

Inspection of The Chase

Geraldine Road, Malvern, Worcestershire, WR14 3NZ

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 October 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy school. They are happy and safe and make strong progress. Pupils feel confident that staff will sort bullying out if it happens. Leaders set high expectations. Most pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. The small minority of pupils who struggle to stick to the rules receive effective support to help them understand how to make the right choices in the future.

Pupils are actively involved in many aspects of school life through school council committees such as the teaching and learning committee. Pupils are passionate about climate change. The school has declared a climate emergency in response to pupils' opinions. Pupils' involvement in this issue extends beyond the school into the community.

Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe, including online. They know they can talk to a member of staff if they need help. Parents appreciate the support that staff provide for pupils' mental health and well-being, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. One parent's comment reflected many others when they said, 'Many teachers give more than would be expected for the positive development of the children, inspiring them to become the best they can be as individuals.'

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

Pupils achieve very well at The Chase. Leaders have created ambitious curriculum plans that help pupils build their knowledge and skills incrementally. Teachers check pupils' learning and give feedback in class. This helps to identify and close gaps in pupils' understanding. Teachers adapt curriculum plans well to make sure all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged, can access the learning. In the sixth form, staff know the students well. They provide exceptional academic and pastoral support to ensure that all students become increasingly independent learners, across the full range of courses they study.

The number of pupils studying subjects that lead to the English Baccalaureate is increasing. For example, more pupils are choosing to study modern foreign languages at GCSE and A level, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. This reflects the school's commitment to equal opportunities for all.

Pupils with SEND make strong progress. Teachers adapt their teaching to address pupils' needs. Support staff provide effective extra support when necessary. A specialist teacher works with local primary schools to identify pupils who might need additional help with reading. This ensures that these pupils receive the right support from the beginning of Year 7.

Disadvantaged pupils' achievement has improved since the last inspection. They get to know the school and staff before they start Year 7 through the summer holiday programme. This smooths the transition from primary to secondary school.

Pupils are confident and articulate. They stand up for what they believe in. The majority of pupils have a strong sense of fairness and positive attitudes to learning. A small number of pupils need to be reminded to treat others with respect. Most staff step in quickly when this happens. Some do not, which pupils feel is unfair.

Pupils learn about equality and respect for different faiths through character education sessions. Pupils regularly discuss current affairs. This supports leaders' aim for pupils to develop the aspiration, respect, resilience and adaptability they need to succeed in life. Some pupils do not have enough opportunities to engage with more diverse communities outside school. Leaders have plans to address this so that pupils are even better prepared for life in modern Britain.

Pupils enjoy the wide range of extra-curricular activities. There is something for everyone, including exciting events in the library, dance productions and a wide range of unusual sports such as kayaking and scuba diving. Staff make sure that pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils participate in after-school clubs too. Students in the sixth form become mature, responsible citizens as a result of the well-planned opportunities beyond the curriculum. Staff promote proactive links with local employers. For example, some students attend an after-school activity at a local cyber-security company.

Almost all pupils and sixth form students go onto their chosen next steps in employment, education or training. Many pupils join the school's sixth form after Year 11. Staff make sure that pupils are aware of other options available post-16. Independent careers advice is a strength of the school.

Staff feel well supported. They say that leaders consider their workload and well-being. Governors understand their roles. They probe the evidence behind leaders' decisions. Governors support leaders to do a good job, and challenge their decisions if things need to improve.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are trained well to spot any signs of vulnerability in pupils. All staff are vigilant. They report any concerns, including those about friendship groups. Leaders follow up these concerns rigorously. They work closely with external experts when necessary so that pupils get the help they need. Leaders ensure that the required pre-employment checks are completed when new staff are appointed.

Leaders update policies and procedures regularly. For example, the relationships and sex education policy makes it clear that sexualised language will not be tolerated.

The safeguarding team works closely with pupils whose behaviour or language has upset or harmed others in the past.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A minority of staff do not implement the behaviour policy consistently. As a result, pupils are unsure of how adults respond to different behaviours, and so they can experience some disruption to learning. Leaders should ensure that all staff understand and consistently uphold the school's high expectations for pupils' behaviour.
- Pupils have limited opportunities to engage with diverse communities. As a result, some pupils' understanding of life in modern Britain is restricted to their immediate community. Leaders should ensure that pupils have more opportunities to experience the rich diversity of different cultures.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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 are the school and you are 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	137625
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10199951
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,332
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	275
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Adrian Thompson
Headteacher	Michael Fieldhouse
Website	http://www.chase.worcs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 – 13 July 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher was appointed in 2017, since the last inspection.
- A new SEND coordinator will start in January 2022.
- The school uses alternative providers, including two unregistered alternative providers, for a small number of pupils who attend part time.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors focused on the following subjects: English, science, music, design and technology and languages. Inspectors examined leaders' plans, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked with pupils about their learning in these subjects. An inspector listened to a small group of Year 7 pupils read.
- Inspectors considered a number of school documents. These included information about behaviour, attendance and the school curriculum, and the school's evaluation and improvement plan. The school website was also checked.
- Inspectors met with staff and leaders to discuss safeguarding. An inspector examined leaders' records of pre-employment checks on staff and scrutinised further safeguarding records. An inspector looked at incidents reported by pupils and how these are recorded and analysed by leaders.
- Inspectors observed pupils at break and lunchtimes and talked to pupils and staff about safeguarding and behaviour.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers, governors and pupils. They also talked informally to pupils and staff to gather general information about school life.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. Inspectors also considered responses to the pupil questionnaire and responses to Ofsted's survey for staff.
- An inspector visited one of the alternative providers which the school uses.

Inspection team

Jane Spilsbury, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Janet Lewis

Ofsted Inspector

Graeme Rudland

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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