

Inspection of Cheddington Combined School

High Street, Cheddington, Bedfordshire LU7 0RG

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 November 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to belong to the school. They enjoy learning and enthuse about the wide range of trips and extra activities on offer. Pupils appreciate 'having a voice' on the school council. They value the opportunity to be involved in decisions about charitable events and improvements to playground resources.

Bullying is rare and is never tolerated. Pupils feel safe and are confident that adults will listen to and resolve any issues. They know that they can also 'post' things to the 'worry monster' to let their teacher know if there is something bothering them.

Pupils told inspectors that everyone is valued and that there is never any discrimination. They behave well and are respectful and caring of others. Older pupils like helping to care for younger pupils during breaktimes by being one of the 'playground buddies'.

Leaders aspire for all pupils to thrive. However, there are weaknesses in some aspects of the school's work, including the curriculum and support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This means that not all pupils are achieving the best possible outcomes.

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

Leaders have not been fully successful in addressing weaknesses and ensuring that pupils benefit from a good quality education. Since the previous inspection, leaders have strengthened the curriculums in reading and mathematics. However, there remain weaknesses and inconsistencies in the wider English curriculum for pupils in key stages 1 and 2. Leaders have not ensured that enough focus is given to developing pupils' grammar, punctuation, spelling and handwriting. As a result, these aspects of pupils' writing are not developing well enough. This is particularly so for pupils with low prior attainment.

The support for pupils in key stages 1 and 2 who find learning a challenge, including pupils with SEND, is not consistently strong enough. The curriculum is not adapted well to meet pupils' needs and not all staff take account of pupils' previous learning. As a result, some pupils do not have the knowledge they need to tackle some learning tasks. Nonetheless, the needs of pupils with SEND are now identified more accurately and there is more timely engagement with external professionals.

In early years, children get off to a good start to their education. They learn well and develop a secure foundation on which to build in key stage 1. Across the school, pupils learn a suitably broad and ambitious curriculum. Content is sequenced logically. In mathematics, key topics are revisited to help pupils consolidate their learning. However, in some foundation subjects, leaders have not yet identified the precise knowledge they would like pupils to learn. This risks pupils not building their knowledge securely.

Phonics teaching gets underway as soon as children join the school. Children in early years make a good start to learning to read. Staff training has led to a more consistent approach to teaching phonics. Most pupils are successful in the Year 1 phonics screening check. However, some pupils in Year 2 continue to need additional support to enable them to become confident, fluent readers. Throughout the school, pupils develop their wider reading knowledge through listening to and reading a range of good-quality texts.

Staff have secure subject knowledge and model and explain things well. They forge positive relationships with pupils and engage them well in lessons. Assessment processes in early years are well established. This enables staff to identify gaps in children's learning. Across the school, leaders have put in place regular assessments to check on pupils' progress. However, not all staff identify and address errors and misconceptions in pupils' understanding and knowledge. This means that sometimes errors go unchecked and become embedded.

Leaders' and governors' ambition for pupils to develop into caring, responsible citizens is reflected in the good provision for pupils' personal development. Staff ensure that pupils gain a 'window' into the wider world and learn about different cultural beliefs and customs. Leaders and staff promote equality of opportunity. They help pupils to develop a strong moral compass and to respect everyone, no matter their background.

Governors fulfil their statutory duties well. They have an accurate view of the school and support and hold leaders to account. Most staff enjoy working at the school and value the opportunities they have for professional development. Many parents are very positive about the school. However, a significant minority of parents expressed concern about leaders' engagement and communication with them.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff are alert to any concerns about pupils. Timely, regular training enables all staff to be confident in fulfilling their safeguarding responsibilities. If in doubt, leaders contact the local authority for advice. They have adopted an approach of 'it could happen here'. Early help is provided through the school's emotional literacy support assistants. When needed, leaders pursue concerns with relevant agencies. They ensure that support and statutory processes are in place. However, sometimes safeguarding records do not include the actions and decisions leaders have taken in response to some concerns.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In key stages 1 and 2, the curriculum is not consistently adapted well to meet the

needs of pupils with SEND and pupils with low prior attainment. Not all teachers take enough account of these pupils' prior learning. This limits pupils' success and their ability to work independently and means that pupils are not achieving well enough. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum and teaching consistently meet the needs of all pupils, including pupils with SEND and those with low prior attainment.

- Leaders have not ensured that there is enough focus on some aspects of pupils' writing in key stages 1 and 2. This includes grammar, punctuation, spelling and handwriting. As a result, some pupils, particularly those who find writing challenging, are not developing these aspects of their writing well enough or applying their knowledge well in other subjects. Some pupils' writing is of poor quality. Leaders need to strengthen their strategic work and sharpen their focus on improving these aspects of the curriculum. They need to provide training for staff so that the English curriculum can be implemented consistently well.
- In key stages 1 and 2, staff do not consistently identify and address errors and misconceptions in pupils' understanding and knowledge. This risks errors becoming embedded and means that pupils are not building their knowledge securely enough. Leaders need to ensure that all staff consistently identify and address weaknesses and errors in pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- In some foundation subjects, leaders have not yet identified precisely enough the knowledge that pupils need to learn. This means that teachers do not have clear enough guidance about the specific knowledge that pupils need to learn and remember. Leaders should refine further the curriculum and ensure that they identify with precision what they would like pupils to learn and remember.
- Leaders have not ensured that the actions they have taken in response to some safeguarding concerns are recorded clearly. This means that their decision-making and response to concerns are not always clear. Leaders must ensure that they systematically record the actions and decisions they have taken in response to all safeguarding concerns.
- A significant minority of parents expressed concern about leaders' engagement, communication and the way that concerns are dealt with. Leaders need to take action to strengthen their engagement and communication with parents.

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	110215
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10241021
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	217
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Simon Aulton
Headteacher	Kathryn Tamlyn
Website	www.cheddingtonschool.org
Date of previous inspection	8 and 9 October 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, English, mathematics and modern foreign languages (French). For each deep dive, inspectors 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.
- Inspectors sampled pupils' work and reviewed curriculum information in other subjects, including history and science.

- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors reviewed a wide range of documents and records, including the record of recruitment checks on staff. They spoke to staff and pupils to gather their views about safeguarding. The lead inspector also met with the designated safeguarding lead.
- The lead inspector met with four members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors took account of parents' responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. An inspector talked with some parents at the start of the second day of the inspection.
- Inspectors met with staff and pupils and took account of their responses to Ofsted's surveys.
- The lead inspector held an online discussion with two representatives from the local authority.

Inspection team

Sue Cox, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Carl McCarthy

His Majesty's Inspector

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