

Inspection of Chaucer School

Wordsworth Avenue, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S5 8NH

Inspection dates:	25 and 26 February 2025
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Inadequate

The headteacher of this school is Joanna Crewe. This school is part of Tapton School Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Lee Barber, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Tom Ashford.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school has been through a period of significant instability. Leaders have acted effectively to address the core issues, such as by raising expectations and improving behaviour across the school. Pupils appreciate the improvements that leaders have made and continue to make. They explain that changes, such as in behaviour and pastoral support, help them to feel safe in school. This improved school culture, and pupils' confidence in staff to address poor behaviour, is contributing to increased rates of attendance.

The school's 'life' curriculum ensures that pupils learn important information that prepares them for life in modern Britain. This has been significantly strengthened since the previous inspection. As a result, pupils have a strong understanding of topics such as the fundamental British values and how to keep safe. Some other topics, such as knowledge of other cultures and beliefs, are still being developed. Some pupils hold leadership positions within the school. House captains meet with school leaders to identify opportunities to contribute to the wider community, such as through their developing charitable work.

Pupils' achievement in school is variable. Typically, where pupils have underachieved, this is the result of missed learning through absence. Current pupils are achieving the aims of the curriculum more consistently. Many pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, produce work of a high standard.

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

Over time, pupils at the school have not achieved as well as they should. The school has improved the quality of the curriculum and other areas, which previously limited pupils' achievement. Pupils who left the school in 2024 only benefited from these improvements for some of their time in school. Consequently, these improvements are not reflected in recent published outcomes.

Pupils study a curriculum that is more ambitious and better sequenced than was the case previously. In many subjects, the school has redesigned the curriculum to better meet the needs of pupils. This provides clarity for teachers on what pupils must know and by when. As a result, new knowledge builds on what pupils have learned previously. In some cases, historic gaps in pupils' knowledge, including gaps in cultural capital, continue to affect pupils' progress through the curriculum. While teachers do act to address these, sometimes this is not as quick as it might be.

The school has strengthened its systems for supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Their needs are accurately identified. Where appropriate, the school works with external agencies to secure additional support. Teachers receive increasingly detailed information about how to meet the needs of these pupils. As a result, most pupils with SEND produce work that is of a similar standard to their peers.

The school has considerably strengthened its support for pupils who are learning to read. Pupils who need additional help, including with phonics, receive this regularly. This is enabling pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, to catch up.

Staff and pupils agree that behaviour is improving. Most pupils behave well in lessons and at social times. A minority of pupils continue to struggle to manage their behaviour appropriately. The school provides these pupils with additional support. Although rates of suspensions for poor behaviour are reducing, these remain high.

The school recognises that increasing how regularly pupils attend school is of utmost importance. It has significantly reduced rates of absence for all groups of pupils. However, these continue to be too high. Leaders understand that improving attendance further is vital to allow pupils to benefit from improvements being made to the curriculum.

The school provides pupils with appropriate careers education, including opportunities such as mock interviews with employers. This has contributed to considerable increases in the number of pupils who progress to further education, employment or training. The school has expanded the range of wider opportunities available to pupils. Participation in these is increasing. Leaders understand that there is more to do to ensure that all pupils consistently benefit from these.

Staff are positive about the steps that leaders, including the trust, have taken to improve the school. Developments such as the 'Chaucer Way' have made clear expectations of staff and pupils. Leaders know that there remains work to improve the school so that all pupils achieve well. Although the school is addressing these issues, many changes are still being embedded. The impact of these is not realised consistently.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils have gaps in their knowledge from earlier stages in their education. These impact on how easily some pupils learn later parts of the curriculum. The school should ensure that staff consistently address gaps in knowledge and misconceptions swiftly.
- The proportion of pupils who miss school regularly remains too high. These pupils miss important learning and develop gaps in their knowledge. The school should build on its current attendance strategy to further reduce rates of absence.
- Some pupils have limited cultural capital and wider knowledge of the world. This impacts on their understanding of the curriculum and their personal development. The school should ensure that the curriculum and personal development offer consistently addresses gaps in pupils' cultural knowledge and experience.

- A number of actions to improve the school, such as some recent changes to the behaviour policy, are still embedding. The impact of these is not realised consistently. Pupils continue to receive an inconsistent quality of education. The school should embed and evaluate the impact of changes made to ensure that pupils consistently attend well and receive a high-quality education.

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	138414
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	10346447
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	803
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Tom Ashford
CEO of the trust	Lee Barber
Headteacher	Joanna Crewe
Website	www.chaucer.sheffield.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 March 2024, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Tapton School Academy trust.
- The school uses three unregistered alternative provisions.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The CEO of the trust is new to his role. He began in this post in September 2024.

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 and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- 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.
- The lead inspector met with members of the trust board, the local governing board and the trust's CEO.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with the headteacher. They also met with other senior and middle leaders, including those responsible for safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and personal development.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, art and design and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also visited lessons and reviewed pupils' work in other subjects.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation regarding the support pupils with SEND receive. They looked at the quality of the provision for pupils with SEND in lessons.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including minutes from governing board meetings as well as the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- Inspectors looked at a range of information regarding behaviour. They observed the behaviour of pupils in classrooms and at social times.
- The views of pupils and staff who responded to Ofsted's surveys were considered.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents through the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Thomas Wraith, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Joe Barton	Ofsted Inspector
Yvonne Bootman	Ofsted Inspector
Peter Cole	Ofsted Inspector

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