

# Inspection of Benedict Academy

Church Road, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 3BE

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Inspection dates:	8 and 9 October 2024
The quality of education	<b>Outstanding</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Early years provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Felicity Gilmore. This school is part of STEP multi-academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Paul Glover, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ross Gardner. There is also an executive director of primary, Tim Mills, who is responsible for this school and others in the trust.

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

This is an exceptional school where pupils flourish. The school has the highest expectations for what pupils can achieve. Pupils, including children in the early years, rise to these expectations at every opportunity.

Pupils take great pride in their school and their behaviour is impeccable. They work hard in lessons and thrive when challenged. Pupils make exceptional progress from their starting points in the early years to the end of Year 6. The school's published outcomes are high.

Pupils are very well supported to develop more widely. They feel happy and safe. Pupils are taught to be responsible and caring citizens. They represent the school's values including 'commitment' and 'aspiration', at every opportunity. For example, by supporting charities in the local area or taking on positions of responsibility in school, such as pupil librarians or as a playground buddy.

The school's curriculum is rich and ambitious. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported to access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. Pupils visit a wide range of interesting places such as museums and art galleries. They talk enthusiastically about how such visits help them in their learning.

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

The well-designed school curriculum builds up pupils' knowledge and skills over time. Leaders have thought carefully about the key knowledge they want pupils to learn and the order in which they should learn it. For example, in history, children in the early years consider their personal stories before they go on to study the Great Fire of London and the Roman Empire in the older years. Teachers encourage pupils to consider how history affects the way we live today.

Teachers present new knowledge clearly. They make sure pupils have secure foundations before moving onto new learning. As a result, pupils become independent and resilient learners. For example, in mathematics, pupils talk confidently about how 'making mistakes' means they can improve.

Teachers check pupils' understanding regularly and correct any misconceptions quickly. They use assessment well to measure the impact of their teaching and address any gaps in learning. Teachers and support staff have the knowledge and skills needed to help pupils with SEND or those who are new to learning English, to excel. The teaching in the early years is equally supportive and challenging. Children build their language and communication skills as well as their social and emotional development. For example, they learn to take turns, develop friendships, and work and play with other children.

The school places great emphasis on early reading. From the start of Reception, pupils learn to read using phonics. Pupils and those at the early stages of reading develop the phonic knowledge and skills they need to read with fluency. Teachers make sure that

pupils read books which match the sounds they know. They identify quickly pupils who are not as confident and put in place a range of appropriate support. This means pupils, including those with SEND, become confident and enthusiastic readers. Pupils are introduced to a diverse range of challenging texts as they move through the year groups. In addition, the school ensures that pupils write accurately using a wide range of vocabulary.

The school has a sharp focus on raising pupils' attendance rates. As a result, attendance has improved significantly. Leaders work closely with families and external agencies to develop pupils' positive habits of regular attendance. Pupils' attitudes to learning are exceptional. They are polite and courteous.

Leaders have designed a rich and age-appropriate programme for pupils' personal development. Pupils are taught to respect difference in the world. They value learning about the importance of equality and diversity. Pupils also appreciate how the school pushes them to achieve their personal best. They learn how to stay safe, including when online, and how look after their physical and mental health.

Staff are happy and proud to work at Benedict Academy. They talk positively about the huge improvements the school has made in recent years. Staff appreciate the efforts leaders make to reduce their workload and promote their well-being.

Trustees support leaders while holding them tightly to account for the quality of education at the school. They take their safeguarding duties seriously. Parents and carers are positive about the school and the caring ethos it promotes. Most pupils told inspectors that their school 'is the best'.

## **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>	147970
<b>Local authority</b>	Merton
<b>Inspection number</b>	10346069
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	165
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Ross Gardner
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Paul Glover
<b>Headteacher</b>	Felicity Gilmore
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.benedictacademy.org">www.benedictacademy.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Benedict Academy converted to become an academy in May 2020. When its predecessor school, Benedict Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate for overall effectiveness.
- The school is part of STEP multi-academy trust.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club.
- 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. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- 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.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other senior leaders, including those responsible for safeguarding. They also met with members of the governing body and representatives from the trust.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history, and art and design. These involved discussions with curriculum leaders and teachers, visits to lessons, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils.
- Inspectors also considered 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.
- The views of pupils, parents and staff were considered through discussions and through looking at information collected from Ofsted's online surveys.

### **Inspection team**

Susan Maguire, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lisa Smith

His Majesty's Inspector

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