

Inspection of a good school: Belfield Community School

Samson Street, Belfield, Rochdale, Lancashire OL16 2XW

Inspection dates: 11–12 February 2020

Outcome

Belfield Community School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders are determined to give every pupil who comes through the school doors the best possible start in life. Staff have high expectations for every pupil, irrespective of their background.

Pupils behave well and work hard in lessons. Pupils also learn how to behave as kind and respectful members of the school community. For example, they learn 'fantastic walking' so that they are considerate to others in the corridors around school.

The pupils that I spoke to told me that they feel safe and that incidents of bullying are very rare. If bullying does occur, pupils are confident that staff will deal with it well. Parents and carers told me that their children are safe and enjoy coming to school.

Leaders are keen to give their pupils new experiences. School teams compete in local competitions such as in football and in singing. There are many visits to places of interest; for example, pupils in Year 4 recently visited a local museum to learn more about the history of their town.

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

Leaders have carefully planned what pupils will learn and when. This helps pupils to achieve well in a range of subjects.

Recent improvements to the reading curriculum mean that children gain the phonic knowledge that they need to become successful early readers. Many children who join the Nursery and Reception classes struggle with their speech and language. Leaders have planned the curriculum in the early years to support these children effectively. For example, teachers use appropriate displays that contain letters and words to support the teaching of phonics. Teachers take every opportunity to sound out words so that children can practise their phonic knowledge in all areas of learning. Teachers read well-chosen stories to children. Leaders carefully select these stories to encourage a love of reading

and to further develop children's vocabulary. Most pupils can read confidently by the end of Year 1. Those pupils who struggle with their reading are given extra help to catch up quickly.

Reading remains a priority for pupils of all ages. Pupils enjoy reading in lessons. Teachers use this time effectively to improve pupils' reading skills. Older pupils can read more demanding texts successfully. This has helped to improve pupils' progress and attainment by the end of Year 6. In the recent past, older pupils did not do as well in reading as they did in other subjects. That said, some pupils in key stage 2 do not read a broad enough range of ambitious texts.

The mathematics curriculum is well planned. Teachers follow a consistent approach which helps pupils to develop their mathematical understanding. In the Nursery and Reception classes, children play games using numbers to practise their counting. They use this knowledge to attempt simple subtraction and addition calculations. Teachers across the school have a strong knowledge of how to teach the mathematics curriculum effectively. They plan pupils' learning carefully and consider what pupils can do already. Pupils enjoy their mathematics learning and achieve well in this subject.

Recently, leaders have made changes to other curriculum subjects such as history. In many of these subjects, leaders have well-thought-out curriculum plans in place. However, there is some variation in how well these curriculums are implemented. For example, in history some teachers are still developing their own subject knowledge of newer topics. As a result, some pupils struggle to make connections and link new learning to topics that they have covered already. Leaders already have plans in place to strengthen teachers' subject knowledge in those subjects other than English and mathematics.

The curriculum caters well for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers set the same high expectations for this group of pupils as they do for all pupils. Pupils with SEND achieve well because there is a strong sense of teamwork among all staff and a shared determination to give them these pupils the support that they need.

Pupils told me that they appreciate the work of all the adults in the school. Pupils show their respect for staff by behaving well and following the school rules. Only occasionally do some pupils lose concentration during learning time.

Staff share leaders' vision that Belfield Community School is a school where everyone can thrive. The school welcomes many pupils from other countries. These new arrivals quickly become established members of the school community. Those pupils who speak English as an additional language receive appropriate support. This includes support from 'young interpreters' who help pupils to communicate with their friends.

The diversity of the school adds to the richness of pupils' experiences about life in modern Britain. Within the personal, social health and economic education curriculum and religious education curriculum pupils have opportunities to share and learn about different cultures and traditions.

Pupils appreciate the wide range of activities that they can enjoy during their time in school. These include lunchtime sports and 'boot camp' after school that promotes the benefits of exercise and healthy eating.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture around keeping pupils safe throughout the school. All staff see this as their priority. Leaders know pupils' families very well. Leaders work effectively with other agencies to ensure that pupils and their families get the support that they need.

Leaders provide regular training for staff and pupils. For example, pupils learned about aspects of online safety during a recent assembly. Staff know what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have carefully planned the curriculum for subjects other than English and mathematics. However, there remains variation in how well these curriculums are implemented. In part, this is because some staff are still building up their own subject knowledge in order to deliver the planned curriculum. At times, this stops some teachers from planning sequences of lessons that build on pupils' previous learning. Leaders should ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills to deliver the agreed curriculum plans. This will enable pupils to make connections in their learning and to remember more.
- Some older pupils do not read a broad enough range of demanding texts to develop their knowledge of English literature. This means that some pupils are not exposed to enough ambitious vocabulary across a range of different genres. Leaders should ensure that there are more opportunities for pupils to read and enjoy more challenging texts in key stage 2.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 14–15 June 2011.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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	105780
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	10122075
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	372
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mrs Rachael El Weshahi
Headteacher	Mrs Margaret Farrell
Website	www.belfield.rochdale.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–15 June 2011

Information about the school

- There have been no significant changes to the school since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- I met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and subject leaders. In addition, I met with two members of the governing body. I also spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- As part of this inspection, I did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, and history. In these subjects, I made lesson visits together with the deputy headteacher and subject leaders. I checked on pupils' work and I spoke with pupils about their learning. I also met with subject leaders and teachers to discuss the curriculums in these subjects in more detail. I also heard pupils read.
- I checked on safeguarding arrangements by speaking with leaders, staff, pupils and parents. I reviewed a sample of relevant school policies. I also reviewed leaders' checks on the suitability of adults who work in the school.
- I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school during social times. I reviewed leaders' records of pupils' behaviour.
- I spoke with parents and reviewed three responses to Ofsted's free-text facility.

- I reviewed 36 responses to Ofsted’s pupil survey. I met with groups of pupils to ask them about their learning, bullying and the school’s support for their personal development.
- I met with a group of teachers. I also considered 35 responses to Ofsted’s staff survey.

Inspection team

Timothy Gartside, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates:
<http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2020