

Belmont School

Warden Hill Road, Cheltenham, GL51 3AT

Inspection dates 7–8 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- In this thriving and popular school, pupils make outstanding progress. They achieve excellently in a range of subjects and are consequently very well prepared for each stage of learning.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have maintained the school's strengths and are forward looking with high ambitions for the school, for example, recently developing an 'eco-classroom'.
- Teaching is outstanding. Detailed planning helps ensure pupils are highly challenged and staff convey high expectations about achievement and behaviour.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are courteous and can state many things they like and enjoy about school. Procedures to ensure pupils' safety and well-being are well considered and applied conscientiously.
- Leadership and management are excellent. Team working is highly effective and staff responsibilities are very clear. New senior leaders have quickly gained the trust of staff and bring a fresh vision and new skills to the school. A rich programme of studies promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.
- Governors know the school well, using their wide-ranging skills to strongly hold the school to account.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day’s notice.
- Ten lessons were observed taught by ten teachers.
- Inspectors heard individual pupils read to them and heard pupils read in class as part of lessons.
- They talked to two groups of pupils about their views and experiences of the school.
- Inspectors met groups of staff and discussed with staff individually their views on continuing professional development and how their performance is managed.
- There were not enough responses to register on Parent View (the online questionnaire), but inspectors took account of responses to a school survey of parent views and spoke informally to parents collecting their children from school at the end of the day.
- Inspectors looked at 37 staff questionnaire responses from senior staff, teachers and learning support workers.
- A wide range of documents was examined, including records of behaviour, the school’s assessment information on pupils, reports to parents, documents relating to safeguarding, the school’s self-evaluation and their ‘Moving Forward Plan’, lesson plans and minutes of governing body meetings.

Inspection team

Michael Farrell, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Jennifer Taylor

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Belmont is a small special school in which all pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The local authority proposes to transfer from statements to Education and Health Care Plans over the next two years so presently no pupils have such plans.
- Pupils are identified as having moderate and additional learning difficulties and this includes pupils with complex difficulties.
- The proportion of pupils who start school after the age of five and at different times in the school year is much higher than is typical.
- There are many more boys than girls.
- More than half of the pupils are disadvantaged and entitled to additional government funding known as the pupil premium. This funding is used to support pupils who are entitled to free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- Year 7 pupils receive literacy and numeracy catch-up funding and the school also receives primary school PE and sports funding.
- The school does not enter pupils for examinations early.
- Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage and a very small number speak English as an additional language.
- Since the previous inspection, the former senior management team has retired. A new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed and at the time of the inspection had been in post for six weeks. Two assistant headteachers have been promoted from within the school. Pupil numbers are increasing.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure through even closer monitoring that a higher proportion of teaching is outstanding, including fine-tuning to make sure that learning always starts promptly in lessons.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The new headteacher and deputy have quickly gained the trust of staff and have a clear view of the school's performance. Newly promoted middle managers are confidently assuming responsibilities because the school has taken great care to prepare staff for leadership.
- Staff are exemplary models of courtesy and respect, encouraging pupils' high achievement and personal development.
- Leaders sharply focus on improving teaching and learning, using comprehensive opportunities for continuing professional development and rigorous management of staff performance. Best practice within the school is regularly shared within a culture of highly developed staff coaching.
- Clear policies underpin practice, especially in literacy. Grouping of pupils is fine-tuned so that teaching matches their learning needs. Older pupils are provided with timely guidance, helping them make choices about destinations after school.
- Comprehensive opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development include innovative preparation for life in modern Britain. Activities include international links, festivals, residential trips, and extensive arts opportunities supported by all staff. Academic pursuits and sporting and artistic activities are highly promoted, as is safety and behaviour.
- The school is working well towards its preferred approach to assessment following the removal of National Curriculum levels.
- Primary school PE and sports funding is used effectively on specialist staff and equipment, contributing considerably to pupils' healthy lifestyles and participation. Additional literacy and numeracy funding is used well to deploy extra staff for individual work.
- Close partnerships with parents are reflected in the very positive views expressed in the school's own survey. Parents receive detailed reports of their child's progress supplemented by 'structured conversations' with staff. The school website is comprehensive and informative.
- Partnership working, including highly developed links with other schools and services, helps ensure that pupils receive support to do as well as they can.
- The school works well to identify pupils at risk and keep pupils safe. It ensures that pupils have equal opportunities to succeed.
- The local authority provides suitable and effective support, including joint observations of teaching with senior staff.
- The school's previous record indicates its strong capacity to continue to improve, and its own evaluations and its 'Moving Forward Plan' show high ambitions for the future.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors vigorously hold the school to account. They ensure finances are managed conscientiously and that staff performance is linked closely to pupils' outcomes. Governors know how pupil premium funding is used and its effectiveness and impact. They have an astute understanding of the curriculum and its contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and preparation for life in modern Britain. They are conversant with the school's information on progress and the quality of teaching. Governors take safeguarding responsibilities very seriously. Using an external advisor they scrupulously review the performance of the headteacher, while ensuring the performance of other staff is managed rigorously. Governors audit their skills and bring in fresh governors when desirable. They regularly undertake training.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They are keen to learn and enjoy their lessons, which strongly aid their progress.
- Pupils have consistently positive attitudes to learning. They take pride in the school, for example, by keeping it neat and tidy and looking smart in their uniforms.
- There have been no permanent exclusions since the previous inspection and fixed-term exclusions are rare.
- Parents, staff and pupils express very positive views about behaviour and safety and pupils recognise the importance of good attitudes to learning.

- Pupils behave very well in lessons and elsewhere in the school, including at break times and lunchtimes. They express their pride in the school and are polite. They attend school regularly and are punctual to lessons.
- In a whole-school practice for the Harvest Festival celebrations, pupils behaved very well and participated enthusiastically.
- According to age and ability, pupils are aware of what bullying is and that it is wrong. Name calling is rare. Pupils know that staff will deal fairly with any incidents.
- Pupils' excellent behaviour is sustained and encouraged by effective approaches that promote high achievement and lead to a very positive climate for learning. Staff are adept at showing pupils how to take responsibility for their behaviour, for example, telling them when they have made a 'poor choice' and when they have done well.
- The school has examples of pupils making very good progress in behaviour and attendance.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Governors, staff, parents and pupils are confident about the safety of pupils. Visitors to the school are carefully checked and monitored.
- Pupils feel safe and can explain according to age and ability how to keep safe in different circumstances, for example when near water or when using social networking sites and the internet generally. They have an increasing understanding of risks because the school teaches safety extensively in its programmes.
- Pupils have a good and developing understanding of British values. For example, older pupils explained 'fairness' and its importance with great concentration. They have basic factual knowledge about democratic institutions such as being able to name political leaders.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Much teaching in different key stages and in different subjects and areas of study is outstanding and is at least consistently good because almost all pupils make continuing progress and achieve outstandingly well.
- Teachers and learning support workers convey to pupils very high expectations for achievement and behaviour. Clear, detailed planning leads to lessons that stimulate exceptional learning across different areas of study.
- Teachers are very aware of different pupils' responses and the ways in which they learn. Using this understanding they check pupils' knowledge in lessons and modify learning accordingly to good effect.
- Literacy, numeracy and communication are taught very effectively, including when these skills are planned as part of other subjects and areas of learning.
- Teachers' very good subject knowledge helps pupils be involved in lessons and motivates them highly. They ensure that boys and girls, disadvantaged pupils, pupils with different special educational needs and pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds participate fully and progress very well.
- Perceptive marking and annotating of pupils' work is thorough and up to date, helping secure progress.
- Teachers use a wide range of strategies to manage behaviour and stimulate learning.
- Homework is set as appropriate and supported by lunchtime homework clubs.
- Learning support workers and teachers work closely together and learning support workers are especially effective with small groups and individual pupils.
- The school provides a wide range of therapies and support programmes that are closely related to pupils' needs.
- Sensitive and skilled teaching in a personal, social, health and citizenship lesson enabled pupils to speak about feelings and interpret the possible feelings of others from pictures, which captured their interest very well. Excellent management of behaviour supported pupils' learning.
- The school recognises that just occasionally where teaching is good rather than outstanding, learning is too slow to start and pupils begin to lose concentration, which inhibits their progress from being outstanding.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- The attainment of pupils on entering the school is below what is expected for their age because of their special educational needs.
- Pupils make significant and continuing progress throughout the school in English and mathematics and

many other subjects.

- From different starting points, pupils make very strong progress. Boys and girls, disadvantaged pupils, minority ethnic pupils, and those with different types of special educational needs make similar progress, achieving very well.
- Disadvantaged pupils generally make slightly better progress than other pupils in English and mathematics. This is because of the highly individualised support they receive.
- Pupils learn exceptionally well. Computer technology is used extensively and very effectively by pupils and staff to support and enhance learning. Their enjoyment of learning was conveyed by one pupil who eagerly stated, 'School is brilliant.'
- In a science lesson, pupils were able to understand about changes in states of materials because the teacher explained this very clearly and the pupils used diagrams to help them. Asked about science, one pupil simply said, 'I love it.'
- Pupils read frequently and widely in school and can readily name books they enjoy. Through workshops and other means, the school fully supports parents, for example in listening to their child read at home where appropriate.
- In literacy, numeracy, and communication, pupils gain knowledge and skills and apply them very well in different areas of study. Pupils receiving Year 7 catch-up funding achieve very well because specific support for these pupils are highly focused.
- The school has a well-established and thoughtfully developed system for assessment and tracking of pupils' progress. It rigorously checks levels with other schools. This helps ensure that judgements of progress are accurate, enabling the school to set aspirational targets for pupils' learning.
- Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stages of their education. For example, 100% of those in 2012–13 who left the school secured a place at a college of further education.
- By the time pupils are ready to leave school, all achieve at least one GCSE pass and also succeed in a wide range of other qualifications, including gaining Entry Level Certificates.

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	131549
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	448931

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	107
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gerry Hayter
Headteacher	Kevin Day
Date of previous school inspection	16–17 May 2012
Telephone number	01242 216180
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