

# New Chapter Primary School

Chapter, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK6 5EA

## Inspection dates

1–2 November 2016

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Governors and senior leaders are ambitious for the school and have brought about notable improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. The headteacher has high expectations of staff and pupils and has developed a strong leadership team.
- Whole-school training has been effective and motivating. Staff work well as a team and their morale is high.
- School leaders rigorously check on the quality of teaching and how well pupils are doing.
- Governors are well informed and provide a good balance of support and challenge to school leaders.
- The curriculum is well designed and provides stimulating activities that engage pupils. It actively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their understanding of British values.
- Good relationships have been established between staff and pupils. Pupils behave well, follow instructions and work hard.
- Pupils feel safe and valued by their teachers. Safeguarding is at the forefront of teachers' minds. Staff are well trained in safeguarding procedures and are vigilant.
- Across the school, the progress of all pupil groups, including disadvantaged ones, is improving.
- Children make rapid progress in the outstanding early years setting, some from very low starting points.
- The school provides effective extra help for pupils who speak English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Phonics is taught well. Staff give a high priority to ensuring that pupils develop good speaking skills and read well. Some pupils, though, who have weak speaking skills, need even more help to develop their vocabularies and reading comprehension skills.
- Leaders do not ensure that teachers provide pupils with enough advice on how to improve their skills, knowledge and understanding of subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Sometimes the activities teachers provide for the most able pupils are not demanding enough.
- Pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to develop their handwriting skills.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' progress in reading by giving them more opportunities to widen their vocabulary and increase their reading comprehension.
- Ensure that pupils develop a clear, cursive handwriting style as they move up through the school.
- Improve the progress of the most able pupils by making sure teachers provide them with suitably demanding tasks.
- Raise pupils' achievement in other subjects, such as science, by ensuring that teachers provide subject-specific guidance on how pupils can improve their work.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The school is a happy, calm and welcoming place and really lives up to its own motto 'Learning, Love and Laughter'.
- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors are ambitious for the school and have high expectations of staff and pupils. They know the school well and are accurate and honest about its strengths and areas for improvement. The headteacher is implementing a detailed and well-focused plan to continue the school's improvement. Roles, accountabilities and timelines are clear and there are useful milestones so that progress can be regularly monitored and evaluated.
- The school has made good progress against the recommendations for improvement identified in the previous inspection. For example, pupils now respond well to their teachers' advice on how to improve their work and subject leaders are closely involved in checking the progress pupils make and the quality of teaching.
- School leaders frequently check the quality of teaching using a wide range of evidence, including the progress pupils make. Teachers are held accountable for how well pupils are doing and extra help is given to any pupils in danger of falling behind. The school works closely with the local authority and other schools locally and in the trust to verify the accuracy of teachers' assessments. As a result, the effectiveness of teaching and pupils' achievement are improving.
- The school provides a well-structured programme of professional training for all staff. Teachers and teaching assistants were positive about the training they received. They welcomed the opportunity to research in small teams and to see themselves teaching via video. Staff are working well as a harmonious team.
- Subject and other leaders plan carefully and are effective in their roles. They are developing their leadership skills well. In addition to training, they gain experience in coaching others and evaluating teaching in their areas of responsibility.
- There are detailed and effective plans to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils who speak English as an additional language. Several teaching assistants are trained in supporting pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills and they do so effectively. The pastoral team works well to make sure pupils with behavioural difficulties improve their behaviour, through counselling and 'time out' in a nurturing environment.
- The primary sports funding is used well to provide specialised teaching for different sporting skills and develop teachers' coaching skills. As well as opportunities to try more sports, such as rugby, dodgeball and badminton, pupils enjoy a range of competitive events. The school has successfully encouraged pupils to be more physically active.
- Parents get clear information about the curriculum through workshops, booklets and, in assemblies, seeing pupils' achievements. The school has planned its curriculum carefully so that all the knowledge and skills required by the new National Curriculum are developed appropriately. A broad range of subjects is offered with a suitable

emphasis on English and mathematics.

- Pupils enjoy the imaginative way learning activities are grouped into topics. 'Wow days' are memorable and trigger pupils' imagination, while 'fabulous finishes' enable pupils to celebrate their achievements with parents. For example, 'Rumble in the jungle' began when pupils in Year 6 came face to face with reptiles and large spiders. Later, they took part in samba activities, dancing and drumming, and finished with a presentation of what they had learned to their parents. The school provides a good range of well-attended clubs before and after school to enhance pupils' experiences further.
- The school actively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Relationships between staff and pupils are caring and pupils behave well, being considerate and respectful of others. Pupils regularly reflect on honesty, forgiveness and resolving problems without conflict. They learn about world religions and different cultures, as well as fundamental British values. In Year 6, pupils consider their achievements at primary school and reflect on their strengths and areas for improvement. They learn about different careers and how they can take full advantage of their time at secondary school.
- The school ensures that there is no discrimination and that there is equality of opportunity for all. School leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils benefit from the pupil premium. Disadvantaged pupils are given extra help and gain life-enhancing experiences through trips, visitors to the school and clubs.
- Since the previous inspection, the trust has provided good support through regular visits to check on progress and by providing training for leaders and teachers. As well as a monitoring role, the trust asks suitably challenging questions of the school's leadership.
- School leaders do not ensure that teachers provide pupils with effective advice on how to improve their skills, knowledge and understanding in subjects other than English and mathematics.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors are passionate about the school. They work well with the headteacher to decide on the school's strategic direction. They regularly monitor its performance against the development plan.
- The local governing body has a good range of relevant skills and experience. Governors know their roles and responsibilities and are diligent in carrying them out. Targeted training has been used to enhance the effectiveness of the governing body further. Governors offer the school a good balance of support and challenge.
- Governors have up-to-date knowledge of the school's performance. They receive comprehensive reports from school leaders and often visit the school to check for themselves that the planned actions are having the desired impact.
- Governors understand how well teaching is improving and how this has brought about better progress for pupils. Governors ensure that pay awards for teachers are warranted and linked to the impact of teachers' work on pupils' progress. They manage the headteacher's performance effectively with the support and guidance of experienced trust leaders.
- The governing body ensures that additional funding is used wisely to help

disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils and to increase the amount of physical activity that pupils engage in.

- Governors have not ensured that the school's website is up to date as a new website is being constructed.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All staff are fully trained on how to spot and report on any concerns they have about children's welfare. Staff know how important their role is in safeguarding. They are vigilant, making children's safety a high priority.
- The designated safeguarding leaders are experienced and fully aware of the range of safeguarding concerns in the local community. They are tenacious in following up concerns with local social services. The pastoral team is used effectively to support vulnerable pupils at school.
- Several governors and leaders are trained in safer recruitment and site security is checked daily. All staff are appropriately vetted before starting work.
- School leaders place a high priority on keeping children safe. The pastoral team liaises closely with identified families, including ones in troubled circumstances, helping to develop an effective safeguarding culture in the school community.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Teaching has benefited from the school's professional development programme. Teachers have higher expectations of pupils and the quality of teaching and learning has improved.
- Teachers have established good relationships with pupils. They manage their groups efficiently and provide interesting activities that engage pupils well. Classrooms are calm and friendly places. Teachers often use effective questioning to make pupils reflect on their understanding and explain their answers. Pupils are given regular opportunities to reflect on what they have learned.
- Teaching assistants are skilful in their roles and support identified pupils well. They play an important role in teaching pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who speak English as an additional language and disadvantaged pupils. Teaching assistants receive regular and ongoing training, particularly in speech and language therapy, as this is a key barrier to learning for many pupils in the school community. Much of the extra support is provided in one-to-one teaching or small-group work and is effective in improving pupils' progress and raising their confidence and self-esteem.
- Following a reorganisation in 2015, the teaching of phonics has improved. There is a wide range of phonics ability in early years and Year 1 and pupils are grouped according to ability so that their learning needs can be more accurately met. A significant number of pupils who join school during this time do not speak English, or speak English as an additional language. Teaching is closely matched to the pupils' phonics ability. Children in Reception were able to link letter sounds to pictures of

objects beginning with that letter. A few children were held back by their lack of familiarity with common objects, such as an ambulance.

- Teaching staff recognise the limited experience of some children and young pupils. Consequently, there is an emphasis on encouraging speaking and expanding pupils' experiences. Teachers and teaching assistants clearly show how to make sounds and ensure that phonics activities are frequent and build on what pupils can already do.
- Reading has a high profile in the school. The school provides workshops and guidance for parents on how to support their children's reading at home. Pupils are encouraged to read regularly and to borrow books from the school library. Visiting authors, such as Luke Temple, reading challenges, new books for boys and a refurbished reading room have raised the importance of reading in the eyes of pupils. Pupils spoken to said they liked the books available at school and read regularly. A few pupils with weak communication skills do not have enough opportunities to develop their vocabularies and reading comprehension.
- There is a consistent approach to planning. Teachers know their pupils well. They make good use of pupils' earlier learning to design activities that build on them effectively. Often, pupils can choose from three levels of challenge, which they do with the teacher's guidance. Occasionally, the activities for the most able pupils are not demanding enough. As well as providing harder activities, the school arranges opportunities for the most able pupils to work on more challenging projects with pupils of similar ability from other schools.
- Mathematics is taught well. Teachers have good subject knowledge and reinforce pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding regularly. Most teachers insist on good presentation as an aid to accuracy, which helps pupils make better progress.
- Pupils are encouraged to write in a variety of styles and in most subjects. Pupils spoken to said they enjoyed the writing tasks. However, the quality of handwriting is variable and, even in Year 6, some is still printed.
- Teachers adhere to the school's assessment policy. They mark pupils' written work carefully, usually pointing out mistakes in literacy and mathematics and giving advice on how pupils could improve their performance. Pupils understand the marking system and say that teachers' comments and questions are helpful. They are given opportunities to go over the marking comments and, on most occasions, make the necessary changes or try to answer the questions posed.
- However, when marking other subjects, teachers focus on improving pupils' English and fail to offer enough advice for pupils on how to improve in other areas, such as science.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Children in the early years show great confidence when working or playing with their classmates. Pupils' confidence is also apparent in later years, when they speak well

when answering questions in class or discussing their ideas. They are quite willing to explain their work or their thinking. Their attitudes to learning help them to make good progress.

- Pupils are generally polite and respectful. Most pupils know the appropriate way to speak to adults and can sustain conversations about their views on the school. Pupils insisted they would respect anyone with a different background. They collaborate well when working in groups.
- Pupils willingly take on extra responsibilities, for example as play leaders, school council representatives and reading mentors. Year 6 play leaders and reading mentors take their roles seriously and enjoy helping younger pupils.
- Pupils say they are happy in school and feel safe. They have someone they can talk to if they ever have concerns. Groups of pupils spoken to explained how they had learned how to stay safe outside school, including when using the internet. They knew about the different forms of bullying and stated bullying incidents were rare. They were confident that teachers would sort out any disputes fairly.
- All areas of the school where pupils are working or playing are well supervised and the site is securely fenced. Visitors are appropriately vetted and the parents spoken to agreed their children were kept safe at school.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school records all incidents of misbehaviour, even minor ones, and includes the school's response and its impact and how parents were involved in the process. There are few more serious incidents, such as bullying, and the numbers of incidents have reduced through the year.
- The school has used temporary exclusions effectively. There is a sensible balance between keeping the few pupils who find it difficult to manage their own behaviour in school while meeting the needs of all pupils.
- Parents are expected to follow strict rules in applying for authorised absences and penalties are applied immediately should parents take their children out of school without authorisation. The school sends letters home and threatens (and carries through) court action when a pupil's attendance slips without good reason. Pupils' attendance is checked every day by the pastoral team, who promptly visit families of concern when absences occur. The number of troubled families is increasing, but the current attendance figures show an improvement since 2015.
- Pupils know the behaviour expected of them and can see it modelled by teachers and older pupils. For example, as classes proceed to assembly, older pupils escort younger ones into the hall and sit with them. Pupils move around the school sensibly and with consideration for others. In lessons, they usually settle to work and follow instructions without fuss. Occasionally, when activities are no longer interesting enough, a few pupils fidget and talk out of turn.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- The school's information about pupils' achievement was confirmed by work seen in their books. It shows that pupils in all year groups are making good progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils, making up over half of the school population, are well supported to make good progress. Much activity is geared to enhancing the life experiences of these pupils. As well as trips out and visitors to the school, pupils attend before- and after-school clubs free of charge.
- The most able pupils have opportunities to work with pupils of similar ability from other schools. For example, there are regular workshops and lessons from specialist secondary teachers at a local secondary school. Overall, high proportions of the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics, though not enough make more-than-expected progress.
- Pupils who have special needs and/or disabilities are, for the most part, identified early and supported well. However, some pupils who arrive from other schools later in the year have special needs that have not been fully diagnosed before they join the school, which delays the provision of the most suitable extra support for them. Generally, these pupils are making good progress.
- In 2016, standards in key stage 1 were higher than in 2015. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standards and the proportion working at greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics were around the national average in 2016.
- Standards at the end of key stage 2 in 2016 were not as good as in key stage 1 and below the national average, particularly in reading, and for the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level or working at greater depth. Overall, pupils' progress was broadly average in writing and mathematics but below average in reading. The school's own analysis of pupils' performance in the reading test (which was significantly below teachers' assessment of reading) indicated a significant number of pupils were unfamiliar with much of the vocabulary, reflecting the limited range of experiences of some pupils.

## Early years provision

**Outstanding**

- The early years leadership team has sustained a demanding and very effective drive to improve outcomes for all children. Leaders rigorously check the performance of Reception staff to ensure that the highest professional standards are maintained. The pupil premium fund is used very well, including specific extra support for identified individuals.
- Children get off to an extremely good start in the early years. Transition arrangements are very effective. Before children begin school, staff visit them in their homes and there is a gentle introduction for parents and children into the school setting. Most children arrive in Reception with skills and abilities much lower than are typical for their



age.

- Children behave very well and listen to their teachers. They settle remarkably quickly into classroom routines, learning to be attentive, how to get on well with others and to do things for themselves. They make rapid progress, some from very low starting points. Over two thirds of children have attained a good level of development by the time they leave Reception in the last three years.
- Cooperation and collaboration between children are very strong. Children quickly learn resilience and persevere with activities, such as practising batik hand-painting, reading stories or role playing.
- The learning environment is highly stimulating and provides children with rich, varied and creative experiences. The inside and outside areas have activities and displays linked closely to all areas of learning. Photographs of children model expected behaviour clearly or illustrate recent work. Two children pointed to the pictures to help explain what they were doing, indicating the impact the displays have.
- Teaching is consistently very strong and meets children's learning needs closely, as well as being suitably challenging. Highly effective assessment procedures are the hallmark of the department's practice. Adults carry out incisive observations of children at work or play and make subtle changes in planned activities to match children's next steps in learning. They frequently engage children in conversation, prompting them to think hard and be more imaginative.
- Safeguarding is effective. All adults have the welfare of children as their highest priority. Children are very well cared for and valued.

## School details

Unique reference number	139057
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10019913

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	328
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anthony Ashmore
Headteacher	Julie Mickleburgh
Telephone number	01908 679 809
Website	<a href="http://www.newchapterprimary.org.uk/">www.newchapterprimary.org.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:ncoffice@mket.org.uk">ncoffice@mket.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	17–18 September 2014

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school does not comply with government guidance on what academies should publish about the use of the pupil premium and primary sports funding.
- This is larger than an average-sized primary school. There are two classes in each of Years 1 to 6 and two full-time Reception classes.
- 70% of pupils are of White British origin. The remainder come from a range of other ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is around average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is

around the national average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who join the school at times other than the usual starting points is above average.
- The school meets the government's 2015 floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a wide range of evidence during the inspection, including through observations of teaching, some of which were undertaken with the headteacher. Inspectors also scrutinised pupils' work in books across all year groups and subjects.
- Inspectors met with school staff, including the headteacher, other senior leaders and staff in charge of aspects of the school's work. Inspectors spoke with parents at the start and end of the school day. They spoke with two governors and the chief executive of the trust.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils during two formal meetings as well as during lessons and breaktimes.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of documentation related to the school's work, including its development plan, self-evaluation report, records of monitoring of teaching and learning and information about pupils' attainment, progress, attendance and behaviour. Inspectors scrutinised records concerning safeguarding and toured the school site.
- Inspectors analysed the 16 responses and 10 written comments submitted to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, during the inspection. They also considered the 37 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

James McVeigh, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Christopher Crouch	Ofsted Inspector
Gillian Peck	Ofsted Inspector

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