

Inspection of Benton Park School

Harrogate Road, Rawdon, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS19 6LX

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 October 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Benton Park School benefit from a broad curriculum and a wide choice of options in key stages 4 and 5. However, there are inconsistencies in the ways that the curriculum is taught. The sixth form is a strength of the school. This is because the curriculum is well delivered and the impact of sixth-form teaching is embedded.

Some pupils do not behave as well as they should. To a certain extent, poor behaviour is having a negative impact across different aspects of the school's work. Some pupils' behaviour in lessons is disruptive. This stops other pupils from learning. Pupils told inspectors that pupils' behaviour depends on what class they are in and who is teaching them. Inspectors saw that poor behaviour is not always managed consistently in line with the school's policy.

Most pupils say that they feel safe. However, a significant minority of pupils worry about derogatory, sexist and/or homophobic language that they hear from other pupils. Some pupils do not believe that the school effectively deals well with their concerns. Several pupils and parents expressed concern that pupils do not have a member of staff that they can talk to, who knows them well.

Pupils can access a wide range of opportunities, such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, drama, extra music tuition and a range of sporting activities. However, the school is not yet tracking this offer effectively and as a result are unable to check that all pupils are benefiting from it. Pupils receive independent careers advice. This is helping them to make informed choices about their future.

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

Pupils follow a curriculum that is ambitious. Leaders have thought about the important knowledge that pupils should learn. However, pupils do not learn and remember this knowledge consistently well. The school is aware of the need to improve curriculum design so that it considers what prior knowledge teachers should return to and when. Leaders expect this to ensure that pupils build more secure knowledge over time. Teachers do not always use their assessment of what pupils know and remember, to fill gaps in knowledge and secure pupils' understanding.

The school has recently introduced initiatives such as 'Quick 6' to encourage pupils to recap prior knowledge. Teachers also use model answers for pupils to provide clear examples of what is expected. However, these initiatives are being implemented inconsistently. For example, in some lessons, 'Quick 6' is taking too long to complete and this is limiting pupils' progress through the curriculum.

The school is ambitious for disadvantaged pupils, and for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, the strategies used to support vulnerable learners vary in their impact. In some subjects, such as history, pupils with SEND benefit from carefully designed resources that help them build their knowledge, so they can produce extended pieces of academic writing. In other

subjects, teachers do not sufficiently adapt their teaching with enough precision to match the needs of more vulnerable learners. This limits the progress that more vulnerable pupils make.

Reading for pleasure is a priority in the school. Pupils read every day in their morning meetings. Pupils read books and extracts that have been carefully chosen. However, the school has not implemented a programme to identify and support the weakest readers. Plans are underway to identify pupils who need additional support, and to provide relevant training for staff. These plans are at an early stage.

Pupils' attitudes to learning vary. In some subjects, such as art and drama, pupils engage with enthusiasm. In other subjects, pupils are notably less engaged. Low-level disruption is evident, and it interrupts learning. Some pupils truant from lessons. Leaders know that attendance is too low. The school uses many strategies to improve pupils' attendance. The impact of these strategies varies.

In the sixth form, students' attitudes to learning are positive. Students focus well during lessons, and they use their study periods productively. Students are supported well as they transition to the sixth form. While there are some inconsistencies in the quality of pupils' academic experiences throughout key stages 3 and 4, students in the sixth form access a well-run provision. As a result, pupils enjoy learning and make good progress.

The personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programme is clearly planned. The school uses the curriculum to respond to emerging issues in society, such as vaping. More needs to be done through the PSHE curriculum to promote respect and tolerance for protected characteristics such as gender and sexual orientation.

Most staff feel supported by school leaders. There are tensions between the school and many parents and carers. Some have expressed concern about the way that recent changes have been communicated and introduced. Leaders are aware of the steps they need to take to improve the school. Leaders are also aware of the need to work proactively with all stakeholders, including parents and carers, to ensure that their plans and strategies are communicated well and clearly understood. The governing body has an accurate view of what the school needs to do to improve. Governors appropriately hold school leaders to account.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils' behaviour and attitudes are not good enough. There is too much disruption in lessons. This is having a negative impact on the progress pupils are

making through the curriculum. Leaders must ensure that the school's behaviour policy is applied consistently, that internal truancy is addressed, and that more is done to improve pupils' attitudes to school.

- The curriculum is not being implemented consistently well in all lessons. This means that pupils' experiences of the curriculum are variable. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is implemented consistently well, so that pupils are able to know more, learn more and do more.
- Some vulnerable pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, are not consistently receiving the support that they need in lessons. As a result, these pupils are not making the progress that they should. Leaders must ensure that teaching consistently incorporates support and strategies that help these pupils overcome any barriers that they may face.
- The weakest readers, including those at the early stages of reading, are not currently getting the support that they need. This means they are not able to access the curriculum as well as they should. Leaders must ensure that a comprehensive programme of support is implemented to teach, assess and monitor the progress of the weakest readers in the school.

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	108083
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10289968
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,535
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Victoria Clarke
Headteacher	Nicholas Skilton
Executive Headteacher	Delia Martin
Website	www.bentonpark.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 October 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Benton Park School is a larger-than-average 11-18 mixed secondary school and sixth form. Since the last inspection, changes have been made to the leadership structure of the school. The school is now led by an executive headteacher and a headteacher.
- The school makes use of five registered alternative providers and three unregistered alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Year 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in mathematics, science, history, geography, and art and photography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, talked to teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at their work.
- 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.
- Inspectors looked at school documentation, behaviour logs, attendance records and destinations data. Inspectors observed pupils at social times and in between lessons. Inspectors met with groups of pupils both formally and informally, including single-gender groups. Inspectors visited the inclusion base: 'The Hub'.
- An inspector reviewed a sample of pupils' work in PSHE. An inspector met with the leader of the sixth form. The lead inspector met with members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They considered a number of other communications from parents which were shared with Ofsted. They also considered the survey returns completed by staff, pupils and students.

Inspection team

Dan McKeating, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Matthew Vellensworth	His Majesty's Inspector
Lucy Toner-Gowland	Ofsted Inspector
Garry Stout	Ofsted Inspector
Liz Cresswell	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Barber	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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