

# Bensham Manor School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	101851
<b>Local Authority</b>	Croydon
<b>Inspection number</b>	355078
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 May 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mike Kell

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>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	163
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Nicky Selwyn
<b>Headteacher</b>	Philip Poulton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 January 2010
<b>School address</b>	Ecclesbourne Road Thornton Heath CR7 7BN
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8684 0116
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<b>Email address</b>	mainoffice@benshammanor.com

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 16 lessons, each taught by a different teacher. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, two groups of students, members of the senior leadership and management teams, the education welfare officer and a visiting teacher of English as an additional language. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, such as assessment data, attendance, behaviour and incident logs, and school development planning. The 55 questionnaires returned by parents and carers were analysed, as were those completed by staff and students.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The progress made by students who speak English as an additional language, those who are known to be eligible for free school meals, and looked after children.
- The use of information and communication technology as a teaching and learning tool.
- How effectively middle managers fulfil their roles and carry out their responsibilities.
- The procedures for tracking and analysing students' achievements and personal development and the use of this information in setting targets and triggering individual support packages.

## Information about the school

Bensham Manor is a much larger than average special school. It was given a notice to improve when it was inspected in January 2010 because it was not performing as well as could reasonably be expected. It received a monitoring visit in January 2011, when it was judged to have made satisfactory progress in addressing the most important areas for development.

All of the students have a statement of special educational needs. In half of cases this is for moderate learning difficulties, and in a third it is for autism. However, many students have additional learning needs, such as social, behavioural and emotional difficulties, severe learning difficulties and speech, language and communication difficulties. Over two thirds of the students are boys. A quarter of the students are known to be eligible for free school meals, and a few are looked after children. Although almost half of students have a White British heritage, the remainder span a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. Thirteen different first languages are represented in the school, and a very small minority of students are at an early stage of learning English.

The school has reorganised its senior leadership and middle management teams since the previous inspection, with the appointment of three new assistant headteachers and new staff with subject or pastoral leadership responsibilities. Since that time, it has acquired an Inclusion Mark and a Global Gateway International School award, and its status as a Healthy School has been reaffirmed.

**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

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. The school provides a satisfactory quality of education, although there are many indications that it is rapidly improving. The improvement is being driven by the leadership of a determined and well-informed headteacher, ably supported by an increasingly influential senior leadership team and effective middle managers. Collectively, they are raising the quality of education by addressing key failings in teaching, the use of assessment and the curriculum. Leaders' accomplishment has been possible because they successfully translated good ambitions into practice by raising expectations through a well-planned, intensive focus on the quality of teaching. Throughout this time, they also retained a close watch on students' personal development and safety. Safeguarding arrangements are outstanding.

As a result of this more challenging climate, academic outcomes for students are steadily improving. Attainment is broadly average. Students learn and make progress at a satisfactory rate, although the pace of learning shows signs of acceleration. The inadequacies in science and mathematics teaching identified in the previous inspection report have been addressed successfully. Teaching and assessment is satisfactory overall. While there are pockets of good teaching practice throughout the school, there is also some inconsistency in the extent to which staff expect and promote rapid independent learning through their planning and the activities they provide. The curriculum is satisfactory. A whole-school review has transformed many of its features, but the changes have not yet had time to make a significant impact. For instance, not all subjects promote mathematical and information and communication technology (ICT) skills as well as they develop literacy skills, and the curriculum is not fully geared to meeting the curriculum needs of a changing and more complex student population. Good procedures for the care, support and guidance of students underpin the good progress that they make in their personal development. They behave well and are very courteous and respectful.

The school has a good capacity for sustained improvement. Leaders have shown their ability to improve many aspects of leadership and management compared with the previous inspection, and they have a secure understanding of how to maintain the momentum of change based on good self-evaluation procedures. Furthermore, despite governance being no better than satisfactory, there is evidence of the newly formed governing body becoming much more involved in the life of the school.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- Increase the rate of students' progress by ensuring that all teachers routinely plan to:
  - provide challenging activities that match students' capabilities and accelerate their learning
  - consistently provide students with opportunities to take initiatives and risks in their learning in so far as they are able to do so
  - make best use of the assessment data and range of other information in the school's in-house electronic recording package in order to promote independent learning.
- Further develop the curriculum by:
  - planning more opportunities for all subjects to promote students' mathematical and ICT skills
  - meeting individual students' needs even more effectively by personalising the range of learning opportunities.
- Make governance more effective by encouraging all members of the governing body to gain first-hand knowledge of the school's work on a regular basis.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

<b>3</b>
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Attainment is broadly average, although there is variability linked to the severity of students' learning difficulties. Students make satisfactory progress and achieve satisfactorily. No individuals or groups of students underachieve compared with others. Therefore, students who speak English as an additional language, those known to be eligible for free school meals, and looked after children progress at the same rate as others, as do those with autism. Consequently, all students in Years 10 and 11 successfully follow courses that result in qualifications. All school leavers in 2010 gained accreditation in a range of courses. For some students in some subjects, such as art, this was a GCSE pass at grade C and above. In the lessons observed, students were enthusiastic with very positive attitudes. The majority of teachers exploited this willingness to learn and students made good progress, although there was not the same sense of urgency in other classes. Achievement was satisfactory overall. Students make good progress in becoming more independent and confident young people and in meeting their targets in individual education plans.

Students confirm that they enjoy school and learn a lot in lessons. Their attendance is broadly average. The vast majority of them say that they feel safe at school and show a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe. They know a great deal about how to lead a healthy life, such as the importance of eating healthily and taking regular exercise. They value the opportunity to grow vegetables in the school allotment. Students make a good contribution to the school and local communities. They take on responsibilities willingly in school, such as collecting eggs from the school's ducks and chickens and looking after the small animals. Older students support younger ones through mentoring arrangements. In the community, the choir often sings at an elderly people's home, and some students worked voluntarily with the Salvation Army on a redecorating project. This

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is indicative of the good progress that students make in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as they learn to appreciate the needs of others and how their actions can affect them.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

Excellent relationships and interactions characterise all lessons. Time is used efficiently. Staff and students are punctual and class routines are well established. Teachers' good use of questions promotes students' speaking and listening skills well. Lesson plans follow a common format, but they vary in the quality of the detail that they contain. When planning is crisp and focuses on what individuals are expected to learn, staff are well placed to provide the resources and activities that stretch students by challenging them to take initiatives, think for themselves and complete the task independently. At these times, teachers make good use of their own assessment information and that in the school's central electronic system. This information, such as students' reading ages and their capabilities in subjects such as mathematics and ICT, enables staff to provide activities that consolidate these key skills and support the acquisition of new ones. Planning is much less precise in a few lessons, and so expectations are not so high. Teaching assistants support students well, noting the small gains in learning that they make.

The curriculum helps students to prepare satisfactorily for leaving school. All 27 leavers in 2010 went into education, employment or training. Students in Years 10 and 11 follow a

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good work-related learning programme and develop the personal skills that employers value, such as teamwork. The new functional skills programme reinforces opportunities for students to learn in the context of real-life situations. Despite this, students do not acquire key numeracy and ICT skills as quickly as they could because opportunities are missed to develop these skills in other subjects. Generally, the curriculum matches students' abilities and needs. However, the school is admitting an increasing number of students with complex needs who require more personalised curriculum provision, and the arrangements for doing this are not fully embedded. Students benefit greatly from a learning enrichment programme that makes very good use of visits and school clubs to extend students' horizons.

The school works well with other agencies to provide comprehensive care, support and guidance packages. Good induction and transition procedures ensure that students enter the school with confidence and leave it with an optimistic outlook about the future. While in school, they are cared for well. Therefore, even potentially vulnerable students thrive and develop positive attitudes because all students' personal development is closely monitored. Interventions are put in place to support them if difficulties arise. Student support plans fulfil a similar role in helping those students who find learning more difficult. These, too, are regularly monitored and evaluated, as are all students' learning targets. The school has established good procedures for helping students to improve their work, as confirmed by the students themselves.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Bensham Manor is a fully inclusive school. Leaders' close scrutiny of data ensures that no individuals or groups are disadvantaged. The school's skill at removing barriers to students' learning reflects its strong commitment to equal opportunity and eradication of any form of discrimination. Its success in doing this is helped greatly by the input of effective middle managers and good links that it has with partner organisations, and parents and carers. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to promoting community cohesion. The school community is very strong, but students' understanding of and engagement with different communities nationally and globally are less well developed, although its acquisition of a Global Gateway International School award represents a step forward in this direction.

The headteacher knows where developments in promoting community cohesion are needed because he has undertaken a detailed audit. Good self-evaluation processes such as this are representative of the good management systems that enable leaders to

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maintain an accurate picture of the school's performance. Leaders are ambitious to maintain the impetus for sustained improvement. Their capacity for succeeding is strengthened by the fact that they have the wholehearted support of all staff. Every one of the 45 members of staff who returned a questionnaire confirmed that they know what the school is trying to achieve and that they are clear about the role that they have to play. Additionally, the governing body is beginning to build on previous successes, such as the part it played in developing outstanding safeguarding arrangements. It has begun to take steps to involve all members in taking a more concerted approach to supporting and challenging leaders so that it can become a full partner in the school's push to improve the quality of education.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Views of parents and carers

A very large majority of parents and carers are strongly supportive of the school and the work that it does. In particular, they believe that their children are safe in school and that the school meets their children's needs. Most agree that their children enjoy school and that they are kept informed about their children's progress. 'My son has gone from being a bullied and introverted child to a popular and happy 14 year old', and 'My child enjoys going to school. He likes the teachers and he is doing very well. He has a lot of homework and he also has the help he needs' are representative of parents' and carers' views. On the other hand, a very small minority of parents and carers have reservations about the school and take exactly the opposite view about some aspects, such as 'homework needs to be given on a regular basis'. On balance, the inspection team's views align closely with the positive views of parents and carers.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bensham Manor School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 55 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 163 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	33	60	17	31	3	5	2	4
The school keeps my child safe	28	51	24	44	2	4	1	2
My school informs me about my child's progress	18	33	32	58	2	4	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	24	33	60	6	11	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	20	36	29	53	2	4	2	4
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	38	28	51	3	5	2	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	33	34	62	1	2	1	2
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	22	40	23	42	3	5	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	22	40	30	55	1	2	2	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	42	25	45	1	2	2	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	29	32	58	2	4	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	19	35	27	49	2	4	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	20	36	28	51	4	7	2	4

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## 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	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.

**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.**



13 May 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of Bensham Manor School, Thornton Heath, CR7 7BN**

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school. A special thanks goes to those of you who gave up your time to speak with us. We were very impressed with how polite and well-mannered you are. You behave well and nearly all of you go to school as often as you can. You make good progress in growing up into mature and thoughtful young people. You know a lot about how to stay fit and safe, and we were very pleased to see you helping out around the school.

Lessons are satisfactory and you make satisfactory progress in your work. You obviously enjoy the many exciting visits and clubs that your school provides. The staff take good care of you and you told us that there is always someone you can talk to if you have a problem.

The people who run the school do a good job. They have ideas about how to make the school better and we have asked them to do the following in order to help them to achieve this.

- Make sure that teachers always provide you with work that is set at just the right level so that you can tackle it on your own.
- Get teachers to help you to learn new mathematical and computer skills in all subjects.
- Plan for more governors to visit you in classes more often.

You can help them to make these improvements by carrying on going to school as often as you can, and by continuing to behave so well while you are there. Finally, thank you once again for welcoming us into your school and I wish each of you every success in the future, especially if you are taking examinations and leaving school this year.

Yours sincerely

Mike Kell

Lead inspector

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