

# Inspection of Bensham Manor School

Ecclesbourne Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey CR7 7BN

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Inspection dates: 5 and 6 June 2024

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Outstanding**

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The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Sixth-form provision

**Outstanding**

Previous inspection grade

Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are happy at this very special school. They thrive here. Pupils enjoy their lessons, and they remember a lot of what they are taught. Teachers check what pupils have remembered and build on this in the next lesson. The curriculum is ambitious and prepares pupils extremely well for their next step in the world. The positive relationships between adults and pupils are a particular strength of the school.

The school has very high expectations of pupils, expecting them to work hard and behave well. Pupils rise to this challenge. Pupils conduct themselves in an exemplary way around the school and in lessons. There is hardly any disruption to lessons, and if it does happen it is sorted out very quickly. Pupils are proud of their school and like to take on the extra responsibilities that they are given as they get older, such as working in the school café or helping younger pupils in the playground. Pupils say that bullying is not a problem at the school, and that pupils are friendly towards each other.

Pupils are keen to come to school, and they attend well. Pupils enjoy the many different clubs and activities that the school provides. These include forest explorations, residential trips and sports activities.

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

The curriculum at Bensham Manor School is excellent. Leaders and teachers have thought carefully and set out in detail exactly what pupils will learn at the school, in every subject and every year group, including in the sixth form. The curriculum is meticulously sequenced so that pupils follow a logical journey through the subjects, with each lesson building on the one before. Expert teachers bring the curriculum to life by choosing interesting resources and activities that spark pupils' curiosity and tap into what already interests them. For example, in art, they use work that stems from 'manga' illustrations and in English, they choose high-quality poetry and literature from diverse cultures as well as more traditional texts.

Reading is prioritised at the school, and there are high-quality books everywhere. Pupils access engaging information about books and literature features in all subjects across the curriculum. Pupils read every day and in every lesson. When pupils start at the school, staff assess them to see if they have the appropriate reading skills for their age. If they have fallen behind, the school puts tailored support in place so that pupils catch up quickly.

School staff know the needs of the pupils very well. They are quick to spot if a pupil needs extra help, and they support pupils to grow in confidence and independence. This means that pupils learn to do things for themselves, for example learning how to cook simple meals, how to eat healthy foods and how to keep mentally and physically well.

Pupils behave in an exemplary way. They learn how to manage their own emotions very well and develop positive strategies that they can use if they are feeling anxious or need help. Pupils learn what good behaviour looks like. They notice and compliment each other if they see good behaviour, for example by giving behaviour awards in assembly. Older pupils act as strong role models for younger pupils joining the school.

Teachers and other adults work in a positive and constructive way with the therapy team that the school has developed. Staff work together to adapt the curriculum for individual pupils and to strengthen pupils' well-being so that they are ready to learn.

Pupils learn about college and the world of work, through visits and work experience. Preparation for adult life starts as soon as they join the school. Pupils receive independent advice and guidance about future destinations, including advice about apprenticeships and supported internships. Most pupils leave at the end of Year 11 and continue their education at a local college. These transitions are very well planned and managed. A few pupils stay on in the sixth form for one or two more years to continue building the skills they need before moving on. Pupils are very well prepared for their next step.

The school prioritises the development of pupils' character. Pupils benefit from the focus placed on respect for different groups of people, including those with protected characteristics. Pupils talk confidently about what they have learned in personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE), including about safe and healthy relationships and how to be a responsible citizen.

Staff are very happy working at the school. They are committed to the education of the pupils and they feel exceptionally well supported.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	101851
<b>Local authority</b>	Croydon
<b>Inspection number</b>	10323297
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	244
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	14
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Martin Williams
<b>Headteacher</b>	Fiona Robinson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.benshammanor.co.uk">www.benshammanor.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	22 and 23 March 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Pupils at the school have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They all have an education, health and care plan. Most pupils have communication and interaction or autism as their primary need. Most pupils also have some cognition and learning needs as well.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other school leaders. Inspectors also met with some therapists employed by the school.
- Inspectors met with the chair of governors and some other governors.
- Inspectors met with representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, early reading, PSHCE, food technology and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for parents and for staff.

## Inspection team

Gary Pocock, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Joanna Tarrant	Ofsted Inspector
Teresa Neary	Ofsted Inspector

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