

Inspection of a good school: Chater Infant School

Chater Infant School, Southsea Avenue, Watford, Hertfordshire WD18 7RD

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 July 2024

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might be outstanding if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

At Chater Infant School pupils thrive and flourish. The school's tailored approach to learning helps each pupil achieve well. The school embraces its many cultures and ethnicities, creating an inclusive environment where pupils feel valued, safe and eager to learn.

The school sets high expectations. These are reinforced through the 'Chater Charter'. Pupils are kind, polite and respectful towards each other and adults in the school. They listen carefully to instructions. The youngest children quickly learn routines and all pupils understand what is expected of them.

Pupils are safe because adults look after them well. Pupils have a 'worry box' and a trusted adult to turn to if they have concerns. Throughout the year, pupils' experiences are broadened with visits that include the zoo, a castle and the local park.

Pupils know they have the right to attend school and learn. They say they feel heard because they are 'given a voice' through various roles, such as school councillor.

The school works closely with families. They receive valuable support from specialists, children centres and schools in the local community. This helps ensure that pupils are supported at each stage of their education, from when they enter and beyond.

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

The curriculum is precisely structured and routinely evaluated to address pupils' differing needs. This includes for pupils who are new to English and those that join the school at different times. Teachers prioritise developing pupils' communication and language skills. In mathematics, teachers meticulously break down learning into manageable steps. They

provide strategies to enable pupils to confidently tackle word problems and apply reasoning skills effectively. In other subjects, such as art, teachers provide clear models of what they expect pupils to do and achieve.

Children in Nursery begin to develop a love for books and stories. The school's phonics programme is structured to ensure that all pupils learn the letter sounds. Skilled adults continually check and adapt the phonics lessons. Adults provide targeted support to help pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to catch up. Teachers offer workshops and information sessions to parents to explain how the school teaches reading. This helps reinforce the skills being taught at school. This work helps pupils to learn the English language and read fluently.

Pupils learn well in a range of subjects. They recall their learning and can describe it in detail. In science, for example, they retain important information about plant growth. By Year 2, they can explain processes such as photosynthesis. In art, pupils can articulate what they appreciate about specific paintings from Picasso's 'Blue' period. Leaders swiftly identify pupils with SEND and provide tailored support. All pupils, including the most vulnerable, are meticulously tracked to ensure they are making strong progress in their social, emotional, and academic development.

Teachers employ a variety of successful strategies to help pupils become successful writers. Consistent emphasis on oral communication and vocabulary leads to strong writing skills by the end of key stage 1.

The school has put in place a range of strategies and systems to support strong attendance. This helps some families to improve their children's attendance when it falls.

Pupils behave exceptionally well across the school. They come into school happy and eager to learn. They are polite and respectful and look after one another. Older pupils enjoy being school buddies. They help the Reception-aged children, including with reading at lunchtimes. In lessons, pupils are attentive and enjoy their learning. They take pride in how they present their work.

Pupils learn about differences in an age-appropriate way. For instance, children in early years learn through stories which teach them that families are different. They celebrate festivals and learn about different religions. They know which foods are healthy and the importance of brushing their teeth. Pupils are listened to and adults value what they have to say. The most vulnerable pupils are supported well. The school works closely with parents, guiding them to specific external support services for their children.

Governors work with the school effectively. They check leaders' actions are supporting pupils to achieve as well as they should. Staff feel very supported. They are committed to reviewing and updating their skills routinely so that they are equipped to provide the best that they can.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 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

Unique reference number	117159
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10345171
Type of school	Infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	221
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Steven White and Phoebe Lill (Co-Chairs)
Headteacher	Amrit Bal-Richards
Website	www.chaterinfants.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	29 to 30 January 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

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 inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. The inspector met members of the governing body and held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, and art. For each deep dive, the inspector 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. The inspector also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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 inspector considered the views of parents through the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View. The inspector spoke with several parents on day two at the start of the school day.
- The inspector considered the views of staff and pupils through meetings and informal discussions. The inspector considered the views of staff through their responses to Ofsted's online survey.

Inspection team

Cindy Impey, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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