

# Chart Wood School

Taynton Drive, Merstham, Redhill, Surrey RH1 3PU

## Inspection dates

6–7 March 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Inadequate</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Inadequate</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	<b>Good</b>

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- The school's arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. Serious concerns about pupils' welfare have not been passed on to the local authority. This failure has the potential to put pupils at risk of harm.
- Senior leaders responsible for safeguarding are too stretched. They do not have enough time or capacity to carry out their duties.
- Senior leaders, governors and the local authority have not monitored the school's safeguarding procedures closely enough. As a result, staff working to ensure pupils' safety have not been held to account or sufficiently supported.
- The pressure of the school's amalgamation, relocation and staff restructure has led to weaknesses in leaders' and governors' oversight of the day-to-day work of the school.
- Governors and senior leaders have not managed the school's finances effectively.
- The relationship between the local authority and the school has broken down. Surrey local authority had concerns about the school but did not provide enough support with safeguarding, leadership or financial management.

### The school has the following strengths

- Weaknesses in safeguarding, leadership and governance have not had a negative impact on teaching and pupils' achievement. Pupils are taught well and many are enjoying learning for the very first time in their lives.
- Pupils' behaviour and attendance improves while they are at the school.
- The parents and carers spoken to during the inspection cannot praise the school highly enough.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. Pupils have a wealth of opportunities to participate in enrichment activities and learn about the world outside the school.
- There is no doubt that staff are totally committed to the pupils in their care, and they make a difference to pupils' behaviour and achievement.

## Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

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

- Follow up all safeguarding and child protection concerns, immediately and appropriately, including referring concerns to the local authority and other agencies who work to protect children.
- Strengthen the leadership capacity for safeguarding in the school, so that workloads are shared reasonably and responsibly, while ensuring rigorous oversight of all processes.
- Ensure that the designated safeguarding leaders (DSLs) oversee patterns of concerns about pupils meticulously, and that they have sufficient time to check, and record in detail, the follow-up actions that have been taken.
- Make sure that senior leaders and governors oversee the safeguarding work of the DSLs and other staff, holding them to account and ensuring that they have enough support to carry out their duties.
- Take immediate steps to ensure that a productive and positive relationship is established with Surrey local authority, putting the pupils' best interests first.
- Establish an effective governing body, with the right level of expertise and insight, in order to manage the budget, hold school leaders to account and work effectively with the local authority.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Inadequate

- Senior leaders and governors have not made sure that all safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and keep pupils safe from risk of harm. There has not been enough oversight of safeguarding procedures and practice from senior leaders, governors or the local authority.
- Senior leaders and governors have expected too much of the senior DSL and the home-school link worker. There are too many referrals and concerns for them to deal with on their own.
- In addition, the extra pressures of the amalgamation, staffing reorganisation, site moves and a deficit budget have dominated leaders' work over the last year, at the expense of overseeing the day-to-day work of the school.
- Senior leaders have not worked productively with the local authority to tackle the financial difficulties faced by the school during the amalgamation. In addition, the local authority has not provided effective support for leaders and governors in managing the school's finances or overseeing safeguarding arrangements. There has been a loss of confidence between the school and local authority on both sides.
- Failings at senior level have not been felt by parents, teachers, support staff and pupils. Credit is due to staff working directly with pupils, because they have maintained standards of teaching and learning and sustained their close and positive relationships with pupils. As a result, pupils and parents remain content with what the school is providing.
- Subjects and courses offered to pupils at both sites and in alternative provision are appropriate, challenging, and help to prepare pupils well for the next stage in their lives. Considerable care is taken in choosing and adapting suitable courses for pupils to follow. For example, a well-designed programme has been developed by the school to help close gaps in pupils' learning. The 'milestones' programme has been specially designed by staff to help pupils retain knowledge and skills in reading, writing and mathematics. This programme is particularly helpful for younger pupils, improving their working memory and self-confidence.
- The school has also succeeded in providing a wide range of accredited academic and vocational courses, leading to useful qualifications. These courses motivate pupils and build up pride in their achievements and self-esteem.
- The school rightly focuses on pupils' personal, social, health and economic development, weaving in real-life topics related to the workplace, managing money and looking after one's physical and mental health. Challenging topics relating to right and wrong, dilemmas and choices, help pupils to acquire steady principles and be more confident citizens in the future.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. There are many opportunities for pupils to participate in sports, learn about different cultures and religions and look outside their immediate environments. Pupils very much enjoy contributing to charity and thinking of people other than themselves, for example raising money for the Grenfell Tower fund. Through the school's strong promotion of

British values, pupils gain a sense of pride in the school community and their own achievements.

- The pupil premium is used effectively to fund the essential work of the home-school link worker and also to pay for additional support for pupils' mental health difficulties. The Year 7 catch-up funding makes a helpful contribution to the school's overall focus on improving literacy and numeracy, supporting additional programmes of extra help for pupils.
- Parents and pupils spoken to during the inspection praised the staff's care and dedication. One parent commented that everything in the school 'was geared towards the children'. Another told the inspector that she had seen 'big changes' in her son and 'could not fault the school'.
- The school makes effective use of external evaluation to identify aspects of teaching, learning and assessment requiring improvement.

### **Governance of the school**

- In February 2018, all members of the governing body resigned, and at the time of the inspection there was no governing body in place in the school. The local authority has recently appointed an interim executive board (IEB), the members of which have experience and a strong track record in governance. However, at the time of the inspection, members of the board had not yet held their first meeting.
- The previous governing body had supported school leaders, was committed to the pupils, and took a first-hand interest in the school's activities. However, governors did not challenge school leaders enough, or carry out their own duties to ensure that safeguarding arrangements were effective. Governors failed to notice that serious concerns about pupils' safety and welfare were not being passed on to the appropriate authorities and had not realised that the DSL was overworked.
- In addition, governors were not effective in managing the school's complex financial situation at the point of the amalgamation. Governors tried hard to improve their understanding of the financial management of the school. Nevertheless, evidence from governors' meetings shows that governors' understanding was limited. Governors did not manage to put together a suitable recovery plan and were unsuccessful in slowing down the rate of spending.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Serious concerns about pupils' safety and welfare have not always been referred on to the local authority children's services when they should have been. Senior leaders do not take enough time to review patterns of concerns, or question whether these are signs that pupils may be at risk of significant harm.
- Written records in pupils' child protection files are not as helpful as they should be. Some files do not show what action has been taken and the impact that this has had.
- There has not been sufficient oversight of safeguarding practice in the school. Former governors failed to identify weaker safeguarding practice. The local authority audit of safeguarding also failed to note that there were shortfalls in sharing serious concerns

about pupils' safety.

- Leaders, previous governors and staff have attended appropriate safeguarding training and there is no doubt that teaching and support staff recognise signs of abuse or neglect and pass on their concerns to the DSL and leaders. Teachers and support staff have trusted senior leaders to take appropriate action but are not aware that sometimes their referrals have not been followed up properly.
- The school carries out suitable checks on staff applying to work in the school. Inspectors found that all the right procedures had been followed. However, some minor administrative amendments needed to be made to ensure that all records of checks on staff were in the same place and up to date.

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

**Good**

- Throughout the school, and in alternative provision, pupils are taught well and enjoy learning. They form strong and mutually respectful relationships with their teachers and other adults. Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively together as a team, creating a purposeful and secure classroom atmosphere.
- Teachers and support staff are knowledgeable about their subject areas and the pupils they teach. Staff are confident that they can help every pupil to make progress and, in turn, pupils have complete confidence in their teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils want to do well and to achieve. Over time, pupils acquire pride in their work and begin to feel motivated to learn.
- Teachers ensure that pupils know what they are learning and why it is important. Pupils have achievable but challenging short-term and long-term targets to keep them focused and motivated.
- Attractive and well-designed resources interest pupils and support their learning. Teachers use the resources they have imaginatively to reinforce key ideas and help pupils to practise their skills and remember the content of what they have been studying.
- Teachers and teaching assistants encourage pupils to work things out for themselves and not be overly dependent on their continuous support. Patient guidance from adults, firm encouragement and positive thinking all help pupils to enjoy learning, often for the first time. Teachers' questions are searching and thought-provoking.
- Pupils are inquisitive learners. They are encouraged to be active, but not at the expense of learning to sit still and concentrate, in order to reinforce ideas, knowledge and skills. However, some pupils find it difficult to maintain their focus when they have finished their work. Some do not make the most of their time when they are waiting for guidance from the teacher or for their classmates to catch up.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

**Inadequate**

## **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate. Ineffective arrangements for safeguarding put pupils' welfare and personal development at risk.
- However, devoted, alert and knowledgeable staff help to keep pupils secure, day to day. During their time in the school, pupils gain confidence and pride in their achievements. They form stable relationships with trusted adults and good friendships with each other. Pupils benefit from firm guidance about keeping safe online and how to cope with unfamiliar situations and potential hazards in the community.
- Threaded through the timetabled curriculum, pupils have frequent opportunities to practise social skills and show consideration. Over time, they acquire greater resilience and control over their emotions.
- Pupils are friendly and welcoming, if hesitant, with visitors. While some are reluctant to share their work, they increasingly relax when talking about their learning and progress.
- Intentional bullying is rare. When pupils forget themselves and use abusive language or threatening behaviour, they are firmly dealt with in a fair and kindly way. Pupils are helped to make fresh starts with their behaviour, but also to learn from their mistakes.
- Pupils take care of their work and the school site. There is no litter or casual vandalism.
- It is heartening to see how pupils begin to bond with each other and make firm friendships. In many cases, pupils begin to show empathy because they realise that their friends share their problems and difficulties.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Over time, pupils' behaviour improves, together with their self-control and resilience.
- Pupils form strong relationships with their teachers and other staff. Because staff are courteous but warm, and kind but assertive, pupils echo these attitudes, imitate what they see and hear and acquire much better social skills.
- There is very little deliberate low-level disruption to learning in lessons. Understandably, some pupils are impulsive or easily cast down when the work is challenging. Nevertheless, they understand that they need to try hard and are quickly brought back on track by assertive and good-natured guidance from adults.
- Pupils behave well during breaktimes and lunchtimes. They move around the school site in between lessons in a calm and orderly way. During the inspection, the fire alarm was raised during a science experiment. All pupils evacuated the building calmly and completely in line with expectations, showing good control and well-established habits.
- All staff are trained in de-escalation of pupils' anger and uncontrolled emotions. Staff are confident in managing pupils' behaviour calmly and safely. As a result, over time, incidents of physical restraint reduce for individual pupils.
- A firm line is taken with behaviour that puts pupils themselves and staff at risk of

harm. School leaders use a range of sanctions, including internal exclusion and appropriate use of exclusion from school, to send out a clear message about what is acceptable and what is not. Leaders have rightly recognised that more needs to be done to reduce exclusions in the future.

- Many pupils who join the school have had long periods of missing education. School leaders have introduced a number of successful strategies to improve pupils' attendance, including the appointment of a home-school link worker. She works closely with families, providing strong practical support with improving attendance.
- Very nearly all pupils improve their attendance at school over time, with increasing numbers exceeding national figures for pupils in mainstream schools. However, school leaders have correctly identified that overall attendance needs to improve even more.
- Pupils who have particular difficulties in attending school often improve their attendance when they are offered alternative provision. Attendance at alternative courses is tracked carefully, so that school leaders know at all times where pupils are. For some pupils, appropriate alternative provision, including accredited courses and work experience, has been life-changing. One pupil told an inspector, 'If it wasn't for this place, I would not be in school.'

### Outcomes for pupils

### Good

- Pupils make good progress, often from very low starting points. Many pupils have gaps in their learning where they have missed education, been excluded or because their poor mental health has prevented them from learning.
- Nearly all pupils make good and better progress in English, mathematics and science. The small proportion of pupils who make less than good progress are those who have significant health concerns and complex difficulties that get in the way of rapid and sustained progress. These pupils are supported very well by the school's 'milestones' programme.
- There is no significant difference in the achievement of pupils from different groups. Disadvantaged pupils and those who are looked after make the same good progress as other pupils.
- Because the curriculum on offer is flexible and ambitious, the most able pupils achieve their potential and go on to gain accredited and useful qualifications.
- Through careful careers guidance and preparation for life beyond school, including conscientious selection of work experience, most pupils are successful in taking up places in local colleges or employment.
- Pupils improve their reading and comprehension through well-planned English lessons and regular reading practice. Inspectors saw examples of improving and increasingly confident extended writing in pupils' books and folders. Some pupils have difficulties with spelling, and the individual programmes of additional support make a difference to pupils' basic accuracy.
- Pupils achieve particularly well in art, and design and technology. Pupils' artwork is impressive and of a standard that compares well with pupils in mainstream schools.

## School details

Unique reference number	125457
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10048979

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	9 to 16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	91
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Williamson
Headteacher	Craig Anderson
Telephone number	01737 215 488
Website	<a href="http://www.chart-wood-school.info">www.chart-wood-school.info</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin.merstham@cws.surrey.sch.uk">admin.merstham@cws.surrey.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	11–12 September 2013

## Information about this school

- Chart Wood School is a maintained special school, with some residential places, catering for up to 105 boys, aged 9 to 16, who have social, emotional and mental health difficulties. A number of pupils have additional special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, such as autism spectrum conditions. All pupils have education, health and care (EHC) plans.
- The school was formerly St Nicholas School. In September 2017, it amalgamated with Starhurst School, led by the headteacher from St Nicholas, who is now the executive headteacher.
- The school is due to move to a new building on the Starhurst site in 2019.
- At present, the school operates on two sites in Merstham and Reigate.
- Following the amalgamation, there was a full staffing and leadership restructure. There is now an executive headteacher, an acting headteacher and a head of school at the



Reigate site. The head of residential care is also the DSL. There have been several other changes to leaders' and staff's roles and responsibilities.

- The school uses alternative provision for some pupils at the Skills and Integrated Learning Centre (SILC), Sporting Chances, and Change of Scene. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 attend vocational courses at East Surrey College.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection began as a no formal designation inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was carried out with no notice. It was deemed to be a section 5 inspection on the second day.
- The inspection was carried out following a complaint made to Ofsted which raised serious concerns. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector decided that an inspection of the school should take place to follow up the whole-school issues that were raised. Inspectors sought to establish whether safeguarding arrangements were effective.
- A full inspection of the residential provision was carried out at the same time as the education inspection. This will be the subject of a separate inspection report.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding and child protection records. They also checked the school's procedures for safer recruitment of staff.
- Information about the school's curriculum and pupils' progress was reviewed. Inspectors also scrutinised records of behaviour incidents, exclusions and pupils' attendance.
- Inspectors visited lessons to observe pupils' learning on both sites and in alternative provision. In these visits, inspectors spoke to pupils and looked at examples of their work.
- The responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, or to the staff and pupil surveys, were too few in number for an analysis to be possible. Inspectors spoke with three parents and took into account the school's own evidence of parental feedback.
- Inspectors met with leaders, staff and representatives of the local authority.
- Documentation relating to the work of the previous governing body, reports from the school's improvement partner, and the school's own evaluation of its performance were scrutinised.

## Inspection team

Janet Pearce, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ross Macdonald

Ofsted Inspector

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