

The Chalet School

Liden Drive, Liden, Swindon, Wiltshire SN3 6EX

Inspection dates

4–5 April 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and governors do not have an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Development planning does not focus sharply enough on areas that require improvement.
- Insufficient time is given to maintaining and improving the quality of the school's work. This is because leaders spend too much time on the daily demands of the school.
- The leadership team have not checked teachers' work closely enough. As a result, not enough pupils' achievements are accurately assessed.
- Governors and leaders are not aware of current expectations on the recording of behaviour incidents. Therefore, some records do not contain enough detail.
- The quality of teaching varies too much across the school. In some classes the work set for pupils does not extend their learning as much as it should.
- Teachers' assessments are based on limited evidence and are unreliable.
- Teaching assistants do not receive sufficient training to ensure that they correctly pronounce sounds that correspond with letters. This has a negative effect on pupils' progress in both reading and writing.
- The governing body are taking action to improve their effectiveness. However, this has not yet had the desired impact. They do not check the effectiveness of leaders' actions.
- Children do not make enough progress in early years.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils develop good attitudes to learning. They show pride in their work.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils make good progress in their personal development, which helps them succeed in demanding situations, which previously might have overwhelmed them.
- Parents and staff have very positive views of the school. Staff value opportunities to improve their practice, through training and trialling new ways of teaching.
- Effective safeguarding procedures ensure that pupils are kept safe.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the impact of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - governors develop their strategic role and evaluate the impact of actions taken by leaders
 - leaders and governors work closely together to develop a shared strategic approach to maintaining an accurate oversight of the school’s work, in order to identify school improvement priorities
 - leaders at all levels have the capacity to fulfil their duties
 - recording of behaviour incidents meets requirements.
- Improve the impact of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - assessment procedures enable teachers to make consistent judgements about what pupils can do
 - there are high expectations of staff to take every opportunity to extend each pupil’s learning
 - teachers and teaching assistants are skilled in delivering phonics effectively.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school’s use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders, including governors, are not aware of which areas of the school's work need to be improved. Not enough attention has been placed on checking the quality of teaching and learning, so leaders have not noticed the variation in quality of practice between teachers.
- There has been a lack of strategic leadership of the school. The long-term school development plan does not identify clear priorities for improvement. The short-term plan includes a list of activities that the school aims to complete this year, but these are not linked to longer-term goals, or specifically to the school's most recent self-evaluation report.
- Both the headteacher and the deputy headteacher are aware that they have been unable to fulfil all of their responsibilities, because they spend much of their time either teaching or supporting individual pupils. Teachers who take a lead in developing particular subjects across the school are not given sufficient time and support for this work to have the required impact.
- Senior leaders have found it hard to stay up to date with aspects of their work. For example, leaders are unaware of current requirements for the recording of incidents when pupils need to be physically restrained. The records that are kept of these incidents do not contain enough detail of what led up to the incident, what happened during it, and what happened after the restraint. There is also no record made of the pupils' views, should they wish to share these.
- Good links have been made with local schools, and plans are in place to further develop them to support the sharing of information between schools. Recently the local authority has not offered any support, or directly monitored the school's performance. As a result, leaders are not clear enough about the school's shortcomings.
- Teachers have been encouraged to develop their own approaches to evidencing the assessments they make about what pupils can do. Disadvantaged pupils receive additional funding but leaders do not know how effectively this money is used.
- The curriculum is planned over a three-year period to ensure that pupils get a good mix of learning over time, covering all required subjects. The enrichment curriculum provides a good range of additional learning opportunities, such as gardening, cooking and 'forest schools'. The combination of all these aspects of learning is well matched to the special educational needs of the pupils. Consequently, the curriculum supports pupils' personal development well.
- Teachers who are new to the school have been encouraged to share skills, knowledge and practice that they have learned in their previous schools. This has had a positive effect on the quality of teaching, but is not always shared effectively across the school. Performance management procedures are in place for teachers and teaching assistants, which are used effectively to support staff performance. Staff value the opportunities that are available to them for training.
- The additional special needs funding is used appropriately to support pupils' individual

needs. Leaders readily engage external specialists such as an occupational therapist or a speech and language therapist to help diagnose what pupils' difficulties might be.

- The physical education and sports funding is used to provide pupils with a good range of activities, which contribute both to their physical and personal development. These include opportunities to join in events with pupils from other schools, and improving their cycling abilities.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain, and are helped to understand British values. Aspects of the curriculum that focus on developing pupils' social skills and ability to take part in group activities help them develop friendships, tolerance and respect. They also learn how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, including when using computers and using roads. The school council effectively shows pupils how to come to democratic decisions, and how their own ideas can have an influence on decisions being made.
- Pupils' experience of being part of a real community where they feel valued and cared for underpins their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. To further support this the school runs regular celebrations to mark a variety of festivals from different faiths, and places a high value on participation in sports and physical education.

Governance of the school

- The governors have been aware of the need to strengthen the work that they do. This has included completing an audit of their skills, to allocate specific tasks to each governor matched to their abilities. Further guidance has also recently been provided to help governors fulfil their roles. An external consultant has been employed to support the headteacher, and report directly to governors. Despite this, the governing body does not have an accurate understanding of the school's work, or the impact of leaders' actions.
- Governors acknowledge that they do not always have the understanding to challenge leaders in relation to issues of teaching and learning. Governors offer a good level of scrutiny to ensure that the school's work to keep pupils safe is effective.
- Governors do not have clear financial oversight of the pupil premium funding.
- Governors have not ensured that leaders have the capacity to fulfil their responsibilities. This has not been identified as an area for improvement in school development planning.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Pupils feel safe and secure in school, and parents and staff agree that they are safe.
- The leaders who have responsibility for child protection have a good knowledge of pupils and their families. School records show that any concerns are properly recorded and suitable action is taken when required. This may include referring pupils to other services.
- Staff recruitment procedures meet with requirements. These ensure that all safety

checks are completed before staff start work.

- Regular checks carried out on equipment and the school buildings lead to good health and safety arrangements. Risk assessments are completed before pupils are taken on school trips. These identify potential hazards, and how staff plan to minimise risks to pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is too inconsistent across the school.
- Pupils enjoy their learning and engage well in the tasks they are set. Pupils' books show work of a good standard. Pupils take care in how they present their work, and show pride in their achievements. However, in many books there is little evidence of pupils attempting work that challenges them sufficiently. Pupils are not supported effectively to make as much progress as they should, with opportunities to extend pupils' thinking being missed by staff.
- Teachers make judgements about pupils' abilities based on different information. There has been no agreed method of doing this across the school. In some classes there is very little evidence on which assessments are based. This means that assessment information is unreliable.
- In English lessons when helping pupils to read or spell unfamiliar words, teaching assistants do not always use the correct sound pronunciation for letters. This inconsistency in teaching restricts pupils' ability to learn methods to read or spell new words.
- Teachers use a good variety of practical resources to aid pupils' learning in mathematics. This enables pupils to understand concepts more easily, and helps to boost their enjoyment and engagement. In a key stage 2 lesson pupils were pleased that they had real money to help them add up the cost of various items of fruit and vegetables.
- All key stage 2 pupils took part in a physical education lesson together. They really enjoyed playing a game together. Despite the noisy and busy environment all pupils participated well in the lesson. Pupils showed a good level of resilience and social skills to manage this situation.
- The learning environment is well designed to meet the special educational needs of the pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants are well trained to understand the needs of pupils with autism spectrum disorder. All adults show skilful approaches to interact and communicate with pupils. Pupils respond well to the directions and support offered to them.
- Teachers mark work in accordance with the school's policy.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in a range of different situations. They know their individual targets well, and these help them practise and get better with current challenges, which can be from home or school. Parents report that when their child is having problems at home the school is really helpful in sharing strategies to support them.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are good. These effectively support pupils to engage in their learning, and cope with the difficulties they face.
- The 'Friendly Bears' provides a regular opportunity for pupils to mix with pupils from a local primary school. The school council have also arranged for a termly football activity based at another school. Both of these activities promote the development of social interaction skills well.
- The parent support adviser provides a good level of support to parents. She works with individual families when they need some extra help, and runs parent group meetings, focused on topics chosen by parents. Recent meetings have covered behaviour, sleep and anxiety problems, and understanding speech and language therapy. The parent support adviser also works with families who are finding it hard to get their child to school regularly. This helps the school maintain good rates of attendance.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils typically behave well in lessons and during less structured times. Some pupils need to spend time out of lessons to regulate their behaviour. The 'Engine Shed' area is well used at these times, providing a range of quiet activities for pupils to do. There are also several quiet rooms around the building, which pupils can choose to go to when they are feeling unsettled.
- Pupils develop good attitudes to learning. They are usually keen to join in with lessons, and take a lot of pride in the work they produce. Pupils who spoke to inspectors said they liked the school, and knew who to talk to if they were worried.
- Some pupils require physical restraint to keep themselves or others safe. School records do not provide enough detail of how pupils are safely managed at these times.
- There have been no exclusions since the last inspection.
- Attendance is good. It is better than at other special schools nationally.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils start at the school with very low levels of ability compared to other pupils nationally. School information contrasts with inspection evidence, which indicates that the progress of current groups of pupils requires improvement. Too few pupils are making good progress in relation to the targets that have been set for them.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making a similar rate of progress to others in the school. This information is based on teacher assessment. However, teachers' assessments were reliant on limited evidence and in too many cases were unreliable.

- Where the school recognises that pupils are not making sufficient progress, teachers appropriately intervene. The school brings in external specialists to help diagnose pupils' needs. Classroom observations are carried out to check that pupils' behaviour is managed and interventions are suitable to support pupils' learning.
- The most able Year 4 and 5 pupils are able to read regularly used words and put them into sentences in their writing. The most able Year 6 pupils make good progress. This includes being able to work out multiplication sums using the 2, 5 and 10 times tables, and being confident to write independently. These pupils write legibly, and include attempts to write words such as 'climbed', 'noise' and 'coming'.
- Some less able disadvantaged pupils make good progress. Their independent writing includes accurate spellings of 'wildlife', 'liked' and 'eating'. In mathematics, they learn how to divide different numbers up to 20.
- Pupils typically transfer to other local special schools at the end of key stage 2.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- There is currently no early years leader. The headteacher is providing support to a class teacher and a higher level teaching assistant, who work together to run this part of the school. Despite this, leadership is weak.
- Senior leaders are not clear about the quality of teaching as they do not monitor the early years rigorously. Recent staff changes have had a negative impact on the effectiveness of early years provision.
- The school has insufficient information to show the progress of different groups of pupils. Individual workbooks reflect children's variable progress. Some children do not make enough progress. For others, their progress is clear. For example, from not being able to make any recognisable mark on paper some are now able to write numbers and their name.
- Most children transfer into the early years from specialist provision, which provides a clear picture of what children can and cannot already do. Teachers use this to create a personalised schedule, which most children respond well to. They work in defined workstations completing set tasks. This individualised approach is well designed for the special educational needs of the children. However this does not lead to all children making progress.
- Children behave well, and enjoy playing and learning. They respond well to the good resources and interesting activities that are planned for them. They can sort objects into different colours, complete jigsaws, and put shapes and numbers in a row. They make good progress in their social skills and self-confidence. Relationships between staff and children are good. Children develop positive attitudes to learning, and build trusting relationships with staff. Not all children are well prepared for future learning at the school because they make insufficient progress in early years.
- All the appropriate welfare and safeguarding requirements are met in the early years. Children feel safe in this environment.

School details

Unique reference number	126554
Local authority	Swindon
Inspection number	10032530

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	57
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Charles Law
Headteacher	Katharine Bryan
Telephone number	01793 534537
Website	http://www.chalet.swindon.sch.uk
Email address	admin@chalet.swindon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	1–2 April 2014

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The Chalet School caters for pupils who have been diagnosed with an autism spectrum condition and associated learning difficulties. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- A large majority of pupils are of White British heritage and are boys.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons in all classes. These were all carried out jointly with senior leaders. During observations inspectors spoke to pupils about their work and listened to them read as part of their lessons. Time was also spent looking at pupils' workbooks with senior leaders.
- Inspectors observed behaviour during lessons and playtime. A number of pupils shared their view about the school.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, and a range of staff members.
- The lead inspector had telephone conversations with the parent support adviser, the chair of governors and a local authority adviser. He also had a brief meeting with the chair of governors.
- Inspectors looked at a range of school documents. These included information on the school's website, school policies, minutes from governing body meetings, pupil progress information, behaviour records, health and safety records, risk assessments, attendance information, safeguarding records and staff recruitment files.
- An inspector spoke to parents who were bringing their child to school, and the staff who are on the school bus. Responses were also considered from Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also took into account views expressed on the survey completed by staff.

Inspection team

Andy Lole, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Jen Edwards

Ofsted Inspector

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