

Inspection of Benthal Primary School

Benthal Road, Hackney, London N16 7AU

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 June 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders encourage pupils to respect one another and to help others. They guide pupils to love learning and to be confident. Many parents and carers commented that this is a friendly school and that pupils make friends easily.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils and they expect pupils to work hard. Pupils meet these expectations. They do so by focusing in class and by behaving in a kind and thoughtful manner. They are safe and they said that they enjoy attending school.

Leaders support pupils to look after their mental health. Leaders have made this a priority following pupils return to school after the COVID-19 pandemic. Pupils are encouraged to eat well and to exercise regularly. For example, pupils are taught to cycle in Years 5 and 6. Teachers foster pupils' understanding of the environment as part of the zero-carbon project in Year 5.

Leaders arrange many visits and educational outings for pupils. In Year 5, pupils have the opportunity practise their Spanish language skills through a visit to a partner school in Madrid. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 take part in residential journeys each year. Leaders ensure that all pupils learn to play musical instruments, including the ukulele and the violin. Older pupils read with younger pupils.

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

Leaders have designed a broad curriculum. They have ensured that pupils have time to study all subjects in the national curriculum with sufficient rigour.

In most subjects, leaders have thought in detail about what pupils should learn and when. In subjects such as history, leaders thinking is well developed. Here, they have outlined what pupils need to know in each topic and the key vocabulary pupils should understand and remember. In science, pupils learn about opaque and transparent materials in Year 4. In Year 6, pupils build on this knowledge as they learn about translucent materials.

In some areas of the early years, such as in early reading and mathematics, curriculum thinking is clear. However, in some other areas of the early years, curriculum thinking is not as coherent as it could be. In these areas, the school has not considered what children learn and when in as much detail as they could.

Usually, teachers provide pupils with work in class that helps them to remember what they have been taught. For example, in Spanish, pupils in Year 5 practised pronouncing vocabulary until they had mastered it. Teachers have appropriate subject knowledge. Subject specialist staff bring very strong subject expertise.

Typically, teachers explain new information clearly, and check that pupils understand what they have been taught. However, sometimes teachers do not routinely check that pupils know and understand key learning before they move on. This means that sometimes a few pupils struggle to understand new information.

The school's reading programme is well established. Leaders make sure that staff are suitably trained. Leaders know which pupils require support to build their reading confidence. Teachers provide weaker readers with support to help them to catch up with their peers.

Leaders identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including children in the early years. They work with parents and external agencies to support pupils with SEND. Generally, teachers adapt teaching and resources so that pupils with SEND follow the same curriculum as their peers. Leaders work closely with staff to make sure that pupils with SEND receive the help that they may require in class.

Pupils focus in class and listen carefully to their teachers. Pupils are polite and respectful towards each other and to staff. Teachers deal with any rare disruptions effectively. This means that pupils learn without distraction.

The personal development programme is wide-ranging. Pupils vote to elect members of the school council. They are taught about world religions and visit a variety of places of worship. Leaders organise visits to theatres, live-music events and local libraries. Pupils attend after-school clubs, such as street dance, cooking, sewing and tennis.

Leaders let parents know how their children are doing at school. For example, in the early years, leaders communicate with parents regularly and show them what their children have learned. Those responsible for governance prioritise improving the quality of education at the school. They support and professionally challenge leaders in equal measure. They know their statutory responsibilities and carry these out effectively. Staff said that school leaders listen to them and consider their workload and well-being. They also said that they appreciate the range of professional development opportunities that leaders provide.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff are alert to the local safeguarding risks that pupils may face. All staff know the signs to look out for that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Staff report any concerns that they have, however small. Leaders act swiftly, where necessary, to ensure that pupils are safe and supported. They work closely with local agencies too. Leaders have designed the personal development curriculum to include teaching on topics including keeping safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has not systematically identified and sequenced the core knowledge and skills that children need to know throughout some areas of learning in the early years. This means that children do not develop equally secure knowledge, skills and vocabulary across some areas of the early years foundation stage. The school should ensure that children follow a well-sequenced curriculum from the beginning of the early years and ensure that this curriculum logically builds on children's prior knowledge.
- Sometimes, teaching does not reflect leaders' intentions accurately. For example, sometimes work provided does not support pupils to learn and remember the intended content. Occasionally, teachers do not check that pupils know and understand what they have been taught before they teach new knowledge. This means that pupils do not learn all that leaders intend. The school should ensure that the curriculum is delivered so that all pupils, including those with SEND, learn and remember more.

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 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	100260
Local authority	Hackney
Inspection number	10210953
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	295
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Stella Sandford
Headteacher	Louise Drew
Website	www.benthal.hackney.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 September 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses no alternative providers.

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 held meetings with the headteacher and other senior leaders. Inspectors met with leaders with responsibility for pupils with SEND, personal, social and health education, behaviour, early reading and pupils' wider development.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, science and languages.

- For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
 - Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
 - Inspectors considered the school's policies and procedures for safeguarding. Inspectors looked at documentation relating to safeguarding, including the school's record of pre-employment checks.
 - Inspectors met with representatives from the local authority.
 - Inspectors considered the respective responses to Ofsted's online surveys for parents, staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Guy Forbat, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Daniel Burton	Ofsted Inspector
Lorraine Slee	Ofsted Inspector

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