

Bensham Manor School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101851
Local Authority	Croydon
Inspection number	335794
Inspection dates	14–15 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Sarah Mascall

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	165
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nicky Selwyn
Headteacher	Philip Poulton
Date of previous school inspection	9 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 18 lessons, spending in the region of 50% of their time looking at learning. Eighteen teachers were observed. Meetings were held with governors, staff, visiting professionals and students. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school's procedures and policies for safeguarding children, records of students' progress and the 46 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the effectiveness of assessment to ensure students know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve
- how well data regarding students' progress are analysed and information used to ensure that all make the progress they are capable of
- the effectiveness of action planning to bring about improvements and enable staff to take on more responsibility
- the effectiveness of the curriculum in supporting learning and students' personal development
- the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures, including risk assessments, in supporting students and keeping them safe.

Information about the school

Bensham Manor caters for students with a wide range of special educational needs. The majority of students (60%) have moderate learning difficulties and about 30% have a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorders (ASD). A small number of students have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. A very small minority of students speak English as an additional language.

The school has been through a difficult period with a number of staff changes and absences. A new headteacher started in September 2009.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with Section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to students' progress in mathematics and science, aspects of the curriculum and the school's systems for ensuring students know what they have to do to improve.

The new headteacher has, through rigorous checks, identified the strengths and areas for improvement within the school. His assessment of the school's position, which has been shared with staff and governors, is accurate. He has, together with his senior managers, taken quick action to bring about improvements and this is already having a positive impact on the school's provision. He has strengthened the senior management team through the appointment of effective practitioners and they are actively involved in bringing about change. During the autumn term senior managers reviewed the school's data. As a result there is a more accurate understanding of students' progress and this is leading to improved target setting procedures. The appointment of a new leader for the provision for students with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) has brought about improvements in the quality of teaching and assessment and there are now greater opportunities for students with ASD to be included in whole-school activities. An improved approach to the management of behaviour has resulted in a reduction in incidents and temporary exclusions. There is still much to do but this is clearly known by senior managers and the positive changes that have already been made, together with the commitment of staff to bring about continued improvement, ensure the school is securely placed to develop further.

The progress and achievement of students is inadequate overall because of the weaknesses in the quality of teaching in mathematics and science. Progress in English is satisfactory overall. For students in Years 10 and 11, progress is good and often outstanding in English because teaching is very effective. In mathematics the range of teaching methods is very limited and resources are not used effectively to make lessons interesting. In both mathematics and science there is insufficient attention paid to meeting the wide range of students' special needs within each class. The curriculum for mathematics and science is inadequate in supporting students' learning. In English the curriculum ensures that students have a satisfactory and often good range of experiences that support their learning. The limited links between subjects prevent students from consistently developing their skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. Progress for students in the ASD provision is at least

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satisfactory because teaching is well focused on their needs.

There are strengths in teaching including the management of behaviour and the strong relationships that exist between staff and students. For older students in English and in the teaching of students with ASD there is good practice in assessment and the use of students' targets for learning. There are appropriate plans in place to ensure this is consistent across the school. The marking of work and feedback to students does not always help them to understand what they need to do to improve. Opportunities are missed to check what students have learnt at the end of lessons and to give them the opportunity to judge how well they have done. The good quality care and guidance in place supports students' personal development well. It ensures students feel safe in school and many comment about how much they enjoy going to school. Safeguarding and child protection procedures are good and well supported by strong links with outside agencies. Parents consider that links with the school are much improved since September and recently introduced ways of communicating, such as the 'blog', are keeping them well informed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement and progress and the quality of teaching in mathematics and science to at least satisfactory by October 2010 by:
 - ensuring that teaching is closely matched to the learning needs of students
 - using a wider range of teaching methods and resources to make lessons more interesting.
- Improve the curriculum to ensure there are good opportunities for students to develop their basic skills across all subjects by October 2010.
- Develop systems for assessing the progress of students so that they have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve by:
 - improving the quality of marking to ensure that students are more aware of what they have to do to improve
 - consistently using students' individual targets for learning to enable them to make better progress in their skills
 - making better use of the ends of lessons to check what students have learnt and to enable them to evaluate how well they have done.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

Students clearly enjoy school and this is reflected in their good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning in lessons. Many concentrate very well and show interest in their work. In an outstanding English lesson, Year 10 made very good progress responding to questions about Macbeth and showing good knowledge of the play. In practical subjects such as design and technology, students plan their designs and work independently, making good progress. Students in a Year 7 science lesson though, showed limited recall of previous work and found it difficult to explain the work they had done in the lesson.

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In mathematics students settle to tasks but the work is often unchallenging and more able students complain that the work is too easy. Work is not consistently matched to students' abilities and less able students struggle, for example with counting on, and so fail to make enough progress. For those students taught in the ASD provision progress in lessons is often good; there is no significant variation in the progress of different groups including students who speak English as an additional language.

An impact of the recent changes is the improvement in attendance and this reflects students' positive attitudes. Students comment that they feel safe in school and that behaviour is good. They enjoy the opportunities to play sport and there is good participation in many of the activities. An impressive feature of lunchtimes is the number of students with healthy lunch boxes and their good awareness of what is healthy food. There are good opportunities for students to have a say in how the school is run and they appreciate that their views are being listened to. However their involvement in the wider community is not as well developed. Because of the weaknesses in students' basic skills and the limited opportunities within the curriculum for students to develop the skills they need, preparation for life when they leave school is inadequate.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	*
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

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The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4 3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is variable across the school. Where teaching is effective, such as in English in Years 10 and 11 and the classes for pupils with ASD, there is a good focus on ensuring that students know what they are going to learn and constant checks are made to ensure that they understand what they are doing. Teachers remind students about the levels they are working at and what they need to do to improve. However this good practice is not evident in mathematics and science and the use of a wide range of resources is not effective. For example, teaching assistants are not well informed about their role and often have to check what they are supposed to be doing. In most other subjects teaching assistants are deployed well and support learning effectively. Time is not always used well and the ends of lessons are often rushed preventing students from discussing what they have learnt and assessing how well they have done.

The curriculum is undergoing a review by senior managers because they recognise that it is unsatisfactory. Plans are in place to make changes and the school is already developing links with colleges and local schools to extend students' opportunities, particularly in providing a wider range of choices in Years 10 and 11. There are limited opportunities for students to develop their basic skills across a range of subjects. However, there are strengths in the creative and physical subjects and this is reflected in the school's range of awards including Artsmark, Activemark and Sportsmark. The satisfactory curriculum for the students with ASD is developing well, enabling students to be included within other groups.

Arrangements for the care and welfare of students are good and benefit from strong links with other agencies. Vulnerable students are supported well and this has enabled many to improve their behaviour and attitude to school. Students are encouraged to take more responsibility in managing how they behave. The number of temporary exclusions has been halved and there are far fewer incidents of inappropriate behaviour. This has enabled more students to make better progress in their learning in many subjects. Safeguarding procedures are good and procedures and training for child protection are effective.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4 4
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The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	4
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The impact of the new headteacher is recognised by staff, students, governors, parents and carers. They comment on the improvements in the school and are positive about the developments. Senior managers say they feel empowered to take on new challenges and are more involved in decision-making processes. Middle managers are now becoming more involved in analysing information about students' progress in order to improve learning. Governors are well led and there is a good working relationship between the Chair of the Governing Body and the headteacher. There are high expectations that more governors will become involved through links with subject areas. Parents and carers are well informed and feel they can approach the headteacher with any concerns. Senior managers recognise that the inaccuracies in students' data in the past have prevented them from ensuring that there is equality of opportunity for all students. Action has already been taken to rectify this through a review of the data and it is now being monitored closely. The school tackles any incidents of discrimination very effectively. The promotion of community cohesion, although satisfactory, is being extended to widen the range of opportunities for students. Senior managers are putting in place systems for evaluating this aspect and ensuring there is a clearer focus on its impact on students' learning.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

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Views of parents and carers

Overall parents are very positive about the recent improvements to the school. Many comment on the headteacher's impact. One parent wrote that the headteacher 'always makes himself available no matter how busy his schedule' while another says 'the school has greatly improved since the new head started'. A small number of parents raised concerns about behaviour but as one commented, the headteacher is trying 'to bring discipline back to Bensham Manor'. The inspection team judge that behaviour is now good. There were a few concerns about the amount of homework students had, although the team observed a number of classes being given work to take home. Where individual concerns were raised the inspectors summarised these and reported to the school without identifying any individual.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bensham Manor School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 46 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 165 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	27	59	18	39	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	26	57	19	41	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	18	39	23	50	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	28	29	63	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	17	37	27	59	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	39	21	46	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	12	26	30	65	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	15	33	24	52	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	52	20	43	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	41	21	46	3	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	28	24	52	2	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	20	43	25	54	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	23	50	22	48	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



16 January 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Bensham Manor School, Thornton Heath, Surrey CR7 7BN

Thank you very much for being so kind and friendly when we visited your school. We really enjoyed talking to you and seeing how hard you work. We were pleased to see how much you enjoyed school and how well behaved you are.

Although you do well in some subjects we had concerns about how well you do in mathematics and science. As a result we have said that your school is not providing a good enough education for you. We have given it a 'notice to improve'. This means that some inspectors will come and visit the school again to make sure that things have improved. The new headteacher and senior managers have a clear plan for the improvement of your education and we are confident that they will make the right changes.

The school looks after you well and keeps you safe. We were impressed at how much you know about keeping healthy and eating the right foods. Your parents and carers are positive about the changes that have happened since September and the school makes sure they know what is going on.

We have asked the school to:

- make sure that teaching in mathematics and science is better so that you can learn more and make greater progress
- improve what you are taught in school so that the subject teachers make sure you always improve your literacy and numeracy
- make sure you have a clearer understanding of how well you are doing and what you need to do to make better progress.

You can all help by making sure you carry on coming to school regularly and asking your teachers at the end of each lesson to tell you how well you are doing.

We wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Mascal

Lead inspector

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