

Inspection of an outstanding school: Belgrave St Bartholomew's Academy

Sussex Place, Longton, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST3 4TP

Inspection dates:

18 and 19 July 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Belgrave St Bartholomew's Academy is a vibrant and exciting school. Pupils love going to the school. They are enthusiastic about their work and they try hard and want to do well.

Reading is of the highest priority in school. Leaders promote reading and the love of books at every opportunity. Pupils particularly love earning books from the book-vending machine.

Leaders have very high expectations of pupils' conduct. Pupils understand the expectations of leaders and follow the school rules. Leaders are quick to spot any potential incidents of bullying. They deal with any incidents immediately. Behaviour in school is exemplary, and pupils feel safe.

Teachers expertly use technology throughout the school day to inspire pupils. Learning is fun and accessible for all. Pupils proficiently use their individual electronic devices and are proud of their achievements.

Leaders have put in place an ambitious curriculum for the majority of pupils. However, the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in the off-site, specially resourced provision is not as ambitious as it is for other pupils in the main school.

Pupils value the broad and exciting range of opportunities and visits that leaders plan. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about their trips and after-school clubs. They particularly enjoy the residential visits and the 'six-mile hike' across local fields.

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

Leaders have a strong understanding of the community they serve. They have very positive relationships with parents and carers and pupils. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about working in the school. They say that leaders genuinely care about them and help them to manage their workload.

Reading is of the highest priority in school. Leaders promote reading and the love of books at every opportunity. Children in early years start learning phonics immediately and make good progress. Leaders choose books carefully to support the teaching of the wider curriculum. For example, in Year 6, pupils read a non-fiction book about Anne Frank. Reading this book helped to develop the vocabulary that pupils need for the history topic of World War 2. Over time, pupils become confident readers. Leaders celebrate achievements in reading at every opportunity.

Staff ensure that pupils develop language skills and a broad vocabulary. This vocabulary helps pupils to achieve very well in different subjects. Children in early years quickly build their language skills and are confident to share ideas. Older pupils have a wide and broad vocabulary that they use in an engaging way when speaking and recording their work.

The majority of pupils learn a well-structured curriculum. Leaders have thought carefully about what they want pupils to know, understand and do in every year group. Teachers deliver lessons effectively that follow the curriculum. They make adaptations if necessary, so that all pupils do well in lessons. Teachers regularly check what pupils know and remember through a range of assessment strategies. They use this information promptly to address gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Consequently, the majority of pupils are confident learners across the curriculum.

Leaders regularly check to see how well teachers implement the curriculum. They provide effective training to help teachers improve their practice. Teachers new to teaching get the additional support they need. Leaders identify the right things to work on and are continuously improving the school.

Leaders quickly identify those pupils with SEND. Leaders keep records so that they know what is working well and what additional support pupils might need. The majority of pupils with SEND get the support they need.

The curriculum in place for pupils with SEND who attend the off-site, specially resourced provision is not as strong as it is in the rest of the school. There is some information in place about what leaders want pupils to learn. However, the curriculum is not well sequenced and does not build pupils' knowledge and skills over time. As a result, these pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Younger children quickly learn the routines and are confident to follow them independently. Older pupils love the rewards they achieve for good behaviour and know how to achieve them. Pupils are attentive in lessons and are keen to do well. Leaders write behaviour support plans for pupils who attend the off-site, specially resourced

provision. These plans do not always provide the information staff need to manage behaviour consistently.

Leaders have carefully considered how they prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. Pupils talk about fundamental British values and what these mean to them. Leaders have identified precisely what they want pupils to know and learn about different faiths and cultures. Pupils understand what it means to be respectful and tolerant of others.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have an exceptionally good understanding of their community and know what the local safeguarding risks are. They provide training for staff so they can identify concerns early. Staff know how to escalate concerns if necessary. Leaders work closely with other professionals to get pupils and their families the help that they need.

Leaders ensure that pupils have access to a well-planned curriculum to teach them to keep safe. For example, Year 6 pupils have recently been taught about gangs. Pupils know whom to talk to if they are worried. They say staff 'spot' them if they look sad or concerned.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum for pupils with SEND who attend the school's off-site, specially resourced provision is not well sequenced. In this provision, pupils' learning is not well ordered or connected, and pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that they carefully map out the knowledge, skills and vocabulary that pupils should learn in this provision to help pupils to make better progress.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 in March 2017.

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](#)' 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	136549
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	10242500
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	528
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Johnny Anderson
Principal	George Barlow
Website	www.belgraveacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 and 2 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not make use of any alternative providers.
- The school became part of the St Bart's Multi-Academy Trust in February 2012.
- The principal was appointed in September 2022.
- The school has two off-site, specially resourced provisions for pupils with complex SEND.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The lead inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors held meetings with representatives from the multi-academy trust, the local governing committee, the principal, senior leaders, curriculum leaders, a representative from the local authority and the leader of SEND.
- Inspectors reviewed documents on the school's website and additional documents provided by leaders during the inspection.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the lead inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead. Pupils' case files were reviewed.
- The inspectors met with staff to discuss their workload and the support they receive to carry out their roles.
- The inspectors observed pupils at other times of the day to evaluate their behaviour.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Amanda Green, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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