

Inspection of a good school: Chipping Norton School

Burford Road, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire OX7 5DY

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 May 2023

Outcome

Chipping Norton School continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a graded (section 5) inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this welcoming and friendly school, where they thrive in its safe and supportive environment. All staff are highly ambitious for pupils and support them to benefit from a rich academic experience and a wide array of extra-curricular activities.

Pupils value the many opportunities to develop and nurture their talents and leadership skills. A wide range of clubs, including trampolining, street dance and computer anatomy, enrich pupils' experiences beyond the classroom. Pupils are proud to be house captains and members of the house system.

Pupils share school leaders' high expectations for behaviour. Pupils rarely encounter bullying behaviour in school. They believe that when bullying does occur, it is dealt with effectively. Leaders' thorough and comprehensive records confirm pupils' views. A few pupils are affected by ongoing friendship disputes, particularly online. Leaders are addressing this and are supporting pupils to develop more mature and appropriate attitudes to social media use.

Parents are full of praise for the school. One parent summarises the feelings of many when they say that: 'The many wonderful teachers at this school are what makes it a great place. They are passionate about their subjects and know what each child needs to succeed.'

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

Leaders and staff have created a rich and ambitious curriculum. They have identified the important knowledge that pupils must remember in all subjects. Leaders have made sure that this knowledge builds in a logical sequence over time. Teachers skilfully link topics and tasks together. This helps pupils to make connections between current work and

previous learning. As a result, pupils talk confidently about what they can remember. They take pride in their exercise books, which contain a complete record of their learning that they can easily refer back to.

Teachers expertly consider the needs of all pupils at every stage of their planning and teaching. They use well-considered strategies and high-quality resources to support pupils to achieve well. Leaders carefully identify the needs of all pupils and they communicate these clearly to teachers. Teachers are very clear about what support individual pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, need to succeed. Teachers regularly check how well all pupils have understood what they are learning. They use this information skilfully to identify any gaps in learning and to adapt their teaching when necessary. As a result, all pupils achieve highly across the curriculum.

Leaders prioritise reading and younger pupils benefit from structured reading lessons. Interventions are made to support any pupils who find reading more difficult. A sixth-form ambassadors scheme, in which students mentor younger pupils once a week, is highly valued by all involved.

Low-level disruptive behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes is very rare. Pupils' understanding of the school's behaviour policy is strong. They appreciate that staff apply the policy consistently and fairly. Leaders work closely with parents and external agencies to address behaviour incidents that happen outside school, including when pupils are online. This helps pupils to feel safe.

Leaders' work to develop pupils' character is strong. Pupils learn positive character traits through a well-structured programme. This weaves together the school's values with spiritual, moral, social and cultural themes. Through this, pupils develop a sense of responsibility and learn how to maintain respectful relationships. Pupils learn the value of teamwork through taking part in activities and competitions in school. The school is always seeking to improve how activities are organised to make it easier for even more pupils to get involved.

High-quality careers advice is a priority for all pupils. Leaders build strong relationships with local employers. This enables pupils to work with these employers in activities, such as discussing different careers, interview practice and work experience. Furthermore, sixth-form students appreciate having careers guidance that prepares them for life after school.

Staff are happy and proud to work at Chipping Norton School. They trust leaders to do the best they can to support the school. Staff feel that leaders support them well to do a good job. All staff feel empowered, through high-quality training, to do their best for every pupil. There is an established culture of teachers supporting each other and sharing their expertise. Those responsible for governance know the school extremely well and provide stable governance and support for school leaders. They work strategically to help the school to prioritise its actions for school improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of vigilance. Staff report any concerns they have about pupils swiftly. Record-keeping is thorough and detailed. Leaders take appropriate action quickly in response to safeguarding concerns. Leaders carry out all relevant checks to ensure that adults are suitable to work with children. Leaders understand the safeguarding risks in and around school and they work closely with external agencies to help keep pupils safe.

Pupils learn appropriate knowledge to help keep themselves safe, including when online. They are confident that there is a trusted adult in school they can talk to if they have any worries or concerns.

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 November 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	137936
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10256480
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
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	982
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	150
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Kirsten Robinson
Headteacher	Barry Doherty
Website	www.chipping-norton.oxon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 and 8 November 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The Chipping Norton School is part of the River Learning Trust.
- The school currently uses two registered alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of 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 met with the headteacher, deputy headteachers, assistant headteachers, subject leaders and other leaders.
- Inspectors met with the chair of trustees, members of the governing body and lead practitioners from the multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, geography and modern foreign languages. 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 observed pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons. Inspectors met with groups of pupils and spoke to pupils during lessons and at other times of the day. Inspectors also took into account pupils' responses to the Ofsted pupil survey.
- Inspectors met with leaders of personal, social, health and economic education to discuss the curriculum and provision for pupils.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors checked the single central record of recruitment checks, talked to leaders responsible for safeguarding and looked at the school's safeguarding records and documents. Inspectors also talked to staff and pupils about safeguarding.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including information about pupils' behaviour, minutes of governors' meetings and the school's development plan.
- Inspectors met with members of staff to discuss the school's work and considered their responses to the confidential Ofsted staff survey. They also looked at parents' responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Nick Simmonds, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Paul Gibson

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates:
<http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

© Crown copyright 2023