

Inspection of Belmont Church of England (Controlled) Primary School

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

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 October 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early Years	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love their school. They say they feel very safe. This is because the school helps them to be safe. Pupils learn about online safety, stranger danger, the Green Cross Code and cycling safely. They speak meaningfully about the school's values and promises. They know the current promise is to be kind to everyone.

Pupils appreciate the eye-catching displays around school. They love the class reading areas and the interesting books they like reading. Pupils explain about classroom 'arks' – a quiet space to use when upset or angry. Mental health and managing emotions are important for pupils. They use their painted 'positivity stones' to de-stress. Writing down worries helps them go away. Worries go into a box or the zipped mouth of the 'worry monster'. Year 6 are proud of the 'We are the future' display. Future career aspirations range from being a soldier to an architect, a footballer to a teacher for homeless people.

Teachers expect great things from pupils. They are rarely disappointed. Behaviour in school and at breaktime is good. Pupils eat lunch in a sociable and calm way. Adults deal with any occasional poor behaviour swiftly and fairly.

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

Ensuring younger pupils quickly learn to read fluently and accurately is a high priority for leaders. A new approach to teaching phonics systematically and consistently is having results. Children in reception can decode and read simple words. They love trying to spot new sounds mixed in with sounds they already know. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 learn a new sound each day. They cement their learning by playing fun games such as 'sounds bingo'. Many pupils are already becoming confident readers. They use their knowledge of sounds and can read many words by sight. A few younger pupils do not yet have books they can easily read to practice their skills. This holds them back from believing in themselves as good readers. Attractive reading areas are well stocked in every classroom. Pupils say they love the choice of reading material they have. Pupils can choose from fiction or non-fiction books, comics and magazines to curl up with and enjoy.

Mathematics is a strength of the school. Leadership in mathematics is very strong. There has been a focus on strengthening pupils' knowledge and fluency in calculation and number skills. The curriculum is well planned and sequenced. Teachers know what to teach and when. Key learning is identified. Pupils are able to remember what they have learned and use it to grasp new learning. They can apply their skills in different mathematical contexts. The leader provides guidance, resources and support for all staff. This assists them in becoming stronger mathematics teachers. Some other subjects, such as history, are not as well planned and sequenced. Leaders have not agreed on what pupils need to know and be able to do to be ready to start learning in secondary school. In some subjects, planning only starts for pupils in Year 1. It is unclear what children need to know and be able

to do by the end of Reception. Leaders have begun to tackle this issue and are taking positive steps to address these weaknesses.

The school is a happy place to be. Staff are uniformly positive about the school and how much it has improved. They know leaders care about their well-being and take steps to ensure staff have an acceptable workload. Pupils' all-round development is a high priority. Pupils respond positively to the high expectations of good behaviour from staff. This helps with their learning. Pupils understand the consequences of their actions. They are given the chance to learn about the rule of law, democracy and human rights. They are taught about their local cultural heritage. Durham cathedral, Durham Miners' Gala and the history of mining are part of the curriculum. Before the pandemic, they enjoyed attending different clubs such as drama, PE or street dance.

In early years, there are many opportunities for children to work independently and cooperatively. Concentration levels are good. Relationships are strong. Children listen carefully to adults. They knew how to follow instructions when peeling and slicing vegetables to make soup. Children are polite, sociable and friendly.

Teachers use assessment to effectively plan pupils' next steps. No pupil misses out on any part of learning. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Work is adapted so that tasks are manageable. Teachers have high aspirations but realistic expectations for pupils with SEND. As a result, they achieve well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils' well-being and safety are of paramount importance to leaders. Online systems to record every concern, incident or issue are extensive. The safeguarding governor assigned to checking systems and procedures is diligent and meticulous. Procedures and systems are watertight. All adults in school, both classroom and non-classroom based are aware of how to report concerns. They all receive the necessary training. The school site is safe and secure. Leaders continue to ensure that school is as safe as possible during the ongoing pandemic. Measures remain in place to protect pupils as infection rates of COVID-19 fluctuate.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- For some subjects curriculum planning starts for pupils at the beginning of Year 1. It is unclear what children need to know and be able to do by the end of the early years to begin their learning in key stage 1. Leaders must ensure that curriculum planning for each subject in the curriculum starts in the early years so that children are ready to make a flying start to their learning in Year 1.

- Some subjects in the curriculum are not yet well planned and sequenced. The essential knowledge and skills pupils need is not clearly defined. This prevents pupils linking new learning to prior learning. Further work must be completed to ensure that the curriculum in all subjects is of an equally high standard as that seen in mathematics and English. It is clear from the actions leaders have already taken to plan next year's curriculum and train staff that they are well underway with this work. For this reason, the transition arrangement has been applied.
- Some pupils who are learning to read are given books that are too difficult. This means that they lose confidence and belief that they are good readers. Leaders must make sure all pupils are given books to practise their reading that encourage them to be fluent readers and proud of how well they read.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	114227
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10200656
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	277
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Keith Mallard
Headteacher	Kirsty Harrison-Brown
Website	www.belmontceprimary.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 December 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The deputy headteacher has taken up post since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Meetings were held with senior leaders from the school, four members of the local governing body, the diocesan representative and the school's development partner.
- Deep dives were carried out in these subjects: reading, mathematics, physical education and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and teaching assistants, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspectors also listened to some pupils read.

- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lesson visits and at breaktime and lunchtime. They spoke to pupils about their views on behaviour and a group of pupils gave an inspector a guided tour of the school.
- Safeguarding records, including the single central record, were reviewed. The inspectors talked to pupils and staff about their views of safeguarding.
- The views of 42 parents who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View, were considered.
- The inspectors met with staff to discuss their well-being and workload. Inspectors considered the 19 responses from Ofsted's survey for staff.

Inspection team

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