

Inspection of a good school: Chiltern Wood School

Verney Avenue, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP12 3NE

Inspection dates:

15 and 16 May 2024

Outcome

Chiltern Wood School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

From the early years to the sixth form, pupils enjoy attending this school. Every morning they come into school with broad smiles, eager to start their day. Pupils, who all have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), say that staff are caring and supportive. This helps them to feel safe and happy. There are high expectations for pupils to do well. The school's vision for 'every student to be actively engaged in their learning, equipping them with independence skills to contribute meaningfully to their community and enjoy fulfilling futures' is successfully achieved.

Staff get to know pupils extremely well. Pupils are well supported when they find situations to be challenging. This helps them to remain calm and to manage their emotions. In lessons and around the school, there is a purposeful atmosphere. Pupils are kind to one another.

The school supports pupils' personal development very well. Pupils enjoy taking part in different trips, such as to music venues, including the opera. Pupils elected to the school council give suggestions to further improve the school. Recently they considered the play areas, which have now been further improved. Parents are very complimentary about how well the school supports their children.

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

The school's curriculum is ambitious. It consists of carefully planned curriculum pathways that meet pupils' different needs. The curriculum for those with profound and multiple learning difficulties, for example, helps to consolidate their understanding.

Staff know the pupils in their class very well. They carefully adapt their teaching. There is a strong focus on making sure that pupils transfer the learning they have learned in one context to another. For example, pupils learn how to count in many different ways.

Personalised goals based on pupils' education, health and care plans (EHC plan) are often incorporated into lessons. This ensures that targets are reinforced throughout the school day. However, the school is still developing ways to check on what some pupils know and can do. This means that new learning does not consistently build on what they already know.

Pupils' communication development forms the foundation of the curriculum. Skilled staff, including occupational and speech and language therapists, work together to find the best methods to support pupils. Pupils' communication skills are successfully developed, and most pupils become increasingly proficient. Many can communicate in a variety of ways, often using technological methods and/or visual symbols. Many pupils can respond to questions and initiate communication. This enables pupils to express themselves and reduces any frustrations.

Reading is a priority. Some pupils experience reading through 'story massage' or 'sensory stories'. The school has worked hard to define what reading looks like so that all pupils benefit. The approach is in the early days of being introduced and some staff are not yet fully trained in delivering the phonics scheme. This means that some pupils who are learning to read do not achieve as well as they might.

The school prioritises pupils' personal development. Pupils are very respectful of the needs and wishes of others. For example, pupil buddies help new pupils to settle in. The school supports pupils to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy. They know about the importance of eating a healthy diet. Pupils are supported to develop new interests and are currently creating a new growing area for vegetables. Pupils enjoy shopping for ingredients and developing their cookery skills with a professional cook. Pupils, including those in the sixth form, take part in a wide range of activities that help them to prepare for life beyond school. For example, pupils are taught how to use public transport. The school has a clear provision for careers information, education, advice and guidance. It is skilfully woven into the curriculum and so is meaningful and relevant to pupils. Many pupils go on to college placements.

All staff use a consistent approach when pupils find it difficult to manage their emotions. Staff understand how to gently help anxious pupils, and this means that learning is rarely disrupted. The school monitors pupils' attendance carefully and actions to reduce absence are effective. Parents are very supportive of the school, and many expressed their appreciation of the work that staff do.

Staff speak highly of the school. They know that their workload is always considered and that their views and opinions are valued. Governors have a detailed understanding of the school. It helps them to challenge the school's work effectively. Governors successfully meet their statutory responsibilities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school is still embedding aspects of the phonics curriculum. This means that some pupils are not learning to read as well as they could. The school should ensure that the subject knowledge of staff is further developed so that pupils build their phonics knowledge coherently over time to achieve the best possible outcomes.
- Systems for checking some pupils' prior learning are still being embedded. This means that pupils' learning does not consistently build on the things they already know. The school should ensure that checks on pupils' learning identify what each pupil knows and can do and staff use this information to decide what they need to learn next.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2019.

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	110578
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10321786
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	205
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	26
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ann Waterman
Headteacher	Rachel Chapman
Website	www.chilternwood.bucks.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 January 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- All pupils who attend the school have an EHC plan. The school caters for pupils with a broad range of SEND, including autism, speech, language and communication needs, moderate learning difficulty or profound and multiple learning difficulties.
- Since the last inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed.
- The school is situated across two sites: Verney Avenue, Cressex and Faulkner Way, Downley, Buckinghamshire.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision.
- 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.

Information about this inspection

- 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 met with the headteacher, the designated safeguarding lead and other senior leaders. The lead inspector had a telephone conversation with the local authority adviser. She also met with governors, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors reviewed individual pupil's EHC plans and checked these against the school's provision.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading and communication, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teaching staff and spoke to some pupils about their learning. Inspectors also looked at samples of pupils' work. An inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 met with members of staff and spoke to pupils at both sites. Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for parents and staff.

Inspection team

Liz Bowes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Martin Dyer

Ofsted Inspector

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