

Belgrave Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110984
Local Authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	310472
Inspection dates	30 November –1 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Diane Auton

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	187
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Peter Welsh
Headteacher	Mrs Deanne Garratt
Date of previous school inspection	4 July 2005
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, one of whom focused solely on the quality of safeguarding. The inspectors visited nine lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and a group of parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation, including data about pupils' progress and attainment, the school's planning documents, policies, procedures and records. They reviewed information provided by parents in the questionnaires they returned. They also took into account the views pupils and staff expressed in their questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the standards reached by pupils and the progress they make
- the effectiveness of teaching and the curriculum in building on pupils' skills from year-to-year
- the impact of leadership and management on achieving the best possible outcomes for pupils
- how well provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage enables children to progress in their learning and development.

Information about the school

The school is situated in a residential area of mainly owner-occupied housing. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is smaller than that found in most schools. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, with a small proportion from other heritages, including a very small number of pupils who are learning English as an additional language. Early Years Foundation Stage education is provided in the Reception class.

Belgrave was an infant school until reorganisation in September 2008 when it became a primary school. The school now provides Key Stage 2 education, during the last school year in Year 3, and currently in Years 3 and 4. The school is scheduled to become a one form entry primary school by 2014. Currently, because the school is still working towards this, the size of year groups is uneven, with higher numbers in Year 2 and Year 3 than in the other years. A planned transition programme to support the school's future development is currently under way; the programme includes work on additions and improvements to the school's accommodation, scheduled to start in January 2010.

The school is an Investor in People. It also holds the Healthy Schools Award, the Artsmark (Gold), the International Schools Award, the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the Activemark and the Green Flag Award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

The school is continuing to sustain high standards of care and excellent outcomes for pupils' personal and academic development during the current period of adjustment to its new status. It fully deserves its excellent reputation in its community and within the local authority. Its outstanding overall effectiveness is the result of excellent, highly focused leadership and management, an innovative, exciting curriculum and the dedication of a talented team of professionals working together productively, in partnership with parents, to secure the best possible outcomes for pupils.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has been significantly above national expectations for the past five years. Pupils go on to be happy and successful learners in Year 3 and Year 4; their consistently high attainment is evident in their oral contribution in lessons and in the quality of the work they produce. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, language or social needs do well, as a result of well-targeted support in this very inclusive school.

Pupils express very clearly how happy they are to be at Belgrave. They link this explicitly to the warm relationships they enjoy with the staff, who 'make me feel good, inside and out' and who 'always greet me with a lovely smile'. They report that learning activities are 'always interesting and fun'. The school has been particularly successful in engaging parents in their children's learning and parents describe a 'strong bond between home and school'. The pupils' voice is valued highly and influences much of what goes on in school, contributing to the development of good citizens of the future. Assessment is regular and used well to help move learning forward. In a further development in some classes, pupils are starting to learn how to assess their own progress; this initiative is still at a very early stage, however, and is not yet fully implemented across the school. Pupils benefit greatly from the outstanding, enriched curriculum which supports not only their academic progress, but also their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well. Plans are in place for further development of the outdoor area for the Reception class in order to improve opportunities for children's investigative learning out of doors.

The school is exceptionally well led and managed. This is very much a team operation; all staff contribute very well to continuous school improvement and the governing body is extremely knowledgeable, effective and involved. The headteacher is an inspirational leader who communicates her ambition and drive for ongoing improvement exceptionally well. The school is aware of its strengths and areas for development and has improved on the good outcomes of its last inspection, showing that it takes effective action to tackle weaker areas. It has outstanding capacity to improve further and to forge ahead successfully in its development as a primary school.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Promote the development of independent learning in the early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - extending and enhancing the opportunities that are currently available for children to take part in adventurous and investigative learning activities out of doors.
- Ensure improved consistency in the effectiveness of marking and assessment by enabling pupils to play an active role in assessing their own progress

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils are happy and receptive learners who thoroughly enjoy all aspects of school life. They are attentive in lessons and they are well-behaved and polite, showing consideration for others. They work together very well and enjoy taking initiative and responding to challenges. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with skills in literacy and numeracy that are broadly at expected levels for their age. Their skills in the other areas of learning are generally above expected levels and they are already enthusiastic learners. Pupils make good and sometimes outstanding progress and go on to reach high standards in all subjects by the end of Year 2. The picture for Key Stage 2 is similarly positive, with no reduction in standards or progress as pupils move up into Years 3 and 4. The good achievement of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with that of their peers, in relation to their abilities and starting points. Pupils have a very well-developed awareness of issues around healthy living and keeping safe. They greatly enjoy the many opportunities they are given to take responsibility, for example, as influential school councillors or when pupils from Year 4 act as play leaders in Reception. Good attendance and excellent punctuality contribute well to their skills for the future. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They discuss important issues in lessons, in assemblies and in 'Philosophy for Children' sessions and this contributes significantly to developing their reflectiveness and maturity. They have an exceptionally good awareness and appreciation of religious and cultural diversity because the school promotes this so effectively. This means that they are very well prepared for life in a multi-cultural society.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is good overall, with some outstanding practice. Lessons are planned well to take the range of learners' needs into account. Pupils are given a clear understanding of what they are expected to do and to achieve and they respond well to teachers' high expectations of them. Written marking provides positive reinforcement and clear assessment of how well pupils have done in meeting the learning objective of the lesson. Areas for improvement identified in teachers' marking are not always followed up with the pupils and this sometimes reduces its impact, although the school has begun to address this in some classes by involving pupils more directly in their own assessment.

The curriculum is designed extremely effectively to meet pupils' needs and to reflect their interests. Consequently, they are engaged and motivated in lessons. There are excellent opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills through work across the areas of learning. The curriculum is extremely well enriched by opportunities for pupils to develop skills in sports and music and to learn a modern foreign language. The school's very effective programme to promote pupils' personal, social, cultural, health and citizenship education is enhanced by visits, visitors and themed learning events, including 'international weeks'. Carefully planned provision for pupils with special educational needs and /or disabilities ensures they enjoy full access to learning and social inclusion. Collaborative planning by staff helps to ensure that the curriculum in Key Stage 1 makes effective links with that of the Early Years Foundation Stage so that it meets the learning needs of pupils across the ability range extremely well. Planning

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for progression into Key Stage 2 has also been developed extremely well and the curriculum in Years 3 and 4 meets pupils' learning needs and supports their continuing progress and achievement.

The outstanding quality of care, guidance and support means that pupils feel secure, safe and valued and this supports their personal and academic development. Pupils with learning, medical, social or language needs are all provided with specific, individually tailored programmes that enable them to progress in their learning and all other aspects of their development. Trained and skilled support staff make an important contribution to the quality of provision for all of the pupils, particularly those with additional needs. Sensitive arrangements around induction and transition ensure that pupils joining and leaving the school are supported effectively. Parents feel they are kept fully informed about their children's progress and that they receive high quality support and guidance through the regular learning workshops and the school's virtual learning platform.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Governors and all of the staff wholeheartedly share the headteacher's clear vision and resolve to take the school forward to achieve outstanding outcomes for pupils. Leaders have taken a strategic approach to managing the school's transition to its new status through effective long-term planning. As a result, excellence in provision and outcomes has been sustained over time and pupils have not suffered disruption to the continuity and quality of their education. Appropriate measures are being taken to ensure that the school's accommodation is fit for purpose at each stage during and beyond the transition period. Well established systems to ensure the quality of provision contribute very well to outcomes for pupils. Subject leaders assist proactively with this, reflecting the very strong team ethos that prevails in the school. Teachers are confident curriculum innovators, sharing ideas and planning collaboratively. Leaders set challenging improvement targets, based on detailed knowledge obtained through rigorous, systematic and accurate self-review. Regular progress reviews ensure that pupils receive the support they need. The school carefully evaluates the impact of the support given to individual pupils to ensure its effectiveness and this contributes greatly to the progress they make. The governing body is exceptionally well-informed and is a very effective critical friend to the school. The school complies fully with statutory requirements for safeguarding, health and safety and child protection. Its very inclusive

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ethos supports equal opportunities and access to educational entitlement. It contributes extensively to community cohesion through a wide range of partnerships: with parents; within its community: with other local schools and further and higher education providers; with its partner school in Germany and with agencies that support pupils' welfare, social and learning needs.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's education gets off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They enter the Reception class with skills that are broadly at the expected levels for their age group. They make good progress, so that by the end of the year their achievement is in line with age-related expectations in the areas of learning of literacy and numeracy and above expectations in their personal, social and emotional development. They also achieve well in extending their knowledge and understanding of the world around them and in their physical and creative development. They establish very positive attitudes to learning during their time in Reception. The quality of teaching is good and children are provided with a rich, stimulating environment. There is a good balance between activities they choose for themselves and those that are led by adults and this is helping children to develop independence.

The outdoor area is attractive and a range of activities are provided to take learning out of doors. Developments to promote more adventurous and investigative learning outside, so that the quality of learning out of doors matches the excitement and fun the children enjoy in their indoor activities, are still at the planning stage.

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Assessment is supported by a wide range of evidence gathered through observing the children in their activities. Parents contribute well to this process by adding their written observations about the learning milestones their children achieve. All of this evidence is used very well to plan the next steps in children's learning and to meet their individual needs. Children interact well with each other and enjoy warm, trusting relationships with the caring staff; as a result, they are happy, secure and ready to learn. They settle quickly because induction procedures are sensitive and staff forge the positive relationships with parents that continue throughout their children's time in the school. The class is well led and managed and the staff team work together effectively. Provision is monitored regularly and this supports ongoing improvements. Procedures to ensure children's welfare are very effective and meet all statutory requirements.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

An overwhelming majority of those who responded said they agree or strongly agree that they are happy with their children's experience at the school. This is in line with the inspection team's judgement on the school's outstanding overall effectiveness. It also reflects the school's great success in involving and supporting parents as partners in their children's education.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Belgrave Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 66 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 187 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	57	85	9	13	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	60	90	6	9	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	52	78	14	21	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	52	78	14	21	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	63	94	3	4	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	65	97	1	1	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	50	75	16	24	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	46	69	16	24	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	53	79	13	19	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	45	67	17	25	1	1	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	50	75	15	22	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	63	94	3	4	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	63	94	3	4	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



2 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Belgrave Primary School, Chester, CH4 7QS

Thank you for making the inspection team so welcome when we visited your school.

As you know, we came to see how well the school is doing and how you are all getting on with your learning. These are some of the things we found.

- The school provides you with an excellent standard of education. Belgrave is a very happy school and you are well-behaved and polite young people. I was delighted to hear how much you enjoy coming to school. You work hard in your lessons and you achieve high standards in your work. You are taught well and your lessons are very interesting and this is helping you to succeed.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage gets your education off to a good start and you achieve really positive attitudes to learning in the Reception class
- The school is extremely well led and managed. We think that the headteacher, the staff and the governors all do an excellent job to make your school so effective. Your parents told us that they think so too and I was very pleased to see how closely the school and your parents work together to help you.

The headteacher and the staff are always looking for ways to make Belgrave even better. I've asked them to go ahead with their plans to improve the outdoor area for the Reception class, so that children can have more adventures and fun in learning out of doors. I've also asked them to develop the way they mark your work, to find very clear ways to help you to see how well you are doing and what you need to do next to improve your work. I think this will help you to make even better progress.

Thank you again for making our visit so enjoyable.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Diane Auton

Lead inspector

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