a lot of support and encouragement in lessons, which helps improve your attitude to learning
- the curriculum is planned well to help make your return to mainstream school easier
- the school works closely with other professionals and other schools to help prepare you for your return mainstream school.

In order to improve the school further, I have asked the headteacher to:

- employ and keep good staff
- make sure all teaching improves further your learning and the progress you make
- plan more opportunities for you to learn about and experience the wider community beyond the school.

Yours sincerely

James Bowden

Lead inspector

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