

Inspection of a good school: Chilton Academy

Chilton, Off New South View, Ferryhill, County Durham DL17 0PT

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 October 2022

Outcome

Chilton Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders at Chilton Academy have high ambitions for all pupils. Recent changes leaders have made to the curriculum are having a positive effect on pupils. Leaders know their pupils well and the local area they serve. They are committed to raising aspirations and developing pupils' self-belief that they can succeed in life.

Pupils and staff are very proud to belong to this school. There is a real sense of community and working together. Pupils feel safe and their behaviour is good. No learning time is lost through poor behaviour in the classroom. Bullying is very rare, but pupils are confident that it will be dealt with swiftly if it does happen.

Pupils enjoy an impressive range of after-school clubs. They participate in local sports competitions, such as football, tag rugby and athletics. Other clubs include crafts and board games.

Support for vulnerable families is exceptional. Leaders go above and beyond to work with services to provide families with the support they need. During COVID-19 restrictions, they delivered food parcels and cleaning kits.

Parents appreciate the breakfast club and after-school care that the school offers. The friends of the school group fundraise to provide enrichment activities, such as a theatre trip for the whole school.

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

Since the last inspection, leaders have introduced a new approach to teaching phonics. Teachers are well trained to deliver the programme. Teachers make timely checks on pupils to ensure they remain on track. Pupils at risk of falling behind receive extra help. Leaders have purchased new reading books to ensure books are well matched to the sounds pupils are learning. Most pupils can use their knowledge of letter sounds to help them read unfamiliar words. However, some of the youngest children can struggle.

Teachers sometimes do not check that they are secure in the sounds they know before new sounds are introduced.

Pupils read a wide variety of books as they progress through school. Regular opportunities are made for pupils to read for pleasure and develop an understanding of the books that they have read. Leaders promote reading at home well through class reading challenges, such as '170 books in 170 days' and a weekly prize draw.

Leaders have made recent changes to the curriculum. They have ensured that it is carefully sequenced and builds on what pupils already know. In mathematics, there is a focus on number, calculation and place value. This is well developed in key stages 1 and 2. Pupils use practical equipment, such as counters and cubes, to support and deepen their understanding. Teachers develop pupils' mathematical vocabulary. For example, in Year 1, pupils know the term 'commutative' means you can add numbers in any order and this will not change the answer. Older pupils can then accurately subtract four-digit numbers because the teacher has clearly shown them the steps they must follow. However, pupils in the early years are not given the time they need to develop a deep understanding of the numbers 0 to 5, so find it difficult to work with larger numbers.

Teachers help pupils to build on the knowledge that they already have and improve what they can do in many subjects. For example, in art and design, pupils practise shading techniques that are well modelled by the teacher. Pupils can recall when they have learned about shading, blending and line work earlier in school. Pupils build upon these skills to create their own high-quality artwork. Leaders are developing new systems for checking what pupils know. However, this is more developed in some subjects, such as science, history and geography. In other subjects, assessment still needs to be developed to help teachers know what pupils have remembered and identify what they need to learn next.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Additional equipment, such as a laptop that mirrors the teacher's screen, enables pupils to learn alongside their classmates. Teachers provide extra support for pupils with specific needs, such as programmes to develop their speech and language.

Learning continues beyond the classroom. Pupils take part in community events that celebrate the history of the local area, such as the Miner's Gala. Other visits that enhance the curriculum include Binchester Roman Fort and Beamish Museum.

Pupils develop a good understanding of the wider world. They learn about diversity through researching famous people as part of Black History Month and events such as Rainbow Day, with the theme 'be proud of who you are'.

All staff talk very positively about working in the school. Leaders are approachable and supportive. There is a culture of professional trust. Staff share planning, which has helped their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff receive regular training updates. Reporting procedures are robust. Actions are recorded electronically and followed up. Leaders are not afraid to challenge services to secure the best possible outcomes for families.

All appropriate recruitment checks are in place for staff in school.

Pupils understand potential dangers online, for example when gaming with players they do not know. What pupils learn in the computing curriculum helps them to stay safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There is a disconnect between the curriculum in the early years and the rest of the school. Children in the early years do not secure the depth of knowledge that they need to prepare them for key stage 1. Leaders must ensure that the curriculum has continuity from the early years all the way through school so that there are no gaps in what children are taught.
- In some foundation subjects, the assessment system does not enable teachers to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and make links with prior learning. Teachers do not select effective next steps in learning, so pupils do not secure some concepts in their long-term memory. Leaders should develop a meaningful system for checking how much knowledge pupils are understanding and remembering in all subjects so that any gaps in pupils' knowledge can be filled.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Chilton Primary School, to be good in January 2016.

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.

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	145594
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10241363
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	303
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Garry Stout
Headteacher	Carrie Dodsworth
Website	www.chilton.durham.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- There is a breakfast club and an after-school club at the school.

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 his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and senior leaders, including those with responsibility for SEND and the early years. He met five governors, including the chair of governors, the chief executive officer from Eden Learning Trust and a representative from Durham local authority. Discussions were also held with some teachers and support staff.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, he discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector considered the views of parents through face-to-face discussions and via

the responses to Ofsted Parent View that had been received.

- The inspector listened to pupils reading to a familiar adult, observed their behaviour moving around school and at lunchtime, met with pupils formally to gather their opinions and held informal discussions across both days of the inspection.
- A wide variety of safeguarding information and documentation was scrutinised, including referrals and attendance records.

Inspection team

Andy Jones, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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