

The Belham Primary School

165 Bellenden Road, London SE15 4DG

Inspection dates

17–18 July 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders, governors, parents, carers, staff and pupils collectively have created a strong, and vibrant school community. As a result, this is a good school.
- The executive headteacher, head of school and other leaders are focused on the right priorities to move the school forward.
- The curriculum is a strength of the school. Pupils benefit from learning a wide range of subjects within and beyond the school day. As one parent stated, 'teachers make learning lively and fun.' Teachers have successfully implemented a mathematics programme but this has not yet had a strong impact on pupils' progress in all classes.
- The proportion of children attaining a good level of development at the end of Reception is well above the national average. At the end of Year 1, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check is well above the national expectation. Pupils' overall attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 is above the national average.
- The partnerships with parents and the wider community are strong features of the school.
- The school is a safe, nurturing environment. Pupils feel safe and are well cared for. Staff are vigilant and report any concerns they have to leaders in a range of ways. The school's 'early help' provision supports vulnerable pupils and families well.
- Pupils are delightful, respectful, interesting young people who exemplify the school's 'Belhamite' values. They enjoy school, and this is reflected in their good attendance.
- Children in the early years benefit from a fun-filled start to school life. They are excited by the interesting topics and activities which are planned for them. The outdoor spaces and resources are developing well, but do not reflect the quality of the indoor space. There is some variability in the quality of teaching across the provision.
- Teaching ensures that pupils make good progress. However, sometimes, pupils are given tasks which do not meet their needs or help them to be successful in some aspects of their learning.
- The quality of pupils' work is sometimes hampered by poor handwriting or presentation.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are supported well and make good progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen teaching, learning and assessment further, including in the early years, by:
 - ensuring that tasks consistently meet the needs of lower-ability and the most able learners
 - ensuring that a consistent approach to handwriting and presentation is implemented in all year groups
 - making sure that the mathematics programme is fully and successfully embedded, in all classes, especially for the most able pupils.
- Strengthen the early years further by:
 - sharing practitioners' individual strengths and expertise across the provision
 - further developing the outdoor learning space so that it mirrors the quality found in the indoor learning spaces.
- Review the system for recording initial referrals for children who may be vulnerable or at risk to ensure that:
 - all staff use it consistently and confidently
 - it reflects the rigorous approach to keeping children safe which is evident in all aspects of school life.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The executive headteacher, governors and leaders have worked tirelessly and relentlessly to realise their vision of establishing a good school in the community. Leaders have been proactive and highly effective in managing the challenges of working across three sites until January 2018. They successfully overcame many barriers to establish a strong, cohesive school community. Since the head of school's appointment in September 2017, leadership has gained in expertise and skills and has the necessary capacity to drive the school forward.
- Leaders are proactive in working with their partner school and with schools in the local authority to inform their school improvement.
- Leaders at all levels have had a good impact on improving and developing the quality of provision across the school. Leaders are ambitious for the school and for their pupils. They have identified clear and accurate priorities to move the school forward. Leaders support teachers well in their assessment of pupils' progress.
- Leaders have created a rich curriculum, which enthuses pupils and develops their skills across a wide range of subjects. Pupils said that they enjoy specialist dance, music and sports teaching. They learn about living a healthy life through physical education and through cooking in 'the makers' room'. The school works in partnership with local shops to develop pupils' understanding of good nutrition. Pupils benefit from working in 'the craze', which is an interactive gallery space in which books, artefacts and films are displayed relating to a particular topic area. The curriculum is very much contextualised around London, which motivates and interests pupils. Extra-curricular clubs are offered in abundance.
- Leaders have recognised the need to establish a consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting across the school. They also are working well to clarify expectations around the presentation of pupils' work as, sometimes, work is untidy.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils are happy and show respect for different faiths, beliefs and lifestyles. They play and learn well together, and exemplify the 'Belhamite' values, such as being trustworthy and valuing equality.
- Subject leaders are honing their skills to enhance teaching, learning and assessment. A mathematics programme has been implemented by all teachers and is beginning to show strong impact on pupils' progress in some, but not all, classes. Leaders have ensured that reading is given a high priority within the school. As a result, pupils read widely and often, at home and at school. Writing tasks are threaded through the curriculum to give pupils opportunities to write for a range of reasons, purposes and audiences.
- Leaders put careful thought into the deployment of the pupil premium funding, which is used well to support the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. As a result, the progress that these pupils make is similar to, and sometimes, stronger than, their peers nationally. Leaders have a good knowledge of individual pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium. They identify that some of these pupils also have SEN and/or

disabilities or other vulnerabilities, which they support well.

- Leaders have used the primary physical education and sport premium funding well to provide professional development for teachers and to provide specialist teaching, for example in yoga and dance. It has also helped to provide equipment and to ensure that pupils benefit from taking part in competitions.
- Since the school opened, leaders have been successful in creating strong partnerships with parents. Most parents are highly complimentary about the school's work. Parents were instrumental in working with leaders and the local authority to secure a zebra crossing close to the school. Parent coaches deliver workshops to support parents in helping their children with different aspects of life at home and at school. Some parents contribute to school life through planning charity events or securing support for the school from local residents.

Governance of the school

- Governors and trustees have been instrumental in the school's success. They support and challenge the work of the school and ensure that their statutory duties regarding safeguarding are met.
- Governors ensure that they receive appropriate training to develop their skills and ensure that they safeguard children effectively.
- Governors are highly ambitious for the school and the pupils. They undertake a range of activities within the school to give them a good understanding of what life is like for the pupils.
- They review leaders' evaluations of aspects of the school's work well, and give appropriate feedback. They are proactive in their roles, and their ideas promote continuous school improvement.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. Pupils feel safe and parents expressed confidence about their children's safety at school. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in school, online and in the local environment.
- Leaders support vulnerable children and families very well. The school's early help system is highly effective, and has helped to improve the lives of pupils and families in the school. Leaders challenge external services, when necessary, to get the right support and intervention for pupils in need.
- Staff are appropriately trained in all aspects of safeguarding and are confident to identify signs of radicalisation, extremism or pupils vulnerable to female genital mutilation. They know about the potential safeguarding risks in the local area. Staff are clear about the need to report that they are worried a pupil may be at risk of harm.
- When initial referrals are escalated and pupils are identified as being vulnerable or needing support, systems to record intervention and support are rigorous and thorough. However, the initial referral process lacks precision and is open to

interpretation by staff. It does not reflect the vigilance and strong safeguarding practices which are evident in the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is good, and helps pupils to make good progress in a range of subjects. Teachers use the school's assessment systems well to keep a check on how well pupils are progressing and to plan next steps in learning. Teachers are committed to improving their own skills and planning interesting lessons which pupils enjoy.
- Pupils collaborate well in lessons. The climate for learning in classrooms is very positive. Pupils chat happily about their learning to each other. There are good, supportive relationships evident between pupils and staff.
- Teachers ensure that pupils benefit from learning across a wide range of subjects, in addition to reading, writing, mathematics and science. Teachers put careful thought into planning and to bringing the curriculum to life.
- Pupils are given interesting writing tasks across a range of subjects. Mathematical themes are applied in artwork. Pupils' sketchbooks reflect their good progress.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their different starting points because they receive appropriate, effective support in their learning.
- Teachers are confident and skilled in teaching phonics, and pupils in Year 1 achieve highly in the phonics screening check. Pupils apply their phonics skills well to read with confidence and enjoyment. Pupils show a good understanding of the books they read. Teachers ensure that reading is a key element of daily homework, and this has a good impact on the good progress pupils make.
- Teachers have worked hard to implement the school's mathematics programme over the past year. As a result, pupils have made strong progress. However, not all teachers are confident in planning to meet the needs of the most and the least able pupils in mathematics lessons. Occasionally, teaching does not help them to achieve the very best that they can.
- Sometimes, pupils working below the level typical for their age do not receive the support they need to be successful or to make the progress that they could. For example, key mathematical vocabulary is sometimes not explained fully, so that pupils are confused and do not necessarily seek help. At the end of key stage 1, pupils have developed their reasoning and problem-solving skills in mathematics. This is less well developed in other year groups.
- Developing writers apply their phonics skills well to writing, and make plausible attempts at words which help them to articulate their thoughts in writing. Teachers build on these early skills well and, as a result, pupils make strong progress in writing.
- The majority of writing tasks seen in pupils' English and topic books were the same, irrespective of pupils' different ability. This means that, occasionally, the most able pupils are limited by the constraints of the task, and the less confident writers achieve limited success because resources do not support them or the task is too difficult.
- Work in books shows that pupils make good progress, but the quality of their work is sometimes spoiled by poor presentation and handwriting skills. Teachers do not have a

consistent approach to teaching handwriting across the school. In mathematics books, presentation is sometimes poor, with lines and shapes drawn without the use of rulers. The high expectations teachers have of what pupils can achieve is not reflected consistently in this aspect of pupils' work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The Belham Primary School is a close, nurturing community. Relationships are strong and supportive. As one parent stated, 'the school is built on kindness'. Pupils trust each other and the adults that they work with. Parents are an integral part of the life of the school. As a result, pupils are confident, happy learners who achieve well.
- Pupils are friendly and open to visitors, and keen to talk about their school and their lives. They are proud of the school and feel privileged to be a part of it. Pupils live by the 'Belhamite' values, and parents report that they 'bring the values home with them'.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They are respectful young citizens who not only tolerate differences, but also celebrate them.
- Pupils play an active role in the life of the school. Older pupils take on the role of play leaders, and pupils contribute to decisions about the building. For example, their ideas contributed to the development of the playground.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils behave well in lessons, and their conduct around the school is impeccable. They eat and chat happily together in the breakfast club and at lunchtimes. They play well together and enjoy the range of activities which are made available to them.
- Pupils say that rare incidents of poor behaviour or bullying are dealt with swiftly, and parents' comments reflect this. Pupils respond well to the reflection sheets, which leaders use to manage and support any behaviour incidents.
- Pupils' attendance has been consistently above the national average since the school opened.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils achieve well and outcomes are good.
- Attainment in the phonics screening check has been above the national expectation each year. The school's information about attainment in phonics this year shows a slight dip in the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard, but attainment remains above the national average for 2017.
- Attainment in reading and writing at the end of key stage 1 in 2017 was slightly above the national average. In mathematics, attainment was slightly below the national

average.

- The school's information about pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 1 this year indicates improvements in all three subjects.
- Work in pupils' books shows that they have made good progress throughout the year across a range of subjects. When teaching occasionally fails to meet the needs of the most able pupils or those who are slightly below average for their age, progress and attainment are less strong.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, or those who are eligible for pupil premium funding, make similar progress from their starting points as their classmates.

Early years provision

Good

- Staff in the early years are well supported by leaders, and have created a safe and stimulating early years provision. Staff have a range of different strengths and skills which support the needs of the Reception children very well. They plan activities to capture children's interest across all the areas of learning.
- Parents and children are supported well with the transition to school. Workshops to inform parents are well attended and parents are involved in helping staff to assess children's skills and knowledge when they start school, in order to plan appropriately for their needs. Parents value the school's online assessment system, which they can view and add to, so that they have a clear, accurate and up-to-date view of their children's achievement.
- From their various starting points, some of which are below those seen typically for their age, children make good progress. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year has been above the national average since the school opened. The school's performance information about the current cohort shows that this is set to continue.
- Children work well together on self-directed tasks. They confidently use the language of learning and often use sophisticated vocabulary to challenge each other to reason and think deeply about the task at hand. This was evident in the construction area, where children were discussing the 'renovation' of the property they were building, and was also evident when a group of children were creating their own animal world.
- When adults lead activities for groups of children, the quality of interaction and questioning is variable. When teaching is at its strongest, practitioners ask questions to deepen children's understanding and clarify their thinking. This was evident, for example, when children were working on their two-dimensional shape 'palaces', or on their 'magic carpets'.
- Sometimes, tasks do not help children to achieve the best that they can. For example, large groups engaged in some activities where they spent a lot of time waiting for a turn. In some activities, practitioners tend to do things for children, instead of guiding and supporting them to be successful independently. During these less effective sessions, the quality of interaction and complexity of language that children are exposed to are limited.
- Not all practitioners are equally confident in supporting children to develop their writing. Guidance and feedback sometimes focuses on the quantity of writing, rather

than checking the quality of what has already been written. Occasionally, staff do not pick up on misconceptions swiftly enough to help children with their next steps in writing.

- Children benefit from learning across the two classroom spaces and in the outdoor area. The outdoor spaces are under development and are yet to fully reflect the quality of the indoor spaces.

School details

Unique reference number	142090
Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	10048377

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	232
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Simon Latham
Executive headteacher	Sonia Case
Head of school	Liz Cohen
Telephone number	020 8353 4290
Website	www.thebelhamprimaryschool.org.uk
Email address	info@thebelhamprimaryschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The Belham is a growing two-form entry primary free school which opened in 2015. It is part of the Dulwich Hamlet Educational Trust. The school moved to its current site this academic year. The school operated three sites up until 2018.
- The executive headteacher was invited to open the school by Southwark local authority. She currently works at the school 2.5 days a week. The head of school was appointed in September 2017.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium funding is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average. The largest ethnic group in the school is White British.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national

average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all year groups. Observations were undertaken with the head of school, the assistant headteacher, phase leaders and the special educational needs coordinator.
- An inspector joined the executive headteacher on a prospective parents' tour of the school.
- Inspectors met with members of the governing body and trustees.
- Inspectors spoke with the DfE adviser for the school.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils to discuss their learning and their views on the school.
- Inspectors met with groups of teachers to learn about their experiences at the school.
- Inspectors met with leaders to discuss their roles and the impact of their work.
- Inspectors heard pupils read, and talked to pupils in the lunch hall, as they moved around the building and on the playground.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documents, including information on pupils' progress across the school, improvement plans, curriculum plans and checks on the quality of teaching. They examined school records relating to safeguarding and behaviour.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the start of day, met with a group of parents, received emails from parents, and telephoned parents at their request.
- Inspectors scrutinised a large sample of books to see what progress pupils have made across a range of subjects.
- Inspectors took account of the 153 responses to the Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and of information gathered from discussions with parents during the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the 32 responses to the staff questionnaire and to the 96 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Ruth Dollner, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sue Brooks

Ofsted Inspector

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