

# Inspection of Chiltern Way Academy Wokingham

Gipsy Lane, Wokingham RG40 2HR

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Inspection dates: 26 and 27 September 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Outstanding**

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The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5  
of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Sarah Stevens. This school is part of Chiltern Way Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Ian McCaul, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Mortimer. There is also an executive principal, Gary Regan, who is responsible for this school.

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

Pupils appreciate being part of this exceptional school, where they feel 'accepted' and 'included'. They speak highly of the support and kindness they receive from the dedicated staff team. Pupils value the time taken to get to know and understand them as unique individuals. This motivates pupils to try their best and creates a tangibly positive, happy, and nurturing environment.

There is a continual focus on preparing pupils to be equipped with the life skills they need to make a valuable contribution to society. Right from when they start at school, the innovative curriculum inspires pupils to develop their interests and talents. They work hard to achieve relevant qualifications that will help them gain paid employment in their futures. Every day starts with a dedicated 'orientation and regulation' session. This enables pupils to self-regulate, explore and understand their emotions. They learn useful strategies to help them focus on their learning in class.

Pupils who are new to the school settle in quickly because routines are well established. Those who have been in the school longer reflect maturely on how changes have significantly transformed their school. They particularly appreciate the broad range of subjects where they can learn important life skills. This includes outdoor education and hospitality. Many parents commented on how their children have 'thrived' as part of this caring school.

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

Robust and decisive action was taken as soon as the school joined the trust. The journey of improvement has been rapid. An aspirational and meticulously organised curriculum is now in place. This includes academic subjects which can be studied to high level qualifications, alongside vocational routes, which prepare pupils for the world of work. Therapists and subject experts collaborate effectively to deliver high-quality training to all staff. This ensures all staff develop expert knowledge of the subjects they teach as well as a depth of understanding about the pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities. Learning is carefully adapted to meet individual needs. This all results in engaging and purposeful lessons, which equip pupils with the knowledge and skills they need to be successful.

There is a noteworthy focus on reading, and pupils are expertly supported to overcome any barriers they have. Teachers accurately assess pupils' phonic knowledge and swiftly put in place any extra support needed. Pupils quickly grow in confidence and start to really enjoy reading. One younger pupil commented 'Now I am learning to read...I feel so good about it!' As pupils progress through the school, the English curriculum includes a broad range of thoughtfully selected texts that help them learn about the world around them.

All staff share a resolute determination for all pupils to succeed, both academically and personally. Pupils co-produce their own targets to identify the behaviours that will help them to be successful, both socially and academically. Throughout the

predictably organised day, pupils have regular opportunities to reflect on their progress against these personal goals. Success earns them 'C-Bucks' reward points. They save these to spend in the school shop, which is ably managed by one of the pupils. Where pupils who have complex behavioural needs or find it more difficult to manage their feelings and emotions, expert staff are there. They support pupils with consistent approaches, underpinned with dignity and respect.

Weekly curriculum enrichment sessions provide an extensive range of activities to spark pupils' interests. Some choose to play in a band, others pursue creative arts and drama. Pupils learn the benefits of competing in team sports. They reflect on how this develops their tolerance and ability to work well with others. The school makes sure pupils value the diversity of the wider world. The recent memorable 'community day' is a strong example of the school coming together to raise money for charity and contribute their time to the community. These activities included some pupils tidying the local churchyard and others who ran a pop-up café.

There is a relentless drive to deliver continuous improvements and make a positive difference to the pupils here. Staff feel valued and well supported to develop and share their expertise. They appreciate the culture of mutual support that school and trust leaders have created and, as a result, pupils flourish.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	148349
<b>Local authority</b>	Wokingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10288104
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Academy special sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	8 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	57
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	David Mortimer
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sarah Stevens
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://chilternway.org/">https://chilternway.org/</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school is part of the Chiltern Way Academy Trust.
- The school caters for pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties, and autistic spectrum disorder. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- There are two unregistered alternative providers used by the school.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

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

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the executive principal, the chief executive officer, the deputy head, senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers, teaching assistants and the school's external school improvement partner.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of trustees and the chair of the local governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, physical education and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in a range of other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents shared through Ofsted Parent View. They gathered the views of pupils and staff through surveys and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including school improvement documentation, trust board minutes and governing body minutes.

### **Inspection team**

Jo Petch, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Alan Johnson

Ofsted Inspector

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