

Inspection of Chenies School

Chenies, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire WD3 6ER

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 December 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?

Leaders want the best for everyone. They aspire for all pupils to leave the school prepared well, socially and academically, for secondary school. Leaders have ensured that pupils experience a wide range of subjects and interesting topics. However, not all pupils achieve well enough. This is because of inconsistencies in teaching and weaknesses in the curriculum.

Pupils enjoy school and like their teachers. They feel safe and describe the school as a friendly, caring place where 'everyone knows everyone'. Pastoral care is strong. Bullying does not happen very often. Any upsets are dealt with appropriately. Most pupils behave sensibly and are respectful to each other and the staff.

Older pupils are caring and supportive of the younger members of the school community. They like to be playground 'buddies' during lunchtimes. Many pupils readily take on extra responsibilities. Special roles include being house captains, school councillors and 'eco warriors'.

Pupils enjoy the after-school clubs such as football, taekwondo and multi-sports. They appreciate the chance to compete in sporting events with other local schools. Enrichment activities enhance pupils' enjoyment of school. These include the recent trip to the Ashmolean Museum and the National Gallery art project.

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

The school has been through an unsettled period and experienced many changes of staff. Along with the COVID-19 pandemic, this has hampered leaders' work to make planned improvements to the quality of education. Sometimes things have been started and then paused because of staff mobility and changes to subject leadership.

Leaders have identified the key focus for pupils' learning in each subject in the wider curriculum. However, content is not yet sufficiently precise or clear. In key stage 2, pupils' learning in subjects other than English and mathematics is somewhat superficial. This is because teachers do not always cover content in sufficient depth. Sometimes, learning activities do not align well to the curriculum intent. Currently, staff in key stage 2 do not give enough attention to some aspects of pupils' writing. As a result, weaknesses in pupils' grammar, punctuation, spelling and handwriting limit the quality of their writing in English and in other subjects. For some years, pupils in key stage 2 have not made strong enough progress in writing.

However, there are strengths in some aspects of the school's work. Children in the early years achieve well and build successfully on this through key stage 1. Pupils also achieve well in mathematics. In this subject, the curriculum sets out a clear pathway of progression. Teachers regularly revisit content to help pupils understand and remember new concepts and procedures. They are quick to spot if any pupils

have not understood something. Across the curriculum, staff make sure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well. Pupils with SEND access a suitably ambitious curriculum and are fully included in the life of the school. Leaders have appropriate systems to enable pupils' needs to be identified.

Leaders' well-judged work to strengthen reading has been successful. The recently introduced new phonics programme is working well. Most children in early years quickly learn to read well. Across the school, story times, reading lessons and visits to the library help to get pupils 'hooked' on reading. Older pupils talk with confidence about their favourite books and authors. Books are chosen for their literary value and often because they contribute to pupils' learning in other subjects. Assessments and ongoing checks mean that staff are on top of how pupils are getting on. Extra support is on hand for any pupils who need more help to keep up.

Leaders make sure that pupils learn about how to keep safe and live healthily. Pupils learn about healthy relationships and how to recognise if something is not quite right. They develop their knowledge of other religions and cultures and the importance of diversity and tolerance. Pupils know that everyone is different and should be respected.

Relationships across the school are supportive. Parents particularly appreciate the nurturing 'family feel' of the school. Their good partnership with the school gets underway as soon as children join Reception. Equally, staff enjoy working at the school and feel supported well by leaders.

Governors are committed to the school and are clear about the school's vision and aims. They have recently restructured their meetings to enable them to work more effectively. However, governance oversight of a few aspects of the school has not been sufficiently robust.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff and leaders understand that it is everyone's responsibility to keep pupils safe. They know pupils well and are alert and responsive to any concerns. Any worries, however minor, are noted and followed up appropriately. Leaders have a good understanding of local safeguarding arrangements. When needed, they enlist the support and involvement of outside agencies. Leaders ensure that staff have regular training and updates to keep their knowledge fresh and up to date. Recruitment processes are thorough and record-keeping is clear and effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In most foundation subjects, leaders have not identified clearly enough the most important knowledge they want pupils to learn. Some content is decided by individual teachers and this weakens the impact of leaders' intended curriculum. Leaders need to ensure that they refine their curriculum and provide greater guidance for staff about the most important knowledge pupils need to learn and remember.
- There are some inconsistencies in teaching in key stage 2. In subjects other than English and mathematics, teachers do not ensure that content is covered in enough depth. Learning activities do not always support pupils to learn the intended curriculum. This means that pupils are not building or deepening their knowledge well enough. Leaders need to provide training for staff so that they can implement the curriculum consistently well.
- In key stage 2, teachers do not give sufficient attention to some aspects of pupils' writing, including their grammar, punctuation, spelling and handwriting. Weaknesses in these aspects of pupils' writing are not being addressed well enough. As a result, pupils' writing is of very variable quality. Leaders need to provide training for staff. They need to ensure that staff give much greater emphasis to addressing weaknesses in pupils' grammar, punctuation, spelling and handwriting that currently impair the quality of their writing.
- Governors' strategic oversight of some aspects of the school's work is not sufficiently robust. As a result, governors do not have a strong enough understanding of aspects of the school's work. Governors need to put in place stronger systems to enable them to have a clearer understanding of the school's work so that they can fulfil their strategic responsibilities more effectively.

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	110216
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10242190
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	98
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Elizabeth Wilson
Headteacher	Suzanne Powell
Website	www.chenies.bucks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 September 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been many changes of staff and leadership. There have also been changes to the membership of the governing body. The headteacher joined the school in January 2019.

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, art and design, mathematics and science. Inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their

learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also heard some pupils read.

- Inspectors spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects and sampled pupils' work in English and history.
- To inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector met with the school's designated leader for safeguarding (the headteacher) and considered a wide range of documents and records. Inspectors also met with pupils and staff to gather their views about safeguarding.
- The lead inspector met with two members of the governing body, including the vice chair of governors.
- The lead inspector held a telephone discussion with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of parents' responses to the online survey, Parent View. An inspector talked with some parents at the start of the first day of the inspection.
- Inspectors met with staff and pupils and took account of their responses to Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Sue Cox, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Bill James

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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