

## BELMONT CASTLE ACADEMY 2020



Thank you for taking the time to visit our school website and I hope you find the information useful.

As Principal of Belmont Castle Academy since January 2008, I feel very proud to be associated with what is a very successful and innovative school, one which has been graded 'good' in the previous three Ofsted inspections. Whilst we are a good school, we aspire to be a great one and I truly believe that this is reflected in everything we do.

Key to the success of any school, I believe, is the appointment of really high-quality staff who are passionate about making a difference to every child in their care. At BCA, we have a very effective, highly motivated and hard-working team, who are all committed to achieving this aim, indeed this is reflected both in terms of the high-quality learning environment and also the quality of teaching and learning evident right throughout the school. We are also in a fairly unique position, in that through careful deployment of personnel, we rarely have to rely on agency staff, thus ensuring our children only receive 'first-quality' teaching on a consistent basis. Collectively this has really helped to raise standards year on year.

We take the care and support of our whole school community, especially everyone's emotional health and well-being, very seriously at BCA. The emphasis we place on this aspect, was indeed recognised in this year's Thurrock Teaching awards when we achieved the Well-being award. We recognise that in order for children to thrive and achieve to their full potential, they firstly need to feel happy and safe in school. That is why we have placed a lot of emphasis, on ensuring that we have highly effective and proactive Pastoral Support, SEND and Pupil Premium teams to meet the differing needs of our children. Not only do they pride themselves on how well they know the children, but they have also forged excellent relationships with some of our most vulnerable families. We also have good systems in place for those new to our school, which helps to ensure that they are able to settle in really quickly. Finally, and key when it comes to the children's safety, all our staff receive regular and thorough Safeguarding training every year,

There is a shared commitment at BCA to ensuring that every child, regardless of their starting point, should receive as exciting and stimulating educational experience as we can possibly offer. This is one of the key reasons why we took the decision several years ago to introduce our 'Book Focused' curriculum, as we believe it is through this approach that we are able to realise one of our key aims of 'developing a love of reading within our children'. Our curriculum is enriched in many ways; we offer children first-hand experiences wherever possible, through trips and inviting visitors into our school, this also includes regular author visits, with the most recent example being Valerie Bloom. We are also fortunate in having our very own specialist Spanish teacher, a professional water colour artist working in the school three days a week, a steel pan orchestra, as well as excellent links with Greenwich University.

An initiative which is clearly having a significant impact on pupil's attitudes to learning and their progress in lessons was the introduction of IPad technology throughout the school a few years ago. A range of carefully thought through Apps is really helping to enhance and deepen children's learning in really creative and imaginative ways.

We also run an extensive range of after-school clubs for the children, with the intention being to try to provide them with as wide range of opportunities as possible including; ones linked to sport, music,

drama and also more academic subjects. In addition to which many of our older children have excellent opportunities to take on additional responsibilities as; Head boy or girl, Team Captains, Junior Librarians, Peer Mediators, Playground Buddies or School Parliament representatives.

Furthermore, our school has achieved a significant amount of sporting success over the last few years not only at Borough level but also County and beyond. In 2019 for example, we became Essex County champions in three separate competitions: Gymnastics, Key Steps Gymnastics and In-door Athletics. Furthermore, our Year 2 children went on to become Regional champions in the Key Steps Gymnastics final, again in the same year.

One of our proudest moments in the school's recent history has to be securing the prestigious Diversity Mark 'GOLD' award in 2019. Samson DeAlyn, senior Director of the Awards Panel, who led our assessment, said of our school 'many aspects of the school are now outstanding in terms of our approach to inclusive practice'. Achieving this award meant a great deal to us, acknowledging all the good work we do to promote BCA as an all-inclusive environment for learning.

In 2013, we took the decision to become a 'stand-alone' Academy because we felt that we really understand what our children needed in order for them to be able to grow into confident and enthusiastic learners and we have shaped our curriculum accordingly to meet their needs. In short, we wanted to retain our individuality and everything that is special and unique about our school, Belmont Castle Academy.

I hope you enjoy visiting our website and if you do require any further information about our school, please don't hesitate to get in contact with me, either through the school office; 01375 373601 or via email: [principal@belmontcastleacademy.org](mailto:principal@belmontcastleacademy.org).



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