

# Benchill Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	132241
<b>Local authority</b>	Manchester
<b>Inspection number</b>	381460
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 February 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Stephen Wall

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	403
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dr Jerry Grant
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Helen Eken
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 October 2008
<b>School address</b>	Benchill Road Wythenshawe Manchester M22 8EJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 998 3075
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## Introduction

### Inspection team

Stephen Wall  
Bimla Kumari  
Vanessa MacDonald

Additional inspector  
Additional inspector  
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 21 lessons taught by 15 members of staff. A sample of pupils' written work in Key Stages 1 and 2 was scrutinised. Inspectors listened to a selection of Year 2 pupils read and observed the teaching of phonics (letters and sounds) on two occasions. Two assemblies were observed, as well as pupils' conduct during playtimes and lunchtimes. The inspectors held meetings with staff, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and the executive headteacher. The inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation including: the school's evaluation of its effectiveness; the school development plan; records relating to attendance and behaviour; records of monitoring teaching and learning; and minutes of meetings of the governing body. The inspectors analysed 45 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, as well as questionnaires returned by staff and pupils.

## Information about the school

Benchill is much larger than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is very high. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A very small proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average. More pupils than usual join or leave the school at other than normal times. The school forms part of a hard federation with adopted Trust Status with another local primary school and the local high school. The three federated schools share a common governing body and an executive headteacher. There have been significant staffing changes since the previous inspection, including the appointment of a new headteacher and deputy headteacher, both of whom were previously senior leaders and managers in the school. Staffing in Key Stage 1 is now stable after a lengthy period of significant turbulence. The school meets the current floor standard.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate**  
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>1</b>

## Key Findings

- This is a good school. Outstanding leadership and management are driving it strongly and purposefully forward. Despite continuing improvement, the school is not yet outstanding because there is not enough outstanding teaching and not all higher-attaining pupils are achieving to their full potential.
- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage where they achieve well. By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment has risen significantly and is broadly average. An attainment gap between Key Stages 1 and 2 is narrowing rapidly because staffing in Key Stage 1 is now stable and teaching is good across both Key Stages. All groups of pupils, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who join the school at other than normal times, make good progress.
- Teaching is good. The proportion of teaching that is outstanding, although growing, is not yet high enough to accelerate progress even faster. Teaching makes good use of assessment data to set tasks that are appropriate to most pupils' needs and abilities. However, the level of challenge for higher-attaining pupils is not yet consistently high enough. Teaching is supported by an outstanding curriculum that plays a pivotal role in developing pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Behaviour in lessons and around school is good. Pupils say how safe they feel in school and that behaviour has improved greatly because lessons are more interesting. Attendance has risen significantly from being low at the time of the previous inspection to its current above-average levels.
- Leaders and managers, including the governing body, use the outcomes of highly accurate evaluation of the school's effectiveness outstandingly well to drive improvement in the quality of teaching and underpin performance management.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further raise pupils' attainment and accelerate their progress by increasing the amount of outstanding teaching to ensure that:
  - activities in lessons are always planned take full account of pupils' prior learning, needs and abilities, especially those of higher-attaining pupils
  - pupils are always set to work on tasks as soon as they are ready
  - the pace of teaching is always lively and the range of activities sufficiently varied to keep all pupils fully engaged in their learning at all times during lessons.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

In lessons pupils are keen to give of their best. They work very effectively in pairs and groups where they willingly contribute their ideas and listen respectfully. The pride with which pupils present their written work shows how seriously they take their learning. Pupils enjoy finding things out for themselves. However, sometimes teaching does not give higher-attaining pupils the opportunity to work independently as soon as they are ready and this sometimes slows their progress.

Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are generally well below age-related expectations. They make good progress in the nurturing environment. They develop solid foundations for future learning because teaching is good and the curriculum matches children's needs. Pupils continue to make good progress as they move up through the school. By the end of Key Stage 2 attainment is broadly average. However, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in English and mathematics tests at the end of Key Stage 2, although showing signs of rising, is not yet high enough. Since the previous inspection, achievement has improved rapidly, initially in Key Stage 2 and more recently in Key Stage 1. As a result, attainment in Key Stage 1 is now rising securely.

Pupils in Key Stage 1 are now making much more rapid progress and achieving well because leaders and managers have been extremely rigorous in tackling weaker teaching and stabilising staffing. As a result, gaps in achievement between Key Stages 1 and 2 are closing rapidly and securely. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because of the effective and dedicated support they receive. Pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, those who join the school at other than normal times and the small proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language also make good progress and achieve well because of the effective support they receive.

The teaching of phonics (letters and sounds) is good and improving, especially in Key Stage 1. Attainment in reading by the end of Key Stage 1 is below average and improving rapidly. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment in reading is average. Returned questionnaires show that parents and carers are unanimous in being satisfied with the progress their children are making. Inspection evidences endorses their view.

## Quality of teaching

Parents and carers are unanimous in their satisfaction with the quality of teaching their children receive and inspection findings confirm their view. Pupils also say that the teaching they receive is good.

Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. It is confident and knowledgeable. The curriculum is designed to match children's needs very closely. It provides a wealth of activities both indoors and outside to encourage children to interact socially and articulate what they have learned. As a result, children make good progress, especially in the development of their communication and language skills. In Key Stages 1 and 2, teaching is also consistently good. It has improved significantly because leaders and managers have eradicated weaker teaching and have made very astute staffing appointments. Teachers use assessment data effectively to plan challenging activities, although sometimes challenge for the most able pupils is not high enough across all classes. Good teaching is supported by an outstanding curriculum that provides pupils with a wide variety of exciting and memorable opportunities to extend their skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). For example, Year 5 pupils were buzzing with excitement in writing perceptively about Anne Frank as part of their preparation for a trip to Amsterdam. In another class, pupils were engrossed in working out the cost of the forthcoming trip and made very good progress in their addition and subtraction skills as a result. Teaching encourages pupils to work independently. However, occasionally teaching keeps some pupils listening to explanations after they have fully grasped the point and are ready to get on with things for themselves. Teachers use questioning astutely to encourage pupils to give extended answers. This adds significantly to pupils' ability to express themselves articulately and with confidence. The pace of teaching and the variety of activities are generally good. However, pupils' concentration sometimes tails off when teachers spend too long on explanations or on one activity. Teaching assistants are used effectively to provide support for lower-attaining pupils or groups with identified needs, such as disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.

Teaching and the curriculum make a highly effective contribution to pupils' outstanding social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Teachers are excellent role models for pupils' attitudes to learning and the curriculum is outstandingly successful in broadening pupils' horizons and raising aspirations.

## Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour and safety are good. Returned questionnaires show that a small minority of parents and carers do not feel that behaviour in lessons is good enough. However, pupils say that behaviour is usually good. They say that behaviour has improved greatly and that lessons are very rarely interrupted because of inappropriate behaviour. On the rare occasions when this happens, pupils say that adults are quick to deal with it effectively. This was borne out by inspection observations and analysis of the school's records of behaviour, which provide strong support for behaviour having improved significantly over time. Pupils are clear about what behaviour is expected of them and any failure to live up to the high expectations is dealt with fairly and consistently. Parents and carers do not express any concerns about bullying. Pupils say that bullying of any kind is rare and, again, on the few occasions when it occurs, it is dealt with swiftly and effectively. Disabled pupils and those

who join the school at other than normal times are treated with unerring respect, tolerance and understanding.

The school has very comprehensive procedures in place to check on and promote attendance. As a result, and because of pupils' increasingly positive attitudes towards school, attendance levels have risen sharply since the previous inspection and are above average. Punctuality to school and to lessons is consistently good. Pupils say how safe they feel in school. Parents and carers are unanimous in feeling that the school keeps their children safe. Pupils talk knowledgeably about the dangers inherent in using the internet. They understand what constitute potentially dangerous situations and how to avoid and/or handle them.

## **Leadership and management**

Leaders and managers have a razor sharp focus on improvement and are relentless in their pursuit of improvement. They evaluate the effectiveness of all aspects of the school's work highly accurately and use the outcomes very astutely to target areas of relative weakness. As a result, the quality of teaching, the curriculum and the achievement of all groups of pupils have improved very rapidly and securely since the previous inspection demonstrating the school's outstanding capacity to continue its upward trajectory. Leaders and managers, including the governing body, are highly ambitious for the school. The school benefits exceptionally well from being federated with its partner schools. The governing body is highly influential in providing strategic direction within a secure framework of sharing best practice and planning for curriculum progression that spans the primary and secondary phases. For example, the teaching of Spanish is carried out by a specialist foreign languages teacher who liaises closely with colleagues at the high school to make sure that progression and continuity after Year 6 are at the core of the scheme of work and teaching.

Leaders and managers monitor the quality of teaching regularly and rigorously. The outcomes are used highly effectively to tackle weaknesses, target professional development and improve the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress. As a result, the quality of teaching is consistently good and improving. Equality of opportunity, including tackling discrimination, is central to leaders' and managers' work. Its effectiveness is seen in the good achievement of all groups of learners, the rapidly closing gap in achievement between Key Stages 1 and 2 and pupils' very high levels of respect for those who are different.

Leaders and managers have developed an outstanding curriculum that provides pupils with a wide range of extremely popular enrichment activities such as educational trips both at home and abroad, enterprise activities, sports clubs and cultural activities in music and drama. These activities play a pivotal role in broadening pupils' horizons, raising aspirations, building levels of self-confidence and adding greatly to pupils' enjoyment of school. As a result, pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is outstanding.

Leaders and managers have forged increasingly positive relations with parents and carers. This is seen in the rapid rise in the numbers of parents and carers attending parents' evenings and in the growing confidence in the school in the local community. Pupil numbers are growing rapidly as a result. Leaders and managers, including the governing body, are meticulous in ensuring that safeguarding procedures fully meet statutory requirements.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.



## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



27 February 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Benchill Primary School, Manchester M22 8EJ**

Thank you for your warm welcome during the recent inspection of your school. Benchill is a good school. It has improved greatly since its previous inspection because it is outstandingly well led and managed. As a result, you are now making good progress and achieving well because teaching is good. It was pleasing to see how much your attendance has improved – well done! You behave well and are very respectful towards each other and the adults working with you. You are obviously proud of your school and this is not surprising considering all the exciting opportunities it provides for you, such as trips abroad. (I hope Year 5 pupils enjoyed their trip to Amsterdam.)

In order to make your school even more successful, I am asking it to do the following.

- Further raise your attainment and accelerate your progress by increasing the amount of outstanding teaching to ensure that:
  - activities in lessons always take account of what you already know and your abilities, especially those of you who are quick learners
  - you are always set to work on tasks in lessons as soon as you are ready
  - the pace of teaching is always lively and the range of activities varied enough to keep you all fully engaged in your learning at all times in lessons.

I am confident that you will continue to work hard to make sure your school continues to go from strength to strength.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Wall  
Lead inspector

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