

Inspection of a good school: Chalfont St Giles Infant School and Nursery

School Lane, Chalfont St Giles, Buckinghamshire HP8 4JJ

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 February 2023

Outcome

Chalfont St Giles Infant School and Nursery continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Teamwork is at the heart of this nurturing village school. Pupils know and model the school's values. They use 'Gem Powers' to help develop their emotional understanding, for example responsibility, kindness, resilience, focus, friendliness, honesty and working together. Pupils also use 'Diamond Charters', a system of recognising good habits in each other, throughout the school day. These strategies work. They help the school to be a calm and orderly environment where time is devoted to supporting each other and all feel included. Staff have consistently high expectations of what the children can do. In lessons and around the school, pupils are polite and respectful. Pupils thrive in what is a positive culture of recognition and celebration of each pupil as an individual.

Pupils feel safe. They know what bullying is and although incidents almost never happen, pupils have been taught about how they would respond. Pupils are confident and enjoy opportunities to take on roles and responsibilities such as classroom monitors and play leaders. Well-trained staff offer emotional support to any pupils who may struggle with any aspects of school life. The focus on ongoing help, wherever it is needed, supports pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to achieve well across the curriculum.

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

Leaders and governors have a relentless drive and determination to maintain high standards and improve the school even further. Staff say that the team 'is like a family' and everyone is committed and works together. There is an ambitious curriculum that is carefully planned and includes clear sequences of learning that build pupils' knowledge over time. Subject leaders use their training and expertise to help staff develop skilled approaches to teaching. In many subject areas, such as mathematics, phonics and early reading, this is well established. However, a small number of foundation subjects are at earlier stages of implementation.

Reading is a strength of the school. Formal phonics teaching begins at the start of Reception Year, building on the excellent provision in Nursery. Pupils learn to read well and are supported by highly skilled staff who make use of all the training and resources that have been provided for them. If any pupil falls behind, there are rigorous processes that help staff to provide extra support to help them catch up. Staff select ambitious and inspiring texts to share with pupils thoughtfully. This, as well as community events such as 'grandparents' story time' sessions, helps pupils to develop a love of reading and link ideas to lessons and themes that they have been learning about. Staff share resources and lead training for volunteers and parents and carers to maintain a whole-community approach. As one leader said, 'We are all obsessed by books!'

Behaviour in lessons and around the school is often exemplary. Staff establish clear routines and have consistently high expectations. Staff work together effectively to help every pupil. Pupils with SEND are identified quickly, well supported and have access to the resources they need to experience success each day. Rewards and consequences are used consistently and fairly. Leaders emphasise moral development, taking ideas such as 'resilience' and explicitly teaching about them in ways that are meaningful and memorable for pupils. This strategy is making a positive difference to pupils and their readiness for their next stage of education.

Leaders think carefully about how to help pupils develop beyond academic subjects. For example, every pupil is involved with the school's drama performances each year. There are a range of clubs and activities available to all pupils, as well as trips and visits, such as to the Milestones Museum and the Great Fire of London travelling workshop. Pupils are proud to take on responsibilities, such as being a school councillor or a member of the 'eco warrior' group. However, a small number of pupils have lower attendance than their peers, which means that they miss out on some of these wider opportunities. Leaders are working hard with these children and their families to reduce absence.

Staff appreciate leaders' efforts to support them with managing workload and well-being. Staff say that 'leaders step in wherever they need to'. Governors are highly skilled and work well with staff and parents to offer challenge and support through effective communication and community engagement. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive. One parent captured the views of many, saying: 'It is a happy village school and an amazing place, where staff nurture and care about their pupils.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding is a priority for all. Staff know pupils and families well and are trained to respond quickly if they believe that any pupil may be at risk. Detailed records show that staff maintain a culture of vigilance and take swift action. Staff teach pupils how to manage risks and to keep themselves safe, including keeping safe online. Where needed, leaders work closely with external agencies and the local authority to make sure that pupils and their families receive appropriate support. Leaders carry out employment checks and make sure that all staff who work at school are qualified to work with children.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some aspects of the curriculum have been recently redeveloped but are not yet fully implemented. This means that some pupils do not consistently learn key knowledge as well as they could. Leaders should further develop the curriculum and implement this effectively to ensure that all pupils learn securely in all subjects.
- A small number of pupils have higher levels of absence than their peers, including a significant number from disadvantaged backgrounds. These pupils miss out on aspects of school life and the full range of wider opportunities that are on offer. Leaders must continue to do all they can so that these pupils improve their attendance.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2017.

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	110214
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10256453
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Donna Westall
Headteacher	Alastair Haywood
Website	www.csgvillageschool.org
Date of previous inspection	17 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Chalfont St Giles Infant School and Nursery is a two-form entry infant school with on-site nursery provision.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been changes to staffing and governance; this includes the appointment of a new headteacher.
- The school is in a hard federation with Chalfont St Giles Junior School.
- The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils at the school is well below the national average.
- The number of pupils who have English as an additional language is well below the national average.

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 completed deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. He met with subject leaders, visited lessons, reviewed pupils' work, and spoke to teachers and pupils.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation. He spoke to the headteacher and the deputy headteacher throughout the inspection and also met with the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator.
- The inspector met with governors, including the chair of the governing body. He spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector held meetings with the staff responsible for safeguarding and scrutinised the single central record. He considered leaders' safeguarding processes and asked staff questions to establish their understanding of these procedures.
- The inspector observed pupils during playtimes and lunchtimes and discussed safeguarding with pupils.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, including the free-text comments. He also considered the responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Carl McCarthy, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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