

Inspection of Belmont School

Haslingden Road, Rawtenstall, Rossendale, Lancashire BB4 6RX

Inspection dates: 29 April to 1 May 2025

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

The recently established leadership team has implemented a broad and ambitious curriculum for pupils to study. From their starting points, pupils achieve well. The school deliberately enhances this curriculum with regular trips and visits. For example, visits to museums, historical sites and outdoor education facilities significantly increase pupils' experience of the wider world. Pupils enjoy their learning and leave the school confident and ready to lead independent lives.

Pupils receive a fresh start at Belmont School. Most pupils who attend this school have missed significant parts of their education. Pupils re-engage with learning because staff develop trusting relationships with pupils. Often this work is transformational. For example, one pupil explained that learning new skills had led them to aspire to a future career for the first time.

Pupils behave well and focus on their learning. Staff create a calm environment for pupils. The school applies its behaviour policy fairly and consistently. When pupils struggle to manage their behaviour and emotions, the school provides highly effective support through their clinical team. Pupils are taught how to regulate their feelings and manage their behaviour extremely well.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school has established an influential vision for pupils to become confident, resilient and aspirational for their future lives. This vision is realised in practice. In personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, pupils develop a broad understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Pupils achieve certificates in horticulture and construction as part of the school's impressive vocational offer. This inspires pupils to explore careers in these areas.

Across the curriculum, pupils develop the confidence to persevere when learning something new. However, the school does not check precisely enough that pupils have remembered the new knowledge that they are taught. Sometimes pupils move on to new learning before they have secured the necessary prior learning.

Pupils develop the knowledge and skills that they need in English and mathematics. For example, pupils confidently explore how character is developed in texts that they are studying. In mathematics, pupils persevere when learning more complex concepts such as calculating angles. However, in some subjects, the school has not ensured that pupils learn and remember the important subject-specific language that they need well enough. Strategies to help pupils to remember new vocabulary are not well developed.

Most pupils have interrupted attendance at, or exclusion from, their previous schools. Pupils have many gaps in their learning. All pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan to support their special educational needs and/or disabilities

(SEND). Teachers routinely adapt current learning to meet the needs that pupils have.

Many pupils join the school with gaps in their reading knowledge. Pupils benefit from a well-taught phonics programme that addresses these gaps. Pupils become fluent and confident readers. Over time, pupils who struggle with reading develop the skills that they need to access a range of texts across the curriculum. Pupils increasingly read with fluency and comprehension.

The relationships that staff build with pupils are highly positive. Pupils are taught to manage their own behaviour more effectively. Pupils' attitudes to learning improve during their time at the school. They make substantial gains in their attendance. The school has created a culture in which pupils feel cared for. Pupils want to attend school and re-engage with their learning.

Staff provide a rich variety of opportunities for pupils to build self-esteem and to develop independence. The personal development of pupils is a high priority. Pupils discuss important aspects such as consent and safe relationships. They learn about the wider dangers that they might face, such as crime and exploitation. This prepares pupils well for their future lives. Opportunities for pupils to explore their interests are woven throughout the school day. For example, pupils learn about archery, fire safety and how to prepare food. In addition, they learn to manage money and navigate public transport. This contributes significantly to pupils becoming well-rounded individuals who are ready for their future lives.

Pupils benefit from a substantial and impartial careers information, education, advice and guidance programme. From Year 7 onwards, pupils receive specialist support to develop a careers pathway. This helps pupils to understand the importance of their current learning in achieving their future aspirations. As a result of this work, pupils secure college places, mentorship programmes or work.

The school has significant expertise to ensure that the independent school standards (the standards) are met consistently. Policies, including a safeguarding policy that meets current statutory requirements, are available to parents and carers on the school's website. The proprietor has ensured that the school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The proprietor is fully involved in the life of the school and knows the school well. It has a clear oversight of the school's strengths and weaknesses and provides high-quality professional development to staff at all levels.

The school meets the health and safety and premises requirements. The building is maintained to a high standard and teaching spaces are bright, clean and well resourced. There are impressive outdoor areas that pupils can spend time in at breaktimes and as part of the curriculum.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- In some subjects, the school does not help pupils to learn and remember new subject-specific language well enough. Pupils struggle to remember some aspects of this important learning. The school should make sure that new vocabulary is consistently taught and used to help pupils to remember it.
- The school does not check precisely enough whether pupils have learned the important new knowledge that they are taught. Sometimes pupils have not sufficiently mastered this knowledge before moving on to learning new content. The school should check more precisely whether pupils have learned the important knowledge that they have been taught before moving on to new learning.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

School details

Unique reference number	131025
DfE registration number	888/6029
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10391719
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	141
Proprietor	Acorn Care and Education Limited
Chair	Daniel Cooke
Headteacher	Justine Sims
Annual fees (day pupils)	£59,698 to £89,698
Telephone number	01706 221043
Website	www.belmont-school.co.uk
Email address	admin@belmont-school.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 to 23 September 2022

Information about this school

- The previous standard inspection took place on 21 to 23 September 2022.
- The school uses seven unregistered alternative providers.
- The school operates from two sites. The primary school site is based at Peel Street, Rossendale, Lancashire BB4 7LJ. The secondary school site is based at Haslingden Road, Rawtenstall, Lancashire BB4 6RX.
- The school has an additional site at Riverside Vocational Unit, Baldwin St, Bacup OL03 0LE. This site provides vocational studies for pupils at the school.
- The school is registered to admit up to 148 pupils ages five to 18. The school caters for pupils who have been out of education for extended periods. All pupils on roll at the time of the inspection have an EHC plan. The special educational need that the school caters for is social, emotional and mental health.
- Pupils' places are commissioned and funded by the local authority.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic and have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the chair of the proprietor body, the regional director, chair of governors and heads of school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, early reading, mathematics and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, considered the curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also talked to leaders, staff and pupils about some other subjects including humanities and vocational studies.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

- During the inspection, inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including that relating to safeguarding. They also reviewed information relating to the standards. They also looked at records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors spoke with some parents and took account of their views.
- Staff's views were considered during discussions and through their responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. To gather the views of pupils, inspectors spoke informally with pupils throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Jen Sloan, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lindy Griffiths

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025