

Inspection of a good school: Chesterfield High School

Chesterfield Road, Crosby, Liverpool, Merseyside L23 9YB

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 March 2023

Outcome

Chesterfield High School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, including students in the sixth form, said that they feel cared for by staff. Pupils benefit from mutually respectful and trusting relationships with their teachers. Added to this, pupils are reassured by the fact that they can seek guidance from each other. This helps them to feel safe and happy in school.

Pupils told inspectors that they can be 'open and honest about who they are'. Pupils are keen to celebrate diversity. They remain vigilant to the signs that may indicate that one of their friends is being bullied. Leaders deal quickly and appropriately with any incidents of bullying. Pupils are keen to live up to leaders' high expectations of their conduct. They behave well.

Pupils have a voice in school. They are keen to take on a range of leadership roles, such as acting as anti-bullying ambassadors and form representatives. Students in the sixth form value representing the views of their peers on the student council.

Leaders have created an aspirational culture for all pupils, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils, irrespective of their background, work hard, achieve well and strive to live up to the school's motto, 'For everyone the best'.

Pupils appreciate the enrichment opportunities on offer, such as learning to play an instrument or honing their sporting talents. A wealth of other experiences enable pupils to become active and responsible citizens. For example, pupils in Year 8 were keen to raise awareness and funds recently for refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine.

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

Since the previous inspection, leaders have transformed how the curriculum is designed. As a result, all pupils and students, including those with SEND, now benefit from a suitably ambitious curriculum that prepares them well for the next stage of education, employment or training. For instance, an increasing proportion of pupils, including

disadvantaged pupils, are choosing to study the subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate.

Leaders have carefully considered the knowledge that pupils should learn and the order in which this content should be delivered. Leaders have organised topics logically so that pupils can build securely on what they know already. Teachers are clear about what they should be teaching and when this content should be taught. For example, staff know which subject-specific vocabulary to emphasise and revisit. This helps teachers to design learning well for pupils.

Teachers have a strong knowledge of their subjects. In most subjects, they use this knowledge to select appropriate activities for pupils and present new ideas with clarity. Overall, staff are equipped well to design learning that supports pupils to learn the intended curriculum. This helps pupils to develop a rich body of knowledge.

Leaders have established appropriate assessment systems to check on how well pupils are learning the intended curriculum. Typically, teachers use assessment strategies in the classroom skilfully to identify and address any gaps in pupils' knowledge. Leaders' assessments systems help staff to adapt the curriculum and revisit and consolidate earlier learning when needed. That said, in a small number of subjects, some staff do not use assessment strategies well to identify and address some pupils' misunderstandings.

Leaders have strengthened their systems to identify the additional needs of pupils with SEND. For example, staff have received appropriate training about how to identify and meet the needs of this group of pupils. In addition, leaders have ensured that teachers receive the information and guidance that they need to adapt how they deliver the curriculum for pupils with SEND. Pupils with SEND achieve well across the curriculum.

Leaders have ensured that those pupils who struggle with reading receive well-tailored support to catch up with their peers. Staff are suitably trained to support those pupils with gaps in their phonic knowledge. Other pupils receive appropriate support to develop their fluency in reading. Increasingly, pupils are choosing to read books from the school library for enjoyment.

Pupils behave well during lessons. They listen carefully to their teachers and follow instructions diligently. Staff use clear and established systems well to manage pupils' behaviour. As a result, pupils' learning is rarely disrupted by the poor behaviour of their peers.

Leaders ensure that there is a strong programme to support pupils' wider development. Pupils were particularly positive about the support that they receive to look after their mental health. They were also keen for inspectors to know that their school community is one in which tolerance and respect are highly valued. Pupils enjoy learning about faiths and cultures that are different to their own. Pupils, including students in the sixth form, are informed well to make decisions about their next steps. For example, students in the sixth form spoke positively about the helpful guidance that they receive on apprenticeships.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the support that they receive from leaders to look after their own well-being. Leaders are cognisant of the workload of staff. Those responsible for governance are increasingly well informed about the quality of education that pupils receive. They use their expertise and knowledge to provide an appropriate balance of challenge and support for leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff receive regular and appropriate safeguarding training. This helps them to stay alert to the signs that may indicate that a pupil is at risk of harm. Staff know what actions they should take if they have concerns about a pupil. For example, staff have recently received training on how to respond to reports of harmful sexual behaviour.

Leaders have forged strong links with external agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families receive appropriate support when needed. Leaders have strengthened support for pupils' mental health. This means that these pupils are accessing help at an earlier stage.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. For instance, pupils learn about the characteristics of respectful relationships and the dangers associated with gang-based violence and drug misuse.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, leaders have not supported some teachers sufficiently well to use assessment strategies to check on pupils' learning. This hinders these teachers in identifying and addressing some pupils' misconceptions quickly enough. Leaders should ensure that teachers are supported to use assessment strategies appropriately to address pupils' misunderstandings in a timely manner.

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 March 2014.

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	137514
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	10282722
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,444
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	132
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jan Vicary
Headteacher	Kevin Sexton
Website	https://www.chesterfieldhigh.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 April 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders make use of five registered and two unregistered providers for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- 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 headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and other members of staff. Inspectors spoke with six representatives of the governing body,

including the chair. The lead inspector held a conversation with a representative of the local authority. The lead inspector also held a telephone conversation with an independent school improvement partner.

- As part of this inspection, inspectors carried out deep dives in English, history, geography, science and physical education. Inspectors met with subject leaders to discuss curriculums, visited lessons, reviewed samples of pupils' work, spoke with teachers and spoke with pupils and students about their learning in these subjects. Inspectors also reviewed pupils' work and visited lessons in other subjects.
- Inspectors met with pupils and students from all year groups. Inspectors also observed pupils' and students' behaviour at social times and observed pupils as they moved around the school site.
- Inspectors met with those responsible for governance, leaders, staff, pupils and students to evaluate the culture of safeguarding in the school. Inspectors checked on leaders' safeguarding procedures, including the checks made when staff are appointed.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including leaders' behaviour and attendance records, leaders' self-evaluation documentation and the minutes of meetings held by those responsible for governance.
- Inspectors considered the views of the parents and carers who responded to Ofsted Parent View. This included the comments received via Ofsted's free-text facility. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and staff.

Inspection team

Emma Gregory, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Christine Veitch

Ofsted Inspector

Sarah Mitchell

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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