

Inspection of Benchill Primary School

Benchill Road, Wythenshawe, Manchester M22 8EJ

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 November 2024

The quality of education **Requires improvement**

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?

Recently established leaders have designed a curriculum that has increased the ambition for pupils. The school is in the early stages of developing this curriculum. Pupils do not learn consistently well across all areas. By the time that they leave the school, too many pupils do not have the reading skills that they need for their future learning. The school is taking the right actions to improve the education that pupils receive. The impact of these actions is not yet apparent in several subjects.

Pupils behave consistently well. They understand what staff expect of them, and rise to these expectations. Pupils treat each other, and those around them, with the utmost respect. Leaders make sure everyone in the school community understands the importance of attendance. On the whole, pupils' attendance is improving.

The positive relationships between staff and pupils are the heartbeat of this school. The school brings the curriculum to life with many opportunities that enthuse pupils. For example, pupils learn to play musical instruments and take part in author visits. This inspires pupils to think about their aspirations for their own futures. The school's values of 'succeeding together' and 'celebrating difference' help to create an inclusive culture in which pupils feel happy and safe.

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

The school is in the process of developing the curriculum. In some subjects, the school has not defined the most important knowledge that it wants pupils to learn. Pupils do not connect new learning to the things that they already know. This limits what pupils know and remember.

In some subjects, such as mathematics and science, improvements to the curriculum are gaining traction. This is beginning to impact positively on pupils. However, staff do not routinely check that pupils have remembered their learning. Pupils have too many gaps in their knowledge. Where the curriculum is more successful, for example in music, pupils do remember their learning. They use musical terminology accurately and develop their ability to play instruments proficiently.

The school identifies pupils' needs accurately and provides effective support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). If pupils have different starting points the school makes sure that teachers adapt the delivery of the curriculum appropriately. This helps pupils to successfully develop their confidence and communication skills. However, where the curriculum is less well developed, this impacts negatively on all pupils, including those with SEND.

In some aspects of reading, such as phonics, pupils are gaining the knowledge that they need. In the early years, the school makes sure that children develop their phonics knowledge to become confident readers. If pupils, including those with SEND, struggle with reading, staff give them effective support to catch up. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the books that they read in class. They enjoy the way that their teachers bring

these stories to life. However, too many pupils do not develop the important reading skills that they need to access their future learning. Pupils are not taught how to answer questions about the texts that they read consistently well. Some pupils struggle to answer questions independently. The school is in the early stages of developing the reading curriculum. These changes have not had time to impact on pupils' learning.

In the early years, staff help children to build positive relationships. Children cooperate consistently well with each other. Staff encourage children to use new vocabulary and extend their talk. Staff share high-quality texts that inspire children to read. Children develop their mathematical understanding well. Teachers are experts in helping children to gain the knowledge that they need to be ready for Year 1 and beyond.

Across the school, pupils behave well in lessons. Learning is rarely disrupted.

The school's work to promote pupils' personal development is very well developed. Pupils talk with maturity about issues such as healthy relationships and staying safe online. Pupils understand that they live in a diverse world. They treat those around them with kindness and respect.

The school deliberately broadens pupils' experiences by providing many opportunities to widen their interests. Pupils apply to be 'mini-police' and use these roles to improve their school community, for example by raising awareness of litter. Some pupils take part in science clubs and sewing clubs. Others take part in debating clubs or dance clubs. These opportunities inspire pupils to try new things and to contribute positively to their school and community.

Governors are knowledgeable about the school. They check that leaders are focused on the right things to improve the quality of education for pupils. The workload and well-being of all staff is a priority for governors and leaders. Staff are proud to work at this school. They are committed to the community that they serve.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has not identified the important knowledge that pupils require clearly enough in several subjects. In these areas, pupils struggle to acquire and remember the important knowledge that they need. The school should ensure that it has identified the important knowledge that pupils need to learn and that teachers are supported to deliver this effectively.
- Staff do not routinely check that pupils have understood new learning. When this happens, some pupils develop gaps in their knowledge. The school should ensure that

staff are suitably equipped to check that pupils' knowledge is secure and that any misconceptions are addressed.

- The school has not ensured that pupils are taught the skills that they need to answer questions about the texts that they read sufficiently well. Many pupils do not achieve well in reading. The school should ensure that the reading curriculum supports staff to successfully develop pupils' reading skills in readiness for future learning.

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	132241
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10348227
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	503
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Rachel Rosewell
Headteacher	Steven Rooney
Website	www.benchill.manchester.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	11 and 12 September 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up their post in September 2024.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision.
- The school runs a breakfast club and after-school clubs for pupils in the school.

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). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 met with senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with the governing body, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector also held a meeting with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history, music and science. 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. The lead inspector also listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 scrutinised a range of other documentation, including governor meeting minutes and leaders' evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors also spoke informally to pupils to gather their views on school life.
- To gather the views of parents and carers, inspectors took account of the responses from Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. Inspectors also met with parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors took account of the staff survey and met formally with staff to gather their views.

Inspection team

Jen Sloan, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sue Mills

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