

Belmont Primary School

Belmont Road, Erith, DA8 1LE

Inspection dates 15–16 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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 achieve well. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is above the national average in reading, mathematics and spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Achievement in Key Stage 1 is improving with faster progress being made in Year 1 than in the past.
- Teaching is good because most activities are carefully planned to meet pupils' needs and help them to make good progress.
- Leaders, managers and governors have ensured that teaching and achievement have improved. Governors are well informed and understand how well the school is doing.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have set clear expectations for good teaching and support their staff well to improve their practice. They understand clearly what needs to be done to further improve the school. Staff and governors share their vision and ambition.
- Pupils speak very positively about their school, feel safe, behave well and treat adults and each other with kindness and courtesy.
- Provision in the school for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage provides good development for the younger children.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Achievement in writing has not improved as quickly in all year groups as it has in reading and mathematics. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to write at length.
- Members of the wider leadership team, many of whom are very new to their roles, are not trained to support the headteacher and deputy headteacher in checking on and improving the quality of teaching.
- The most-able pupils are not always challenged to think deeply about topics or to give detailed explanations. This hampers their progress towards the highest attainment levels.
- Not all teachers are as skilled as the strongest in checking pupils' understanding and reshaping tasks to help them make faster progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 19 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 16 teachers. In addition they observed pupils' activities at break time and lunchtime as well as during breakfast and other clubs.
- A lesson was observed jointly with the headteacher who also accompanied an inspector on an additional series of short visits to classrooms to look at the writing in pupils' books. The inclusion manager also accompanied an inspector on a series of short visits to classrooms to look at the support offered to pupils who need additional help.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body, and subject and school leaders. A discussion took place between an inspector and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the 54 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as informal discussions with parents and carers, a phone call and four letters. The views of the staff were taken into account through meetings and the 35 responses to staff questionnaires.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read and discussed their choice of reading books.
- Inspectors checked the school's own attainment records for the current as well as previous academic years in addition to published information on pupils' achievement. They also examined planning documents as well as records relating to pupils' safety and welfare, including the school's single central record of security checks on staff, the behaviour logs and attendance records.

Inspection team

Patricia MacLachlan, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Clifford Walker	Additional Inspector
David Westall	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a larger-than-average sized primary school. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of a Nursery and two Reception classes.
- The school has specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs. It has six full-time places in a unit called Russell House for children drawn from across the borough of Bexley who have severe and complex needs.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium (extra money provided by the government for pupils who are eligible for free school meals and children in public care) is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below the national average. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and small groups of pupils with Indian and African heritage backgrounds comprise the next largest groups. The proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language is well below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is below the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school has experienced many changes of senior staff since the previous inspection. The current headteacher was appointed in September 2012 and a new deputy headteacher had been appointed the previous year. Three more staff with leadership roles have been appointed within the last 12 months and the vacancy for literacy leader was unfilled at the time of the inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that more is outstanding by:
 - ensuring that all adults use suitable strategies to help the most able pupils to think more deeply about topics, and give more detailed explanations
 - making sure that all teachers follow the practice of the strongest in making regular checks throughout lessons on how well all groups of pupils understand new work.
- Improve achievement in writing further by making sure that pupils, particularly the most able, have better opportunities to write at length and that they are set suitably challenging targets in English and other subjects.
- Train subject and phase leaders to check on the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility so that they can play a greater role in the leadership and management of the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good.

- Children join the Nursery with skills that are at slightly above the levels expected of three-year-olds nationally. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good progress and join Key Stage 1 with levels of development that are well above the national average.
- There was a dip in attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2013. The causes for this have been identified and leaders have taken steps to improve the accuracy of assessment and set more ambitious targets. The progress records of pupils currently in Key Stage 1 show that attainment has improved. High proportions of pupils, particularly those in Year 1, are now making expected or better progress in all subjects.
- At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have attained above the national average in reading and mathematics in recent years. Attainment in writing has not been at the same level. Progress records of pupils currently in Key Stage 2 show that the rate of progress in writing is improving, most notably in Year 5 where high proportions are making good progress in both reading and writing. The most recent summary of Year 6 performance also shows an improvement in writing attainment compared with pupils at this stage last year.
- Commitment to equal opportunities is evident because progress, particularly in reading and mathematics, is good relative to the pupils' starting points. In classes where there are groups of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, they too, are making the same progress as their classmates. This also applies to pupils from minority ethnic groups and for whom English is an additional language. This is because a good training programme has been introduced for adults who support small groups in and outside the classroom.
- Pupils in Russell House make good progress from very low starting points. The majority of current pupils are now working within the National Curriculum levels which represents a good level of achievement.
- The most able pupils made good progress by the end of Key Stage 2 last year and recent school records show that increasing proportions of the most able pupils in Years 5 and 6 are now attaining high scores in reading and mathematics. The more able pupils make good progress in mathematics throughout Key Stage 2 and the work in their books is of a high standard. However, leaders are aware of the need to set these pupils more challenging targets and extended tasks in writing.
- Money from the pupil premium grant is used effectively to pay for small-group activities in reading, writing and mathematics. In tests at the end of Year 6 in 2013 the gap between these pupils and their classmates had narrowed to the equivalent of three months progress in reading and writing and four months in mathematics. As a result of individual support, many of these pupils throughout the school are catching up well with their classmates and those in Year 1 are now outperforming their peers in all subjects. School data show that the gap for the current Year 6 pupils has narrowed compared to 2013.
- There has been a renewed focus on phonics (the linking of sounds to letters) so that higher proportions of pupils met the standard in the phonics screening check last year than in 2012. School records show that pupils' skills in phonics continue to improve.

The quality of teaching is good.

- Teaching is good because strong and supportive relationships are established between all adults and pupils in the classroom. Consequently, pupils are keen to learn. Well-planned and interesting tasks offer pupils good opportunities to make progress.
- For example in a Year 6 lesson, pupils were enthused by the opportunity to draw up arguments for and against a school vending machine. Because the teacher provided timed discussion and clear guidance, pupils were able to rephrase their arguments using rhetorical questions,

hyperbole and flattery to enliven and improve their initial drafts of persuasive writing. As a result, all groups made good progress.

- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage skilfully blends the activities led by the teacher and those chosen by the children to support confident self-expression. Adults are good at asking questions which help children to describe things or do simple calculations while they are happily engaged in physical or creative tasks.
- Pupils understand the accuracy of their written work because teachers mark their work regularly and check that the pupils are subsequently responding to the advice given in their English and mathematics books. However, marking in other subjects is less detailed.
- Teachers provide too few opportunities for pupils, especially the most able, to write at length. This is particularly the case in subjects other than English.
- Where teaching is best, adults adapt tasks quickly if pupils are not succeeding to make sure the work is neither too easy nor too difficult. However, not all teaching is as skilled in this respect.
- Well-trained teaching assistants give extended support to pupils who need additional help to complete tasks. However, while the more able pupils are given extra work to do, they are not always challenged to think more deeply and give more detailed explanations to help them reach the highest attainment levels.
- In the specialist unit, the staff work effectively to create a happy environment with stimulating activities that help the pupils to trust and interact well with those around them and develop their skills of observation and communication.
- Phonics is well taught. The headteacher reorganised the system on her appointment. Consequently, pupils now enjoy applying their reading skills and select books for pleasure from the cosy school library..

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good.

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their attitudes to learning are good as a result of the strong relationships established by teachers and other adults in the classroom. Pupils want to live up to their teachers' expectations, and learners of all ages work cooperatively with each other. Behaviour is good, rather than outstanding, because pupils' attitudes to learning are not exemplary across all classes.
- Pupils behave well outside lessons, interacting constructively with adult helpers in the dining room and playground. The school is effective in promoting good relationships. Pupils share the well-maintained playground areas sensibly and safely with the help of trained pupil 'playleaders'.
- Pupils take great pride in their well-designed environment and the striking displays of their work. They talk excitedly of 'their school' and offer constructive suggestions through their 'pupil parliament' to make it better. These opportunities support their moral and social development well.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel well looked after by the adults around them. They have a good awareness of personal safety, including on the internet and road and fire safety, because it is well covered in lessons.
- Typically, pupils are well mannered. This is because all staff set a good example of being polite and courteous, be it in class or the playground, and pupils quickly respond to this.
- Pupils understand what bullying means, believe that the number of incidents is declining and speak of the ways in which they are quickly helped if there is any unkind behaviour.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and those who attend Russell House enjoy positive relationships in a secure environment. They follow well-established routines supervised by staff, who are well trained to cope with minor mishaps.
- A good range of sports clubs, including 'Steps in motion' fitness for Key Stage 1, and participation in projects such as cookery club help to promote a healthy lifestyle.
- Attendance has remained high since the previous inspection and is above the national average

because of efficient checking. Exclusions are not resorted to because behaviour management is effective.

A very large majority of the parents and carers who responded to Parent View believe that the school provides a safe and caring environment. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are very pleased with the clubs and activities that have been provided for them.

The leadership and management are good.

- The resolute headteacher and deputy headteacher have developed a focused system for sharing lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' books. As a consequence, improvements to the quality of teaching have resulted in rising achievement, particularly in the current Years 1 and 5. Leadership and management are not outstanding because recently appointed middle leaders do not play a full part in checking on standards of teaching and achievement.
- Systems have been developed to make sure that only those teachers who meet required standards move up the salary scale. The headteacher does not shirk difficult conversations about teaching performance when these are necessary.
- Leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage are good because rigorous assessment procedures are followed consistently. Children's needs and interests are well met and helpful information is given to parents and carers to assist their children to learn outside school hours. The specialist unit is well led because progress is good as a result of the stimulating individual programmes designed for each pupil.
- Provision to encourage spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils reflect on the differences between right and wrong in personal education lessons. They raise money for children's cancer charities with creative challenges linked to the number 26 (the length of a marathon in miles). Residential journeys to woodland locations or water sports festivals develop social confidence. Memorable participation in a film to promote the Vikings exhibition at the British Museum has widened pupils' cultural horizons. In addition, striking displays illustrating the customs of different faiths extend pupils' spiritual understanding.
- The primary school sports funding is being used to increase the number of classes that have swimming lessons and to engage a specialist who is training the class teachers to improve their skills in teaching gymnastics and team games. Pupils' enjoyment of physical education and membership of sports clubs have increased as a consequence. The funds have also been used to start a boccia club (a ball game related to bowls) to include disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Effective safeguarding systems meet statutory requirements and policies are consistently applied. Leaders promote equal opportunities and are assiduous in tackling any discrimination that may arise.
- Leaders work successfully with other schools. The school works closely with a cluster of local schools. This helps with checking the accuracy of teachers' assessments of pupils' work and the Early Years Leader moderates pupils' outcomes across the borough. The headteacher is supporting the leadership team of a special school in the borough.
- The local authority has provided support to this school by running training on effective leadership for governors. It formed a partnership board two years ago to support the new headteacher in making frequent checks to promote the school's swifter progress towards its targets for pupils' achievement.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Members of the governing body know the standards of achievement and teaching in the school. This is because the headteacher's summary reports provide clear information and governors are now asking more challenging questions about pupils' outcomes. The governing body has improved its effectiveness by working with the local authority to reorganise its

operations and by undertaking a focused training programme. Consequently, governors have an accurate understanding of how pupils are performing compared with national standards. They use published data to compare pupils' performance with national figures. They make regular visits to the school on 'governor days' to satisfy themselves that reported improvements are indeed taking place. Governors understand the link between teachers' pay increases and pupils' progress and have revised the pay policy to reflect this. Governors receive summaries of teachers' performance from the headteacher. They are aware of what support has been provided to improve teaching and if there has been any underperformance. Checks are made that the pupil premium funds are spent on the intended groups and governors hold school leaders to account for the impact of the expenditure on pupils' performance. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and the budget is carefully managed to support the school improvement plan.

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	101422
Local authority	Bexley
Inspection number	444298

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	472
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rick Nelson
Headteacher	Madelaine Caplin
Date of previous school inspection	20–21 October 2009
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