

# Inspection of Chesham Primary School

Talbot Grove, Bury, Lancashire BL9 6PH

---

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 March 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Inadequate**

---

The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Inadequate**

Early years provision

**Good**

Previous inspection grade

Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are proud to attend Chesham Primary School. They have warm relationships with staff and with each other. Leaders tackle bullying and name calling effectively. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. They apply classroom rules fairly and consistently. As a result, pupils behave well. They feel happy and safe in school.

Pupils enjoy learning and want to do well. That said, leaders and teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can and should learn in some curriculum areas. This hinders pupils' readiness for the next stages of learning.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), benefit from an array of activities that help to keep them physically active, for example netball, boccia and ten-pin bowling. Pupils develop leadership skills by taking on responsibilities such as playground pals, buddies and representing their class on the school council.

Weaknesses in leadership at all levels have led to a decline in the quality of education that pupils receive. The curriculum in some subjects does not help pupils to learn all that they should during their time at school. Leaders lack the capacity to identify and remedy the shortcomings in the curriculum offer.

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

The school has experienced a period of significant turbulence in leadership during the past year. This has hindered leaders' ability to address some of the main shortcomings at the school. While leaders have made improvements to safeguarding procedures, they have not been as successful in stemming the decline in the quality of education at the school.

Governors do not have sufficient oversight of the school's effectiveness. They have not taken suitable steps to challenge leaders or to assure themselves of the quality of leaders' work. Governors and senior leaders are over-reliant on support from external partners to accurately identify and address weaknesses in the quality of education and the school's policies, systems and practices. Leaders lack the capacity to bring about the necessary improvement at the school.

Leaders have designed a curriculum which covers the expectations of the national curriculum. In a few subjects, including in the early years, leaders have gone further to develop an ambitious and progressive curriculum. For example, in mathematics, leaders have carefully ordered subject content so that all pupils, including those in mixed-age classes, can successfully build on what they have learned before. However, many subject leaders have not developed their curriculum beyond a broad overview. They have been hindered by a lack of training and direction from leaders and governors.

Weaknesses in curriculum design affect pupils in mixed-age classes the most. Teachers do not take account of older pupils' prior learning. They have the same expectations of pupils in both year groups. As a result, pupils in the mixed classes experience a less ambitious curriculum than those in single-year classes.

In some subjects, leaders have not supported teachers to design learning that builds on pupils' prior knowledge. Teachers do not have a strong enough understanding of what pupils should know and remember at each stage of learning. Pupils cannot connect their new learning to what they have learned before. As a result, some pupils struggle to remember their learning over time.

Many teachers have strong subject knowledge. That said, leaders have not ensured that staff have access to subject-specific training to keep their knowledge up to date. This means that sometimes staff do not select the right approaches to help pupils to learn.

Teachers make some checks on pupils' learning in lessons. This helps them to identify and support pupils who are struggling. However, due to weaknesses in the curriculum design, teachers are unsure what they should check to make sure that pupils have understood their learning. This means that teachers are not able to identify, or address, the gaps in pupils' knowledge well enough. This hinders pupils' subsequent learning in these subjects.

In contrast to the curriculum on offer in key stages 1 and 2, the curriculum in the early years is ambitious and well designed. It meets children's needs and interests. Strong routines and warm relationships with staff ensure that children settle into the early years quickly. Staff support children's developing language through thoughtful interactions that target the vocabulary that they want children to learn. Leaders ensure that children have opportunities to develop their learning across the curriculum through carefully focused activities. As a result, children are well prepared for Year 1.

Leaders have recognised the need to improve the teaching of early reading. They have recently introduced a new, more ambitious curriculum. This is in the early stages of being rolled out. The training that staff have received is having variable impact on how well the programme is being delivered. In the early years, children start learning to read straight away. Leaders engage well with parents and carers to help them support children's reading at home. Pupils across the school practise their reading regularly, with books that match their reading ability. Teachers identify and provide extra help if pupils find reading more difficult. This helps most pupils to become fluent and confident readers.

Staff are proactive in identifying pupils who struggle to keep up with their peers, including in the early years. Leaders manage the assessment of pupils' needs well. They help teachers to support pupils with SEND effectively to access the same curriculum as their peers. However, due to the weaknesses in the curriculum, pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they should.

Pupils typically behave well. They said that it was rare for their learning to be disrupted by others. Leaders support teachers to address incidents of poor behaviour. However, they do not share information effectively with other leaders and governors. This hinders leaders' ability to analyse behaviour incidents across the school so that they can take action to prevent them happening again. Similarly, leaders are taking effective action to improve the attendance of persistently absent pupils. However, they do not analyse trends in attendance to identify and support pupils at risk of becoming persistent absentees.

Leaders have established a culture of tolerance and respect within the school. They have ensured that pupils learn about diversity and equality. Teachers create opportunities for pupils to consider the different views of others. For example, Year 5 pupils discussed whether historical books should be edited to reflect the changing values in society over time. Pupils are taught how to maintain good mental and physical health. They benefit from social and cultural enrichment activities such as visits to local museums and residential outward bounds excursions.

While many staff feel that their workload and well-being are prioritised, some leaders are struggling to cope. Due to a legacy of ineffective staff development, middle leaders do not have the time or expertise to fulfil their roles effectively. As a result, senior leaders' workload is excessive and unsustainable.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have recently made rapid improvements to safeguarding policies and practices to ensure that the arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have made sure that staff have received up-to-date training. Staff use the reporting procedures confidently to share their concerns about pupils' welfare and safety.

Leaders make appropriate use of external agencies to secure additional support for vulnerable pupils and their families. However, leaders' records of safeguarding concerns are not as comprehensive as they should be. For example, at times it is unclear what actions have been taken to ensure that pupils are safe.

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

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

- Senior leaders and governors do not have the capacity or expertise to identify, and then improve, the shortcomings in the curriculum and pupils' achievement. As a result, weaknesses have not been dealt with and the education that pupils receive is not good enough. Governors must take immediate action to strengthen leadership so that the weaknesses in the curriculum can be addressed.
- Due to a historic lack of training and development, many subject leaders do not have the expertise to develop and implement a high-quality curriculum. This

contributes to the lack of leadership capacity in the school, placing undue pressure on senior leaders. Leaders must ensure that all subject leaders have the knowledge that they need to drive forward improvements in their subject areas.

- In some subjects, leaders have not identified and ordered the knowledge that they want pupils to learn. This means that pupils, particularly pupils in mixed-age classes, do not learn all that they should. Leaders should ensure that they identify the progression of pupils' knowledge from the early years up to Year 6.
- Leaders have not ensured that staff have received sufficient training to support the delivery of the curriculum in some subjects, including early reading. Consequently, some staff do not select the right approaches to ensure that pupils learn what it is intended. Leaders should ensure that staff are equipped with the expertise that they need to deliver the curriculum effectively.
- In some subjects, teachers are not sure what they should check to make sure that pupils have understood what they have been taught. This hinders teachers from spotting, and then resolving, gaps in pupils' knowledge. This hampers pupils' subsequent learning. Leaders should ensure that they equip teachers with the information that they need to check pupils' learning.
- Leaders have not established a rigorous approach to recording and monitoring safeguarding, behaviour and attendance issues. Information is not shared well enough between leaders. This hinders the ability of leaders to recognise patterns and trends in incidents, and then to target these areas effectively. Leaders should ensure that they adopt a systematic approach to recording and analysing such issues.

## 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>	105293
<b>Local authority</b>	Bury
<b>Inspection number</b>	10256172
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	311
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Alyson Malach
<b>Headteacher</b>	Peter Hudson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.cheshamprimaryschool.co.uk">www.cheshamprimaryschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	16 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- There has been an interim leadership team in place at the school since October 2022. This is due to the secondment of the substantive headteacher.
- The interim leadership team has recently received leadership support from a multi-academy trust.
- Leaders do not use alternative provision for any pupils.
- Leaders provide a breakfast and after-school club.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a graded (section 5) inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with senior leaders, including the interim headteacher, and a range of staff. They also spoke with members of the local governing body, as well as a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors spoke to pupils about their experiences of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. They observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and social times.
- The inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including leaders' self-evaluation documents, improvement plans, minutes of meetings of the governing body and records of pupils' behaviour.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documentation about safeguarding. They met with leaders, staff and pupils to understand how pupils are kept safe.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, science, physical education and history. For each deep dive, they 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.
- One inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and staff.

### **Inspection team**

Charlotte Oles, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Sheila Iwaskow	His Majesty's Inspector
Kelly Butler	Ofsted Inspector
Lindy Griffiths	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](mailto: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/](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2023