

Bentham Community Primary School

Low Bentham Road, Low Bentham, Lancaster, LA2 7BP

Inspection dates

23–24 February 2016

Overall effectiveness

Good

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school's motto 'building our future, step by step' has been lived out in reality. The headteacher, assistant headteacher and governing body have created a strong team which has rapidly improved the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, outcomes for pupils have improved and continue to do so.
- Teachers' use of assessment information to check how well pupils are doing, and to help them plan lessons which match the needs of pupils, is strong.
- The progress pupils make across the curriculum, including in reading, writing and mathematics, is good. Pupils' progress accelerates in Year 6 and is outstanding in this year. Consequently, by the end of their time at school, pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Disadvantaged pupils make as much progress from their starting points as their classmates do. Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make equally good progress.
- Children in the early years make outstanding progress. Assessment information is used to plan activities for individual children. As a result, children develop a deep curiosity, a love of learning and are becoming more independent in their learning.
- The behaviour of the pupils is good, as is their attitude to learning. Pupils are kind and considerate. Attendance has improved because pupils enjoy school. Parents are increasingly supportive of the school.
- Systems to keep pupils safe are strong.
- Leaders place a high priority on developing pupils' good cultural awareness, and their understanding of what it is to be British. A wide range of special events and activities are on offer, such as the class orchestra, visits to London and parliament, religious education day and a focus on different types of family.
- The assistant headteacher has been pivotal in developing the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning. As a result, leaders know the school's strengths and what needs to be better. They have good plans in place for the school's next steps.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The proportion of pupils making more than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics across the school is not high enough.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to develop writing at length, spelling and mental arithmetic.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to secure consistently rapid rates of progress for all pupils by:
 - increasing the opportunities for pupils to write at length in different topic areas
 - improving the quality of pupils' spelling
 - developing pupils' mental arithmetic skills
 - increasing the number of opportunities for pupils to become independent in their learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Since the last inspection the governing body has strengthened the senior leadership of the school by appointing an assistant headteacher. Together, the headteacher, governing body and assistant headteacher have created a strong team ethos among the staff. The staff have worked together to improve the quality of provision at school 'step by step'. High expectations and determination have led to an improvement in outcomes for all pupils, and much higher quality teaching at school. Actions taken are ensuring that the school continues to improve.
- Staff and governors say that the school is much more effective since the last inspection. Inspection evidence confirms this. School leaders are aware that the school can become even better, and are working hard to ensure that the rates of progress that pupils make are consistently strong.
- Middle leaders are increasingly confident about their role in helping to improve standards at school. All are working successfully with senior leaders to drive improvement across the school.
- The use of information about pupil performance is strikingly good. This is used to shape learning in classes, alter the curriculum and intervene when pupils fall behind. This has been pivotal in improving the quality of education at school. Such systems are extremely refined in early years and, as a result, the quality of provision and the progress these children make are outstanding.
- Systems to check and improve the quality of teaching are also good. These are linked to a wide-ranging staff training and development programme, which supports both teachers and teaching assistants. The school has benefited from good support from local authority staff and the Harrogate and Rural Teaching School Alliance to this end.
- The performance of teachers and teaching assistants is well managed. There are clear links between the effectiveness of teachers and pay progression. Targets for individuals are based on school-wide priorities. For example, recent lower performance in mathematics led to all teachers having professional targets linked to pupil progress in this subject.
- The curriculum is characterised by a strong focus on developing cultural awareness, and developing well-rounded citizens. Four school priorities are visible within the curriculum, and in additional opportunities on offer to students: higher levels of achievement; development of respect; pupils' understanding of themselves as global citizens; and pupils' understanding of their local heritage. Practically, these are seen through events and topics such as anti-bullying week, religious education day, the annual school production (*A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 2015), and visits within the local area.
- The school places a high priority on developing pupils' understanding of themselves as British citizens. Teachers make links to 'Britishness' explicit in lessons or other areas of school provision. For example, the school council is an example of democracy, and learning about different types of family an example of tolerance and respect for others.
- The school has worked hard to develop positive relationships with parents and the local community and this work is beginning to bear fruit. Curriculum evenings and coffee mornings have helped improve communication between parents and the school. Parents report how appreciative they are of the improved level of communication.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium funding is used well to extend the range of sporting activities on offer to the pupils. School leaders have also ensured that the pupil premium funding (additional government funding) is used effectively. Pupils benefit from a variety of support, including one-to-one support, small-group work, and financial support to access additional curriculum opportunities. These are having a positive impact on the progress these pupils are making. Initiatives are evaluated and any that are not having a positive impact on these pupils are stopped.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors are now an effective force in providing support and challenge to the school. They have reviewed their structures and improved the way they operate. They now have a much more 'hands-on' approach. There are named governors linked to curriculum areas and school priorities. Governors' visits to school and interviews with members of staff have increased their impact.
 - Governors receive good information about the progress pupils are making, the standards they reach and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. This enables them to ask pertinent questions and challenge the school to further improve when weaknesses are identified. They understand how teachers' performance is managed and the links between this and pay progression.

- Governors manage the financial resources available to the school well, including the impact of the pupil premium and PE and sport premium.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Robust systems are in place to ensure that keeping pupils safe is a high priority. Regular training helps staff make sure they are able to identify any pupils who are at potential risk. The school works well with outside agencies to support more vulnerable students and their families. Some practical examples of keeping children safe were seen on inspection, including good health and safety arrangements for children in the early years in relation to ice in the outdoor area.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The quality of teaching across the school has improved significantly since the last inspection. Teaching is now consistently good and some is outstanding.
- The most striking aspect of teaching at the school is the extent to which teachers observe the pace of learning and then shape lessons and planning accordingly. Teachers are skilled at identifying when pupils are beginning to fall behind, or do not grasp a concept. They use this assessment to plan additional support, or modify next steps in planning. Some practical examples of this were seen during the inspection. One pupil, who was making rapid progress in a mathematics lesson, was spotted by the class teacher who immediately altered groupings to provide more challenge. Another example is the way in which the teachers' explanations were altered to support a pupil whose first language is not English.
- The feedback and marking provided to pupils is of a high standard. The school uses 'bricks' and 'clouds': bricks show pupils their next steps, and clouds point to areas of success. Pupils fully understand this system. In line with the school's policy, they are given time to read and respond to any feedback given, which helps them in their next steps.
- Teaching assistants deliver good-quality support for individuals and groups of pupils. Teachers guide them well, and use them effectively to support learning. The school knows the pupils as individuals, and programmes to help those with special educational needs or disability are strong. Their specific needs are well addressed and, as a result, they make as good progress as their classmates.
- Phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is well taught throughout the school. As a result, pupils read well. Pupils say that they enjoy reading. Reading records provide a valuable link between home and school, helping teachers to check pupils' reading and to encourage them to read a wide range of books. Where pupils are at risk of falling behind in their reading, teachers identify this and support them to catch-up to where they should be.
- Homework is used well to further practise pupils' skills and to extend learning.
- English and mathematics are well taught across the school. Leaders are aware of the strengths of teaching. They have identified that sometimes opportunities to develop writing at length, spelling and mental arithmetic are not developed as well as they could be. They are working effectively to plug these gaps.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying. They say that they feel very safe at school and parents agree. Where there is any unkind behaviour, pupils say that this is dealt with swiftly. The work of the pupils and staff in developing an understanding of children's rights is helping pupils take responsibility for their own behaviour.
- Pupils understand the importance of being healthy. They understand the importance of exercise and healthy eating and relish the range of opportunities on offer in the school to be healthy and active.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. Many throw themselves into activities in lessons, enjoy talking to their peers about their learning and focus well on the task in hand. Occasionally, a few pupils can become disengaged from learning or lose concentration, but this is uncommon. Sometimes there are too few opportunities for the pupils to become independent in their learning.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- There are high standards of behaviour in school. Pupils' behaviour in the playground, in the dining hall and as they move around school is very good.
- Pupils are polite and courteous to each other and to adults. They display good manners.
- Pupils are very proud of their new school and treat it with respect. The school is well ordered and tidy. There are many displays of pupils' work and topics that are being studied.
- The school has worked hard to raise levels of attendance, which have increased recently. The rates of persistent absence are much lower than those found nationally. The school analyses any underlying causes and works with families effectively to help improve attendance.
- The majority of parents who responded to Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents) confirmed that behaviour at school is good.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- The standards that pupils reach and the progress that they make have both improved since the last inspection. The proportion of Year 6 pupils that made expected progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics in 2015 was higher than that found nationally. The proportion of pupils in the school making more than expected progress was less strong. Overall, the standards attained by the pupils by the time they leave Bentham are at least in line with, or above, national averages.
- Pupils currently in school are making good progress in Years 1 to 5 and outstanding progress in Year 6.
- Leaders say that pupils make good progress in different subjects across the curriculum. Inspection evidence confirms this, especially in geography, science and music.
- The school is quick to identify any pupils that need extra support or any that are falling behind. This individualist approach ensures that all groups of pupils make similarly good progress from their starting points.
- For example, the school provides additional support for pupils who have special educational needs or disability. Their progress is closely tracked, and additional programmes are put in place to help them make progress. All staff in school are aware of their needs and this helps them both academically and socially.
- As a result of the effective use of the pupil premium funding, disadvantaged pupils make as much progress from their starting points as their classmates, including in English and mathematics. There is still a gap as far as the standards they reach is concerned, but the gap between those that are disadvantaged and their classmates is narrowing well.
- The most-able pupils make good progress. Teachers provide work that is carefully planned to stretch their thinking and grapple with more complex concepts and problems. Their attitudes to learning are excellent, and this also supports their progress.
- The school provides well for those pupils that need to catch-up, for example those that start school other than in Reception class. Specifically, the school has provided well for the few students who speak English as an additional language.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education. They are used to working hard and reflecting on their progress. The standards they reach are such that they will be able to begin secondary school ready for the challenges that await them.
- School leaders are aware of the need to help pupils make even more progress in spelling and in mental arithmetic.

Early years provision

is outstanding

- Children in the early years make outstanding progress. Assessment information is used exceptionally well to plan activities for individual children. As a result, children develop a deep curiosity and a love of learning, and are becoming more independent in their learning. The use of assessment information is stronger than that in Years 1–6, and it is this that pushes children on to make outstanding progress from their starting points.
- Children's skills on entry vary considerably from year to year, but are generally slightly below those typical for their age. From these starting points, they make rapid progress so that the vast majority are very well prepared for Year 1. The proportion of children who reach a good level of development across the areas of learning is higher than average.
- Leadership of the early years is very strong. An extremely flexible approach to the curriculum, and a constant questioning as to how things can be further improved characterise the leadership of this area.
- Children behave well and cooperate superbly with each other. They know how to take turns, they listen well to each other, and they focus well on the task in hand. They clearly love their learning.
- Teachers and other adults plan very imaginative activities which help the children develop both socially and academically. The outdoor space is used well by the children. There are exciting opportunities for children to develop their understanding of numbers, and to begin to develop writing skills. Opportunities to develop imagination, physical skills and to play together are rich in this early years setting.
- Arrangements to ensure that children are safe and that their needs are met are robust. As a result, children feel happy and safe and this helps them thrive.
- Parents are encouraged to contribute to their children's learning journals. These are helpful and high-quality documents which celebrate children's successes, help parents and school work closely together, and point towards next steps for the children.

School details

Unique reference number	121380
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10002079

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	146
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jill Donaldson
Headteacher	Catherine Boocock
Telephone number	01524 261412
Website	http://benthamcpschool.org.uk/
Email address	admin@bentham.n-yorks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10–11 October 2013

Information about this school

- Bentham Community Primary School is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and for whom English is an additional language is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to give extra support to pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by Year 6.
- The school has received support from the Harrogate and Rural Teaching School Alliance, and a national leader of education from this alliance.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are admitted on a part-time basis in Nursery, and accommodated in a mixed Reception in Year 1 class. All other pupils are taught within mixed-age classes, except for class 5 which provides for Year 6 pupils only.
- Since the time of the last inspection an assistant headteacher has been appointed as an additional member of the senior leadership team.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in lessons and groups of pupils working, and observed pupils at break time and when moving around the school. He talked to pupils in lessons and looked at work in their books. He talked to groups of pupils about life in school, the behaviour of pupils and the quality of teaching.
- The inspector conducted joint observations of learning with the headteacher and assistant headteacher and discussed findings with them.
- The inspector held meetings with members of the governing body and individual members of the teaching staff, including middle and senior leaders. He also spoke to colleagues from the local authority and Harrogate and Rural Teaching School Alliance about the support they have given the school.
- The inspector looked at the 40 responses to Parent View and considered pupils' responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- The inspector observed the overall work of the school and looked at a number of documents, including information about pupils' current progress. He also studied documents relating to safeguarding, governance, behaviour and attendance.
- The inspector also looked at a range of other evidence, including displays, the school website and evidence representing the school's wider achievements beyond the classroom.

Inspection team

Dr Michael Wardle, Lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2016

