

Inspection of Bentham Community Primary School

Low Bentham Road, Bentham, Lancaster, Lancashire LA2 7BP

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 November 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Early years provision	Good
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Previous inspection grade	Good
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What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are inspired by the school values. These are to 'be proud, be yourself, be together, be friendly, be strong, be Bentham.' Pupils are polite, well mannered and fully engage in their learning. They speak kindly and respectfully about how people and families may be different. As one pupil said, 'Everyone needs to feel special as we are all unique and we are all different.'

Staff expect pupils to work hard and do their best. Parents and carers are invited into school for 'stay and learn' sessions, so that they can see this in action. Leaders hold regular 'coffee and cake' sessions for parents to talk about the curriculum and other areas of school life.

Pupils know that they are expected to follow the school rules and they usually do. Pupils say that bullying does not happen very often and if it does staff will sort it out quickly. Pupils told us that trusted adults are there whenever they need help. This makes them feel safe.

The school is in a small town. Leaders take advantage of all that the area has to offer. Firefighters from the local community come in to read with pupils. Visits to the local area give the curriculum meaning. For example, pupils took a short walk to the war memorial as part of their learning in history.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have made recent changes to the curriculum. They have carefully considered how the curriculum is planned for pupils in this school. Curriculum planning starts in the early years and is well sequenced. As a result, children make a good start in Nursery and Reception. Some pupils are taught in mixed age classes. Leaders have made sure that the curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This means pupils achieve well.

Staff receive the training and support that they need to teach the curriculum well. They have secure subject knowledge. The use of assessment in English, mathematics and science is well established. This helps teachers to plan the next steps for learning. In the foundation subjects, the way in which teachers check what pupils know and can remember is less effective. Leaders have only recently started to check what pupils already know in the wider curriculum. In addition, they need to consider the most important knowledge that pupils need to know and remember over time.

Reading is a priority. Leaders have introduced a new phonics scheme. This has led to greater consistency in the teaching of early reading. Most pupils keep up with the pace of the programme. Those who do not are identified quickly and given the support that they need to catch up. As a result, pupils read with increasing fluency over time. Leaders have invested in high-quality texts. These books are well

matched to pupils' reading ability. Pupils are encouraged to develop a love of reading and books. The school has strong links with the local library. Leaders provide books and resources to engage pupils' interest in reading. The school library is a welcoming place for pupils to enjoy reading.

The learning environment for early years, both inside and outside, helps children to learn. Staff support children effectively to be independent. As a result, children manage their own learning well. They take turns and share with each other. Children learn through well-planned opportunities and activities.

Pupils behave very well. They enjoy the wide range of things that they can do at playtimes. There is a strong connection between behaviour and learning. This is because secure routines are in place. Pupils know what is expected of them. They respond well to the system of rewards. These include effort stars and house points. House captains take pride in making sure that rosettes are given to the leading team in celebration assembly.

Leaders promote pupils' personal development through the well-considered personal, social and health education curriculum. Pupils are taught that fundamental British values help everyone to live together in modern Britain. This prepares them for their next stage of education. Pupils take pride in their responsibilities. Through the school council, pupils enjoy making suggestions about how they can improve the school. Pupils can attend a weekly sports club after school. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to develop other talents and interests further.

Leaders and governors are focused on ensuring that the school continues to improve. Leaders help staff to manage their time and the demands on their workload. Recent changes in staffing and leadership have meant that planned developments to the curriculum have taken longer than necessary. The curriculum is not currently fully embedded. Subject leaders know their subject well but need to establish from the planned curriculum what pupils know and remember over time. Leaders and governors have put plans in place to address this.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that there is strong pastoral support in school. This means that pupils are well cared for. Leaders have ensured that staff receive the training that they need to recognise pupils who may be at risk. Staff know what actions they need to take if they are concerned about a pupil. Leaders have developed a culture where it is safe for pupils to speak to adults if they are worried about anything.

Detailed checks are in place to make sure that all adults who work in school are safe to work with pupils. These are recorded accurately.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Until recently, curriculum planning has not identified what important knowledge from the wider curriculum needs to be prioritised for assessment and retrieval. As a result, pupils have gaps in their knowledge in subjects, such as history and science. Leaders need to ensure that teachers have clarity as to the content chosen for teaching and assessment, so that pupils embed this knowledge from the planned curriculum
- Pupils do not have access to a broad range of extra-curricular activities. This limits the opportunity to develop their talents and interests. Leaders should plan a programme of activities to support pupils' personal development.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	121380
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10199635
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	156
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mark Leather
Co-headteachers	Claire Pearson and Alison McGregor
Website	www.benthamcpschool.org.uk/
Date of previous inspection	23 and 24 February 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use alternative provision providers.
- The school has two co-headteachers. This arrangement has been in place since April 2022.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the two co-headteachers, assistant headteacher, and the special educational needs coordinator. Meetings were also held with the early years leader, subject leaders and class teachers.

- Inspectors met with representatives from the local governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into reading, mathematics, science and history. For each deep dive, inspectors looked at curriculum planning, conducted joint lesson visits with leaders, had discussions with teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at pupils' books and samples of their work.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, around the school and at playtime and lunchtime. They spoke with pupils about their views of the school and their learning, behaviour and safety.
- During the inspection, a range of safeguarding information was scrutinised, including the school's policies and records. Inspectors spoke to pupils and observed relationships between pupils and pupils and pupils and adults. The lead inspector also met with the designated safeguarding lead.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff and pupils and Ofsted's online survey for parents, Parent View. This included comments received via the free-text facility. They also talked to some parents in the school playground.

Inspection team

Nicola Beaumont, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

David Hodgkiss

Ofsted Inspector

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