

Inspection of Belsay Primary School

Belsay, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE20 0ET

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 December 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Craig Shaw. This school is part of Pele Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Kieran McGrane, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Gerry Miller.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Belsay Primary School as an academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection of the predecessor school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive in this friendly and caring school. Children from Reception to pupils in Year 6 arrive on time each morning with enthusiasm and ready to learn. Pupils appreciate the staff who are there to help them with any problems. This helps pupils to feel safe.

Pupils benefit from a broad curriculum. The school has high expectations of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Through the school's 'global curriculum', pupils enjoy discussing and debating local and worldwide issues. Reading is at the heart of the school's curriculum. Pupils practise reading often. As a result, pupils read well across all subjects.

Pupils show high levels of respect towards each other and the staff who care for them. In Reception, children learn to listen carefully to staff. Pupils of all ages play well together. Older pupils enjoy helping younger pupils, for example during lunchtime. 'Collaboration' is the school's value for December. During lessons, pupils behave well. They collaborate by sharing ideas and ways of working.

Pupils benefit from a range of opportunities to support their development. For example, pupils enjoy learning how to maintain an active lifestyle through activities such as dance, which is led by the trust's primary physical education (PE) specialist. Music tuition is popular. Pupils enjoy performing together in a band. Last year, older pupils visited Paris and St Omer as part of the school's work to develop well-rounded citizens.

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

The school has developed an ambitious curriculum for all pupils, including those with SEND. The important knowledge that pupils need to remember, from Reception to Year 6, is clearly sequenced. For example, in Year 4, pupils learn about 'invasion' in history lessons about the Anglo-Saxons. Pupils remember the important knowledge from recent lessons. Later, in Year 5 and Year 6, pupils study the Second World War. However, some pupils do not remember what they have previously been taught, long term. They do not make connections with what they have previously learned about invasion. The school does not know exactly how well pupils have remembered important knowledge over time.

In mathematics, carefully ordered lessons help to build pupils' knowledge. For example, younger pupils, in Year 1, use counters to subtract single-digit calculations. Later, in Year 2, pupils solve problems with addition and subtraction. They record their work in written form. This helps to prepare pupils for formal written methods with larger numbers as they move through key stage 1 and into key stage 2. Despite this, occasionally misconceptions and gaps in pupils' knowledge are not identified quickly enough. This hinders some pupils from moving on to their next steps quickly.

The school develops pupils' love of reading well. Pupils enjoy reading from the wide range of high-quality texts on offer. They look forward to daily story time. Pupils recommend books for their friends. These recommended reads are available for all pupils. Pupils are motivated to read at home through incentives such as earning 'Book Worm' points. There is a highly effective approach for teaching pupils to read. Phonics is taught right from the children's earliest starting points in Reception. Through the Reception class and into Year 1, staff support pupils exceptionally well. A few pupils receive extra support to help them keep up with the phonics programme. Teaching is purposeful and helps children to quickly build on previous learning. Children learn new sounds and read increasingly complex words over time. As a result, pupils quickly learn to read fluently and confidently.

The school identifies the needs of pupils with SEND effectively. 'Pupil passports' provide detailed information for staff to use to support pupils in all aspects of school life effectively. For example, resources such as personalised workspaces and organisational guides help pupils to concentrate and access the curriculum. Information, such as how to support pupils' reading, is shared with parents and carers. This helps parents to support their children at home.

The school's well-structured programme for personal development begins in Reception. Children learn to explore who they are by, for example, looking at how they have changed as they grow up. The school provides a range of opportunities to help prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. For example, pupils read novels such as 'Anglo-Saxon Boy' by Tony Bradman. These experiences help pupils to understand how the past has influenced the world we live in today. Pupils enjoy clubs, such as badminton, dance and Spanish. Residential visits help to build pupils' character. The active lunch programme ensures that pupils who are unable to stay for after-school clubs are able to access opportunities, for example to develop their fitness. The school links with other schools in the region and overseas. This is helping pupils to celebrate cultures different to their own.

Governors and trust leaders have a clear vision for the school. Governors visit the school often to check that the actions that leaders take to improve the school benefit all pupils. Staff are proud to work here. They value the training and resources available to help them teach the curriculum. They feel exceptionally well supported by leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some mathematics sessions, the checks on pupils' learning are less effective than in other subjects. Where this is the case, teaching is not adapted quickly and precisely enough to address any misconceptions and secure pupils'

understanding. The school should ensure staff have the expertise they need to be able to swiftly identify pupils' gaps in knowledge and then adapt teaching approaches accordingly.

- In some foundation subjects, the school does not know how well pupils are remembering the curriculum long term. This makes it difficult to see where learning needs to be adapted to support pupils to remember more. The school should ensure it provides subject leaders with the expertise they need to continue to improve the quality of education in their subjects.

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	145779
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10242431
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	83
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gerry Miller
CEO of the trust	Kieran McGrane
Headteacher	Craig Shaw
Website	www.belsay.northumberland.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of Pele Trust. The school converted to academy trust status in March 2019.
- The headteacher took up his post in September 2023.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy CEO and other leaders from the trust. The lead inspector met with the chair of the board of trustees and members of the school academy committee, including the chair. The lead inspector held separate meetings with the CEO of the trust and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector observed some pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 scrutinised a range of documents, including curriculum subject plans, leaders' evaluation of the school and priorities for school improvement.
- The views of parents and carers were considered through Ofsted Parent View. In addition, an inspector spoke to parents as they brought their children to school. Inspectors also reviewed responses to the staff and pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Kathryn McDonald, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Joanne Shaw

Ofsted Inspector

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