



BENSHAM MANOR *School*

SEF Summary

September 2026



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School Context:

Bensham Manor School is a large, oversubscribed secondary special school for pupils aged 11–18, with provision for 245 young people who have a range of complex learning needs, including autism and speech, language and communication needs. All pupils have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), and the school is committed to providing an ambitious and inclusive education that enables every pupil to achieve their fullest potential academically, socially and emotionally. The school serves a diverse community within an area of deprivation and has a significantly higher than average proportion of pupils who are eligible for the Pupil Premium and those who are looked after by the Local Authority, with approximately 60% of pupils falling within these groups. The school is unwavering in its commitment to ensuring equity of opportunity and achieving the very best outcomes for all pupils, regardless of their starting points or individual circumstances. In June 2024, Ofsted judged Bensham Manor School to be Outstanding in all areas, recognising the exceptional quality of education, leadership, personal development, behaviour and attitudes, and safeguarding provided by the school. A particular strength of the school is its broad, balanced and highly ambitious curriculum, which is carefully designed to meet the complex learning profiles of pupils while preparing them successfully for their transition into adulthood. The curriculum promotes the development of communication, independence, wellbeing, resilience and employability skills alongside academic achievement. Learning is enriched through a wide range of opportunities, including annual residential experiences, educational visits, after-school clubs, work experience placements and well-established College Visit and link programmes for Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 pupils. These experiences contribute significantly to pupils' personal development, confidence and readiness for the next stage of their education and future lives. The school benefits from high quality specialist facilities that enhance teaching, learning and therapeutic support. A significant recent development has been the opening of the school's dedicated Therapy Centre in September 2023, which provides a universal therapy offer for all pupils. Bensham Manor School is also an active member of the Inclusion Quality Mark Cluster Group comprising more than 30 schools. This collaboration enables staff to engage in high-quality professional development, share effective practice and contribute to wider school improvement initiatives.

Inclusion - Strong Standard

Inclusion is the foundation of the Bensham Manor's vision, values and day to day practice, underpinning every aspect of leadership, curriculum design and pupil support. Leaders have established a culture in which every pupil is known, understood and valued as an individual and has the opportunity to thrive. Decisions are rooted in a detailed understanding of each pupil's strengths, needs and aspirations, ensuring that barriers to learning, attendance, participation and achievement are identified early and addressed

Curriculum and teaching - Strong Standard

Bensham Manor School provides a culturally responsive, ambitious, carefully sequenced and highly personalised curriculum that enables every pupil to develop the knowledge, skills and personal attributes required for successful adult lives. Leaders have designed a curriculum which balances academic achievement with communication, independence, emotional wellbeing, empathy and preparation for adulthood, ensuring that pupils experience both breadth and depth across all phases.

effectively. High expectations are maintained for every pupil, with personalised support enabling all pupils to access an ambitious curriculum, participate fully in school life and prepare successfully for adulthood.

The school adopts a highly collaborative approach, working in close partnership with families and a wide range of external professionals to secure the best possible outcomes for pupils. Relationships with parents and carers are characterised by trust, openness and shared responsibility, ensuring that support is coordinated and responsive to changing needs. Parents and carers have regular opportunities to visit the school for a wide range of activities. Therapeutic provision is fully integrated within the school's inclusive practice, enabling pupils to develop emotional regulation, resilience and readiness to learn. Staff are highly skilled in adapting teaching, the learning environment and pastoral support to meet individual needs without lowering expectations.

Inclusive practice is evident across all areas of the school's work. The curriculum is ambitious and accessible, behaviour is understood through a relational lens and trauma-informed approach, attendance support is personalised, and enrichment opportunities are designed so that every pupil can participate and succeed. Leaders rigorously evaluate the impact of their inclusive practice, using assessment, pupil voice, family engagement and wider outcomes to continually refine provision. As a result, pupils experience a strong sense of belonging, feel safe and respected, attend well from their individual starting points, and achieve highly across academic, social and personal development.

As an Inclusion Quality Mark (IQM) Flagship school, leaders have created a community where every pupil experiences belonging, dignity and respect regardless of need or background. The school celebrates diversity and inclusive practices to ensure every pupil

The curriculum is underpinned by high aspirations for every learner, regardless of their starting point. Teachers use detailed knowledge of pupils' Education, Health and Care Plans, therapeutic assessments and prior learning to personalise curriculum pathways whilst maintaining ambitious expectations. Reading, communication and mathematical understanding are prioritised across all curriculum areas and are reinforced through carefully planned opportunities both inside and beyond the classroom. A particular strength is the integration of therapeutic support into curriculum planning. Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, counselling and other specialist services work collaboratively with teachers to remove barriers to learning and maximise pupil engagement. This multidisciplinary approach ensures pupils access the full curriculum successfully. Preparation for adulthood is threaded throughout the curriculum from Year 7 onwards. Pupils develop increasing independence through work experience, college link programmes, enterprise activities, independent travel training and community-based learning. The curriculum therefore prepares pupils exceptionally well for the next stage of education, employment or independent living.

We currently offer 6 GCSEs, Functional Skills, Entry Level pathways and Level 1 qualifications.

Teaching is consistently effective because staff possess expert knowledge of SEND pedagogy, trauma-informed practice and the individual needs of every pupil. Lessons are purposeful, engaging and carefully adapted to ensure all pupils experience success whilst maintaining high levels of challenge. Teachers are expert at using the information they have about each pupil to scaffold learning and ensure progress. Teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge and use assessment skilfully to identify misconceptions, adapt learning and deepen understanding. Teaching assistants make an exceptional

participates fully in school life. Therapeutic support, personalised curriculum pathways and highly skilled, experienced and professional staff enable pupils with complex needs to flourish. Our IQM Flagship annual review recognises that inclusion is deeply embedded across every aspect of school life rather than existing as separate initiatives- *'one of the most striking aspects of the visit to Bensham Manor was the relational culture that underpins every aspect of school life. Inclusion does not feel like a collection of separate initiatives, but part of the everyday culture of the school'*.

Similarly, the Trauma Informed Schools report concludes that pupils experience genuine belonging and develop trusting relationships with adults -*'a significant strength of the school is the consistency with which staff build and sustain relationships with pupils over time'*.

Partnerships with families are exceptionally strong. Parents and carers are viewed as equal partners and are actively involved in supporting learning and wellbeing.

Leaders ensure that all subject curricula are reviewed annually to evaluate their relevance, ambition, inclusivity and impact. Subject leaders work collaboratively with staff to refine curriculum content in response to assessment information, pupil voice, national developments and emerging local priorities. Careful consideration is given to ensuring that pupils can see themselves reflected positively within the curriculum through diverse texts, role models, perspectives and experiences that celebrate difference and promote belonging. The curriculum is also responsive to the local context, with subject content thoughtfully adapted to address issues that are particularly relevant to the community our pupils live in, including diversity, equality, healthy relationships, community safety, exploitation, knife crime, online safety and preparing pupils to become active, responsible citizens. This ensures that learning is meaningful, representative and equips pupils with the knowledge, skills and

contribution to learning and work seamlessly alongside teachers to scaffold independence rather than create dependency. Adaptive teaching is a particular strength. Staff break learning into manageable steps, use visual communication systems effectively and adjust teaching according to pupils' communication profiles, sensory needs and learning preferences. Therapeutic strategies are naturally embedded within teaching rather than delivered separately. Assessment informs planning effectively. Teachers routinely use formative assessment, questioning, observation and immediate feedback to adapt learning in real time. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own learning and develop increasing confidence as independent learners. The quality of professional development ensures teaching continues to improve. Staff engage in coaching, peer observations, subject development, research-informed practice and specialist SEND training.

understanding they need to thrive both within their local community and in modern Britain. Pupils progress is tracked using <i>TrackAble</i> and subject leads analyse their subject data termly, identifying any gaps in skills and knowledge and pupils who require additional intervention. The Pupil Premium strategy is implemented. Our curriculum is designed with differing needs and levels at the forefront. There is a clear focus on all pupils' developing both knowledge and skills. We provide high-quality and regular training which focuses on the range of barriers that pupils' face in their learning and wellbeing. Leaders ensure that a range of support agency professionals (specialists) work in partnerships with staff to ensure the best support is provided and reasonable adjustments are made when required. Leaders work closely with parents and carers to ensure their views are taken into account. Our accessibility plan is reviewed regularly and published on the school website. Expectations for all pupils are exceptionally high. Leaders and staff rigorously monitor the progress of all pupils robustly to ensure pupils meet these expectations. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and supporting parents and pupils to find suitable Post 16 provision is always a priority. The DSLs share information with various Local Authorities well to support social care needs. The DSL works with social workers and other professionals to provide appropriate support. Our pupils love their school which enables them to raise their resilience and be ready for academic challenge. We regularly share our best practice with other schools and professionals.	
Achievement - Strong Standard Pupils attainment and progress is strong. Pupils achieve highly from	Attendance and behaviour - Strong Standard Behaviour across the school is exemplary because relationships,

their individual starting points because the curriculum, teaching and therapeutic support combine to remove barriers to learning and promote sustained progress over time. There is a genuine, measurable difference in pupil outcomes. Leaders evaluate achievement using a broad range of evidence, recognising that success for pupils within a specialist setting extends beyond examination outcomes alone. Academic attainment, personal development, communication, independence, attendance, emotional wellbeing and preparation for adulthood all contribute to the school's understanding of achievement. All pupils are making strong academic progress across a varied curriculum, developing broad subject knowledge across our curriculum and in all year groups. Disadvantaged pupils do equally well.

Our curriculum has been thoughtfully designed to provide all pupils with access to a wide range of examinations, qualifications, and accredited pathways at appropriate levels. This ensures that every pupil, regardless of their starting point or individual needs, can make strong progress, achieve recognised outcomes, and leave school with qualifications that support their next steps in education, employment, or training. Pupils achieve accredited qualifications across a wide range of subjects, including GCSEs, Functional Skills and vocational qualifications. Outcomes are excellent as the curriculum is effectively adapted and expectations remain consistently high.

Leavers move successfully into further education, supported internships or employment because careers education and transition planning begin on arrival in Year 7. The school has made a significant investment in its careers provision by supporting a member of staff to achieve the Level 6 Diploma in Career Guidance and Development. This enables all careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) to be delivered in-house by a qualified careers professional who has an in-depth understanding of each pupil's individual strengths, aspirations, needs and next steps. As a result, careers

psychological safety and therapeutic understanding underpin every aspect of school life. The school's trauma-informed approach enables staff to understand behaviour as communication rather than simply responding to incidents. Pupils are supported to regulate emotions, reflect on their experiences and repair relationships following difficulties. As a Nurture School we focus on ensuring removing all barriers to learning. The Trauma Informed Schools assessment identified relational practice as exceptional, noting that pupils consistently described feeling safe, understood and valued. Staff demonstrate calm, attuned and emotionally available responses which enable pupils to develop increasing emotional regulation and independence. Rates of exclusions are extremely low when compared with national figures. Incidents of bullying, peer-on-peer abuse or discrimination are very low, however, on the rare occasions they are evident swift action is always taken. Pupils consistently report they feel safe and happy.

Bensham's core rules of safe, ready, kind are given a high profile in the school and actively celebrated. A positive behaviour system, which rewards excellent behaviour, effort, achievement etc. is highly motivating to pupils. There is a significant focus on supporting pupils to show self-discipline and manage their own emotions. Lessons are calm and learning-focused, something which is regularly observed and commented on by visitors.

Attendance remains strong because pupils enjoy attending school, feel a genuine sense of belonging, that they matter and therefore experience success. Families work in close partnership with the school to overcome barriers to attendance. The school recognises that for some pupils, particularly those with complex additional needs, barriers to attendance can be linked to anxiety, unmet emotional needs and emotionally based school non-attendance (EBSNA). The school takes a highly personalised and relational approach to

guidance is highly personalised, aspirational and tailored to each pupil, ensuring that advice is meaningful, well-informed and closely aligned with pupils' Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), interests and long-term outcomes. This approach strengthens transition planning, supports pupils to make informed decisions about their future education, employment and independent living, and contributes to consistently positive post-16 destinations. Staff maintain exceptionally high aspirations for every learner, ensuring pupils develop confidence, resilience and independence alongside academic success.

supporting these pupils, ensuring that attendance challenges are understood through a trauma-informed and therapeutic lens rather than viewed simply as non-compliance. Staff work closely with pupils and families to identify barriers to attendance and develop individualised support plans that enable pupils to successfully re-engage with education. Strong relationships between school, pupils and families are central to this approach, with regular communication and collaborative problem-solving ensuring that families feel listened to and supported. The school works effectively in partnership with external agencies, including health professionals, therapeutic services and local authority teams, to ensure that pupils and families receive coordinated support. This collaborative approach enables the school to put appropriate interventions in place, including phased returns, personalised timetables, therapeutic support and targeted pastoral strategies where required. As a result, pupils are supported to develop a strong sense of belonging and emotional safety within school. The school's nurturing environment, alongside its high expectations and comprehensive pastoral and therapeutic offer, ensures that pupils who experience barriers to attendance are given the support they need to access learning, rebuild confidence and make positive progress.

Personal development and well-being - Strong Standard

Personal development is strong because it permeates every aspect of school life rather than existing as a discrete programme. Pupils develop confidence, resilience, independence and leadership through an extensive range of experiences including School Council, sports leadership, residential visits, enterprise activities, work experience, volunteering and enrichment opportunities. We have an active school council which promotes democracy and includes all pupils in decisions made about their school. The pupil Shadow Leadership Team support SLT in their roles, ensuring that pupil voice remains at the forefront of our practice.

The curriculum promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. Pupils learn about diversity, democracy, healthy relationships, online safety and citizenship through meaningful experiences relevant to their lives.

The school's therapeutic approach enables pupils to develop emotional literacy, self-awareness and resilience. Preparation for adulthood is a defining strength of the school. Pupils leave as confident young adults prepared for further education, employment and independent living.

We celebrate the culture and background of staff, pupils, families and Governors. We celebrate diversity and inclusion throughout the year with dedicated events and celebrations.

Through our PSICHE curriculum and on a cross-curricula basis, pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships through relationships and sex education. Pupils are explicitly taught how to stay safe in assemblies, PSHCE lessons, Tutor Time, workshops from external providers and through discrete online safety sessions.

Leadership and governance - Strong Standard

Leadership is ambitious, compassionate and firmly centred upon securing the very best outcomes for every pupil. Leaders have created an inclusive culture where high expectations coexist with exceptional levels of care and support. The vision of the school is shared by governors, leaders, staff and pupils. Relationships are central to decision making and every strategic priority is considered through the lens of improving life chances for young people with SEND. Leaders have successfully embedded a whole school trauma-informed culture.

Governance is highly effective. Governors possess a detailed understanding of the school's strengths and priorities, regularly visit the school and provide both strategic challenge and professional support. The annual Governors Away Day, nine Committee meetings and Full Governor meetings ensure professional oversight. Governors maintain close oversight of safeguarding, curriculum quality, finance and school improvement.

The school plays a significant system leadership role across Croydon through outreach, SEND development, professional development and support for mainstream schools. Staff contribute to borough-wide developments and share expertise nationally through the Inclusion Quality Mark network. Professional development is strong. The Headteacher has undertaken formal coaching training and is committed to embedding a coaching and reflective culture across the school. This approach will support staff in engaging in meaningful professional dialogue, reflect on their practice, identify strengths, and consider areas for further development. Through coaching conversations, staff are encouraged to share ideas, develop their expertise, and work collaboratively to continually improve outcomes

for all pupils.

Staff receive continuous training in SEND, trauma-informed practice, curriculum development, safeguarding, behaviour, therapeutic approaches and leadership. Staff wellbeing remains a strategic priority and contributes to exceptionally strong staff retention.

Post 16

Leaders ensure that the 16–19 curriculum is implemented consistently and effectively across all pathways, with ongoing evaluation informing continuous improvement. There is a very strong, knowledgeable and experienced Head of 16 in post. Teaching is highly responsive to students' individual needs, enabling them to develop secure knowledge, skills and understanding over time. Students achieve strong outcomes and make sustained progress from their starting points. They produce high-quality work, demonstrate increasing independence and are well prepared for adulthood, further education, employment and training. Support is carefully tailored to achieve positive outcomes that enable pupils to successfully transition to their next stage of learning and life.

Post 16 pupils undertake an array of activities which develop their independence skills including undertaking a college link course, helping to run parent activities and catering for staff and pupils, running enterprise activities and leading charitable events including providing weekly food bags to families in need in conjunction with The Felix Project.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is at the heart of all aspects of school life at Bensham Manor School. We are committed to protecting pupils from maltreatment and harm, whether this occurs within the home, in the community or online, and maintain a culture of vigilance where all staff understand that safeguarding concerns can arise at any time and in any setting. Strong partnerships with safeguarding agencies and external professionals ensure that pupils and their families receive timely and appropriate support, while information is shared openly and appropriately to secure the best outcomes for children and young people. All staff receive comprehensive safeguarding training and are empowered to identify concerns, take action and seek advice when needed. The Safeguarding team members receive regular training and attend local and national networks to maintain and update knowledge. The DSL attends regular supervision sessions which offer a point of support and reflection for current cases and consideration of trends within local safeguarding issues. Staff use our internal safeguarding supporting system very well. We actively listen to and value the views of pupils, parents, carers and staff, responding promptly and effectively to any concerns raised. Robust systems enable us to identify pupils who may be vulnerable, at risk of harm or in need of additional support, including those who are missing education, and to secure appropriate intervention through early help or referral processes. The school maintains rigorous safer recruitment procedures, effective processes for managing allegations and concerns about adults, and comprehensive safeguarding records, including a fully compliant Single Central Record. The safeguarding governor is very aware of school practice and has termly visits from which reports are created and shared with the wider governing body. Leaders regularly review safeguarding policies, procedures and practice, welcome challenge and scrutiny, and continually evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements to ensure that pupils

	remain safe, supported and able to thrive.
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