

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



10 April 2017

Mrs Jackie Hood  
Headteacher  
Chaulden Infants' and Nursery  
School Row  
Chaulden  
Hemel Hempstead  
Hertfordshire  
HP1 2JU

Dear Mrs Hood

### **Short inspection of Chaulden Infants' and Nursery**

Following my visit to the school on 1 March 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in June 2013.

### **This school continues to be good**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. This is a caring school, where pupils of all abilities are nurtured and encouraged to achieve their best. Parents and staff are highly supportive of the school and the work of you and your staff. Parents are proud of their children's progress and would unreservedly recommend the school. Senior leaders are aware of the need to further improve pupils' outcomes, especially in phonics.

Pupils are happy and enjoy coming to school and enjoy learning. Behaviour in class and around the school is good. Pupils have positive attitudes towards learning because they are supported effectively in class and praised for their achievements. Pupils are proud of their work and take care with its presentation.

At the last inspection you were asked to provide more challenging work for the most able pupils, especially in mathematics. The school has successfully achieved this. In 2016, all most-able pupils met the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion attaining above the expected standard was broadly average in reading and above average in writing and mathematics. The work of the most-able pupils currently in the school shows that they are making good progress. I saw evidence of this in both key stages.

Governors and you identified a need to strengthen the leadership team if provision in the school was to continue to improve. The new leadership structure is beginning to impact positively on pupils' progress. Leaders' precise identification of gaps in pupils' learning has enabled you to specifically target the needs of individual pupils. School progress information demonstrates that pupils are quickly catching up. Some pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making progress at a slower rate than other pupils due to the complex nature of their needs. However, they are making reasonable progress.

Phonics results in the school, although improving, have remained below average since the last inspection. This year you have made changes to the way phonics is taught. Teaching is now tailored more closely to pupils' levels of ability. The school has joined the local authority phonics project and is benefiting from the support of external advisers to support teaching. Early indicators suggest that outcomes are improving considerably for the current pupils.

You have identified social and emotional needs as a barrier to learning for some pupils. As a result, you have introduced one-to-one support for these pupils. It is too early to see the full impact of this work on pupils' attainment. However, pupils' confidence and behaviour are improving with this support.

Senior leaders and governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors are aware of their statutory duties. However, they have not ensured that the school meets the current requirements for the school's website information in relation to the spending of the pupil premium and sports premium funding.

### **Safeguarding is effective**

Safeguarding children is a high priority in this school. Leaders have created a safe and secure environment where pupils are listened to and supported by adults. Parents and staff agree that pupils are safe and well looked after. School records indicate that bullying is rare and pupils spoken to confirm this.

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed, accurate and stored securely. Staff have been trained according to the latest safeguarding guidance. Staff have a thorough understanding of what to do if they have any concerns about pupils. Governors are also appropriately trained and carry out their safeguarding duties appropriately. Your work with other agencies ensures that pupils and parents are well supported.

### **Inspection findings**

- Following our discussion, I wanted to look at the impact of the actions leaders have taken to improve pupils' progress and outcomes in phonics, in the early years and for lower-attaining pupils.

- We visited all classes to look at the quality of phonics teaching and pupils' progress. Children in the Nursery enjoyed talking about the objects they had brought in beginning with C and K sounds. In Reception and key stage 1 most teachers demonstrate letter sounds correctly. Most phonics lessons are interesting and provide opportunities for pupils to make rapid progress. However, we agreed that there is a need to ensure a consistency of teaching across the school. There is also a need to review some of the activities used in the early years, especially in relation to reading, to ensure that they sustain the children's interest.
- Nevertheless pupils who read to me were able to use their phonics knowledge well to read unfamiliar words. They were confident readers and talked about the types of books they enjoy. Lower-attaining readers are developing fluency and expression. The most able readers use expression well and are able to talk in depth about their reading.
- We looked at a range of pupils' work in reading, writing and mathematics. The targeted support provided in the classroom and on a one-to-one basis is having a positive impact on pupils' progress. I saw some rapid progress in the books of pupils, especially those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities where pupils who were not yet working at the expected standard are making rapid progress towards them. We agreed that individual pupil monitoring and intervention are effective. The next step is to monitor more closely the progress of different groups of pupils from their starting points to ensure good progress across all groups.
- In recent years, a large proportion of children have entered the early years with skills and knowledge below those typical for their age, especially in the areas of personal development and speech and language. As a result of teaching that stimulates their interest and is well matched to meet their individual needs, all pupils make good progress from their starting points with some making outstanding progress, especially in the Nursery. Parents speak highly of the early years provision.
- Attendance was a line of enquiry because the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities was well below average. Your work with families to improve attendance has been successful and the number of pupils persistently absent from school is much lower than in the previous year. As a result, these pupils are now making better progress.
- Progress in subjects other than mathematics and English was a line of enquiry, as writing across a range of subjects was an area for improvement from the last inspection. Attainment in science in 2016 was also below average. Looking through pupils' books, I noticed that they are provided with opportunities to write in depth across all subjects. Pupils are learning basic geographical knowledge, for example the names of countries and of counties in the United Kingdom. In science, pupils are using scientific terms correctly. For most pupils, progress across the curriculum is good.

- My final line of enquiry was about the provision for pupils in the speech, language and communication resource base. On visiting the base, I found a group of excited pupils who were eager to taste the pancakes made from their batter mix. The pupils were confident to talk to me and keen to share their views on the pancakes. The pupils benefit from specialist teaching and work that is adapted to support their language development. Adults demonstrate language and sounds well, enabling pupils to develop their vocabulary. For example, one pupil spoke to me about the work of the artist Kandinsky. Pupils are making good progress across a range of curriculum subjects. Work in pupils' books supports the positive achievement data. By the end of Year 2, some pupils have made rapid progress, especially in mathematics. Pupils have access to the full range of curriculum subjects and join the main school for subjects such as music. The school ensures that pupils are very well prepared to move on to their next stage in education as transition arrangements are robust and the school continues to work with the junior school in the pupils' first term.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- attainment in phonics continues to improve by ensuring that:
  - all teaching demonstrates letter sounds correctly
  - activities in the early years foster a love of reading.
- they monitor the progress of all groups of pupils from their starting points to ensure that none fall behind.
- the school's website has all the required information that parents need about the use of the pupil premium and sport premium funding.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Hertfordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Caroline Pardy  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I discussed the work of the school with you, five members of the governing body, the special educational needs coordinator, the specialist speech and language teacher, and the local authority improvement partner. We visited all classes to look at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, particularly in phonics, and in the specialist speech, language and communication base. I observed pupils' behaviour around the school and during lessons, and talked to pupils informally at break and lunchtime. I looked at samples of pupils' work across a range of subjects with both you and the special educational needs coordinator. I listened to a group of pupils read. I also looked at a number of documents, including information about pupils' progress, your school self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, documents relating to safeguarding and information posted on the school's website. I considered the views of 35 parents who replied to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, which included 15 free text responses. I also took into account the views of the 22 pupils who completed the pupil questionnaire and the 19 responses to the staff questionnaire.