

# Inspection of Chipping Norton School

Burford Road, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire OX7 5DY

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Inspection dates:	24 and 25 September 2024
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Sixth-form provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Barry Doherty. This school is part of the River Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Paul James, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jeremy Long.

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

The school has high expectations for how well pupils and students achieve and conduct themselves. The great majority of pupils achieve highly across the main school and the sixth form and demonstrate excellent behaviour.

The school's motto, 'everyone belonging, everyone achieving', underpins everything it does. The great majority of pupils demonstrate the school's values on a daily basis. Pupils feel safe and enjoy their learning. They conduct themselves very well in lessons and work diligently and independently. Pupils value the expertise and support of their teachers, who help them develop the resilience and determination to succeed.

Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), regularly take part in the plentiful range of clubs on offer. These include the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, sports clubs and the arts. In addition, the school runs numerous trips, including the popular German exchange. These activities greatly enrich pupils' personal development and experience of school life. The school's commitment to developing pupils' character is exceptional. Pupils are able to take on a range of leadership roles, helping to prepare them well for later life.

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

Pupils achieve examination results at the end of key stages 4 and 5 that are well above national averages. These outcomes are achieved due to an ambitious curriculum that is carefully planned and skilfully delivered. The school ensures that curriculum content is selected effectively, introducing new knowledge and skills in a logical sequence. Teachers are experts and are passionate about their subjects. Typically, they explain new learning well, checking that it has been understood in most cases. There is much strong practice in the main school, but some gaps in pupils' understanding are not identified and remedied, especially among the pupils more vulnerable to underachievement. In the sixth form, highly effective teaching and guidance enable students to excel in their academic studies.

The school works hard in mainstream lessons to include pupils with SEND and those from less advantaged backgrounds. Staff have been well trained to use teaching methods that challenge and support all pupils, including those with SEND. While much effective work is done by staff, there are some variations in its effectiveness. Sometimes, specific pupils struggle to keep up because lessons are not adapted enough to meet their needs.

The school places a high value on reading. Pupils read independently and with their peers and teachers throughout the school day. The school carefully identifies the pupils who are struggling with reading. These pupils receive focused additional support, including phonics assistance, which aids in their rapid catch-up.

Pupils behave very well in lessons and at social times. They follow the expected routines and staff instructions. Pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary. They are extremely well prepared for lessons and listen to their teachers intently. The school culture is highly respectful. Derogatory language is rare and dealt with very effectively. Sixth-form

students work with diligence and determination. The refurbished sixth-form study centre supports students in working responsibly and independently. The majority of pupils have good attendance. The school works effectively with pupils and families where support is needed to ensure pupils attend more regularly.

The provision for pupils' personal development is exceptional. A comprehensive personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programme helps them be healthy, build respectful relationships and understand how to keep themselves safe. Character education is an important aspect of the personal development programme. Pupils explore morality and character through fortnightly lessons, assemblies and other planned activities and events. Sixth-form students are fully involved in the life of the school and the wider community. They support younger pupils and have numerous opportunities to develop leadership. The careers programme is a particular strength. High-quality advice for pupils ensures they make appropriate choices about the subjects to study at GCSE, in the sixth form and when moving on from the school.

School leaders work closely within the River Learning Trust. Trustees have a thorough understanding of the school's work. They rigorously challenge the school's leaders to ensure that decisions are always made in the best interests of pupils. Staff receive ongoing high-quality training. They also value the steps leaders take to consider their workload and well-being. The school engages and communicates very well with parents and carers. One parent's comment reflected those of many when they wrote via the Ofsted Parent View survey, 'Chipping Norton School fosters a great relationship between staff, students and parents. The school demonstrates regularly how much it cares about its students' life at school, both academically and socially.'

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- In lessons, teachers do not always check pupils' understanding fully and make necessary adaptations before moving learning on. This means that some gaps in knowledge are not tackled, and the next steps are less securely learned. Consequently, a small number of pupils, including some who are disadvantaged, do not achieve as highly as their peers. The school should share the good practice that exists across the school so that all pupils achieve as well as they could.

## 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>	137936
<b>Local authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10321948
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,028
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	174
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Jeremy Long
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Paul James
<b>Headteacher</b>	Barry Doherty
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.chipping-norton.oxon.sch.uk">www.chipping-norton.oxon.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	4 and 5 May 2023, under Section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Chipping Norton School is part of the River Learning Trust.
- The school currently uses three registered and four unregistered alternative provisions.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information 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. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements

(quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 held meetings with a range of leaders, including the headteacher and senior leaders. They also met with representatives from the trust and the local governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: art and design, design and technology, history, mathematics and science. 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 look at samples of pupils’ work. Inspectors also spoke to leaders, visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils work in some 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.
- In addition, inspectors considered a range of information, including the school’s plans for improvement and behaviour records.
- Inspectors considered the views of members of staff who responded to Ofsted’s online staff survey. The views of parents were taken into account from the responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and free-text responses. Inspectors met with groups of pupils formally and informally to discuss their views of the school and considered their responses to the Ofsted survey.

## **Inspection team**

Mark Bagust, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Tash Hurtado	Ofsted Inspector
Taj Bhambra	Ofsted Inspector
Jason Philipsz	Ofsted Inspector

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