

Belmont School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	131549
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	381361
Inspection dates	16–17 May 2012
Lead inspector	Linda McGill HMI

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	81
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brenda Parker
Headteacher	Anne Maddison
Date of previous school inspection	17 September 2008
School address	Warden Hill Road Cheltenham GL51 3AT
Telephone number	01242 216180
Fax number	01242 227827
Email address	admin@belmont.gloucs.sch.uk

Age group	5–16
Inspection date(s)	16–17 May 2012
Inspection number	381361



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012



Introduction

Inspection team

Linda McGill

Her Majesty's Inspector

Robert Coburn

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 13 parts of lessons taught by 13 teachers, and made shorter visits to classrooms to observe reading sessions with older pupils. They listened to pupils read, and talked to two groups of pupils about their experiences of school. The inspectors met with senior and middle leaders, other members of staff and members of the governing body. There were no responses to the on-line Parent View survey, but the inspection team took account of the responses in questionnaires returned by 26 parents and carers, 27 staff and 73 pupils. A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including the school's record of recruitment and vetting checks, self-evaluation and forward plans, curriculum plans, reading records and other assessment information and minutes of meetings of the governing body.

Information about the school

Belmont is a small special school for pupils who have a statement of special educational needs for their moderate learning difficulties. It also has specialist school status for behavioural, social and emotional difficulties and as such admits a growing number of pupils with additional and complex needs. The proportion of pupils who start at the school after the age of five and at different times during the school year is substantially greater than typically found. About half of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. Almost all of the pupils are of White British heritage, and none speak English as an additional language. Boys greatly outnumber girls.

The school has numerous awards for its work, including Investors in People, Artsmark and ICT Mark, the Eco Schools award and Healthy School status. The headteacher is a National Leader in Education and works to support and guide other local schools.

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	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key findings

- Belmont is an outstanding school. Parents and carers, staff and pupils are rightly proud of its achievements and its part in the wider community. It embraces change and innovation wholeheartedly as it constantly strives to ensure that its pupils make the best possible progress and leave very well prepared for the next steps in their education and the wider world.
- Strong, determined and purposeful leadership is the major driving force behind the school's success. Procedures for self-evaluation and forward planning are detailed and thorough, and meticulous attention is paid to tracking the progress and personal development of every pupil. Leaders have very high expectations both of the pupils and the staff. They know that excellence in teaching is the key to outstanding outcomes for pupils, and so performance management is rigorous and the provision of professional development opportunities for staff at all levels is a major priority.
- This investment pays off. Teaching is outstanding overall because it has an excellent impact on pupils' learning and progress over time. Teachers and learning support assistants work in seamless partnership, and have a deep understanding of the needs and preferred learning styles of individual pupils. The very best teaching is inspiring, skilled, perceptive and innovative. Pupils' additional needs are effectively met through a wide range of interventions specifically tailored for them.
- Pupils have an extremely positive attitude to learning; in lessons they listen attentively and participate readily. Almost all pupils in all key stages make rapid and sustained progress in reading, writing and mathematics, closing the gap on the expectations for their age. Achievement is outstanding.
- The pupils also thrive in their personal development. Their behaviour is excellent, and they are remarkably polite and respectful. They say they feel safe at all times, and greatly value the support of their 'preferred adults'. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptionally well promoted, in part through the school's supportive and inclusive ethos that builds their self-esteem, but also through the extensive range of enrichment activities that enlivens the outstanding curriculum and broadens pupils' horizons.

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

What does the school need to do to improve further?

There are no significant weaknesses in the school's work. The following points are to enable the school to fine-tune its performance.

- Strive to ensure that all teaching is as outstanding as the very best with leaders and managers pinpointing exactly what teachers need to do to move their performance even further forward and further encouraging the sharing of best practice.
- Ensure that information presented to the governing body gives a succinct overview of areas of strength and relative weakness.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Many pupils arrive at Belmont without a successful prior experience of education, and lack confidence in themselves and their ability to learn. The staff go to great lengths to help pupils settle in quickly, so that they can begin to move on. These efforts pay off, and pupils grow in confidence and resilience. For example, boys in the Year 3/4 class rose to the challenge of reciting the five times table from memory to their classmates. They managed the task successfully and showed great pleasure in their own and others' achievement. Older pupils willingly read aloud, or contributed opinions and ideas. The school's assessments show that, overall, pupils make exceptional progress from their low starting points when they arrive at Belmont and are rapidly closing the gap on the levels expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. Notably, many pupils are making progress at a faster rate than their peers in mainstream schools. There are no discernible differences in the progress made by boys and girls, or those known to be eligible for free school meals. There have been particular successes in boosting pupils' reading skills. Regular sessions in which the younger pupils are taught the sounds letters make (phonics) have led to pupils' greatly increased confidence in working out unfamiliar words. Older pupils benefit from regular guided reading sessions, where they read carefully selected texts. As a result of these activities, pupils' reading ages have increased considerably, as has their enjoyment of reading. 'This school has taught me to read,' said one pupil who joined the school in the secondary phase. 'I love books now,' said another, younger pupil.

By the time they leave, all pupils attain at least one GCSE pass and a broad range of other accreditation. The current Year 11 pupils are on track to do very well indeed, with the majority expected to gain three GCSE passes and nine or more entry-level certificates in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) and other subjects including horticulture, hospitality and catering, physical education, child development and graphics. They have made excellent progress during their time at Belmont.

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

All parents and carers who returned a questionnaire agreed that their children were making good progress and that their skills in reading, writing and mathematics were developing well. The findings of this inspection support that positive view.

Quality of teaching

Consistently good and often outstanding teaching has a marked impact on pupils' achievement over time. Teachers and learning support assistants have a deep and thorough knowledge of the current attainment and learning needs of individual pupils, and use it exceptionally well to plan lessons that enable pupils to build confidently on what they already know and can do. They take full account of pupils' preferred learning styles, give plenty of opportunities for practical work and encourage active participation. They also recognise that pupils sometimes prefer to stay quiet and think before responding to questions. At its very best, teachers' management of pupils' behaviour is highly skilled and appears effortless; teachers have very high expectations of behaviour, anticipate when problems might occur and take immediate steps to deal with them. The teachers are also very vigilant during lessons, spotting quickly how well pupils are doing or if their concentration is beginning to wane a little. Lessons are then adjusted straight away.

The teachers fully understand the importance of boosting pupils' literacy skills and lessons almost invariably include opportunities for reading aloud, writing, or learning new vocabulary. Pupils repeat important vocabulary and explain what words mean. For example, in an ICT lesson pupils in Year 7 discussed the term 'variables' and then described accurately the variables in the task they were completing. In a history lesson in Year 6, pupils were pleased to learn and repeat the word 'thermopolia' when talking about the food that was eaten in Ancient Rome. Teachers consistently praise pupils for effort or achievement, boosting their confidence and spurring them on to do more. They also successfully encourage pupils to try new things. For example, a group of Year 10 boys is studying child development. They proudly showed the soft toys they had made and explained how to make sure they were safe for babies. They discussed bedtime routines thoughtfully and with insight.

Teachers make excellent use of a wide range of resources to enhance learning. Particularly skilled use is made of technology, and the extensive grounds are used very well for both recreational and teaching purposes. The newly installed 'Solar Dome' and the numerous raised beds, for example, enable the school to offer accredited study in horticulture on site. The school also offers an extensive range of complementary therapies, interventions and activities that are carefully selected to meet the needs of individual pupils.

These features illustrate the considerable strengths in teaching. However, they are not uniformly distributed. For example, some teachers have greater skills and expertise than others when using ICT, and others have particularly effective ways of ensuring all pupils participate fully throughout the lesson. There is scope to enhance teachers' skills still further by highlighting what each member of staff does

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

exceptionally well, and how this good practice can be shared with colleagues.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour is excellent both in lessons and around the school. During the inspection, pupils were polite, considerate and friendly; they held doors open for adults, offered chairs and initiated conversations. In assembly, pupils behaved impeccably, listening attentively and bowing their heads respectfully during a prayer. All parents, carers and staff agreed in their questionnaires that the standard of behaviour is consistently good and that lessons are not disrupted; no concerns whatsoever were raised. Pupils' excellent behaviour and attitudes make a very strong contribution to their learning in lessons. The pupils were a little more critical of themselves and a few felt that behaviour was not good all of the time, but in discussions they highlighted nothing more than minor disagreements. Pupils and their parents and carers are unanimous in agreeing that pupils are safe at school, and are taught how to keep themselves safe. The pupils say that bullying does not happen, and that they have been taught how to deal with different situations including when using mobile phones or the internet. They pointed out the 'keep safe at Belmont' posters they have designed and which feature largely in classrooms. They also said that they can rely on adults to sort out any difficulties.

The pupils' excellent behaviour is testament to the impact of the staff's efforts to help pupils manage their own behaviour and take responsibility for their decisions. Boundaries are clear and expectations are high, backed up with appropriate support and guidance. Case studies show considerable improvements in some pupils' behaviour over time. Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their excellent attendance rates.

Leadership and management

The school's leaders and the governing body share a very strong sense of purpose and a clear determination to enhance pupils' learning and life chances. Their actions, based on a rigorous analysis of performance, lead to substantial improvement in pupils' academic achievements and enhance their personal development. Initiatives that have the potential to bring about further improvements are seized upon and followed through. For example, the school has joined the 'Achievement for All' project and has seen a marked improvement in engagement with parents and carers as a result. The school's website is comprehensive, and its virtual learning environment enables parents and carers to be closely involved in their children's learning. The professional development of teachers and support staff is a major priority and expectations of performance are high. Teachers are held to account for pupils' progress towards 'Belmont challenge' targets, and they are given a high degree of support to improve their practice. Every teacher leads at least one major event each year; these encompass fundraising activities, cultural and sporting events, visits and residential experiences. These activities considerably enhance the curriculum and do a great deal to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The curriculum fully meets pupils' needs. The school works

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

exceptionally well with a wide range of partners both to foster pupils' achievement and well-being and to share its good practice and expertise.

The school collects and analyses a wealth of information about pupils' achievement and personal development. The key messages from the information, however, are not always summarised or presented in such a way as to enable the governing body to quickly get to the heart of the issue. The governing body plays a strong part in the life of the school. Its meticulous annual schedule ensures that statutory requirements for safeguarding pupils are fully met and that policies are reviewed in a timely way. The school's success in enhancing the life-chances of its pupils clearly demonstrates its unswerving commitment to the promotion of equality of opportunity.

The school has maintained the many strengths noted at its last inspection and has successfully tackled areas of relative weakness. There is no sense of complacency, however; forward plans are ambitious and challenging. The school's track record shows clearly that the capacity for improvement is strong.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



18 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Belmont School, Cheltenham GL51 3AT

Thank you very much for the polite and friendly welcome you gave to me and the other inspector. We enjoyed meeting you, talking to you and seeing you at work in the classrooms. A special thank you goes to those who met us and told us what life is like at Belmont, and those who read books to us.

When I asked the younger pupils what they like about school they said, 'everything!' The older pupils said how much school helps them to learn. We could see how much you enjoy school, because you behave really well, respect your teachers and each other and your attendance is very good indeed. Well done!

We agree with what you and your parents and carers told us about Belmont. Our inspection report says that your school is outstanding. You make excellent progress in your learning, because the teaching is excellent, too. Your behaviour is a credit to you, your school and your families. The headteacher and all of the staff work exceptionally hard to make sure that the school keeps improving and that when you leave you are very well prepared for college or the wider world.

Inspectors always have to put something in their reports that will help the school get even better. This is what we have said.

- We want all of the teaching to be as outstanding as the very best. We think your teachers can learn a lot from each other about what works well in lessons.
- We have asked the school's leaders to think about how they present information about how well the school is doing, so that the governors and other people can pick out the most important messages at a glance.

You can all help by continuing to work hard at school and by living up to Belmont's motto 'to always be the best that you can be'.

Yours sincerely

Linda McGill
Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.**