

Inspection of Chellow Heights Special School

Thorn Lane, Bingley Road, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD9 6AL

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 June 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Chellow Heights Special School is a place for 'safe, happy, learning'. It is based across two school sites. Pupils typically attend the site nearest to their home. Leaders ensure that the school sites are well equipped. Pupils can access a range of specialist resources and therapeutic interventions. These are used to meet pupils' individual special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These resources include a sensory garden, pet therapy and a hydrotherapy pool.

Leaders have redeveloped the curriculum. Some parts are more developed than others. The curriculum is being embedded across the school. Pupils follow a range of education pathways that support their learning needs. Reading is prioritised across school. Staff sing, rhyme and read every day to develop pupils' interest in language. Developing pupils' communication skills is an important part of the school's work.

Teachers adapt lessons to meet pupils' individual needs. Lessons are taught in creative ways that interest pupils. This ensures that pupils engage well. Staff model positive behaviour around school. Pupils are encouraged to behave well. Most pupils are happy to be in school. Bullying is not an issue. There are many adults available to spot problems and swiftly intervene. This ensures pupils feel safe.

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

Leaders are passionate about reading. It is prioritised across the school. Leaders have developed a reading curriculum that meets a range of pupils' needs. It uses resources that match pupils' needs, abilities and interests. This supports pupils to engage with reading well. Where appropriate, pupils are taught phonics effectively in dedicated lessons. In other subject areas, reading hooks and opportunities are woven into lessons. Pupils that are not yet ready for phonics learn pre-phonics. This includes learning environmental sounds. Routines for literacy and reading are well established. Staff teach lessons with enthusiasm. Pupils read with confidence.

Across school, pupils follow a newly developed curriculum. It largely meets all pupils' needs well. The curriculum is mostly led by new subject leaders. Curriculum maps are generally well thought out, with linked assessments. Physical education is inclusive of all pupils. It supports the development of pupils' mobility carefully. This includes pupils with physical disabilities and multi-sensory impairment. The mathematics curriculum matches whole-school learning themes well. This ensures mathematics lessons are engaging. However, leaders' quality assurance systems are not fully embedded. This makes it difficult to completely check the quality of learning across the school.

Children in early years follow a personalised curriculum. It is matched to their education, health and care plan (EHC plan) targets. Teachers adapt the early years learning goals to the context of the school. Children in early years are well cared for. There are plenty of staff on hand to support them. Classrooms are well resourced and organised. Different spaces are used well to develop learning. There are

dedicated numeracy areas used to promote number use and bright literacy spaces used to develop language. Most staff use developmental language well when interacting with children.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. There is a high staff ratio to support good behaviour. Relationships between pupils and staff are secure. This ensures pupils behave well in and out of lessons. Pupils are polite and take turns when playing during breaktimes and lunchtimes. They support each other when collecting meals in the dining hall. Pupils' behaviour is understood by staff. Most staff do not believe pupils' behaviour is a concern. Occasionally, pupils lose focus or become disengaged. Staff effectively steer them back on track.

Leaders ensure that pupils receive an effective programme of personal development. They are supported to be physically and mentally healthy. Pupils discuss their emotions using a 'feelings tree'. They take part in dance club. Many pupils enjoy yoga. This helps them feel calm. Pupils also enjoy films with their friends in movie club. Pupils study different faiths and cultural celebrations. For example, in lessons and assemblies, pupils learn about Diwali, Eid and Christmas. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of consent. They learn how to recognise online dangers when using technology.

Governors have a deep understanding of the school. They support the school to offer high-quality education to all pupils. They challenge staff to excel and be the best. Leaders' school improvements are welcomed by most staff. They say leaders are approachable, but some staff do not feel included in the vision for school improvement. They recognise there has been much-needed change in school. At times, this has increased their workload as leaders introduce important changes. Early career teachers feel well supported. They have regular development time with their mentors.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school sites. Checks on adults prior to their employment are thorough. Leaders use external audits to provide additional assurance. This ensures school safeguarding practices are kept up to date. Staff receive safeguarding updates in weekly meetings. Leaders check their understanding to keep children safe. Staff know how to report concerns. This keeps safeguarding leaders fully informed about pupils' needs.

Leaders work with multiple agencies to safeguard pupils. This ensures referrals of concerns about pupils' welfare are made to the right people. Leaders are persistent. They question decision-makers if safeguarding referrals do not meet thresholds for intervention.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some subject leaders are not experienced and fully developed in their roles. This means that some areas of the curriculum are less well developed than others. Leaders should continue to develop teachers to ensure that they have the right knowledge and skills to fully develop their curriculum areas.
- The curriculum is new. Leaders' quality checks are not fully developed. This makes it difficult for leaders to check the quality of learning across school. Leaders should further develop quality assurance systems to ensure all teachers are delivering the curriculum effectively.
- Some staff do not feel fully included in leaders' vision for the school. They need reassurance about the changes brought about through school improvement. Leaders should engage with all staff across school sites to reassure them about the changes taking place to further improve the school.

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	135228
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	10282622
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Maria Greenwall
Headteacher	Helen Willett
Website	www.chellowheightsschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 May 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Chellow Heights Special School is a special school for pupils aged between two and 11 years. It is based across two school sites.
- All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The school makes provision for pupils with complex SEND. This includes those with severe learning difficulties, autism, speech, language and communication needs, physical disabilities and multi-sensory impairment.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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, members of the senior leadership team,

subject leaders, teachers, early career teachers and support staff.

- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body. They also met with the local authority education adviser.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, physical education, mathematics and personal, social and health education. 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.
- The lead inspector met with the school's designated safeguarding lead. The inspector reviewed the school's safeguarding records, relevant policies and other safeguarding documentation. The inspector reviewed the processes leaders use to identify and help pupils who need support. In addition, the inspector scrutinised the school's records of checks carried out on adults who work at the school.
- The lead inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation and development plans.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for pupils, staff and parents. This included any free-text responses.

Inspection team

David Mills, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Christina Jones

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