

# Inspection of Beacon Hill Community School

Market Square, Aspatria, Wigton, Cumbria CA7 3EZ

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Inspection dates: 8–9 January 2020

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|------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b> | <b>Good</b>          |
| The quality of education     | <b>Good</b>          |
| Behaviour and attitudes      | <b>Good</b>          |
| Personal development         | <b>Good</b>          |
| Leadership and management    | <b>Good</b>          |
| Previous inspection grade    | Requires improvement |

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Regardless of pupils' personal circumstances and past experiences, they get every opportunity to be confident and successful at this school. Staff have high expectations of the academic standards that pupils can achieve. This is especially the case for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils have high hopes for their futures.

Pupils told us that they enjoy school. They appreciate the support that they get from their teachers. Pupils also told us that they feel safe at school. They are confident that staff will listen to them if they have any worries.

Pupils behave well. They told us that corridors are calm and there is little disruption to learning. Pupils who struggle to manage their behaviour receive excellent support to help them to behave better. Pupils told us that bullying rarely occurs. If bullying does happen, pupils have every confidence that teachers will sort it out quickly.

Pupils explained to us that because they attend this school, they can benefit from a unique range of opportunities that they may not have had otherwise. For example, this year, pupils in the 'bike club' are preparing to cycle hundreds of miles across Spain.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

The executive headteacher and deputy headteacher lead by example to ensure that all staff place pupils' best interests at the heart of everything that they do. Staff say that leaders consider their well-being and their workload.

Published GCSE information does not provide an accurate picture of how well pupils achieve. It does not consider the high proportion of pupils who join the school part-way through their secondary education. Nor does it consider the high proportion of pupils who face difficult personal circumstances. Many pupils who join the school part-way through a school year make a fresh start. They benefit from a carefully-designed curriculum and excellent pastoral support. As a result, they achieve well in many subjects, including English and mathematics.

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum. They have ensured that the key stage 3 curriculum prepares pupils well for the rigour of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc). For example, younger pupils spend more time studying a modern foreign language than pupils have done in the past. This means that more pupils in key stage 4 choose to study EBacc qualifications, such as separate sciences, geography, history and Spanish.

Leaders have thought carefully about what they want pupils to learn and when. This means that pupils can build effectively on earlier learning. For instance, in science

pupils use their knowledge of energy to answer questions confidently on endothermic reactions.

Teachers do not overwhelm pupils with too much new learning at once. For example, in mathematics pupils can build on their existing knowledge of algebra gradually. Teachers make sure that pupils are clear about the most important knowledge that they need to remember. They check regularly that pupils' knowledge is secure. Teachers identify those aspects of the curriculum that pupils need more help with. That said, there are some occasions when teachers do not address misconceptions in pupils' learning quickly enough.

Pupils with SEND receive a wide range of high-quality support. Leaders ensure that this group of pupils get appropriate help as soon as they arrive. Staff are kept well informed about the needs of pupils with SEND. As a result, teachers adapt the curriculum effectively for this group of pupils. Pupils with SEND achieve well. Those pupils who are behind in their reading receive intensive support. They catch up with their reading quickly.

Leaders have chosen qualifications carefully to best equip pupils for employment opportunities in the local area. These qualifications complement the academic curriculum well. Pupils complete 'industry projects' that are delivered by local businesses. For example, pupils in Year 10 explained how they designed a sustainable way for a packaging company to recycle waste water. Pupils receive a wealth of high-quality careers guidance that starts in Year 7. Older pupils benefit from opportunities to encounter the world of work.

Pupils attend regularly, follow teachers' instructions and are keen to learn. This is also the case for pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils. Pupils learn about the importance of respect, especially for those pupils with religions, cultures and backgrounds different to their own. For example, pupils learn about Islam and Hinduism. Pupils told us that they can be open about their sexual orientation or gender identity at the school. Staff help pupils to look after their physical and mental health. For example, through the personal development curriculum, pupils learn about relationships and sex education.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have robust systems in place to check that adults who work at the school are safe to work with pupils. Staff understand the procedures they must follow if they have concerns about a pupil. Leaders have forged strong links with other agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families receive appropriate support.

Staff receive regular safeguarding training. For example, they have training about how to recognise the potential signs of radicalisation. Pupils also learn how to keep

themselves safe. They explained to us how they learn about the negative effects of drug misuse and the dangers posed by criminal gangs.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- There are occasions when teachers do not address misconceptions in the curriculum before they move on to a new topic. This means that some pupils struggle to apply this knowledge to later learning. Leaders should continue to develop how teachers use assessment, so that any misconceptions in pupils' knowledge are addressed quickly, before pupils move on to more complex learning.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## **Further information**

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

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|--|---|
| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 112375  |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Cumbria   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10121977  |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Secondary   |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Community   |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 11 to 16  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed   |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 124   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body  |
| <b>Chair of governing body</b>             | David Davidson  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Judith Schafer  |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://beaconhill.cumbria.sch.uk/">http://beaconhill.cumbria.sch.uk/</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | 1 May 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005                             |

## Information about this school

- This school is part of the Cumbria Futures Federation.
- The school currently uses alternative provision for a small number of pupils at: 'Upcycle', Nudge Education, Lakes College and West Cumbria Learning Centre.

## Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- During the inspection, we spoke with pupils about their learning and their life at the school. We held meetings with leaders, teachers and other members of school staff. The lead inspector spoke with a representative from the local authority and three members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- We reviewed school documentation. This included leaders' improvement plan and their evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. We also reviewed information about pupils' attendance and behaviour.

- We checked on safeguarding documentation, including leaders' appointment checks on staff. We also spoke to representatives of two of the alternative providers used by the school.
- We considered the views expressed by parents in the 17 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including the comments received via the free-text facility. We considered the 19 responses to a questionnaire for staff and the 19 responses to a questionnaire for pupils.
- The inspection focused deeply on science, mathematics, English and Spanish. We met with subject leaders and pupils, visited lessons, met with teaching staff and looked at pupils' work. Other subjects were also considered as part of this inspection.

### **Inspection team**

Emma Gregory, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Paul Edmondson

Ofsted Inspector

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