

# Inspection of a good school: Chalkwell Hall Infant School

London Road, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex SS9 3NL

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Inspection dates:

8 and 9 March 2023

## Outcome

Chalkwell Hall Infant School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Chalkwell Hall Infants is a happy school that pupils enjoy attending. Pupils know and understand their 'REACH' values: 'respect, enjoy, achieve, care, healthy'. They show these values in everything they do. They speak with confidence about what their values mean and how they live them. Pupils enjoy having their achievements celebrated, both in class and through the awards they receive.

Pupils are enthusiastic about the subjects they learn and their lessons. They are keen to learn about events such as The Great Fire of London during their history lessons. They talk confidently about the impact some historical events and people have had on the world today. Pupils work hard to achieve leaders' high expectations. They are well prepared for the next stage of their learning.

Bullying is very rare. If it does happen, staff are quick to deal with it. Pupils behave well in their lessons. They also behave well during playtimes. Pupils are clear about the importance of caring for each other. As one pupil said, 'If someone is on their own on the playground, we ask them to play with us.' Pupils are happy and safe at school.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum. They have placed the important knowledge that pupils will learn into a logical order, identifying carefully where the curriculum begins in early years. Children in the Reception class, for example, learn about their own lives and significant people in their lives. This supports them when they begin to learn about significant people throughout history in Year 1 and Year 2. Children are well prepared for their learning in key stage 1.

Subject leaders work collaboratively to provide teachers with clear guidance to teach the curriculum and support teachers with their subject knowledge. Typically, teachers follow the approaches that leaders want with consistency. There is, however, some variation in

the quality of provision across classes. This means that, while pupils achieve well, they do not always develop as deep an understanding of the curriculum as leaders expect.

Leaders identify how they can continue to improve the curriculum. They have recently introduced a new approach to teaching phonics. They have also adapted the mathematics curriculum to ensure that pupils have more opportunities to secure their knowledge of number. They have trained staff in these approaches.

Children in early years have many opportunities to develop their knowledge of the sounds that letters represent. Staff use a range of stories and rich vocabulary to develop children's language skills. Children quickly learn to blend sounds together to help them to read new words. They do this accurately and confidently. Teachers identify any pupil who finds reading hard. This ensures that pupils receive the support they need to develop their reading fluency. Books are an important part of the whole curriculum. This helps pupils to learn to love reading as they move through the school.

Clear systems ensure that any pupil who might have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is identified. The special educational needs coordinator provides clear guidance and support for all staff. This helps staff to know how best to support pupils with SEND. Teachers' careful adaptations to the curriculum and consistent use of language and resources help pupils with SEND to achieve well.

There are many opportunities for pupils' wider development, both within and outside the curriculum. Pupils relish the chances leaders give them to hold positions of responsibility, such as being 'REACH' councillors. This gives pupils a voice in the school and teaches them about democracy. Eco-warriors are passionate about making the school a healthier place to be. Pupils enjoy attending clubs and representing the school, for example as members of the school choir. Pupils learn about differences through the curriculum and through the stories they read and listen to. They are very respectful of anyone who is different from them.

Governors understand what the school does well. They hold leaders to account for the quality of education pupils receive. Governors ensure that leaders support staff to manage their workload. Staff are appreciative of the support they receive from leaders. They are proud to work at the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders complete all the required checks on new adults in the school. Leaders provide training that gives staff the knowledge they need to identify the signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Staff report concerns quickly and consistently. Leaders ensure that they follow up on all concerns raised in a timely manner. Leaders seek help from other professionals when pupils need it. The curriculum teaches pupils how to keep safe in the community and when online.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There is some variation in the quality of the implementation of the planned curriculum. While pupils achieve well, they do not always secure as deep an understanding of the curriculum as leaders expect. Leaders must continue to provide staff with the support, guidance and training they need to teach the curriculum consistently well, so that pupils secure a deep understanding of what they have learned across all subjects.

## 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 school to be good in May 2013.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114719
<b>Local authority</b>	Southend-on-Sea
<b>Inspection number</b>	10268458
<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	328
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	James Isaacs
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sarah Clements
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.chalkwellhallinfants.co.uk">www.chalkwellhallinfants.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	18 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school does not currently make use of alternative provision.
- The school has recently reduced in size from four classes to each year group to three classes to each year group.
- The school shares its site with Chalkwell Hall Junior 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 carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also listened to pupils read with a familiar member of staff.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector scrutinised safeguarding policies, the school's record of background checks on adults at the school and a sample

of child protection files. He also spoke with governors, the designated safeguarding lead, the deputy designated safeguarding leads and staff about safeguarding practices at the school.

- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders, staff, governors and pupils.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents, including behaviour logs, bullying records, attendance records, pupils' records, minutes of governing body meetings, school improvement visit notes from an external consultant, school development plans and school policies.
- There were 87 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, which were considered.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for pupils. The inspector spoke with pupils throughout the inspection to gather their views.
- There were 35 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for school staff. The inspector also spoke with staff throughout the inspection to gather their views.

### **Inspection team**

Michael Williams, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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