

Benchill Primary School

Benchill Road, Wythenshawe, Manchester, M22 8EJ

Inspection dates 4–5 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school is good and improving because leaders at all levels know their school very well and provide clear direction on how teaching and learning must improve.
- The headteacher is innovative and is taking effective action to improve the quality of teaching. She leads by example, teaching literacy to a group of Year 6 pupils. She is very well supported by the deputy headteacher.
- Teachers are very positive about the opportunities they have to develop their leadership skills and work collaboratively with colleagues to improve their teaching.
- Pupils generally behave well and display positive attitudes towards their learning.
- Attendance is improving and is now above the national average.
- The curriculum provides rich opportunities for teaching pupils how to stay safe and respect each other's faiths and cultures.
- Teaching is good across the school. Pupils talk positively about their lessons and the help teachers provide.
- The teaching of reading is now a strength across the school. The additional support for reading is also having a significant impact on the achievement of those who find reading difficult.
- Attainment has continued to improve since the previous inspection. Pupils make good progress across the school.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils has improved continuously in the past three years.
- Pupils with special needs achieve well and make very strong progress as a result of good support.
- Children get off to a flying start in the early years and make good progress. The well-established routines ensure that children feel safe, secure and are happy and willing to learn. This aspect of school is well led and managed.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching, as the new initiatives for sharing best practice have not had time to make the necessary impact on teaching quality.
- Teaching is not checked frequently enough to make sure pupils always make the best possible progress.
- Work is occasionally not sufficiently challenging for the most able pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 30 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 16 teachers.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read and scrutinised pupils' work.
- Discussions were held with representatives of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, senior leaders, middle leaders, other staff, pupils and parents.
- The inspectors looked at the school's documentation including: safeguarding policies, the school development plan, records used by the school to measure how well it is doing, minutes of governing body meetings, records of behaviour and also displays in classrooms and around the school.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of information on how the school checks on the progress of the different pupil groups.
- The inspectors took into account the 11 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), the most recent parent questionnaire sent out by the school, and talked to parents at the beginning of the day.
- The inspectors also analysed the 54 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Desmond Stubbs, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Pamela Hemphill	Additional Inspector
Maureen Hints	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above the national average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.)
- Nursery and reception-aged children are in school full time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school has had an Interim Executive Board since April 2014 with a shadow governing committee and two sub-committees.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching to ensure that a higher proportion of pupils are working at the highest levels by:
 - providing the most able with work that is always challenging so that they reach their full potential
 - continuing to share the best practice that exists within the school
 - checking on the quality of teaching and learning more frequently in order to make sure pupils always make the best possible progress.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is highly innovative in developing ways to improve the quality of teaching. She has developed a strong team of phase leaders and collectively they know their school very well and know what must be done to improve further. They are constantly researching ways in which teaching and learning can improve.
- The school is a calm environment where high standards of behaviour are expected. The walls are adorned with high quality work. Leaders have taken effective action to improve achievement, teaching and behaviour year on year.
- Leaders at all levels check the quality of teaching and learning by considering the evidence from lesson observations, checking exercise books and listening to the views of pupils. There are, however, inconsistencies in the impact of teaching. In addition, teaching is not checked frequently enough to make sure pupils always make the best progress.
- Teachers have started to evaluate their teaching by filming lessons and then sharing them with colleagues. In mathematics, lessons are checked in a highly rigorous manner. This sharing of best practice is a recent introduction and is just beginning to have an impact.
- The school has a curriculum which provides the pupils with many first-hand experiences that they might not otherwise have. There are subject-themed days such as mathematics day, art day and many trips and visitors into school to enrich the learning experience further. There is a strong emphasis on preparing pupils for employment by planning opportunities for them to practise their basic skills across the curriculum and having links with businesses such as Manchester International Airport.
- The school's work related to 'Peace Mala' has done much to encourage pupils to treat others with respect, to be tolerant, celebrate diversity and understand differences between religions and cultures. It has also been used to promote British values as a crucial part of the school's values. Subsequently, the school's work in fostering good relationships and tackling discrimination is highly effective. The school's promotion of pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is strong.
- Additional funding is used effectively to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Their standards in literacy have improved continuously over the past three years. They make the same good progress as other pupils in school.
- The primary school sport and physical education funding has been used effectively to improve the skills of teachers and provide more opportunities for pupils to compete against other schools and take part in activities such as 'Fit-tastic.' During the inspection, pupils were using mini-exercise bikes with the fit-tastic teacher to keep fit and improve some of their physical skills.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding and child protection meet statutory requirements.
- Representatives from local authority visit the school each term to assure the quality of provision and to support leadership and management.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - In April 2014, the Interim Executive Board was formed and quickly established a highly effective governors' committee which then set up sub-committees whose members have the appropriate skills and training to undertake their duties. They have been meeting since the summer term 2014. These committees will very soon replace the Interim Executive Board.
 - The governors' committees have a detailed understanding of relevant data, how well the school is doing, how it needs to improve and what is presently being undertaken to bring about this improvement. Members are fully aware of the quality of teaching in the school.
 - Governors understand that teachers' progression up the pay scale is not automatic and they are not afraid to make difficult decisions when required.
 - The minutes of meetings show that governors are holding senior leaders to account and challenge the school with relevant and searching questions. The resources committee checks that the various types of additional funding are having the required impact and which pupils are benefitting.
 - Both the Interim Executive Board and the governors' committees are passionate about moving the school forward.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In class, pupils behave well when working as a whole class and in small groups. Pupils told the inspectors that there are a small number of pupils who misbehave but this was not observed during the inspection.
- The pupils have a large space to play in and there are a lot of adults supervising to make sure the pupils behave well and are safe. Behaviour at lunchtime both in the lunch hall and outside is generally good and records show that behaviour is improving over time with many fewer 'yellow cards' being used than previously. The number of fixed-term exclusions is also greatly reduced.
- Pupils generally show a positive attitude towards their learning. They listen carefully to their teacher and to each other when working with a partner or in a small group. A small number of the younger pupils, however, get restless when they are not properly challenged.
- Pupils show pride in their appearance and look smart in their uniform. The head boy and head girl are excellent role models for other pupils. However, some of the older pupils do not always take care when presenting their work and some English and mathematics books are untidy.
- The school invests a lot of resources in providing a special class for pupils with needs who otherwise might disrupt the learning of other pupils. These pupils learn in a very calm environment, they are well taught and flourish as a result of high quality care provided by all the adults who work with them.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe and are happy at the school. Pupils told the inspectors, 'Adults listen to us and try to understand us if we are upset.'
- The curriculum is well planned to ensure that pupils understand how to manage risk. Pupils understand how to stay safe in a wide range of situations, including when using the internet.
- All visitors to the school are properly checked and do not pose any threat to pupils.
- The school provides a breakfast club which is very well attended. Pupils are well looked after, enjoy this time and are grateful that it helps them to be punctual and have a healthy meal to start the day. Parents are also very grateful for this service and some even stay and have breakfast with their children!
- Attendance is improving and is now above the national average. The school uses a wide range of strategies for encouraging high attendance and punctuality, which are having a significant impact.
- In the questionnaire distributed by the school, parents were overwhelmingly positive that their children are happy, feel safe and are well looked after.

The quality of teaching is good

- Overall the quality of teaching across the school in all subjects is good and results in good achievement. There have been recent changes to ways in which subjects are taught and how work is marked. These changes are already having a positive impact on pupils' progress but the best practice is not yet embedded fully.
- The teaching of reading has improved and is now very effective. The texts are enjoyed by the pupils. Teachers provide a range of high quality activities and pupils show a good application of their phonics (the sounds letters make) skills. In several sessions observed, teachers showed a real enthusiasm for reading, asked searching questions and helped the pupils to gain a deep understanding of the text.
- In mathematics, teachers are encouraged to use a much wider range of activities in order for pupils to solve problems and investigate concepts more deeply. For example, in a Year 3 class pupils' learning and progress were enhanced when they were presented with column addition problems which had been answered incorrectly and they had to work out the mistakes that had been made. The evidence in exercise books and in learning observed is that the teaching of mathematics is improving and pupils enjoy these challenges.
- Pupils understand how they can improve their work. This is a result of marking which makes it very clear what pupils need to do to improve. This is very evident in the teaching of writing. However, pupils are not always given the time to read the teachers' comments and then revisit their writing and see how it could be improved further.
- Much homework is on line using educational websites. There are clear expectations for each year group. Pupils also have the opportunity to visit a homework club, which is very well attended.
- The school has made excellent progress in the way they judge how well pupils are achieving in the new

curriculum. Teachers do not only make assessments of attainment in English and mathematics but also across the curriculum, for example in Spanish, which is a favourite subject of the pupils. This information is used to inform teachers at the High School how well pupils are doing. Teachers discuss these judgements with other colleagues across the school and in other local schools in order to make sure that assessments are accurate and secure.

The achievement of pupils **is good**

- The achievement of pupils is good. Standards in all subjects have improved over the past three years.
- Pupils' attainment in the Year 1 screening check to assess understanding and use of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is improving but is below that of other schools nationally. The school has responded by adopting different teaching strategies and this is having a significant impact on pupils' progress in reading.
- At the end of Key Stage 1, standards are rising. Pupils make good progress in all subjects. Attainment is now close to the national average in reading and writing. In mathematics, all pupil groups achieve above similar pupils nationally.
- Attainment in all subjects at the end of Key Stage 2 is improving, although it is still below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils working at the highest levels. Overall progress is good. In July 2014, the proportion of pupils making expected progress from their different starting points was better than pupils nationally in writing and mathematics and similar in reading.
- The achievement of current learners is good. Pupils make consistently good progress in all subjects across the school.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good and particularly good in reading as a result of the support pupils receive from well-trained teaching assistants.
- In July 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium was a year behind that of non-disadvantaged pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportions of these pupils making the progress expected of them from their starting points are similar to non-disadvantaged pupils nationally in all subjects.
- In July 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils was two terms behind other non-disadvantaged pupils in the school in reading and writing. There was a similar picture in mathematics. Throughout school, the progress these pupils make is similar to that of their peers.
- Expectations of the most able are not high enough. Inspection evidence, including the observation of learning in lessons and the scrutiny of pupils' exercise books shows that the most able pupils are not always set work that is challenging enough. Some of the most able pupils explained to the inspectors that there are times in both English and mathematics lessons when they could achieve more.

The early years provision **is good**

- Generally, children enter the nursery with skills and knowledge below those that are typical for their age. Many have weaker skills in speech and language, reading, writing and mathematical understanding. Despite this, by the time they move into Year 1 they have made good and on occasions rapid progress, because the teaching is good and focussed on developing children's basic skills.
- In 2014, the attainment at the end of the reception year improved from previous years and the school is ambitious for its current cohort. However, on entry to Year 1, although pupils' skills have improved, there were still many children who were not yet at a typical level of development for their age.
- There is a wide variety of activities and they are well matched to the needs of the children and designed to interest and encourage them to become confident learners.
- Children settle well into the nursery because of the effective procedures when children start school. The well-established routines throughout early years ensure children feel safe and secure and are happy and willing to learn. They respond positively to the high expectations of staff and enjoy any challenges that are set them. For example, the children particularly enjoyed dressing up for World Book Day and undertaking the book-related activities planned for them. Parents have regular opportunities to stay and play with their children.
- The early years are well led and managed and, as a result, teaching and learning are improving continuously. All adults work together as a cohesive team.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	132241
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	456135

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	500
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair	Jenny Andrews
Headteacher	Helen Eken
Date of previous school inspection	23 February 2012
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