

Benton House School

Address: Benton House, Front Street, Benton, Tyne and Wear, NE7 7XE

Unique reference number (URN): 151477

Inspection report: 30 June 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	●
Expected standard	● ● ● ● ●
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

✓ Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.
- **Insufficient evidence:** Inspectors were unable to gather sufficient evidence to judge whether safeguarding standards are met.

Strong standard ●

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Leaders' strategies to improve attendance are incredibly successful. Pupils' attendance shows significant and sustained increases across their time at the school. A well-coordinated approach starts with creating a positive culture and respectful relationships so that pupils want to come to school. Leaders' analysis of attendance patterns and support for pupils and their families means that any barriers to attendance are quickly identified and appropriate strategies can be put in place. These strategies are highly personalised. All staff understand their role in supporting attendance, as communication and expectations are consistently clear.

Pupils' attitudes to school are very positive. They enjoy their time here because they are known and supported as individuals. Consistent routines, with individual adaptations based on information about the context of each pupil, leads to an environment which is inclusive for all. Staff training enables consistently positive interactions between pupils and staff. Incidents of discrimination and bullying are rare but, where they do occur, leaders put in place supportive intervention to educate pupils to develop positive attitudes for all. Pupils feel that their views and feelings are important. As a result they feel valued, participate fully in the life of the school and respect the views of each other by taking turns when speaking.

Expected standard ●

Achievement

Expected standard ●

Pupils make progress in developing their knowledge and skills in reading, writing and mathematics. This, in turn, enables them to access and experience success in the wider curriculum. For example, pupils can confidently explain the processes involved in making dough for pizzas.

Pupils develop the confidence to participate in lessons and to ask for help when they are stuck. All pupils have an education health and care plan. Leaders develop realistic and achievable targets from these which create specific indicators of success which pupils can understand and celebrate. This helps pupils to progress both socially and academically while they are at the school.

Pupils are very successful in learning how to work with others and participate in group activities. They develop an understanding of their own emotions and behaviour which means they are more able to interact successfully in new situations. Consequently, pupils are developing resilience to be ready for the time when they will leave Benton House School.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders' curriculum plans are developed to ensure all pupils are supported. For example, reading, writing and mathematics are prioritised for pupils of all ages and recent training for staff related to developing writing and handwriting is benefiting pupils in these areas. For some pupils, elements of the early years curriculum are in place to support their development. Leaders have plans to enhance their curriculum by embedding their forest and beach school programmes. Leaders' checks on the delivery of the curriculum mean they have a precise understanding of the next steps they need to take to further enhance pupils' experiences.

Leaders ensure that consistent strategies are used across the school. For example, adaptations to resources to include visual cues are well embedded. There is a focus on vocabulary and language development so that pupils learn to express themselves more confidently. Pupils are eager to be involved in lessons because teachers plan engaging activities with, for example, songs and rhymes. Regular recap and recall of prior learning help teachers to understand what pupils are learning and remembering. Teachers use this information, along with their knowledge of pupils, to plan specific adaptations to the curriculum for each of the pupils in their class. However, occasionally teaching activity choices are not consistently well matched to pupils' needs.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have high expectations for all pupils at the school. They start to meet these expectations through thorough admission processes which allow for a rounded and complete view of each pupil's needs. Baseline assessments, information from education, health and care plans and work with external agencies all shape the interventions and support that pupils receive.

Ongoing and effective communication with, for example, the local authority's virtual school and local authorities placing pupils at the school, help leaders to make timely and effective adjustments to the support that pupils receive. The special educational needs coordinator and the clinical team at the school also help to shape the provision in school. In this way, each pupil receives a bespoke package of support which, in a short time, develops feelings of positivity about coming to school. Information is systematically made available to staff which helps them to make appropriate adaptations to the curriculum and teaching. As a result, in the long term, pupils are more able to access the school's curriculum and achieve success.

Staff are able to effectively support pupils through, for example, the information shared on the 'my sensory plan' and parental and carer engagement sessions, such as coffee mornings, give another means of finding and using information to help pupils.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Clear governance structures ensure information sharing about the school's performance is effective. For example, safeguarding information is immediately and effectively shared so that appropriate action can be taken should concerns arise about staff. Network groups

within the proprietor organisation allow different staff groups to work together to develop their own practice. Staff are able to easily access professional learning and development programmes. Quality assurance programmes mean that leaders understand the school's strengths. They continue to adapt the school's curriculum, for example, as they build towards full capacity. Training around trauma informed practice and the impact this has on approaches to managing behaviour have been particularly effective. While training around curriculum development has supported staff to deliver the curriculum effectively, further specifically tailored work around subject knowledge and pedagogies is needed to embed the curriculum consistently.

The systems to ensure that the independent school standards are consistently met are particularly effective. Record-keeping in all areas is clear and provides timely alerts to ensure, for example, that necessary checks on site safety are carried out and any actions are completed quickly.

While the school has only been operational for a year, leaders have quickly established a clear ethos, a positive culture and effective relationships with parents and carers, and staff. Staff are proud to work at the school, feel fully supported and recognise that leaders care for them. Parents share similarly positive views. One parent typified the views of many when they described the 'amazing' difference that the school has made to the life of their child. This view is supported in the way that pupils happily attend Benton House School.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders' emphasis on the wellbeing of pupils is central to the school's personal development offer. A nurturing environment in which pupils feel safe is created through a personal development programme which, for example, recognises the importance of social times and the interactions that pupils have with their peers at this time. The personal, social, health and environment programme supports pupils to develop friendships, keep themselves safe and understand how to stay healthy. This is supported through a programme of assemblies, trips and visits which take account of global events while helping pupils to understand why these events may be important in their own lives. Leaders have plans to further personalise this offer to pupils.

Leaders take account of pupils' interests and aspirations when planning trips and visits so that pupils understand the range of options available to them when they leave Benton House School and have a broad understanding of the world. Pupils are active in the community and have made charitable contributions to local churches with the proceeds from their enterprise activities. The careers programme is linked to the academic curriculum so that pupils see that what they learn may link to future careers. This extends across the school to benefit pupils of all ages and helps them to prepare for adulthood.

Golden time activities are particularly enjoyed by pupils. Kick boxing, forest school, spa activities and cookery club excite pupils. Overall, this helps to build pupils' confidence, willingness to try new experiences and understanding of the world around them. Visits to the school by authors, the Royal National Lifeboat Institution and the fire brigade, among others, develop pupils understanding and respect for the British life and institutions. Leaders ensure

that visitors from a range of backgrounds develop understanding of, and respect for, the range of cultures that exist in modern Britain.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils have wonderful relationships with staff at Benton House School. They enjoy school, feel safe and eagerly anticipate activities such as 'wake up, shake up' every morning. Breakfast routines provide a calm start to the day where pupils excitedly speak to staff about, for example, their interests and hobbies. In lessons, well established routines allow pupils to focus on learning and they are eager to participate in lessons which range from English to cooking to forest school. They benefit from an ambitious and evolving curriculum which is typically taught well. The school makes appropriate adaptations to remove barriers to learning and wellbeing for pupils, all of whom have an education, health and care plan. Regular trips to the beach are a particular highlight for pupils. Their active participation in learning means pupils are able to achieve well across the curriculum.

Pupils love coming to this school and their attendance is very high as a result. Behaviour around the school is superb. Pupils are well supported by staff who know them incredibly well and are therefore able to support each pupil in the most appropriate ways. This leads to remarkable improvements in pupils' behaviour and attitudes to school.

The school's personal, social, health and environment programme's focus on respectful relationships helps pupils to develop friendships. Bullying is incredibly rare. Pupils value the positions of responsibility they are given. For example, pupils on the school council have helped to develop the garden area in the school grounds and pupils learn about the importance of ensuring that everyone's voice is heard.

Pupils are helped to develop skills of independence, for example by learning how to look after themselves and keep themselves safe in the community. They learn about possible careers across all ages in the school. When it is time to leave Benton House School, leaders ensure that there is well developed programme of transition to support pupils' next steps.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to embed high-quality teaching across all subjects and phases, supported by a precisely defined professional learning programme to support staff's subject-specific knowledge and pedagogy.

About this inspection

Inspectors carried out this standard inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, and checked the school's compliance with the independent school

standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher. They also spoke with the chair of the governing body, a representative of the proprietor body, leaders for the clinical provision in the school and the special educational needs coordinator.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

All pupils that attend the school have an education, health and care plan. The school caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs, including autism.

The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

The school is registered to admit up to 60 pupils.

This was the first standard inspection of the school since the school was registered to open by the Department for Education on 9 June 2025.

The proprietor of the school is Acorn Care and Education Ltd.

The chair of the proprietor body is Richard Power.

The fees currently charged are £55,241 to £70,241.

The email address of the school is bhadmin@ofgl.co.uk

Headteacher: Vincent Sinclair

Independent school standards

Independent school standards are either met or not met for each category.

1. Quality of education provided	Standards met
All standards have been met.	
2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils	Standards met

All standards have been met.

3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Standards met

All standards have been met.

4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Standards met

All standards have been met.

5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Standards met

All standards have been met.

6. Provision of information

Standards met

All standards have been met.

7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Standards met

All standards have been met.

8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Standards met

All standards have been met.

Lead inspector:

Matthew Vellensworth, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Hannah Millett, His Majesty's Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This data was available to the inspector at the time of the inspection.



This data is from 30 June 2026

Total pupils

37

School capacity

60

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

37

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

0

Our grades explained

Exceptional ●

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard ●

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard ●

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention ●

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

Insufficient evidence

Inspectors were unable to gather reliable enough evidence to grade an evaluation area. This is rare and normally only happens if there are no pupils on roll at the school.

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