

Inspection of Benton Dene Primary School

Hailsham Avenue, Longbenton, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE12 8FD

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 July 2024

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged outstanding at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since June 2012.

What is it like to attend this school?

Everyone is valued in this welcoming and inspiring school. Staff set the highest of expectations for behaviour and learning. Staff care for pupils and pupils trust staff to help them. This helps pupils to feel happy and safe and to achieve highly. Typical comments from parents include: 'My child has thrived at the school because of the consistent approach to learning and pastoral care.'

Everyone is supported to achieve their best, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils achieve exceptionally well from early years to Year 6. Pupils develop a keen interest in learning and a strong work ethic.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. In early years, children are taught to show kindness to each other. Children listen attentively to staff. Older pupils understand and follow a clear strategy in mathematics of 'brain, book, board, buddy and boss'. This reminds pupils of how to solve problems independently when they are stuck.

All pupils benefit from an extensive range of high-quality wider curriculum experiences. Children in early years learned about baby animals when they received a visit from a local farm. Older pupils participate enthusiastically in educational and residential visits linked to the curriculum. For example, they visited London recently, where they experienced live theatre and the zoo.

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

Following the pandemic, the school has revised its curriculum to make clear the important knowledge and vocabulary that all pupils need to learn. The curriculum is highly inspiring. It is organised so that pupils revisit important knowledge to help them to connect prior learning to new, more complex curriculum content.

Strong foundations are established in the early years. For example, in Nursery, children practise counting in real-life and play situations until they confidently and accurately count a small number of items independently. Further up the school, in Year 4, pupils calculate with hundredths and decimals. They build knowledge as they use decimals, linking them to fractions. Pupils practise applying their number knowledge by solving increasingly complex problems.

Highly effective teaching strategies enable all pupils, including pupils with SEND, to remember important curriculum content. Teachers provide clear explanations, using their expert subject knowledge. Teachers make meaningful links between subjects. For example, in English, pupils in Year 2 write instructions about 'how to defend a castle'. Pupils recall the important historical facts about the defence systems of castles while using instructional language and presenting it in a logical order.

Reading is the bedrock of the school's curriculum. Pupils enjoy reading books from the diverse range of texts on offer. Some pupils can identify different story genres and name their favourite authors. Reading initiatives and termly book fairs promote

a love of reading. Phonics teaching by highly skilled staff helps children to get off to the best start in the early years. Pupils practise reading books that are matched to the sounds that they know. Pupils who have gaps in their phonics knowledge are identified early, receive targeted support and catch up quickly. This means that pupils read confidently and accurately. The school ensures that pupils consistently apply their phonics knowledge in their writing.

The learning environment in the early years is calm but highly stimulating. Children learn to play and work to a high standard independently. They are fully absorbed in the language- and number-rich environment indoors and outside. Children persevere when they experience carefully planned challenging tasks. They demonstrate resilience and high levels of self-control when grappling with complex activities.

Pupils with SEND make exceptional progress. The school explores all ways to overcome any barriers to learning, such as drawing on staff's expertise in school and seeking advice from external specialists. Pupils in the resourced provision receive high levels of care where their needs are fully met through appropriate support. This includes movement breaks, use of ear defenders and weighted blankets to support pupils' sensory needs. Parents appreciate the support from school to help their children at home.

The school's provision to enhance pupils' personal development is exceptional. The curriculum to promote different faiths, cultures and diversity helps prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. Attendance is high because pupils love being in school and do not want to miss the exciting curriculum on offer. The extended extra-curricular activities include computing, yoga, mini rugby, debating and chess. Pupils relish their leadership roles, such as being eco-councillors.

The school benefits from highly effective leadership that provides expertise to support other schools in the local authority. Governors fulfil their role exceptionally well. They provide pertinent support and challenge to leaders. Staff are overwhelmingly positive and proud to work at this school. They appreciate leaders' actions to reduce their workload. All staff feel trusted to be innovative in ways that are right for the pupils.

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

Unique reference number	108604
Local authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	10297255
Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	464
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Janet Hunter
Headteacher	Ashleigh Lawrence
Website	https://bentondenepriamaryschool.schooljotter2.com/
Dates of previous inspection	14 and 15 June 2012, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of North Tyneside Learning Trust. It is a local authority maintained school.
- The headteacher was appointed to her substantive headteacher post in March 2024, having previously been the acting headteacher for the school for 18 months.
- The school has specially resourced provision for pupils with speech, language and communication needs. Currently, 12 pupils access the resourced provision.
- The school runs breakfast clubs and after-school clubs for pupils who attend the school.
- The school does not currently 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.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke to the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher, the special educational needs coordinators and the designated safeguarding lead.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the governing body and held a telephone conversation with the chair of governors. A telephone conversation was also held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history and music. 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. The lead inspector observed some pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors discussed the curriculum in some other subjects, including English (writing), science, design and technology and modern foreign languages (French).
- 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.
- The inspectors took account of the views of pupils, staff and parents, as gathered through discussions and Ofsted surveys.

Inspection team

Kathryn McDonald, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Sharon Common	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Baines	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
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M1 2WD

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