

# Belgrave School

## Independent Special School

### Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	801/6019
Unique Reference Number	109382
Inspection number	330400
Inspection dates	3–4 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Angela Corbett HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended.

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## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

## Information about the school

Belgrave School was opened in 1993 by the current headteacher who is also the proprietor. The school is located in a large Victorian house in Clifton overlooking Bristol Downs. The school caters for boys and girls aged from 6 to 12 years, currently providing full-time and part-time education for 20 pupils. All pupils who attend have a specific learning difficulty (dyslexia) but some have additional complex learning difficulties. A few of the pupils have statements of special educational needs and several travel significant distances each day to attend. The school aims to encourage children to enjoy school by restoring self-confidence and self-esteem and to develop self-reliance by improving reading, writing, spelling and numeracy skills, so enabling children to realise their full potential. It is hoped to bring the pupils' academic skills to a level of attainment that will allow them to happily and confidently return to mainstream education. The school was last inspected in April 2006.

## Evaluation of the school

Belgrave School provides a good quality of education for its pupils and successfully meets its stated aims. This view was supported by parents who, in their pre-inspection questionnaires and in meetings with the inspector, were overwhelmingly positive about the school. Pupils also agree that they regain their self-esteem, enjoy school, acquire strategies for learning and experience success. The curriculum is good and appropriately modified to meet pupils' complex learning difficulties. Teaching and assessment are good. Regular monitoring of pupils' progress enables teaching to be tailored to meet their specific needs. As a result they make at least good progress in their learning. Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Welfare, health and safety are satisfactory overall, however, all pupils are well supported by the very good care they receive from staff.

## Quality of education

The curriculum is good. The main focus is on the development of literacy and numeracy skills with access to most National Curriculum subjects. However, provision for practical subjects such as music is limited. Some older pupils would benefit from elements of the Key Stage 3 curriculum, in particular in subjects such as design and

technology, to better prepare them for their next schools. The curriculum is enhanced by visits and outside speakers. For example, most recently older pupils visited an animation company where they found out about the world of work and gained an understanding of animation which they are now applying in their information and communication technology (ICT) lessons.

Pupils receive good quality teaching and assessment. They are currently taught in ability groups. There are clear daily routines which they understand and follow well. Teaching is generally well planned with a good mixture of whole class, small group, paired and individual activities. Teachers use a range of materials drawn from different schemes and a computer-aided-learning program developed by the associated Dyslexia Centre. These effectively promote confidence, independence and progression because they are tailored to each pupil's specific developmental needs. Learning support assistants contribute significantly to pupils' progress. Staff develop good relationships with pupils, and use praise and encouragement effectively.

Although most teaching is good, in some lessons it is satisfactory because less use is made of visual or practical approaches to learning and pupils, particularly the most able, are not always sufficiently challenged. Staff provide frequent feedback to pupils about their work. Often this is verbal and whilst this is helpful for the pupil and the teacher, written commentary on the work is inconsistent. As a result it is not always clear what has made the work good, how it could be improved or the next steps of learning. Pupils do not consistently reflect on their progress because they are not fully aware of their individual learning targets for some lessons.

When pupils start at the school they are assessed against a range of standardised tests and an individual education plan (IEP) is written which is reviewed twice yearly following similar assessments. Within the IEP, pupils are set detailed targets that are well matched to their individual needs. Information gathered is then used well to ensure that lessons meet pupils' needs. The good progress that pupils make is particularly evident in reading, writing and numeracy, especially given the low starting points and complex needs of the pupils. In other areas of the curriculum most pupils gain knowledge, skills and understanding as expected given their specific learning needs. Parents spoke very positively about the significant improvements in their children's attitudes to learning, self-confidence and noticeable progress.

## Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is good. Pupils enjoy school. This is evident in their eagerness to learn, their good attendance and significantly improved self-esteem. High importance is attached to ensuring that pupils develop good interpersonal and social skills as well as appropriate moral values. As a result their behaviour is good, they interact well together, and show courtesy towards each other and the staff they work with. Pupils take on some responsibilities within their classrooms, however, these roles are not sufficiently well defined or celebrated. Pupils said they would like more opportunities

to contribute their views. Pupils have opportunities to develop their awareness of the world they live in through the curriculum, for example they learn about current events in the news such as the recent presidential election in the United States and current job losses. Cultural development is supported by regular visits to the local Church, Buddhist Centre and Mosque, links with a school in Thailand and money raising for a Romanian orphanage. Although provision for pupils' cultural development and knowledge of the world they live in has broadened since the last inspection, the school has yet to take a systematic approach to documenting these experiences to ensure consistent opportunities for all pupils.

## Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Provision for safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety is satisfactory overall. The school works as a community to support the needs of the pupils and provide them with a safe and caring environment in which they can learn and develop their self-confidence. Pupils like the clear routines, appreciate the support they receive from staff and say they feel safe. Pupils are aware of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle and they are encouraged to eat a healthy lunch. There is clear guidance on bullying, behaviour and sanctions. This is understood and followed by staff and pupils. Supervision of pupils at all times is good.

The school has a good range of policies and procedures in place and these are readily available to staff. Risk assessments are completed satisfactorily for educational visits. Due attention is paid to health and safety issues and clear action taken when needed, although records are not regularly kept. Fire drills are regularly undertaken and appropriately recorded. Since the last inspection practices in First Aid and child protection have been improved and are now in line with the school policies. External and internal training for child protection has taken place with plans in place to make sure this good practice is maintained.

Procedures for completing attendance and admission registers are now satisfactory.

The school has planned and acted well to increase accessibility to meet the needs of current pupils. It is now drawing up its next three year plan, in particular, exploring ways to provide access for pupils in wheelchairs or with mobility difficulties.

## Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The proprietor has due regard for the suitability of the staff employed by the school. Whilst processes are in place for appointing staff that follow national guidelines, these are not always systematically evidenced. The single central list is in place and meets statutory recording requirements. The school's practice is for full criminal records checks regarding suitability for work with children to be carried out before a member of staff commences work at the school. However, this has not been the case in two instances, although the school's actions ensured that at no time were children placed at risk.

## School's premises and accommodation

The school's classrooms and hallway are separated within the large detached house that is shared with the Bristol Dyslexia Centre. The interior and exterior of the premises are in good condition. Classrooms are small but suitable for the numbers of pupils on roll. Although the furniture and fittings are appropriate, there is a lack of specialist facilities for subjects such as physical education (PE) and design and technology. There is good access to computers within each classroom, although they are connected unsuitably using multi-way sockets. The school has plans to rectify this.

The school has not been able to improve the provision of washrooms and toilets since the last inspection. However, it has designated separate washrooms and toilets for boys, girls and staff, and put in place procedures for supervising the girls when they use the facilities that are outside of the school area. The school is considering ways of altering its premises so that washrooms and toilets for girls and staff are provided within the school area.

A medical room that meets requirements is designated away from the classrooms and appropriate provision is made to supervise and care for any pupil who is unwell.

The playground area is very small. A grass play area is available in a public open space opposite the school, this is used weather-permitting for PE lessons and some lunchtimes when play equipment is made available. The grill that covers a gap between the playground and basement remains a concern. Since the last inspection, windows have been fitted with safety laminates.

## Provision of information for parents, carers and others

Parents are provided with an outline of the required information through the school's prospectus, an information pack and website. Together these meet the requirements and make clear the availability of the school's policies upon request.

Information on pupils' progress is provided to parents on both a formal and informal basis. There are two formal parent meetings following the six-monthly assessment process when the IEP is discussed and agreed. A written report at the end of the academic year provides good evaluations of pupil progress. Parents commented that excellent informal contact between themselves and the school enables them to raise any concerns quickly and be further informed on their child's progress.

## Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a complaints policy in place that meets all of the requirements and reports that there have been no formal complaints in the previous 12 months.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended ("the Regulations"), with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff ensure that there is written proof that all the required checks have been met (paragraph 4(2)(a))
- prior to staff commencing work in the school ensure that List 99 checks are in place or that enhanced CRB checks have been received (paragraph 4(2)(b)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- ensure that washroom facilities meet the requirements of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(k))
- provide appropriate outside space for pupils to play safely. (paragraph 5(t)).

## What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- improve the rigour of CRB checks and recruitment procedures
- provide pupils with appropriate targets and learning objectives so that they can regularly reflect on their progress within both whole class and individual teaching
- extend the ways in which pupils can make a positive contribution to the school by providing ways to collect their views and enable them to take on posts of responsibility.

# Inspection Judgement Recording Form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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## The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

## Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

## Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils			✓	
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## School details

Name of school	Belgrave School		
DCSF number	8016019		
Unique reference number	109382		
Type of school	Special		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1993		
Age range of pupils	6 - 12		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 13	Girls: 6	Total: 19
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 3	Girls: 1	Total: 4
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£6000-6600		
Address of school	10 Upper Belgrave rd Warral St Entrance Clifton Bristol BS8 2XH		
Telephone number	0117 974 3133		
Fax number	0117 973 9405		
Email address	PAT@DYSLEXIACENTRE.CO.UK		
Headteacher	Mrs Pat Jones		
Proprietor	Mrs Pat Jones		
Reporting inspector	Angela Corbett HMI		
Dates of inspection	3–4 February 2009		