

Benedict Primary School

Church Road, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 3BE

Inspection dates

15–16 November 2016

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is variable, particularly in key stage 2.
- Although leaders have ensured pupils are making faster progress than they have done in the past, progress over time has been inconsistent.
- Teachers do not always intervene quickly enough to address pupils' mistakes or provide more challenging work for those who are ready to move on.
- Pupils are not always given sufficient opportunities to improve their work or learn from their mistakes. This slows their rate of progress.
- Some teachers do not have high enough expectations for the most able pupils, including those that are disadvantaged. In some classes, the most able pupils spend too much time waiting for the rest of the class to catch up.
- Progress in mathematics is variable because there are few opportunities for pupils to develop their thinking or explore mathematical concepts in greater depth.
- In key stage 2, pupils are not making fast enough progress in writing. This is because pupils do not consistently apply their grammar, punctuation and spelling skills across a range of writing in different subjects.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has provided much-needed vision and stability after a period of turbulence. Together with senior leaders, she has established a culture in which every child is expected to learn well and succeed.
- Pupils, parents and staff are very supportive of the improvements at the school.
- Leaders are taking effective action to improve teaching. Consequently, the achievement of the current pupils is improving quickly.
- The school is a safe, calm and welcoming place in which to learn. Relationships between pupils and staff are strong.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning have improved considerably. Pupils enjoy learning and are proud of their school.
- The early years is led effectively. Teachers plan challenging and interesting learning that meets the needs of pupils well. As a result, pupils make good progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
 - teachers adapt learning during lessons so the work is at the right level for all ability groups
 - pupils respond to teachers' feedback using the school's policy consistently
 - pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are given more time in lessons to develop and practise basic skills
 - pupils have regular opportunities to develop and explain their reasoning skills in mathematics
 - teachers plan writing activities that enable pupils to build on their existing knowledge and skills.
- Accelerate the rates of progress for pupils, particularly in key stage 2, so that a greater proportion achieve the expected standard at the end of Year 6, with a greater focus on writing and mathematics.
- Strengthen the capacity of middle leaders so that they have a greater impact on diminishing differences in the rates of progress and attainment for different groups of pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has worked with great determination and vision to improve all aspects of school life. Despite significant changes in staffing over the last two years, she has not been distracted from her work to improve the standard of education at the school.
- Senior leaders are uncompromising in their ambition for pupils and have raised expectations for what pupils can achieve. Staff have responded positively to these high expectations and are committed to bringing out the best in every pupil.
- Senior leaders have rightly prioritised creating a calm and purposeful environment throughout the school. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning have improved considerably. Parents recognise and appreciate this. Teachers and pupils are now able to focus on learning.
- Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and what needs to be improved. Leaders monitor the quality of teaching carefully. They have taken effective action to address weaknesses and are clear about how they measure improvement. The impact of their work is evident in the faster rates of progress being made by the current pupils in the school, particularly in the early years and key stage 1. However, leaders also recognise that there is still work to be done to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently effective across the school, particularly in key stage 2.
- Plans for improvement are well focused. This has ensured that differences in the achievement of different groups of pupils have diminished significantly. However, the most able pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are not making the rapid progress needed to overcome previous underachievement. Leaders are taking effective action to tackle this.
- Middle leaders are clear about what they need to do to improve the achievement of pupils in their subject areas. However, they have not been given sufficient time to check that the quality of teaching is improving outcomes for pupils. This has reduced the clear impact of their work.
- Teachers, including those at the early stages of their career, feel well supported and have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve their teaching.
- Leaders have ensured that assessment information on how well pupils are doing is accurate. Leaders meet teachers regularly to monitor progress, review pupil targets and identify pupils who are at risk of falling behind. This means that teachers have a better understanding of which pupils need to have extra support or challenge.
- Leaders have used the pupil premium funding effectively to provide pupils with well-targeted support that ensures that they are ready to learn. Leaders have already taken steps to refine their use of the pupil premium to diminish differences in achievement for the most able.
- The sports premium is used well to increase pupils' participation in a range of sports, including competitions with other schools.
- Leaders have made considerable improvements to the curriculum to support pupils

develop positive attitudes to school. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their learning in different subjects and enjoy the range of strategies teachers use to help them develop their knowledge and understanding. Some examples of these are writing blogs and visiting the theatre. The promotion of British values and equality underpins the curriculum. For example, Year 6 pupils learning about apartheid explored concepts of fairness and tolerance.

Governance of the school

- The local governing body and academy trust know the school well. Governors share the high aspirations of the headteacher and provide appropriate challenge to enable senior leaders to drive further improvement.
- Initially, the trust relied too heavily on external support to improve the school. This slowed the rate of improvement because not everybody was clear about what needed to be done to move the school forward.
- The trust has recognised that the current leadership team have the vision and skills needed to drive improvement. The headteacher and senior leaders now have the time they need to focus on improving teaching and pupil achievement. Additional support and challenge is now tailored to the school's priorities. This means that the school is well placed to improve further.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have ensured that keeping pupils safe is threaded through all aspects of the school's work. Regular safeguarding training means that staff are quick to spot signs that a pupil may be vulnerable to abuse, including those pupils who may be at risk from radicalisation, female genital mutilation or gang involvement. Staff report concerns promptly and the designated safeguarding lead acts swiftly.
- The school works effectively with external agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils get the help and protection they need. The school's vigilant approach means that support, such as that provided by the local authority's Early Help service, is provided at the earliest possible stage.
- The school has built strong relationships with families, particularly those in challenging or complex circumstances. Parents know who to approach if they have concerns and trust that the school will work with them sensitively to protect the well-being and safety of their child.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, although improving rapidly, is inconsistent.
- Teachers do not adapt the learning quickly enough during lessons when pupils find the work too easy or too difficult.
- Teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics is improving and this ensures they provide pupils with clear models and explanations during lessons. However, pupils can spend too much time practising calculations which they have mastered. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to try out different strategies, think logically or explain how

they worked out an answer. This prevents pupils from developing a deep understanding of mathematical concepts.

- Progress in writing is inconsistent, particularly in key stage 2. This is because in some classes, pupils are not encouraged to write at length, even though they are capable of this. The teaching of grammar, spelling and punctuation skills is improving. However, teachers do not expect pupils to use these skills consistently across curriculum subjects.
- Staff are skilled in helping pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities develop positive attitudes to their learning. However, support from adults does not focus enough on helping pupils practise and consolidate basic skills independently.
- The most able pupils, including those that are disadvantaged, are given work that is not sufficiently challenging. They spend too much time practising what they already know or can do. In too many lessons observed during the inspection, the most able were left to challenge themselves.
- Most teachers provide pupils with feedback in line with the school's policy but the impact of this is limited because pupils do not always use this feedback to improve their work.
- In early years and key stage 1, the teaching of phonics is effective in helping pupils learn to read and spell new words. This is because most staff have the secure subject knowledge needed to teach phonics well.
- Pupils in key stage 2 enjoy reading and read regularly both in school and at home. However, teachers do not always check that pupils read books that match their ability. This slows their rate of progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are proud of their learning and their school. The school's 'Habits of Mind' approach has helped pupils develop the skills they need to learn well and make good progress.
- The curriculum ensures that pupils are clear about the positive choices they can make to keep healthy and stay safe in a range of situations, including crossing the road and using the internet.
- Pupils feel safe and are well cared for in school. They are confident that adults in school will help them when they have concerns. Parents agree that pupils are safe in school. They are highly appreciative of the school's work to promote pupils' well-being and positive attitudes to learning.
- Bullying is rare and pupils are confident that adults will deal with it quickly if it does occur. Special events, such as anti-bullying week, ensure that pupils are confident to report different types of bullying, including incidents that occur online or are homophobic.
- The school uses a number of strategies to promote better attendance, including

attendance awards and building close partnerships with families. These strategies have had an impact and attendance has improved to around the national average. However, there are still a few pupils with stubbornly high rates of persistent absence.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Leaders and staff have transformed behaviour in the school so that there is a consistent focus on pupils' learning. Pupils are very positive about the higher expectations for behaviour and are clear about the systems the school has put in place to help them make positive choices.
- Pupils are polite, considerate and friendly. They behave consistently well around the school and respond quickly to instructions from adults.
- Pupils say that their learning is rarely interrupted by poor behaviour. This was the case in all lessons visited during the inspection. Leaders and staff are skilful in helping pupils manage their behaviour so that it does not affect their learning or the learning of other pupils in the class.
- The school is a calm, friendly and orderly environment. Pupils of different ages play well together at playtimes and lunchtimes. Displays around the school are attractive and celebrate pupils' achievements.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Inconsistent teaching over time has meant that progress has not been rapid enough to ensure pupils catch up from previous underachievement, particularly in key stage 2.
- School assessment information shows that current pupils are making better rates of progress and a greater proportion are now on track to achieve the standards expected for their age. This matches the work inspectors saw in pupils' books. However, there are still some differences in achievement between groups of pupils in the school, particularly the most able and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The 2016 Year 6 cohort made broadly average progress in key stage 2. Disadvantaged pupils made similar rates of progress to other pupils nationally. However, the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities was too low and they did not achieve as well as they could.
- The proportion of pupils who in 2016 achieved the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 was above the national average. This represents good progress from their starting points.
- In 2016, the proportion of pupils who met the required standard in the phonics screening check was below the national average. Disadvantaged pupils did not do as well as other pupils nationally. Well-targeted additional phonics teaching is ensuring the majority of these pupils are on track to meet the standard by the end of Year 2.
- Progress in writing across the school is variable, particularly in key stage 2. Although pupils are making better progress in grammar, punctuation and spelling, the impact of this is not yet evident in their writing.

- Work in pupils' books shows that the most able pupils, including those that are disadvantaged, usually achieve a higher standard than their peers in reading, writing and mathematics. However, they do not do as well as they should. This is because teachers do not consistently give them work to help them achieve the standard of which they are capable. In 2016, the proportion of Year 6 pupils who met the higher standard was lower than the national average in reading and writing.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years has improved considerably over the last two years. Leaders and staff have established a safe and stimulating environment in which to learn.
- Teaching in the early years is good. Assessment information is accurate and is used well by staff to plan lessons that interest and challenge pupils.
- The proportion of pupils who achieved a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year has risen rapidly and is now in line with the national average. The proportion of Reception pupils who exceeded the standard expected for their age was also above the national average. This represents good progress from pupils' starting points. Disadvantaged pupils do not do as well as other pupils nationally, although differences did diminish significantly in 2016.
- Staff have high expectations for pupils and skilfully model learning so that pupils are clear about what they have to do. In one mathematics lesson observed, the teacher made good use of visual prompts to help pupils identify one more and then two more than a given number.
- In whole-class learning, adults are quick to identify pupils who are having difficulty and provide well-targeted support so they do not fall behind.
- Pupils make swift progress in their communication skills because adults provide clear explanations, model language and use questioning skilfully to help pupils share their ideas. The teaching of phonics is particularly effective in supporting pupils develop the skills and knowledge they need to read and write well.
- The outdoor area contributes well to pupils' learning in all areas of the curriculum. For example, inspectors observed pupils helping to sweep up leaves outside. The adult working with the pupils skilfully used this opportunity to encourage pupils to practise their counting skills.
- Relationships are very positive. Pupils play well together, share resources and support each other with their learning. An example of this was observed in a whole-class mathematics lesson, when one pupil suggested to his partner: 'You can look at the board to help you.'

School details

Unique reference number	140187
Local authority	Merton
Inspection number	10019641

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	336
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Ms Ellie Stacey
Headteacher	Ms Christine Smith
Telephone number	020 8648 4726
Website	www.benedictprimaryschool.org.uk
Email address	benedictprimary@benedict.merton.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Benedict Primary School is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The school became a sponsored academy with the Chapel Street Community Schools Trust in January 2014.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of key stage 2.
- The proportion of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds is much higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is much higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is higher than average.
- The headteacher joined the school as head of school in September 2014. She was appointed as substantive headteacher in April 2016.

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons across the school, including the Nursery and Reception classes. Some lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders. Pupils' behaviour around the school, including at playtimes, lunchtimes and at breakfast club, was also observed.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, representatives from the academy trust and the local governing body to discuss the impact of their work.
- Telephone conversations were held with the school's challenge partner and a representative from the academy trust, who provide support for school improvement.
- Inspectors met with the leader responsible for safeguarding to review procedures related to safeguarding.
- A range of documentation was examined during the inspection, including the school improvement plan, information on pupils' achievement and records of the checks leaders make on the quality of teaching. Inspectors also reviewed behaviour logs, attendance information and documentation related to health and safety, including risk assessments.
- Inspectors met with newly qualified teachers to discuss the support and training they have received. Inspectors also reviewed staff responses to the online survey.
- Pupils' work was scrutinised to evaluate the achievement of current pupils in the school. This was conducted together with senior leaders.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read from key stage 1 and key stage 2. Discussions were also held with pupils, both formally and informally, to evaluate pupils' behaviour, well-being and attitudes to learning.
- Inspectors spoke to parents informally before school. They also took account of the 16 responses to Ofsted's online survey Parent View.

Inspection team

Sarah Murphy-Dutton, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Martina Martin	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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