

Putteridge High School

Putteridge Road, Luton, Bedfordshire LU2 8HJ

Inspection dates

18–19 June 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The Chiltern Learning Trust and the local governing body have been fundamental in offering support that has resulted in school improvement. The effective communication between them ensures that school leaders are steadfastly held to account over the performance and behaviour of pupils.
- Governors provide strategic support for school leaders and challenge them to improve further.
- The headteacher and senior leaders have been relentless in their efforts to improve provision. As a result, the standards of teaching and the achievements of pupils are good.
- School self-evaluation is accurate. Senior leaders know the school's strengths, where improvement is required and what to do.
- Middle leaders are effective, making an important contribution to school improvement.
- The school's systems for assessing pupils' progress are effective.
- Teachers' strong subject knowledge promotes an eagerness to learn across the school. Pupils show positive attitudes.
- The performance of disadvantaged pupils is improving swiftly and the gap between their achievement and the others is narrowing. However, leaders' plans are unclear as to which improvement strategies are the most effective.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress. However, the way that leaders monitor and evaluate the impact of the support is not sharp enough. Communication with these pupils' parents is not as good as it could be.
- Pupils' social and emotional needs are met exceptionally well. Developing pupils' self-esteem is at the forefront of the school's work.
- Pupils feel safe and secure. They are knowledgeable about how to keep themselves safe when using modern technology.
- Attendance is now in line with the national average because pupils enjoy school more than in the past. Punctuality to lessons is good.
- Some disadvantaged pupils do not attend school as regularly as their peers. Although this is improving, persistent absence remains high.
- Good-quality careers advice means that pupils secure next steps in their education and training.
- At times, teachers provide insufficient challenge for the most able pupils. Consequently, they do not make as much progress as they should.
- The rich curriculum provides pupils with a very wide range of subjects, enriched by a range of excellent extra-curricular activities.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Plans are refined to produce a suitable strategic pupil-premium plan so that governors and leaders have a thorough understanding of the impact of strategies to support disadvantaged pupils.
- Refine systems to monitor and evaluate the strategies used to support pupils with SEND and implement a whole-school strategy to strengthen communication with their parents.
- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that the most able pupils are consistently provided with a greater level of challenge, so that they achieve their best in each subject.
- Take effective action to decrease the persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The Chiltern Learning Trust has provided highly valuable support to raise standards. The trustees are very proactive and successful in helping to secure improvements and know the school very well. The trust ensures that the school has the necessary capacity to drive forwards further developments.
- The headteacher has high expectations of himself, staff and pupils and has created an aspiring culture within the school. This has led to secure improvement since the school opened. He is ably supported by a motivated senior leadership team who shares his vision for an outstanding school.
- The school's evaluation of its performance is accurate. Leaders carefully link school improvement to their evaluation. Leaders have clear procedures in place to monitor the quality of leadership and management, teaching, learning and assessment, and the behaviour and welfare of the pupils.
- Strong middle leadership appointments have added capacity to the school. Middle leaders track the progress of pupils and the quality of teaching closely to ensure good progress. They are unwaveringly positive about the support they receive from senior leaders and value the frequent access they have to leadership training programmes.
- An effective approach to assessment has been developed. This enables teachers to carefully match work to most pupils' abilities. Leaders robustly track the progress that pupils make and have an accurate understanding of groups of pupils and those who need further guidance and support.
- Pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans are carefully maintained. Staff monitor closely pupils' social, emotional and academic development. Parents and carers receive frequent updates to let them know how their children are progressing.
- The trust provides a comprehensive training programme for staff. Teachers welcome the opportunities provided and speak highly of the courses they attend.
- Staff new to the profession are well supported by their mentors. They are given lots of opportunities to share ideas and experiences. As a result, they feel valued by senior leaders and quickly adapt to the school's systems and procedures.
- The spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of pupils is shaped by the school's caring, nurturing and supportive ethos. Pupils' understanding of British values is seen in their respect for each other in lessons and around the school. As a result, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain and leave school able to make a contribution to society.
- The responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff were overwhelmingly positive. Staff are proud to be a member of the school, and agree that pupils' behaviour is good and that pupils are kept safe.
- Parental responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire and free-texts indicate that the vast majority agree that the school is well led and managed. Most parents appreciate what the school does for their children and say that their child is well looked after and safe.
- Leaders use Year 7 catch-up funding and additional funding to support disadvantaged

pupils well. However, leaders' plans and evaluations relating to additional funding are not sufficiently sharp to enable them to determine which strategies have the most impact on disadvantaged pupils' learning.

- Leaders promote equality of opportunity well. All groups of pupils are achieving better results than in the past but there is still more to do to promote the achievement of higher-ability pupils from the start of Year 7.
- Special educational needs funding is used effectively because the coordinator ensures that pupils' needs are identified, resulting in most pupils making good progress. Training is provided to staff, including teaching assistants. However, the monitoring of the impact of this training is not sharp enough to enable pupils to make the most progress they can.
- A minority of the parents of pupils with SEND do not feel that the school communicates well enough with them about their child's individual needs and their academic progress.

Governance of the school

- The local governing body and the trust have high aspirations and expectations for the pupils who attend the school. They work as a team and have a clear strategic plan that identifies accurately the many strengths and the specific weaknesses in the school's provision.
- Members of the governing body have a range of professional experience and expertise. They know how to analyse information on the performance of pupils. Visits to the school help the governors to gain a sharp understanding of the school's priorities and progress towards these.
- Governors are rigorous in their management of the performance of the school. Meetings are strategically focused and supported by the trust. Governors have evolved a highly systematic approach which ensures that they challenge and support leaders appropriately.
- Appropriate checks are made to ensure that statutory duties are met regarding safeguarding pupils and employment of staff. The trust and governors have a strong commitment to ensure that pupils are safe. They ensure that all statutory health and safety duties are met.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has an up-to-date safeguarding policy on its website which takes into account the government's current requirements. There is a strong culture of keeping pupils safe in the school.
- The single central record of employment checks on staff, governors and members of the trust is well maintained. Leaders, including governors, fully understand the importance of safer recruitment. They ensure that all staff are vetted prior to commencing employment in the school.

- Staff are well trained in all aspects of safeguarding, including child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation and radicalisation. They have knowledge of the risks associated with the criminal exploitation of children known as county lines. This high-quality training enables staff to spot concerns quickly and confidently take rapid action. There is a shared understanding of the need to protect these vulnerable pupils from all possible risks.
- Pupils told inspectors they feel safe. They are confident that staff will help and support them with their worries and concerns. Talks given by the local police help to ensure that pupils have a good grasp of the rule of law.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved considerably since the school opened, and is now good. The majority of teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge, which they use to plan engaging activities that build on learning. Effective questioning is used to probe pupils' understanding and deepen it. Longer-term sequences of lessons are carefully planned to support pupils' learning potential.
- Strong relationships between staff and pupils provide an effective basis for learning. There is a positive atmosphere for learning in classrooms. Pupils are encouraged to take risks and 'have a go' if something is difficult. This gives them the confidence to learn from their mistakes.
- Classroom routines are well established. Pupils know what is expected of them. Activities have a clear focus on learning that is shared with the pupils. Staff develop pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy through a variety of activities, while they maintain pupils' interest and motivation.
- Teachers rarely need to correct any inappropriate use of language by pupils. Teachers' high, consistently applied expectations of pupils' conduct mean that a short reminder is normally all that is required to help pupils manage themselves well again.
- The school's own feedback procedures are consistently implemented by the majority of staff. Consequently, pupils are clear on how to improve their work.
- Teaching assistants are effectively deployed and work successfully with pupils. They are careful not to do the work for them and their support is carefully timed to enable pupils to learn better and build self-confidence.
- Displays celebrate pupils' achievements and provide them with additional information to aid their studies.
- Some teaching does not ensure that the most able pupils are challenged to think hard and deepen their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Leaders have worked tirelessly to establish a culture where pupils feel they can succeed. Pupils are proud of their school and keen to explain about all that it offers. They understand the school's values and what is expected of them. Teachers know their pupils exceptionally well as individuals and their specific needs.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe when at school. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. They demonstrate a strong awareness of the risks associated with the use of social media and the use of networking sites.
- Pupils are happy, well cared for and respect each other's differences. Pupils spoken to say that they do not use pupils' backgrounds or disabilities as reasons for being unkind. Pupils have flourished in the welcoming, inclusive, nurturing environment that leaders have created. As a result, they grow in self-esteem.
- Promoting emotional health and resilience is high on the school's agenda. During the inspection, the Year 9 pupils received a well-being day led by outside agencies. External speakers delivered a range of sessions, for example on how to cope with stress and the dangers of sexting.
- Pupils are encouraged to discuss and debate issues, showing respect for others' points of view. They are supported to understand the importance of democracy and are active in helping others through charity work.
- High levels of supervision ensure the pupils' safety. Staff are highly visible at the start and end of the school day as well as at breaktime and lunchtime. Pupils value teachers' concern for their health and safety. The school has risk assessments to keep pupils safe when in school and when participating on excursions.
- Pupils enjoy a wide range of enrichment activities that add significantly to their personal development and welfare, including the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Pupils are given the opportunity to learn a musical instrument and participate in a wide range of sports, for example, football, basketball, netball, hockey and tennis. A number of pupils are top sports men and women competing at county, regional, national and international levels.
- The school has purchased equipment to enable pupils with SEND to participate fully in sports. The school has specialist trampolining and gym equipment.
- The school holds the International Schools Award for 2018–2021. The school has strong links with its German partner school and welcomed a group of pupils this year to visit. Together, in a multinational group, pupils undertook a series of activities in music, art, outdoor challenges, teamwork and cooking.
- The few pupils who attend alternative provision are helped well. Pupils are safe, secure and learning well.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Throughout the inspection, pupils were polite, courteous and seen willing to help each other. They move sensibly around the building and follow the instructions of staff.

Pupils wear their uniforms with pride and keep the school very tidy.

- Classrooms are calm; pupils respect each other's views and pay attention to their teachers. Typically, lessons proceed without interruption because low-level disruption is rare.
- The school has effective policies for dealing with any unacceptable behaviour. Records show that behaviour has improved year on year. Far fewer pupils are excluded from school than previously. The vast majority of parents believe that the school makes sure that its pupils are well behaved.
- Pupils say that they enjoy school and bullying is rare. They state that any concerns of this kind are dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff. The majority of parents agree. Pupils are knowledgeable about the different types of bullying including e-safety, cyber bullying and bullying linked to those who are seen as different.
- The isolation room for internal exclusion is used selectively and good-quality restorative work is carried out there.
- Attendance is now in line with the national average and punctuality has significantly increased, reflecting pupils' more positive attitudes to school. Persistent absence has reduced considerably and is now below the national average. However, it continues to remain high for disadvantaged pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Standards are rising across the school in many subjects due to sharper leadership and better teaching. The school's performance information, along with work seen during the inspection, shows that progress is now good.
- GCSE results for 2018 show that pupils' progress is in line with the national average. The school's performance information shows that Year 11 pupils are on track to reach higher levels of attainment this year.
- Current pupils' work shows that they are making strong progress across a range of subjects and year groups.
- Staff analyse assessment information carefully and track the progress of groups of pupils closely in order to ensure that pupils make good progress over time.
- Disadvantaged pupils are now making better progress than previously. Leaders' strategies are beginning to have more impact on the rate of progress of disadvantaged pupils across the school.
- The development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills is a clear priority, and opportunities are taken, across the curriculum and across the year groups, to promote pupils' verbal, reading, writing and numerical skills.
- Pupils who attend alternative provision do so regularly and make good progress because of the good support they receive.
- As a result of strong careers advice and guidance, the vast majority of pupils are well prepared for the next stages of their education or training. In 2018, all pupils took their learning further after the age of 16.
- Work seen in lessons and in books shows that some of the most able pupils could be

further stretched and challenged as they are not making the progress that they should.

School details

Unique reference number	144311
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	10102381

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	819
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Bill Pollard
Headteacher	David Graham
Telephone number	01582 415791
Website	www.putteridgehigh.org
Email address	head@putteridgehigh.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Putteridge High School is a secondary school serving the area of Luton. It is smaller than the average secondary school.
- The school became part of the Chiltern Learning Trust on the 1 March 2017. Although the multi-academy trust's board of trustees is legally the responsible body, the school retains a local governing body. This holds the school's leaders to account for the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment, personal development, behaviour and welfare, as well as pupils' progress, outcomes and safeguarding.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils whose first language is not believed to be English is above average.

- The proportion of pupils who receive support for SEND is above average.
- The school uses alternative provision, all of which consists of registered providers. Pupils attend Active Support, ACE, Avenue Centre for Education, Aspire to Inspire and MacIntyre.

Information about this inspection

- The lead inspector held meetings with the chief executive officer of the Chiltern Learning Trust.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders, members of staff, recently qualified teachers, trainee teachers and two members of the governing body.
- Inspectors spoke with a wide range of pupils from all year groups in meetings, in lessons and around the school at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors observed pupils' conduct throughout the school day, when they arrived and as they left at the end of the school day.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in lessons and conducted a work scrutiny.
- Inspectors scrutinised school documents about teaching and learning, behaviour, records and information about safeguarding, attendance and punctuality, the school's record of self-evaluation and its development plan, minutes of the full governing body and minutes of the multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors took account of the 101 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire, the 92 free-text comments from parents and the 42 responses to the online staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the online pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Stefanie Lipinski-Barltrop, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Shân Oswald	Ofsted Inspector
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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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