

Inspection of a good school: Church Hill Middle School

Wood Piece Lane, Church Hill, Redditch, Worcestershire B98 9LR

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 June 2024

Outcome

Church Hill Middle School continues to be a good school.

The executive principal of this school is Angela Crawley. This school is part of Central Region Schools Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Guy Shears, and overseen by a board of trustees, co-chaired by Elizabeth Keates and Orla MacSherry.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel happy and safe in this warm and friendly school. Relationships between staff and pupils are a real strength. Staff know their pupils well. Pupils know who to talk to if they have any worries or concerns. They know things will be dealt with well by staff. Pupils feel listened to and supported.

Staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and conduct. In lessons, staff have created an engaging and purposeful learning atmosphere. Pupils enjoy their time together at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They understand the routines around the school and are supported well when they struggle. Pupils are respectful, kind and inclusive. They want the best for each other and work together well.

The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities. These support the pupils in nurturing their interests and aiding their personal development. For example, there are a range of sports on offer as well as other activities, such as cooking and 'Purple Card' club.

Pupils are encouraged to contribute to the school community and beyond. Pupils of all ages take up an array of leadership opportunities. Through these, they actively contribute to the life of the school. Recently, the school council has worked with staff to develop new house names to further enrich the sense of community felt by all.

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

The school, with the support of the trust, has strengthened the curriculum in recent years. It is ambitious and carefully sequenced. Staff give pupils opportunities to regularly

revisit work to help them get better at what they need to learn. Teachers have a shared understanding of the crucial knowledge that needs to be acquired in each subject across both key stages. This is supported by subject specialists, who help ensure that no learning opportunity is lost as pupils progress through the school.

Pupils achieve well at the end of key stage 2. Throughout Years 7 and 8, the strength of this work continues. Pupils write well and continue to build on their prior knowledge. However, in some subjects, the use of feedback to support pupils in their learning is not consistent. This leads to pupils sometimes having difficulty in expressing what they need to do to improve. As a result, their depth of understanding is not as secure as it could be.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are provided for well through the curriculum. Staff adapt work well as they support pupils through their learning. However, due to recent leadership changes, the ongoing identification of pupils' needs has not been sufficiently accurate. Another impact is that the communication with the parents of pupils with SEND has not been as strong as it needs to be. Leaders have begun to take action to address both issues and initial improvements are evident.

The school has prioritised reading and pupils reflect this. They talk about what they are reading in detail. They enjoy their library lessons in English. The well-resourced and welcoming library space gives them the opportunity to read a range of genres and deepen their love of reading. Help for those at the earlier stages of reading is supporting these pupils to catch-up with their peers.

Improving pupils' attendance and behaviour is a clear focus for the school. Currently, attendance is not high enough. Leaders at all levels have recently improved processes and procedures to address this. However, too many pupils continue to be persistently or severely absent. Pupils' behaviour over the course of the academic year has improved greatly. This is reflected by pupils, staff and leaders. The school takes effective action to support pupils who need help. A range of interventions are used to support them and ensure they can meet the high expectations that exist for all.

Pupils' wider development is well considered. Assemblies and the form tutor programme give pupils more opportunities to understand life in modern Britain. These support their learning well in personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education lessons. Pupils reflect positively on what they have learned about online safety and healthy relationships. Trips are well-matched to enrich what happens in the classroom. For example, pupils talk about the positive impact of these in English, history and geography.

The trustees, trust staff and governors have an accurate view of the school. They know its strengths and areas to develop. The trust supports the school well, particularly in relation to the curriculum and other external challenges. Leaders ensure that staff workload is well considered. Staff reflect positively on the recent improvements in this.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There is variability between subjects in how feedback is used to support pupils' progress through the curriculum. As a result, pupils are not always benefiting from being able to deepen their understanding. The school should ensure that assessment is used effectively to improve pupils' experience of the taught curriculum.
- Attendance is not as high as it should be. As a result, absent pupils miss valuable time in lessons and do not experience the richness of the wider curriculum. The school needs to ensure that pupils attend more regularly and therefore experience more of the whole curriculum being delivered.
- The accurate identification of pupils' needs, and communication of this with parents, has not been sufficiently robust. As a consequence, some pupils are not always supported as well as they could be to engage with the ambitious curriculum that is in place. The school should ensure that the needs of all pupils are well understood, and the resulting provision is communicated to all those involved.

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 January 2019.

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 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

Unique reference number	142543
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10322883
Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	9 to 13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	436
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Co-chairs of trust	Elizabeth Keates and Orla MacSherry
CEO of trust	Guy Shears
Executive Principal	Angela Crawley
Website	www.churchhill.worcs.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	15 and 16 January 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is part of Central Region Schools Trust.
- The school uses four alternative providers for pupils. One is a registered provider and three are unregistered.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 8 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

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. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspectors held meetings with the executive principal, head of school, trustees, other senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and pupils. They also talked informally to pupils and staff to gather general information about school life.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in English, science and art. 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.
- 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.
- The inspectors reviewed the PSHE education curriculum plan, spoke with leaders and discussed the provision for careers.
- The inspectors looked at records and spoke to staff in relation to attendance, behaviour and bullying.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school's work to support those pupils with SEND.
- The inspectors took account of responses to the pupil and staff surveys, as well as Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Richard Wakefield, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Stewart Tait

Ofsted Inspector

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