

Inspection of a good school: Cholsey Primary School

Church Road, Cholsey, Wallingford, Oxfordshire OX10 9PP

Inspection dates:

15 and 16 March 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Cholsey Primary School is a happy and welcoming school where positivity is carefully cultivated. Pupils are responsible, kind and caring. They understand the school values of curiosity, aspiration, respect and enthusiasm (CARE) and link these to everything they do.

Pupils behave well in lessons. They play sociably together. Older pupils take pride in helping younger pupils with games at breaktimes and with reading. Leaders take swift action to sort out any concerns about bullying. This helps pupils to feel safe at school.

Pupils enjoy taking part in clubs and extra-curricular activities. They were proud to represent their school in music and sport before the pandemic and are looking forward to doing this again. Pupils take particular pride in the 'CARE' club, which they organise and run themselves.

Cholsey's curriculum is broad and balanced. Leaders have recently revised many curriculum areas, including the teaching of early reading. However, the revised curriculum is not yet fully established. Variations in the quality of the curriculum mean that pupils do not learn as well as they should. This is particularly the case for some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

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

Leaders have an ambitious vision for the curriculum. In a few subjects, such as mathematics, physical education (PE) and art, this is fully realised. In these subjects, leaders work closely with staff so that everyone understands what to teach. This begins in the early years. For example, children in Reception explore and talk about the similarities and differences between shapes. They are encouraged to challenge each other respectfully so that they begin to understand that there are different ways to classify

shapes. The same approach to mathematical reasoning continues throughout the school. Pupils become confident to explore new ideas and take risks. Pupils learn that making mistakes can help them to discover the most efficient ways of working.

Teachers check pupils' learning regularly in mathematics, English, PE and art. They act swiftly to close any gaps. However, leaders do not ensure that teachers carefully check for gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding in other subjects. As a result, some pupils do not always learn successfully or achieve well across the curriculum.

Other curriculum subjects are at an earlier stage of development. Leaders have not yet checked how well the planned curriculum is taught. This means that leaders do not currently have a full picture of how well the curriculum is being delivered across the school. Leaders do not always understand how pupils' knowledge builds step by step from what they learn in Reception. This means that leaders cannot fully evaluate how well the early years curriculum meets children's needs.

Leaders have prioritised reading throughout the school. This emphasis starts in Reception Year, where teachers focus on developing children's language through the sharing of songs, stories and rhymes. Effective teaching ensures that most pupils learn to read by the end of Year 2. However, a few older pupils do not read fluently. Leaders know that more needs to be done to ensure that these pupils practise and consolidate reading skills. Leaders ensure that pupils read across a wide range of genres. Pupils say that they enjoy reading because it helps them to understand new ideas and to 'build pictures in our minds'.

Leaders are in the process of changing the school's approach to the teaching of phonics. Scheduled staff training has been delayed due to the pandemic. As a result, there are inconsistencies in the delivery of the phonics programme currently. This means that some pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, make slower progress in reading than they should.

Leaders have high expectations for all pupils. They consider the emotional barriers that may prevent pupils from learning and try to resolve them. Pupils agree that sanctions and rewards are fair. Teachers manage occasional disruptive behaviour well so that little learning time is lost. Pupils demonstrate respect and tolerance towards each other. They can debate difficult questions with increasing understanding about why people have different opinions.

Pupils with SEND have individual learning targets. These identify the small steps pupils need to complete to make progress. Additional resources and interventions are well matched to pupils' individual needs. However, some pupils are not always given sufficient opportunities to practise and consolidate new knowledge and skills.

Staff say that leaders are mindful of their workload and well-being. Leaders are developing strategies to help staff to manage workload. They monitor staff welfare closely. As a result, staff feel valued and appreciated.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff benefit from regular safeguarding training. Staff understand their responsibilities to keep pupils safe. They report any concerns about pupils quickly. Reporting arrangements are thorough. Records show the actions taken and the impact of these actions in securing help and support. Leaders offer effective support and guidance to pupils and their families when needed. Governors are aware of their duties to keep children safe. Procedures for appointing new staff are robust. Leaders ensure that all the necessary checks are carried out on adults to ensure they are safe to work with pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's approach to teaching of reading, including phonics, is inconsistent. This means that some pupils make slower progress in reading than they should. This includes some disadvantaged pupils and some pupils with SEND. Leaders should ensure that all staff have the subject knowledge and expertise to deliver the reading programme effectively, including phonics.
- Curriculum leadership in some subjects is underdeveloped. Leaders do not always understand how the curriculum builds successfully upon what children learn in the early years. Leaders should improve subject leaders' understanding of how the curriculum develops from early years to Year 6 and how best to support teachers to deliver this.
- The implementation of the revised curriculum for most foundation subjects is quite recent. It does not yet reflect leaders' ambitious intentions. Leaders should ensure that all subjects are taught effectively, so that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, achieve well across the curriculum.
- In some subjects, teachers' checks on pupils' learning are not sufficiently well established. This means that teachers do not always identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge quickly enough. Leaders should make sure that teachers are well equipped to check what pupils know and remember of the taught curriculum.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Cholsey Primary School, to be good in March 2011.

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	140279
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10200147
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	296
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Andy King
Headteacher	Heidi McSweeney
Website	http://www.cholsey.oxon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 October 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation.
- The inspector met with two members of the governing body, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, subject leaders and other staff. She also took account of the responses to Ofsted's staff survey and pupil survey.
- The inspector spent time observing and speaking to pupils, including those who attend the breakfast club.
- The inspector spoke with pupils to gather their views about the school. She spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day and took account of the responses to Ofsted's survey, Ofsted Parent View.
- To inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and reviewed records. The lead inspector met with the school's administrative officer to

scrutinise the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. The inspector also spoke with staff and pupils.

- The inspector considered a range of school documents including leaders' self-evaluation and plans for improvement.
- The inspector did deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. As part of this work, she visited lessons and spoke with subject leaders and teachers. The inspector reviewed pupils' work and spoke with them about their learning. She also observed pupils read to trusted adults.

Inspection team

Clare Morgan, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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