

Belgrave St Bartholomew's Academy

Sussex Place, Longton, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST3 4TP

Inspection dates

1–2 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The executive principal and the principal have high aspirations and uncompromising ambition to secure the very best outcomes for all pupils. Together, they have built on the school's many strengths to create an environment where pupils and staff excel.
- Leaders at every level share a strong moral purpose. Pupils' well-being and readiness for the future are central and inform all decisions. Every adult in the school is committed to ensuring that pupils are given every opportunity to succeed socially, emotionally, creatively and academically.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. Teachers have strong subject knowledge, which they combine with skilled questioning to extend pupils' thinking and deepen their understanding.
- A large proportion of pupils start school with English as an additional language. Many have no English at all. Leaders ensure that the environment is language rich. Consequently, pupils acquire English rapidly and make excellent progress.
- The school curriculum is enriched with opportunities for pupils to engage in a wide range of activities. However, the standard of pupils' writing can vary across the curriculum.
- The early years provision is extremely well managed. Children rapidly develop skills across all aspects of learning, including independence and social skills. Though achievement is very strong in the early years, boys do not always secure the same rapid rates of progress as girls.
- Learning environments are of the highest quality. Displays support learning and celebrate achievement.
- The professional development of staff is a priority. Leaders have created a culture where staff are open to innovation and change.
- Belgrave St Bartholomew's Academy is the lead school for Britannia Teaching School Alliance. As a result of this partnership, teachers receive exceptional professional development, which enables them to make swift and sustained improvements to their practice.
- Pupils constantly demonstrate the school's values and high expectations through exemplary behaviour. They respect adults and each other. They work collaboratively, showing tolerance and sensitivity to the needs of others.
- Despite the relentless work of leaders, rates of attendance are variable from year to year and are below those found nationally.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to seek ways of working with parents who are not ensuring that their children's attendance is as good as it can be.
- Further develop provision within the early years so that boys' achievement continues to rise and moves more in line with that of girls.
- Continue to improve achievement in writing so that it matches outcomes in reading and mathematics by ensuring that writing standards in work across the curriculum match the quality of work in English.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- There is a strong moral purpose for this school to serve its pupils as well as it possibly can. The leadership team is uncompromising and relentless in its drive to improve standards for pupils. It leads with purpose and conviction. The ambition for every child to excel is shared across the school.
- Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths. They are honest about areas for further development. School development planning reflects information gleaned from robust monitoring and evaluation processes, showing the unwavering commitment to further continuous improvement.
- The principal has the very able support of the executive principal and other senior and middle leaders of the school. Leaders have a very good understanding of the school's work. Together, they drive improvement through a continuous focus on professional development to refine teaching and leadership skills.
- Strong partnership work between the school, Britannia Teaching School Alliance and the St Bart's Multi-Academy Trust have led to teachers and other staff sharing practice and developing outstanding teaching and learning. Staff benefit from an exceptionally well-developed programme of professional development, including support for emerging leaders. This provision meets staff's needs effectively. Leaders have established an open culture of coaching and mentoring. Consequently, staff are highly reflective and are committed to improving their practice.
- The curriculum is stimulating and interesting and pupils are keen to talk about what they are learning. The school creates memorable learning experiences by providing opportunities for pupils to think for themselves and be curious about the world around them. The school pays particular attention to the development of skills in art, music, technology, dance and drama, and weaves opportunities to extend these within topic work.
- Leaders are aware of the need to extend pupils' vocabulary. This is an emphasis across the school. All termly topics are developed using a book focus.
- The school prepares its pupils exceptionally well for life in modern Britain. The school's ethos, based on its values of 'Courtesy, Consideration, and Respect' provides a strong moral and social code, which pupils exemplify in their learning and behaviour. Pupils' spiritual awareness is increased through opportunities to reflect. Pupils' everyday life in the school is built upon British values. As a result of the school's work, pupils: demonstrate tolerance and respect for each other; experience democracy in the decision-making processes of the school, for example, in the organising of Fair Trade Week; and they understand how the school's rules lay the foundations for equality.
- Leaders ensure that there is a wide provision of enrichment and extra-curricular activities that engage and excite pupils.
- Leaders ensure that they use the primary physical education and sport funding effectively. As a result, pupils' participation in sporting activities is very high. Pupils take part in a range of sporting events throughout the year.

- Senior leaders and governors make excellent use of the pupil premium funding to improve achievement for disadvantaged pupils, including those who are most able. Potential barriers to learning are identified and effective support is provided to help overcome these. Thus, disadvantaged pupils learn well, achieve high standards and, in some cases, perform better than their peers.
- The funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is also well targeted. These pupils receive precise and valuable support to achieve well, given their relative starting points.

Governance of the school

- Governors know the school very well and have very positive and productive working relationships with leaders and staff.
- Governors use their expertise to provide challenge and support to senior leaders to increase the school's effectiveness. They are well informed about the quality of teaching, including staffing and finance, which they keep under scrutiny. They understand the strengths and relative weaknesses of the school and can articulate what the school is doing to address areas for improvement. They make a valuable contribution to the culture of transparency, trust and shared ambition for continuous improvement.
- Governors understand the educational climate beyond Belgrave St Bartholomew's Academy. They have been extremely supportive of the school's work to improve opportunities and outcomes for pupils in other schools and settings.
- Governors ensure that all statutory responsibilities are met, including those relating to safeguarding.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that an ethos of safeguarding is embedded in the school. All staff are aware of their responsibility for keeping children safe and are vigilant in doing so. Pupils are confident in staff members' ability to keep them safe, as are parents.
- Leaders and governors have ensured that the staff have received appropriate training, including 'Prevent' duty training. They also ensure that their systems to recruit staff are meticulous.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers and teaching assistants have excellent relationships with pupils. They set high expectations for pupils' work and behaviour. They know how individual pupils learn best and plan to meet their needs exceptionally well. As a result, pupils work hard and are resilient learners who want to do well.

- Pupils are motivated to learn. Teachers enthusiastically promote all aspects of learning. Teachers capture pupils' interest, imagination and their natural curiosity. Pupils are keen to talk about what they are learning, for example the eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79, which they could speak knowledgeably about.
- Teachers' very skilful questioning encourages pupils to extend thinking, deepens learning and helps pupils develop skills in reasoning, justification and explanation. Teachers place great emphasis on extending pupils' vocabulary. This is supported by a language-rich environment.
- Classrooms are calm and purposeful. All learning environments are vibrant and of the highest quality.
- Teachers ensure that pupils make rapid progress in lessons by supporting learning with additional resources. Pupils retain knowledge because teachers frequently recap previous learning. Throughout lessons, teachers provide precise and timely feedback, which addresses misconceptions, provides further challenge and acknowledges success. Lessons proceed with pace. However, sometimes the pace is too fast for lower ability pupils, who need more time to process information.
- Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. They are highly skilled at intervening to support pupils who are struggling or to provide additional challenge when pupils have grasped an idea. Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively together to provide teaching that matches the needs of pupils.
- Pupils make strong progress over time because learning builds on previous learning. Teachers use assessment information to plan lessons that specifically focus on what pupils need to do next.
- Pupils' learning is enriched further by a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities, which range across sport, technology, languages, film, dance, cookery and outdoor learning. The school employs specialist teachers for physical education, dance, drama, music and forest school.
- Leaders have successfully ensured that the teaching of early reading skills is rigorous. As a result of excellent teaching of phonics, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check in 2016 was above the national figure.
- Pupils enjoy using books as a stimulus for learning across the curriculum. As a result of this whole-school approach, pupils have opportunities to read widely and develop a range of strategies when reading challenging texts.
- Pupils' books demonstrate that the skills they have acquired in English are not always transferred to writing in other areas of the curriculum. Consequently, the quality of writing in the wider curriculum is not always as strong as it could be.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. The physical, emotional and social well-being of pupils is at the heart of the school's work.
- Pupils are happy at school and learn to concentrate well from an early age. They demonstrate tenacity and resilience in their learning and don't give up in the face of challenges.
- Pupils are given excellent opportunities to develop personal qualities through the additional learning experiences they receive. For example, they grow fruit and vegetables on the school allotment and sell them, reinvesting the money they receive into the project. Additionally, some pupils are given specific training to help them support their peers on the playground. These activities make a significant contribution to their growing sense of responsibility and independence.
- Pupils report that they feel safe at school and that bullying is rare. Any incidents are dealt with effectively and promptly by staff.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe when out and about in their local community and when online. As part of their curriculum work, they are given opportunities to explore and develop understanding of issues such as bullying, and discriminatory and prejudicial behaviour. For example, a street artist worked with pupils to create large canvases on the theme of anti-racism.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Leaders and teachers have high expectations of behaviour. Consequently, pupils conduct themselves well and are self-disciplined.
- Relationships between pupils are excellent. They cooperate well together and share resources. They show respect and courtesy to each other.
- Teachers value pupils as individuals and they foster extremely positive relationships. In return, pupils are polite and show appreciation.
- Rates of attendance are variable over time and are currently below national levels. However, leaders and pastoral staff are committed to securing further improvements. They work closely with families to improve any persistent absence and use a wide range of incentives and rewards to encourage regular attendance. Inspectors reviewed attendance carefully and found that while issues such as extended family holidays do adversely affect data, further work is required to bring levels in line with those found nationally.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- From starting points that are well below those typical for their age when they start school, pupils make outstanding progress. Many children start school with little or no English. The school works hard to ensure that children acquire English rapidly so that they can take full advantage of learning opportunities. By the time pupils start secondary school, their achievement is either in line with or above national standards. Given pupils' low starting points, this represents outstanding outcomes.
- Children settle into school routines well and make exceptional progress. By the end of Reception Year, the proportion of children who achieve a good level of development is higher than the national figure. This ensures that pupils are well placed for the demands of the national curriculum from Year 1 onwards. From such very low starting points, this is impressive.
- The proportion of pupils meeting the expected standards in the Year 1 phonics check was above the national average in 2016. Similarly, almost all of the pupils who took the phonics re-check in Year 2 were successful.
- Rapid progress is sustained across the school, and by the time pupils leave Year 6 they are well prepared for their next stage in education. Attainment exceeds national averages in reading, mathematics, science and English grammar, punctuation and spelling. Achievement in writing is weaker, particularly when pupils are writing in other areas of the curriculum, besides English. The school's own assessments and review of pupils' work reflect very high levels of attainment. This aligns with the unrelenting focus on ongoing improvement seen across the school. There is no complacency. Everyone continues to aim for the highest possible standards in all they do.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress and attain well overall. The school uses additional funding to provide exceptionally good support, which helps pupils to access the curriculum and achieve as well as their peers and others nationally in reaching expected standards.
- The most able pupils, including the disadvantaged most able, are well challenged. In 2016, outcomes were particularly strong at the end of key stage 2 in mathematics. A significantly higher proportion of pupils with high prior attainment achieved at a higher level in mathematics than the national average. However, outcomes were not as strong at a higher level in writing in 2016. Leaders are well aware of this and have taken effective and appropriate steps to respond to this difference.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language rapidly acquire English and go on to make progress that is at least in line with that of their peers.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress that is in line with that of their peers, given their relative starting points. In collaboration with parents and pupils, the school develops highly effective passports, which capture the specific needs of pupils and their learning styles. These passports are used to accelerate learning.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Leaders and teachers in early years are ambitious for the children in their care. They have high expectations and work creatively together to ensure that all barriers to successful learning are overcome before children start Year 1. There is rigorous monitoring of learning and teaching, which has led to continuous improvements in children's development and achievement.
- Leaders have an accurate picture of the strengths and relative weaknesses in the provision. They have focused action plans and are aspirational for future improvements.
- Outstanding practice results in high levels of achievement. Most children achieve a good level of development, despite their generally very low starting points. Children who enter school with low levels of English catch up quickly. Effective systems for early support ensure that these children acquire appropriate language skills to be able to meet national expectations.
- Children are motivated to learn and demonstrate sustained concentration on tasks. They cooperate well together, sharing resources. They follow instructions quickly. A broad curriculum is in place, so that children achieve across all aspects of the early years foundation stage. The learning environment is lively and creative. However, the organisation of the environment can sometimes limit the extent to which children are able to pursue their own ideas and create and think critically.
- Safeguarding procedures are thorough. Staff have received the appropriate levels of training. All welfare requirements are met. Children show confidence in adults, who keep a close eye on them. Children are happy and feel safe.
- Teaching and learning opportunities are based on a deep knowledge of individual children's needs. Staff carefully assess children's learning and use this to identify precisely what they need to do next. Questioning by staff to take learning forward is a strength and the input from all staff is effective.
- The gap in achievement between boys and girls has reduced considerably over time. As a result of improvements, the proportion of boys who reach a good level of development is now in line with national figures. However, there is scope to diminish the difference even further by ensuring that provision continues to address the needs and interests of boys.
- Partnerships with parents and other adults are established at the earliest opportunity, prior to entry, through home visits and visits to other early years settings. Parents are very positive about the support, care and learning provided to their children.

School details

Unique reference number	136549
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	10025382

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	484
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gill Porter
Executive Principal	Christopher Brislen
Principal	Lisa Sarikaya
Telephone number	01782 235523
Website	www.belgraveacademy.org.uk
Email address	lsarikaya@belgrave.stoke.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	25–26 June 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- Belgrave St Bartholomew’s Academy is larger than the average-sized primary school. It has a two-form entry with Nursery provision.
- The school has been an academy since April 2011.
- Three quarters of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups, with the vast majority of these being of Pakistani heritage.
- Almost two thirds of pupils speak English as an additional language.

- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs at a stage of support is below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Belgrave St Bartholomew's Academy is the lead school in the Britannia Teaching School Alliance.
- Belgrave St Bartholomew's Academy runs a multi-academy trust, which includes sponsored academies.
- The executive principal is a national leader of education and there are specialist leaders of education within the staff. This expertise is used to support other schools.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all year groups. Observations were undertaken with the executive principal and other members of the leadership team.
- Meetings were held with the executive principal, the school principal, senior leaders and middle leaders. The lead inspector also met three governors, including the chair of the governing body, as well as representatives from the teaching school and multi-academy trust. Discussions were also held with pupils.
- Inspectors took into consideration the 12 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. The inspection team met parents when they were dropping off their children at school.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and scrutinised several documents, including: the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans; records of data on pupils' performance; records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding; minutes of governing body meetings; monitoring records of the school's effectiveness; and pupils' work from all classes completed in the current academic year.
- The inspection began as a section 8 short inspection for one day but was converted to a full section 5 inspection. The inspection lasted for two days in total. Inspectors used the second day to gather additional evidence to assess the school's effectiveness and verify the leaders' self-evaluation of the school's work.

Inspection team

Helen Davies, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Tracy Stone	Ofsted Inspector
Sofina Islam OBE	Ofsted Inspector
Catherine Draper	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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