

Inspection of Phoenix Junior Academy

Glencoe Road, Chatham, Kent ME4 5QD

Inspection dates: 17–18 December 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, parents and carers are proud of their school. Staff create a strong family feel and care deeply about their pupils. Pupils tell us that they enjoy the company of their friends. They take pride in helping others, both in school and in the community. For example, pupils support the work of a local homeless charity and, during the inspection, the school choir visited a care home to sing Christmas carols.

Leaders have raised teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in reading, writing and mathematics. Although not all pupils leave the school with the knowledge and skills they need in reading, writing and mathematics, pupils' achievement in these areas of the curriculum is improving. In other subjects, leaders' ambition for pupils to succeed is less well developed. Not enough pupils build the knowledge and skills they need in every subject.

Pupils feel safe and well cared for. They say that behaviour is good and that bullying is rare. Pupils and parents are confident that, if bullying does take place, staff deal with it quickly. Pupils think the sanctions for poor behaviour are fair and help those who need it to improve their ways.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

School leaders have worked hard to strengthen the quality of the teaching of the basic skills that pupils need. Pupils enjoy reading and hearing their teachers read to them every day. Those who join the school without the skills they need to read are taught phonics so that they catch up. Disadvantaged pupils read to breakfast club staff daily, as well as in class. All this helps pupils to become increasingly confident readers. In mathematics, teachers use assessment well. They plan lessons that strengthen pupils' understanding. Pupils build their knowledge and skills over time.

In many subjects beyond reading, writing and mathematics, learning is not planned well. Leaders have not created clear plans that help teachers know what to teach and assess. This means that teaching does not always help pupils to learn and remember important information. Subject leaders do not focus enough on the progress pupils are making when they monitor their subject.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive interventions matched to their needs in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders check the quality of support these pupils receive. They work with other professionals, such as counsellors and therapists, to give pupils the right support. But the wider curriculum does not always match the needs of pupils with SEND well enough.

Governors receive helpful information from school leaders about reading, writing and mathematics. They visit the school regularly to review improvements and hold school leaders to account. This has helped make improvements in the leadership of the core subjects and pupils' achievement. Governors have not yet paid the same attention to other subjects. Leaders of the multi-academy trust challenge the

headteacher to ensure that the school's plans for improvement are followed through. But trust leaders have not made sure that these plans help to develop a strong curriculum across the full range of subjects.

Leaders create a positive atmosphere in the school. Personal, social and health education is carefully planned through the school. Staff speak respectfully to pupils and show a genuine interest in their lives. They have high expectations of pupils' behaviour in class and around the school. Pupils are keen to be in school and attendance has improved since the last inspection. They are polite and kind to one another and to adults. Pupils say that, on the rare occasions when pupils do misbehave, adults help them to become better behaved.

Some pupils take on roles of responsibility in the school. This includes, for example, running the school tuck shop or being a member of the school's eco-council. This helps them to take a genuine pride in their school. Leaders introduce a different value each term. This helps pupils understand what it means, for example, to be selfless and how to be responsible citizens in their school and community.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Governors make sure that school procedures maintain a culture of safeguarding. Leaders make sure that staff receive training to keep pupils safe. Appropriate systems are in place to ensure that any concerns raised about the safety of pupils are quickly followed up. Staff know the pupils and families well. Leaders make sure that every member of staff has undergone the checks needed to work with pupils.

Pupils learn about keeping themselves safe. They feel safe and are aware of how to use the internet and other technology appropriately. Pupils are confident in sharing their worries with staff and they trust staff to keep them safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In too many subjects, the curriculum is not planned and sequenced well enough to build pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. As a result, teachers do not always know what to teach and when, so pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Subject leaders should make sure that they identify the essential knowledge needed in each subject and sequence the curriculum so that pupils' learning builds over time.
- Teachers do not always check pupils' understanding well enough in subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics. As such, teachers do not use what pupils already know and understand to plan what they should learn next. Leaders need to ensure that all teachers have a secure understanding of what pupils should and do know so that they systematically build pupils' knowledge, skills and

understanding.

- School leaders think carefully about the workload of their staff when introducing new policies and initiatives. Subject leaders value the time they have been given to monitor the quality of the curriculum. While they have checked pupils' work, this has focused mostly on the presentation of work and the feedback that teachers give to pupils, rather than how effectively the curriculum has been implemented. Senior leaders should develop subject leaders in order to strengthen their challenge and support for teachers so that the curriculum helps pupils to know more and remember more.
- Governors have worked with the headteacher to monitor the quality of education. However, this has focused mostly on the improvements needed in reading, writing and mathematics. Governors do not have an accurate enough view of leaders' work to improve the curriculum beyond these subjects. Governors need to ensure that they have appropriate procedures in place to understand the quality of the curriculum in order to support and challenge leaders to improve the school further.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	138510
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	10111231
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	233
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Denise Ford
Headteacher	Peter Sears
Website	www.phoenixjuniors.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	4–5 May 2016

Information about this school

- Phoenix Junior Academy is a junior school with two forms of entry.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with the headteacher, the designated safeguarding leader and a range of curriculum leaders. We met with the inclusion lead and the assessment and progress lead. We considered the views of 19 staff who responded to the staff survey.
- I held meetings with the trustees and governors, the chief executive officer of the trust and the executive headteacher designate.
- We examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including the school's own plan for improvement, governance documents, monitoring records, attendance and behaviour records, and documents relating to the safeguarding of pupils.
- We reviewed safeguarding training records and met with the school safeguarding lead.

- We met with parents at the start of the school day and considered the 23 responses to Ofsted’s Parent View questionnaire.
- We considered the views of pupils, including 38 responses to the pupil survey.
- We did deep dives in reading, mathematics, science and history. These deep dives consisted of linked activities to gather evidence about how well pupils are helped to gain knowledge and skills. As part of these, we reviewed pupils’ work, we visited lessons with senior leaders and spoke to pupils and teachers. We heard pupils read, observed adults reading to pupils, visited reading lessons and talked to pupils about reading. We also reviewed the curriculum planning and workbooks in a selection of other subjects.

Inspection team

Graham Chisnell, lead inspector

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