

# Benedict Primary School

Church Road, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 3BE

## Inspection dates

19–20 March 2019

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Inadequate</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Inadequate</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Inadequate</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- Leaders and governors have an inaccurate and overgenerous view of teaching, learning and assessment. They have not taken enough action to tackle key areas for improvement since the last inspection.
- Pupils' outcomes over time are poor. They are not prepared well for the next stage of their education. As a result of weak teaching, groups of pupils across the school, including those who are disadvantaged, make poor progress. In some year groups, standards are declining.
- Teachers do not receive the professional development they need. This means that they cannot improve their skills in teaching reading and writing.
- Middle leaders have little impact on the quality of teaching. This is because they lack the experience, the skills or the time to support and develop staff effectively.
- The identification of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is inaccurate. Provision for pupils with SEND fails to meet their needs and does not enable them to make progress.
- Pupils' work and progress in subjects other than English and mathematics are limited.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher, staff and governors have created a positive, nurturing culture in the school, which parents and carers value.
- Teachers have consistently implemented the school's mathematics programme. This has had a positive impact on pupils' progress.
- The early years provision is good. Children make good progress from their starting points. Some of the teaching is inspirational.
- The safeguarding team, which is led by the headteacher, works exceptionally well and effectively to keep children safe.
- The curriculum promotes British values and spiritual, moral and social development effectively. Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are good.

## Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

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

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - senior, phase and subject leaders make accurate judgements about the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
  - middle leaders have greater impact on the achievement of pupils across the school
  - teachers receive the professional development they need to strengthen teaching and improve pupils' outcomes, particularly in reading and writing
  - governors rigorously monitor the impact of the pupil premium funding on the progress of disadvantaged pupils
  - provision for pupils with SEND is reviewed to ensure that the identification of their needs is accurate and that teaching helps them to make good progress.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
  - teachers pitch activities and tasks which consistently meet pupils' differing needs and help them to make good progress across the curriculum
  - teaching in key stage 1 builds swiftly on the good progress children make in the early years.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Inadequate

- Leaders and governors have not ensured that teaching, learning and assessment have improved since the previous inspection. Teaching has led to inadequate outcomes for pupils and shows no significant signs of improving. Leaders do not rigorously and accurately monitor and improve the quality of teaching.
- The headteacher has high expectations and is ambitious for her pupils. She does not have a strong, effective leadership team in place to support her in improving key aspects of the school's work.
- Middle leaders lack the confidence, time, experience and skills to move teaching forward.
- Leaders and governors have an overgenerous view of the school's strengths. Their evaluation of teaching, learning and assessment and of pupils' outcomes is inaccurate. This means that plans for improvement do not target precisely what is needed to develop teachers' skills.
- Leaders collect assessment information about pupils' progress and attainment. However, pupils' work in books shows that this information is not accurate for all year groups and, consequently, has limited impact. The opportunities for pupils to demonstrate progress in subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics are limited.
- Leaders have not ensured that pupil premium funding has significantly diminished the differences between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and others. Governors do not hold leaders to account rigorously enough for the spending of this funding.
- The provision for pupils with SEND does not meet their needs or help them to make progress. The threshold for the identification of SEND is insecure and inaccurate. Pupils are identified as needing SEND support, in some cases, because teaching has not been strong enough to help them make progress.
- The headteacher, staff and governors have focused on making the school a harmonious, happy place. They have worked tirelessly to create positive relationships with parents and the local community. This was recognised at the time of the previous inspection and has since been strengthened further.
- Leaders' work to improve attendance is a strength. There is relentless work to keep children safe, improve attendance and nurture their well-being. This is not matched by a similar approach to improve pupils' academic success.
- The curriculum promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils exemplify the British values of respect and tolerance, and they understand right from wrong. There is little evidence that the curriculum enables pupils to study subjects in any depth other than in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders have been successful in implementing a mathematics programme. This has had a positive impact on the progress that pupils make, especially in Year 6.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium has been used well to introduce pupils to an additional range of sports. During the inspection, for example, pupils enjoyed

playing tennis with a specialist coach.

- Leaders face considerable recruitment and retention challenges. It is recommended that newly qualified teachers may be appointed as long as Ofsted is satisfied that appropriate support arrangements are in place.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors do not have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching or of pupils' outcomes. They have not held leaders sufficiently to account for the quality of education in the school.
- Governors are not incisive enough in their understanding or evaluation of how the pupil premium funding is spent and the impact that it has on the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. They have not ensured that funding for pupils with SEND has been used effectively.
- Governors are supportive of the school's work. They have contributed well to developing a cohesive community. Governors provide challenge through their committee work. However, this is not sharply focused enough on improving outcomes in all year groups.
- Governors undertake all their statutory duties regarding safeguarding. They make appropriate checks on staff's suitability when they come to work at the school.
- The trust has provided a large amount of school improvement support to the school since the previous inspection. Trust representatives provide challenge and support to leaders and support to teachers. At this stage, there is little impact of this on pupils' outcomes.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The work of the safeguarding team, led by the headteacher, is inspirational. They care deeply about the pupils and do everything possible to ensure that they are kept safe and are happy.
- The team has a detailed understanding of every vulnerable pupil and their families. They diligently secure the best services and support to keep children safe and support their well-being. Records are thorough and detailed. Leaders know the contents of every single file. The significant challenges faced by some pupils in the school affect their attendance. The safeguarding team works creatively to promote higher attendance levels and is successful in some cases.
- The headteacher liaises with community police who are invited into school to talk to pupils about local safeguarding risks.
- Staff are well trained and up to date about potential risks to pupils. They are highly vigilant. Leaders carry out detailed risk assessments to ensure that pupils are safe on visits and around the school.
- Pupils said that they feel safe in school, and they carefully check visitors' badges to make sure that they should be on-site.

**Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Inadequate**

- Poor-quality teaching across different year groups has led to weak progress over time. This is particularly the case for pupils with SEND and for those who are disadvantaged.
- The good start that children make in the early years is lost when they enter key stage 1. This is because transition arrangements are poor. Strong, personalised teaching in early years is replaced with poor teaching in Year 1, which fails to meet the needs of pupils or build on their earlier successes.
- Teaching across key stage 2 is inconsistent and often weak. Teachers lack the skills to teach writing and reading well enough to enable pupils to make good progress. Teachers are committed to improving their skills and to providing a good standard of education for their pupils. However, they have not benefited from appropriate or effective professional development to support them to do this.
- A writing programme, which is underpinned by developing speaking skills and vocabulary, has recently been implemented across the school. However, teachers have not ensured that work is pitched at the appropriate level for pupils in different year groups. In some key stage 2 lessons, pupils' progress in writing is inadequate and pupils do not develop fluency in writing independently. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are often too low. Stronger outcomes in writing can be seen in Reception children's books, where standards are higher than in some books in key stage 2.
- Displays and book areas in classrooms are of variable quality, and some fail to inspire or promote a love of reading. Much of the book stock available for pupils to choose from is shabby and of poor quality. Nevertheless, pupils aspire to be good readers. They read regularly and have journals to chart their progress. Teachers' assessment of reading is weak. Teachers prioritise the 'next book band', rather than developing pupils' reading skills.
- Activities to support reading are not pitched appropriately to strengthen progress. For example, pupils in key stage 2 played games to help them recognise and read 'sight' words. The pupils read all the words instantly. Their previous reading books, as identified in their journals, show that their reading abilities are well beyond blending and decoding basic words. Leaders have introduced new ways to teach comprehension skills effectively, and this is having some impact in key stage 2.
- The teaching of phonics in key stage 1 is weak. Teachers lack skills and subject knowledge in this area. For example, pupils were shown how to 'not' spell a word. This was confusing for them and reinforced their misconceptions. Leaders focus on preparing pupils for the phonics screening check, which is a test of pupils' ability to blend single words for reading. Teachers do not encourage pupils to apply their phonics skills systematically when reading or writing continuous text. They do not routinely refer to phonics learning and help pupils to apply it during writing activities.
- Teachers have implemented a mathematics programme and this has led to pockets of better progress in some classes.
- Pupils have limited opportunities to demonstrate progress in subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching in Year 2 and Year 6 is stronger than in other year groups. Even so, teachers in these year groups struggle to fill the gaps in learning from the legacy of poor

teaching in other year groups.

- Pupils of all abilities are routinely given the same tasks to complete in lessons. This means that much of the learning is too difficult for the least able pupils and too easy for the most able.
- Provision for pupils with SEND is inadequate. These pupils are consistently given activities in lessons which do not meet their needs or help them to make progress. Some of the activities seen during the inspection were designed to keep pupils with SEND busy, rather than meet their learning needs.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have a positive attitude to school and to their work. They are resilient and do their best, even when teaching does not meet their needs.
- Pupils feel safe and happy at school. They show a very good understanding of how to keep safe in school and in the local community.
- Ziggy, the school dog, is a wonderful member of the school community. He supports the well-being of pupils and staff. Pupils care for him and know he will be there 'for a cuddle' if they need one. As one Year 6 pupil put it, 'He's part of the family.'

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are respectful, polite and friendly. They talk confidently about themselves, their school, their work and their aspirations. They are kind to each other and to visitors. They are articulate and interesting to speak to.
- Pupils play well together. Lunchtimes are pleasant and sociable. Some teachers help to make lunchtimes a social occasion by eating and chatting with pupils in the lunch hall.
- Pupils' conduct in lessons and as they move around the school is good. Playtimes are fun. There is an abundance of equipment and interesting areas in which to play. Older pupils are kind to younger pupils.
- There are a few instances of poor behaviour by a small number of pupils, which are dealt with effectively by leaders. The school uses external support well to support targeted pupils.
- There are some pupils who struggle to attend regularly. The safeguarding team provides excellent support for these families. While some barriers remain because of family circumstances, lower levels of attendance by some pupils are not an indicator of their attitude to school, which is positive.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Inadequate**

- Pupils in Year 6 are not prepared well for secondary school. Achievement, particularly

in reading and writing, has been well below the national average for the past three years.

- Books show that pupils across the school make variable progress from their starting points in writing. In some year groups, there is little or no progress evident in books. Standards in writing have declined for some pupils across the school this year.
- Pupils with SEND make poor progress from their different starting points.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils is poor and shows no signs of sustained improvement. Too few disadvantaged pupils have achieved the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- Progress in reading and writing across key stage 2 for the past three years has been broadly average. Inspection evidence shows that pupils in Year 6 are making at least average progress. However, this is a result of determined efforts to help Year 6 catch up following poor teaching in previous year groups. This legacy is set to continue. Pupils in key stage 2 do not make enough progress compared to their peers nationally. This is despite the more positive picture which the school's own assessment information presents.
- Progress in mathematics is stronger, and pupils in Year 6 have made above-average progress in this subject for the past two years. Again, this is the result of strong teaching in Year 6, which is not evident throughout the rest of key stage 2.
- Attainment at the end of key stage 1 was below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics in 2018. Again, standards in mathematics were closer to the national average than in other subjects. Disadvantaged pupils' attainment was well below the national average in reading and writing, and below the national average in mathematics.
- The proportion of pupils who reached the required standard in the phonics screening check has been below the national average for the past two years. Pupils in the current Year 1 are not making the progress of which they are capable in phonics because teachers' subject knowledge is weak.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Children benefit from a good start to school when they join the early years. The provision is well led and managed. Leaders of the phase said that they have benefited from the support and guidance of the headteacher. Leaders have created a collaborative, cohesive, successful team in this phase of the school.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Teachers analyse children's skills and knowledge accurately when they start school, and plan provision to meet their needs. They make sustained progress from their starting points.
- Parents of Nursery children told inspectors how quickly they have seen their children progress. Some parents report that the work to support and manage behaviour has had a positive impact on family lives at home. Parents are welcomed into the Nursery with its 'open-door' policy. This creates a happy community right from the start. Children are safe and happy.
- All areas of learning are reflected in the high-quality learning environments across the

early years. The outdoor and indoor spaces entice children into learning and playing constructively, collaboratively and effectively. Adults' interactions with children are skilful. They model language and vocabulary clearly. They ask skilful questions and, critically, they listen to children to assess their next steps in learning.

- Phonics teaching is strong in the early years. In the Reception classes, children can make sophisticated, plausible attempts at writing, using their early skills. They write confidently and, often, at length. Reading and books are given a high priority, and children learn to blend sounds for reading with confidence.
- Children's 'all about me' books chart the good progress that they make in all areas of learning. Practitioners make learning fun. For example, children returning from a PE lesson taught inspectors how to stretch and walk like a giraffe.
- Warm, caring relationships between adults and children underpin the early years provision. The very youngest children show confidence in their learning and are used to experiencing success. It is hard to leave the provision without being shown a piece of work a child is proud of, being asked to 'be the wolf' or, indeed, shown how to be the wolf!
- The proportion of children achieving a good overall level of development has been below the national average for the past two years. Current information indicates that the proportion of children on track to achieve a good level of development is showing improvement.



## School details

Unique reference number	140187
Local authority	Merton
Inspection number	10054408

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	290
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Ms Ellie Stacey
Headteacher	Ms Christine Smith
Telephone number	020 8648 4726
Website	<a href="http://www.benedictprimaryschool.org.uk/">www.benedictprimaryschool.org.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:benedictprimary@benedict.merton.sch.uk">benedictprimary@benedict.merton.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	15–16 November 2016

## Information about this school

- Benedict Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school became a sponsored academy with the Chapel Street Community Schools Trust in January 2014. The school was judged to require improvement by Ofsted in November 2016. The trust provides school improvement support and financial management to the school. The school's governing body works with the trust to support and challenge all aspects of the school's work.
- The early years provision consists of two full-time Reception classes and two part-time Nursery classes.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much higher than average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is much higher than average.

- The proportion of pupils with SEND is well above the national average.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all year groups. Observations were undertaken with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special needs coordinator and phase leaders.
- Inspectors met with members of the governing body and with a representative of the academy trust.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils to discuss their learning, hear some of them read and listen to their views on the school.
- Inspectors met with leaders to discuss their roles and the impact of their work.
- Inspectors reviewed the 27 responses to the staff survey and the seven responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also reviewed the school's own recent parent survey and spoke with parents as they brought their children to school.
- Inspectors talked to pupils in the lunch hall, at breakfast club and as they moved around the building and in the playground.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documents, including information on pupils' progress across the school, improvement plans, curriculum plans and checks on the quality of teaching. They examined school records relating to safeguarding and behaviour.
- Inspectors scrutinised a large sample of books to see the progress pupils have made across a range of subjects.

## Inspection team

Ruth Dollner, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Timothy Rome	Ofsted Inspector
Liz McIntosh	Ofsted Inspector

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