

# Belmont Community School

Buckinghamshire Road, Belmont, Durham, County Durham DH1 2QP

## Inspection dates

12–13 February 2019

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Strong leaders, managers and governors have successfully improved the school's effectiveness since the last inspection.
- The headteacher and his senior leadership team evaluate accurately the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The enthusiasm and commitment of the headteacher and deputy headteachers are unrelenting. Expectations are high, and the school continues to improve.
- Governors are knowledgeable and, since the last inspection, have taken prompt action to improve their skills. They carry out their duties successfully and have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.
- Teaching is good. Leaders have successfully addressed previous weaknesses in teaching. As a result, most pupils in school are now making good progress from their starting points across a range of subjects.
- Standards of attainment are rising for most pupils across the school in most subject areas. Where attainment falls below national averages, progress of pupils from starting points is nevertheless strong.
- Leaders have taken successful action to improve the progress made by disadvantaged pupils. As a result, the gap in progress made between this group of pupils and other pupils nationally is diminishing quickly.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are very positive. There is a strong culture of support in the school. Pupils enjoy helping each other in class and during tutor periods.
- Strong support is in place for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and this is helping them to make good progress.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are good. Leaders have improved pupils' behaviour since the last inspection. Pupils generally conduct themselves very well in lessons and around the school. They are confident, polite and courteous to one another and to staff. Pupils behave well and show positive attitudes to learning. Attendance is above the national average. Fixed-term exclusions are consistently below the national average.
- At times, teachers do not provide effective challenge for the less able and the most able pupils. Consequently, in some lessons these pupils do not make as much progress as they could.
- Although the attainment of pupils in history, geography and modern foreign languages is improving, their attainment remains below the national average in these subjects.
- The Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium funding is used effectively to improve pupils' literacy. However, it is not yet used effectively to improve pupils' numeracy.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further strengthen the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils make good progress in all subjects by ensuring that teachers consistently plan learning activities that challenge pupils effectively, particularly the less and the most able.
- Continue to improve the outcomes of all pupils, in history, geography and modern foreign languages.
- Further strengthen the quality of leadership to bring about further improvement in the effectiveness of the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium on pupils' numeracy.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher and his senior leaders have created a nurturing and inclusive culture of pupils being 'Ready, Respectful, Safe' across the school. Through their unrelenting commitment and focused vision, leaders have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Consequently, they have improved the effectiveness of the school.
- Leaders are highly evaluative and have a detailed understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They set high expectations of themselves, staff and pupils. Senior leaders have established thorough systems for monitoring the progress of all pupils, linked effectively to their checks of the quality of teaching. As a result, most pupils make good progress.
- The leadership of teaching and learning is strong. Senior leaders have an accurate overview of the strengths and the remaining areas requiring further improvement in teaching across the school. There are very clear processes in place to monitor the quality of teaching. Leaders take decisive action, when needed, to eradicate weak teaching. As a result, the quality of teaching overall, is good.
- Governors and senior leaders have developed a strong culture of accountability. They work closely with middle leaders through frequent meetings. Consequently, most middle leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of their departments well and take appropriate and effective actions to support individual pupils.
- Leaders ensure that additional funding, including pupil premium and funding to support pupils with SEND, is used well. They evaluate the effect of all aspects of the school's intervention programme to make sure that their actions are making a difference. As a result, the progress of disadvantaged pupils is now close to the progress of other pupils nationally and is improving in most year groups.
- Pupils have access to an extensive range of extra-curricular activities. In order to ensure that as many pupils as possible can participate in these after-school activities, a number of the school buses run at later times. Leaders ensure that as many pupils as possible have the opportunity to take part in residential trips and outdoor experiences, including the 'tall ship' sailing experience. These enrichment activities provide excellent opportunities for pupils' social and cultural development.
- The local authority has provided effective support for the school since the last inspection. Middle leaders attend local authority network meetings and national training events to share best practice. The headteacher has welcomed the opportunity to engage in a range of external reviews, including a pupil premium review, and has successfully used the recommendations to inform the school's next steps to further improvement.
- Governors and senior leaders have focused the spending of the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up funding on improving literacy. Inspection evidence shows that pupils now make strong progress in reading. However, this has been to the detriment of the development of pupils' numeracy skills, where the impact of this funding has been less effective.

## Governance of the school

- Governance is good and has been strengthened further since the last inspection because governors have improved their skills, knowledge and expertise. The governing body is ably led by the experienced chair. Governors are rightly proud of the way in which they have supported and challenged leaders to improve the school.
- Governors have a good knowledge of the school and its work. They are active in their approach to finding out information, are linked to different subject areas of the school and leaders keep them well informed about the progress pupils make. They ask challenging questions of school leaders and monitor the impact of their actions closely.
- Governors scrutinise the use of additional funding and the difference this makes to pupils' outcomes. The use of the pupil premium has contributed to a significant diminishing of differences between the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils compared to their peers in school and other pupils nationally.
- Governors have evaluated the use of the additional Year 7 catch-up funding effectively to support pupils' literacy development in Year 7. However, governors have not done likewise with regard to the use of this funding to improve Year 7 pupils' numeracy development.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. A weekly briefing, led by the headteacher, emphasises the importance of everyone's responsibility to be vigilant.
- There is a culture of safeguarding in the school. Leaders ensure that all staff have appropriate training, for example in awareness of radicalisation, child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation. As a result, staff know what to do should there be a safeguarding concern about a pupil. Staff act quickly and appropriately to share any concerns they may have. The designated safeguarding leader acts on all concerns swiftly.
- Records about safeguarding and child protection concerns are thorough. They show that leaders take appropriate and comprehensive action as it is needed. Leaders work very well with external agencies to ensure that pupils receive any additional support they need. Leaders make and record thorough checks on the adults who work at the school.
- Pupils report that they feel safe and know what to do to stay safe, including when online. Pupils also say that although bullying sometimes does happen, when it does, teachers and leaders tackle it quickly. Inspection evidence confirms this.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved significantly since the previous inspection, and is now consistently good in almost all subjects in the school.
- Teachers' strong subject knowledge and probing questioning identify misconceptions and deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. Common routines, such as using the

'fast four' tasks at the beginning of each lesson to link to previous learning, help pupils learn and remember more. As a result, most pupils now make good progress.

- The positive relationships that exist between staff and pupils make a clear contribution to the quality of learning in the vast majority of lessons. The work in most pupils' books is well presented and shows that they take pride in their learning.
- There are detailed systems in place for checking the quality of teaching and learning. Leaders use the school's teaching, learning and assessment policy ('Belmont 8 Rs') to identify strengths and areas for further development for each teacher. As a result, senior and middle leaders know the strengths and weaknesses in teaching in each subject.
- Most teachers have high expectations of their pupils and set challenging activities in lessons. Leaders provide targeted support and development to staff where needed, in order to improve teaching. As a result, the quality of teaching overall is good and improving in weaker areas, for example in geography.
- Teaching assistants are effective in their support for pupils' learning because teachers and teaching assistants regularly check on the progress of individual pupils. Consequently, teaching is adapted to make sure that pupils with SEND make good progress from their starting points.
- Most teachers use pupil assessment information routinely to plan activities that deepen pupils' understanding. Careful planning enables pupils to work at an appropriate rate, moving on to more challenging work when they are ready. However, in some subjects, teachers do not provide effective challenge for pupils of different abilities.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils engage well with the taught programme of personal development, which also improves pupils' confidence, self-esteem and resilience. The school works with a range of charities to raise pupils' awareness of the differences between migrants, refugees and asylum seekers and the impact of racism on peoples' lives. Pupils respect the rights of others and celebrate differences. As a result, the school is friendly and very inclusive.
- Pupils are taught how to stay safe online and how to avoid potential dangers when using social media. They understand the risks associated with drugs and alcohol and the issues around female genital mutilation. Consequently, pupils know who to go to if they have any concerns.
- Pupils appreciate the impartial careers advice and guidance they receive. This is helping pupils in Year 11 to think carefully about possible career options and raising their aspirations. As a result, over time, the proportion of pupils continuing into further education, employment and training, has been either in line with or above national averages.
- Leaders ensure that the welfare of the small number of pupils who attend alternative

provision is a high priority. There is very effective communication between school staff and the providers. Pupils follow a personalised curriculum that is well suited to their needs. Consequently, the pupils who are educated in the school's alternative education provision are well cared for and behave well.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Behaviour has improved significantly since the last inspection and school processes ensure that any incidents of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with quickly and efficiently. Pupils are clear about the consequences and sanctions associated with specific actions. There are very few incidents of bullying and when it does occur it is dealt with appropriately by staff. The views of staff, pupils, parents, governors and inspection evidence confirm this.
- The school uses a range of resources to support pupils' mental health. These resources include support from the National Health Service resilience nurse and educational psychologist mentoring sessions for vulnerable pupils, as well as the school's own trained counsellor. As a result, pupils show positive attitudes to school and their learning.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are positive and pupils' conduct is respectful and polite. Pupils attend well, and the school's overall attendance rate is above the national average. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND also attend well and their attendance rate is in line with or above national averages. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school is below the national average.
- Leaders' systematic approach to behavioural issues has reduced the number of incidents of poor behaviour since the last inspection. Most pupils conduct themselves very well, both in lessons and at social times. They move calmly around the site and wear their uniform well. Fixed-term exclusions have fallen sharply since the last inspection and have been consistently well below the national average.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Since the last inspection, the school has seen a significant improvement in pupils' progress. By the end of Year 11 in 2018, the progress pupils made across a wide range of subjects was broadly in line with national averages, a significant improvement from the previous two years.
- Inspection evidence, work in pupils' books and school assessment information show that, from their starting points, current pupils in Years 10 and 11 are continuing to make strong progress in a wide range of subjects.
- In 2018, pupils made much better progress in mathematics, science and English than they had in the previous year. The proportion of pupils achieving a strong pass (grade 5) in English and mathematics combined, continued to improve and it was in line with the national average.
- The school's assessment information, scrutiny of pupils' work and inspection evidence indicate that a high proportion of current key stage 4 pupils are on track to reach their

target grades at the end of their courses. This includes history, geography and modern foreign languages, where outcomes were not as strong last year. Although attainment is improving in these subjects, it remains below national averages.

- Disadvantaged pupils make strong progress from their starting points, and the gap in progress and attainment between this group and their peers and other pupils nationally is diminishing. Pupils with SEND are also making strong progress in most subjects as a result of effective teaching and tailored support.
- Destination information for pupils leaving Year 11 shows that they are being well prepared to move into further education, employment or training. Leaders ensure that all pupils receive high-quality careers education, advice and guidance.

## School details

Unique reference number	114308
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10059047

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	759
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Patrick Conway
Headteacher	Paul Marsden
Telephone number	01913 865 715
Website	<a href="http://www.belmontschool.org.uk/">www.belmontschool.org.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:school@belmontschool.org.uk">school@belmontschool.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	18–19 October 2016

## Information about this school

- Belmont Community School is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. The majority of pupils are White British.
- The school hosts a local authority-run specialist provision catering for pupils with visual or hearing impairment. All pupils fully access mainstream lessons across the full curriculum.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below the national average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is broadly in line with the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The school currently uses Delta Independent School, Beacon of Light (Sunderland Football Club), Engage, and the Bridge as alternative provision for a very small number of pupils.



## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited parts of 42 lessons covering most curriculum areas and most teaching staff. Some of these visits took place with senior leaders. During visits to classrooms, inspectors looked in pupils' books and questioned pupils about their learning. Inspectors also visited form learning time and observed an assembly for Year 8 pupils.
- Discussions took place with the headteacher, deputy headteachers, other senior leaders, heads of departments and members of the wider body of staff.
- Discussions also took place with a school improvement adviser from the local authority. Inspectors met with the chair and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors held discussions with pupils from all year groups about what it is like to be a young person at the school.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the school, including between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtime.
- Inspectors took into account the 70 responses from parents to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including the 57 free-text responses.
- Inspectors examined records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors also scrutinised documents, including school development plans, governing body minutes of meetings, school surveys of staff and pupil voice, external reviews, leaders' monitoring notes and information about pupils' achievement.

## Inspection team

Dimitris Spiliotis, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Louise Greatrex	Ofsted Inspector
Jamie Lawler	Ofsted Inspector
Melanie Kane	Ofsted Inspector

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