

Inspection of Chigwell Row Infant School

Lambourne Road, Chigwell, Essex IG7 6EZ

Inspection dates: 2 and 7 November 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Early years provision

Inadequate

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Due to weak leadership and poorly managed change over time, pupils are receiving an inadequate quality of education. Pupils' knowledge and understanding are far behind where they should be, including in English and mathematics. This is because curriculum planning in several subjects and the early years is poor. Leaders are implementing changes, but these are not yet having the desired impact.

Some pupils' behaviour is not as it should be. Children in Reception are not learning classroom routines, such as listening to the teacher and sitting still. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) frequently wander around, exiting lessons and choosing not to join in. Sometimes pupils enter lessons they should not be in. This disrupts other pupils' learning.

Pupils do not understand what bullying is. Pupils trust an adult will help if they have friendship concerns.

Parents and pupils appreciate some changes leaders are making, for example better lunches and play equipment. Pupils are looking forward to new after-school clubs for construction, dance and gardening.

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

The school has been through much turbulence, with frequent changes of staff and leadership. Over time, trust leaders and governors have not checked carefully enough the quality of education offered. Issues have grown and there are significant inconsistencies in processes and procedures. This includes the development of a coherent and well-planned curriculum. Pupils are not learning the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in the next stage of education. In their effort to improve the school, new leaders are juggling priorities and implementing too many changes at once. They have not checked that the changes are working. Improvements are not having the desired impact.

Too many pupils do not have a secure understanding of basic phonics to learn how to read. While leaders have put in place a new phonics programme, they were slow to adjust teaching to suit pupils' abilities. Leaders have only recently matched books to the sounds that pupils know. There is inconsistency with the teaching of the new phonics programme. There is some confusion among staff as to the best way to support pupils learning to read. This means that pupils are falling further behind.

There are teething problems with the teaching of the new curriculum, including for mathematics. While this is ambitious for pupils, it is out of reach for pupils who lack the basic knowledge expected for their age. Teachers are adapting the curriculum and resources, however, this is with mixed success. Too often, pupils are not able to complete work, or have misconceptions that are not corrected.

Leaders have not ensured that there is an appropriate curriculum for children in the early years. Staff plan a series of disconnected activities that do not help children to learn the knowledge and skills they need for their early development. Staff are not applying what they have learned from recent training. For example, activities for children in the outdoor area are not promoting large-muscle movement for physical development. Staff are not showing or teaching children how to express their feelings. As a result, children become upset because they cannot share and do not know how to take turns when using equipment.

Pupils with SEND are not having their needs met so they cannot access the curriculum fully. Staff do not help pupils to focus on learning successfully or manage their behaviour. Frequently, staff give pupils a task which is to occupy them rather than learn the same curriculum as their peers. A few pupils with SEND attend alternative provision. Leaders have not ensured that what pupils learn at alternative provision connects with what they are learning in school. As a result, when pupils return to school, they find it difficult to access the curriculum and keep up or catch up with their peers.

Staff are not ensuring that some pupils behave consistently well and display positive attitudes to learning. Pupils' learning is sometimes disturbed by the behaviour of others. Pupils are not clear about the difference between bullying and disagreements or unpleasant behaviour. Until recently, leaders did not record bullying incidents. They do not have a clear view of how much or what types of bullying may have taken place over time.

Leaders are expanding pupils' experiences to enhance their social, cultural and physical development. Pupils recently undertook an inter-school sports festival and leaders have plans for cultural visits. Pupils learn about relationships as part of the curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE).

Governors do not have a secure understanding of their role and responsibilities. They do not challenge leaders about their over-generous view of the quality of provision. As a result, governors have not held leaders to account for the quality of their work. They have not fulfilled some of their safeguarding duties, such as monitoring incidents of bullying and leaders' response to these.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff receive regular updates and training on the latest government guidance for keeping children safe. Staff know and understand the school's safeguarding policy, including how to report concerns. They understand the importance of teaching pupils about risk, such as how to cross the road safely on their journey to school. Pupils are also taught in an age-appropriate way how to stay safe online.

Leaders liaise with external agencies to ensure the safety of the most vulnerable pupils.

During the inspection, leaders amended the single central record to accurately show the use of external contractors.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Recent efforts to improve pupils' early reading and phonics are not established well enough. Too many pupils are still far behind and are struggling to catch up, including pupils with SEND. Leaders must improve staff's expertise and use of assessment, including matching books more closely to pupils' phonic knowledge. This is so pupils learn their sounds quickly to help them to learn to read.
- Curriculum planning lacks coherence and precision. Teachers are not adapting plans effectively to suit pupils' starting points. This means that pupils struggle to access the curriculum, and misconceptions are not addressed. Leaders must ensure that there is a coherently sequenced curriculum in place in all subjects that teachers deliver effectively, taking into account pupils' starting points.
- Children are not learning what they should, including how to behave, during their time in Reception. This is because the curriculum is poorly designed and taught. Staff do not have the expertise to help children gain the knowledge that they need to make a positive start to Year 1. Leaders need to develop the early years curriculum and improve its implementation as a matter of urgency.
- Leaders have not ensured that teachers and other adults have a clear understanding of how to support the needs of pupils with SEND. This frequently results in pupils with SEND becoming frustrated and losing interest in learning. This can lead to poor behaviour. Leaders must ensure that staff are sufficiently trained to meet pupils' complex needs and make appropriate adaptations to the delivery of the curriculum so that they learn well.
- Governors have not held leaders to account for the quality of education that the school provides. While governors recognise the need for further training and closer scrutiny, improvements are in the early stages. Governors need to ensure that they undertake the necessary training to discharge their functions effectively. They must introduce effective monitoring systems to be able to challenge leaders on the quality of education the school is providing.

Having considered the evidence, we strongly recommend that leaders and those responsible for governance do not seek to appoint early career teachers.

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	145993
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10240366
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	59
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Lee Batson
Headteacher	Alison Farquharson
Website	chigwell.efspt.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Chigwell Row Infant School converted to become an academy school in July 2018, joining the Epping Forest Schools Partnership Trust. When its predecessor school, Chigwell Row Infant School, was last inspected by Ofsted in July 2017, it was judged to be good overall.
- The trust has delegated some responsibilities for oversight of the school to a local governing body.
- The executive headteacher and the head of school joined the school in September 2022. The executive headteacher works across two schools.
- School leaders use one registered alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

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

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons

responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

- The inspection began as an ungraded (section 8) inspection. This took place on 2 November 2022. Due to concerns about the quality of education, provision for pupils with SEND and the quality of early years provision, the inspection was deemed a graded (section 5) inspection. The second day of inspection was completed on 7 November 2022.
- 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 spoke with the chief executive officer from the multi-academy trust, members of the local governing body, the executive headteacher and head of school, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), staff and pupils about the school's provision.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the start of school.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. 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 considered the provision for PSHE and relationships, sex and health education.
- Inspectors met with the SENCo and scrutinised documentation for SEND. Inspectors observed support for pupils with SEND. Inspectors spoke with leaders from alternative provision.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's information on behaviour, bullying and attendance. Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records and spoke with governors, leaders, staff and pupils about safeguarding arrangements.
- Inspectors considered the 21 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the 15 free-text comments. Inspectors also reviewed the 17 pupil responses and 14 staff responses to Ofsted's questionnaires.

Inspection team

Liz Smith, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Daniel Short, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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