

Belthorn Academy Primary School

Belthorn Road, Belthorn, Blackburn, Lancashire, BB1 2NY

Inspection dates 13–14 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and achieve well throughout the school.
- Teaching is good across the school, and some is outstanding. Pupils are well known to staff and there are usually high expectations of what they can achieve.
- Pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium funding, disabled pupils, and those with special educational needs, achieve well because they are well supported and work provided meets their needs.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils are keen to learn and enjoy coming to school. They say they are well looked after and feel very safe in school.
- School leaders, including governors, have a good understanding of how well the school is performing and where it can do better. Their actions are improving the quality of teaching and raising pupils' achievement.
- Parents are very supportive and appreciative of the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Work set is not always hard enough so that pupils are consistently challenged to make the best possible progress, especially the most able.
- Occasionally, not enough guidance is provided for pupils about what they need to do to improve their work. Teachers do not always check that pupils follow their advice when it is given.
- There are too few opportunities for teachers to observe outstanding teaching in other schools.
- The provision for outdoor learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage is not as well developed as the indoor provision. As a result, children's progress sometimes slows.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 14 lessons, taught by seven teachers. They also made short visits to seven other lessons. There was one joint observation with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with school leaders and with six governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors also met the school adviser.
- Inspectors met two groups of pupils, and also spoke informally to other pupils in lessons and during break and lunch times.
- Inspectors looked at the work pupils were doing in lessons and in their books over time. They listened to pupils in Year 2 and Year 5 read and talked to them about their enjoyment of reading.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and examined a number of documents concerning pupils' current achievement and progress, development plans and performance-management information. They also looked at records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding arrangements. Minutes of governing body meetings and the school adviser's reports were also considered.
- Inspectors took account of 19 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire and 16 responses to the inspection questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Robert Birtwell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jean O'Neill

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are taught in seven classes from the Reception Year to Year 6.
- A large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium (funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school converted to become an academy in October 2011. The predecessor school, Belthorn Primary, was judged to be a good school when it was inspected in June 2011.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is outstanding in order to further raise pupils' achievement, by making sure that:
 - the work set is always hard enough so that pupils are consistently challenged to make the best possible progress, especially the most able pupils
 - pupils are always given clear guidance about what they need to do to improve their work, and teachers check that pupils respond to this advice
 - there are more opportunities for teachers to observe outstanding teaching in other schools to help them to further improve their skills.
- Improve the provision for outdoor learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills that are generally in line with those typical for their age. They make good progress in the Reception class because they are taught well and have good opportunities to develop their skills. They are well prepared to enter Year 1.
- Overall standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have been broadly average for the past two years. In 2013, standards were above average in writing. Inspection evidence shows that pupils currently in Years 1 and 2 are achieving well and making good progress from their individual starting points.
- The standards reached by Year 6 pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 have been above average for the last two years. In 2013, they were above average in reading and mathematics, and well above average in writing. Almost all pupils have made the expected progress for the last two years. The proportion of pupils who made more than expected progress in 2013 was above average in writing, average in reading, and below average in mathematics.
- The school's most recent data for current Key Stage 2 pupils shows that all groups of pupils are making good progress. Pupils in Year 6 are on track to make better progress this year, with all pupils making expected progress and a higher proportion making more than expected progress, especially in reading and writing.
- Pupils achieve well in reading. Teachers and teaching assistants make sure that pupils read regularly and have good skills in phonics (letters and the sounds they make). As a result pupils read accurately and well. The proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in the Year 1 national phonics check in 2013 was well-above average.
- Pupils make good progress in writing. There is a clear focus on improving pupils' grammar and spelling skills. Pupils write well in a range of styles in different subjects.
- Pupils have well-developed numeracy skills. They can apply and use these skills effectively to solve mathematical problems in real-life situations.
- The most able pupils achieve well overall. However, school data and inspection evidence show that sometimes they do not progress as rapidly as they could. This is because they are not always given work that is hard enough.
- Extra support, where needed, enables pupils in receipt of support through pupil premium funding, including those entitled to free school meals, to make good progress. This year, their progress is continuing to accelerate. The standards reached by these pupils in 2013 were around three terms behind their peers in reading, writing and mathematics, although any current in-school attainment gaps are closing rapidly.
- Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs achieve well. They make similar progress to their classmates because their needs are identified accurately and they receive good support. This shows the school's effective commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is typically good across the school, and some is outstanding. This was confirmed by teaching observed during the inspection, the work in pupils' books, and the school's own records of the quality of teaching. This enables pupils in all year groups to learn well.
- Pupils are well known and there are good relationships between pupils and teachers and teaching assistants. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are usually high and the work provided motivates and engages pupils in their learning. Pupils say that activities are interesting and that they, 'learn in a fun and educational way'. Consequently, pupils enjoy their time at school, are keen to learn, and do well.
- During a science activity, pupils in Year 2 were developing their observation and practical skills by looking at fruit and seeds. Very skilful questioning encouraged the pupils to sort the various

seeds and fruits into different groups, before moving on to planting the seeds. The pupils showed very high levels of engagement and excellent attitudes to learning. Pupils were challenged continuously to refine their knowledge, understanding and skills, and to use and apply what they had learned in mathematics. As a result, pupils greatly enjoyed the activity, had to think hard about what they were doing, and made excellent progress.

- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is generally good. Activities provide many opportunities for children to develop their investigative skills and learning is purposeful. However, the outdoor provision is less well developed and is not used as effectively as it could be, and this sometimes slows children's learning.
- The work set is not always hard enough for the most able pupils to reach the highest levels and make the best possible progress.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly. Praise is used effectively but pupils are not always given detailed advice and guidance about what they need to do to improve the quality of their work. Whether pupils have responded to this advice is not always checked and pupils are not always able to learn from their mistakes.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work very effectively together to help disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. As a result, these pupils make good progress and achieve well. Pupils supported by the pupil premium also receive effective support when they need it, and make the same good progress as their classmates, or better in some cases.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, take pride in their work and are keen to do well. They get on well with their teachers and with each other, and behave well in lessons so that learning typically proceeds smoothly and without interruption.
- The school's behaviour records, and talking with pupils, show that poor behaviour is rare. A small number of pupils sometimes misbehave, but the school manages this effectively and it is rarely repeated.
- Inspectors observed good behaviour in lessons and around the school. Pupils play enthusiastically, but safely, during break times and act responsibly at lunch times. Pupils are very proud of their school and wear their uniforms smartly.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Attendance has risen and is now above average.
- Pupils have a good knowledge of the different forms bullying can take, and understand the difference between bullying and falling out. They say that bullying is almost unknown in the school. They are very confident that it would be sorted out quickly if it occurred.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils say that they feel very safe in school, and have a good knowledge of how to keep themselves safe in different situations, including on roads, when cycling, and when using the internet.
- All parents who responded to the Parent View survey thought that their child was happy, safe and well looked after in school, and inspection evidence confirms this.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors lead the school well. They make good use of information about pupils' achievement and progress. As a result, they have a good understanding of how well the school is performing and where it can do better.
- The school development plan clearly identifies priorities for improvement. It has a strong focus on improving teaching further in order to raise achievement, with detailed sub-plans for different subject areas.
- Senior and middle leaders monitor the quality of teaching and learning effectively, and check

and evaluate pupils' progress and achievement. Any underachievement is identified and pupils are provided with extra support if they need it.

- Information about the quality of teaching and pupils' progress is used to check how well teachers are performing and to identify where further training or support or other action is needed. It is also used when making recommendations about teachers' pay progression. Consequently, the quality of teaching in the school is improving and pupils' achievement is rising.
- There are examples of outstanding teaching in the school, and staff work well to share this practice. However, there are not enough opportunities for them to observe outstanding teaching in other schools so that they can improve their skills even further.
- The curriculum is well planned and engages pupils effectively in their learning. There is a good range of enrichment including activities, clubs, trips and visits. For example, pupils in Year 4 participated in a Shakespeare festival recently which involved them performing *Twelfth Night* in a local theatre, and pupils in Year 6 are looking forward to a forthcoming residential visit to an outdoor activities centre.
- Pupils have opportunities to take on responsibilities in areas such as the school council, running the library and acting as monitors. These contribute to pupils' strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school is making good use of the additional primary school sport funding to improve the quality of physical education in the school. Additional equipment and training are being provided in basketball and archery, staff are being trained in dance, and the school participates in a wider range of competitions. This has broadened the range of activities in the school and is having a positive impact on pupils' physical well-being and lifestyles.
- Although the school is an academy, it has retained the services of a local authority adviser who has provided light touch, but effective, support for this successful school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are well informed and know the school well. They have a good knowledge of the 'big picture' of how well the school is performing. They use data about pupils' achievement and progress to ask questions about the quality of teaching and how the school can do better. Governors hold the school to account by setting challenging targets as part of the headteacher's appraisal. Many governors visit the school regularly in a variety of roles, and have first-hand experience of it on a day-to-day basis. Governors oversee the school's finances effectively and have a good knowledge of how extra funding, such as the pupil premium and primary school sport funding, is spent and the impact it is having. They make sure that the school meets statutory duties, including those related to safeguarding.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	137512
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	444301

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	175
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Yvonne Brown
Headteacher	Steven Tilley
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01254 55620
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