

Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Belmont School

Warden Hill Road, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL51 3AT

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 February 2025

Outcome

Belmont School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of the school is Kevin Day. This school is part of SAND Multi-Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Martin Hughes, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Antonia Noble.

What is it like to attend this school?

At Belmont school, pupils love learning a breadth of subjects. The carefully designed curriculum enables and supports pupils to develop excellent communication skills. Consequently, pupils articulate their knowledge and understanding of the world around them with expertise. The school has very high expectations for pupils to succeed, and pupils aspire to achieve.

Pupils are highly valued and nurtured at the school. Strong, caring, supportive relationships between staff and pupils form the bedrock of learning. Pupils' behaviour is exceptional. Pupils, as a result, are confident learners and welcome the challenge of learning increasingly complex concepts.

Staff continually check what pupils know and do not know with impressive expertise. This results in highly bespoke approaches to supporting pupils' individual learning needs. For example, some pupils were observed learning about the shape and colour of money while others were doing complex mental arithmetic. The curriculum is skilfully adapted to meet the needs of each pupil.

Pupils have an abundance of opportunity to develop their knowledge about the world around them. For example, pupils develop leadership skills through the student parliament, where a pupil elected as prime minister very ably guides the other members.

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

The school places the social, emotional, physical and academic needs of each pupil at the heart of the curriculum. The school's holistic focus on ensuring that pupils are fully prepared for their future adult lives underpins everything that staff do. Staff teach pupils to articulate their understanding exceptionally well. The school identifies the communication needs of each pupil with expertise. This ensures that pupils study the most appropriate pathway that enables them to excel. The early reading programme enables many pupils to read with fluency and understanding. Many parents echoed the view of one parent who wrote in the online survey, 'I never thought my child would learn to read and now they can.'

Pupils are proud of their learning. Their work is beautifully presented. With skilful guidance from staff, pupils continually reflect on their learning. They are knowledgeable about the targets in their education, health and care (EHC) plans and know what they need to do to improve. Pupils are supported to interact with each other in preparation for the world beyond school. Pupils visit the local supermarkets, for instance, to learn about how to shop for food and to interact with people in the community.

In lessons and around the school, pupils are well behaved, polite and kind. Through the trusting relationships between pupils and staff, pupils are exceptionally well supported to thrive in school. Leaders and staff use evidence-based research to inform the approach to managing pupils' behaviour. Through a highly individualised approach, staff identify key issues that underpin pupils' emotional responses to the world around them and devise effective supporting strategies.

Pupils learn about healthy relationships. They learn about the concepts of democracy and individual liberty. This prepares them very well for future adulthood. The school also provides strong guidance to help them decide on their next steps. Pupils gain an array of pertinent qualifications to help them access further education, employment and volunteering opportunities. Pupils visit local colleges routinely, and former pupils return to give insight into the worlds of employment and apprenticeships.

The school shapes pupils' characters very well. The school provides a remarkable breadth of sporting, cultural and craft opportunities. For example, pupils learn circus skills, dog grooming, animal care and skiing. Pupils visit places of cultural and social significance to enhance their learning. Pupils visit London to see the Houses of Parliament and Buckingham Palace. Many pupils learn to sing and perform in the school choir at local and national celebrations. Pupils articulate their experiences with enormous pride.

Trustees and governors are very knowledgeable about the school and pose suitable challenge. Staff are unanimously proud to work at the school. They value the support of leaders in managing their workload and caring about their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged outstanding for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding for overall effectiveness in October 2018.

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.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	147577
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10344831
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	191
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Antonia Noble
CEO of the trust	Martin Hughes
Headteacher	Kevin Day
Website	belmont.sandmat.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 October 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- The school is part of SAND Multi-Academy Trust.
- All pupils who attend the school have an EHC plan. Three local authorities fund these places.
- The school has a SEND focused respite service for pupils at the school and locally.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, members of the leadership team, governors, including the chair of governors and the chair and vice chair of the board of trustees.
- An inspector held discussions with the CEO and the trust director of education.
- The lead inspector held a telephone call with education officers from Gloucestershire local authority.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors discussed the curriculum in a range of subjects.
- Inspectors met with staff to consider their views.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents and carers who responded to the confidential questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. They evaluated the views of staff from the Ofsted online questionnaire.

Inspection team

Susan Aykin, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Paula Marsh

Ofsted Inspector

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