

Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Chatsworth High School and Community College

Chatsworth Road, Eccles, Salford, Greater Manchester M30 9DY

Inspection dates:

17 and 18 December 2024

Outcome

Chatsworth High School and Community College has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Andrew Taylor. This school is part of the Sovereign 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), Paul Eckley, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Eddie Austin.

What is it like to attend this school?

This school is a welcoming, joyful place where pupils flourish. They are cared for by staff who know and respond to pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. This helps pupils, and students in the sixth form, to feel understood, nurtured and safe.

The school has high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils are eager learners who rise to meet these expectations. Typically, pupils achieve well from their different starting points. For many, this includes developing the independence that they need to successfully move on to employment or further education.

Pupils benefit from skilful support to regulate their emotions. This enables pupils to learn in a calm environment. Most pupils demonstrate respect for each other and for adults. Staff manage any incidents of challenging behaviour effectively. They are quick to act when pupils experience distress. This helps pupils to return to their learning as soon as they can.

Pupils enjoy many enriching activities at school. For instance, they relish performing in the Christmas production. Others look forward to participating in residential trips. Students in the sixth form embrace responsibilities such as running the tuck shop and mentoring

younger pupils. These experiences further develop their independence in readiness for leaving school.

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

The school's curriculum meets the wide range of pupils' SEND. Pupils follow pathways that are tailored to their needs. Pupils, including those with the most complex needs, study a broad range of subjects. The curriculum is carefully designed to allow pupils to develop knowledge securely, regardless of their starting points. Pupils typically remember and build on their previous learning well.

All pupils at the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. The school works closely with external specialists to review and respond to any changes in pupils' SEND. This provides staff with detailed information about how to support pupils towards the outcomes in their EHC plans. In the main, staff use this information judiciously alongside the school's comprehensive assessment strategies. This helps to ensure that most pupils benefit from teaching that is adapted to suit their needs. However, some staff do not take sufficient account of pupils' individual plans and starting points when they design activities. At times, this hinders some pupils' progress through the curriculum.

The trust has recently helped the school to re-establish its focus on ensuring that pupils' voices are heard. For example, pupils are supported to use pictures, symbols and signing to communicate. This helps pupils to share their needs, worries and feelings with staff, and to socialise with their peers. Staff model language and communication highly effectively. As pupils develop their independence, they benefit from regular opportunities to practise their communication skills in the local community.

The school ensures that pupils develop a love of stories, regardless of how they access them. Staff read to pupils frequently. Pupils who do not communicate verbally delight in the sensory stories that staff share with them. Pupils who are at the early stages of reading benefit from the school's well-considered phonics programme. Skilled staff support these pupils to learn to read accurately. Students in the sixth form use their reading skills to support their independence when they travel by bus, shop for groceries or follow a recipe.

Well-established routines help pupils to conduct themselves in a calm and positive way. This includes many opportunities for pupils to celebrate each other's successes. Some pupils require a highly considered approach to support them to manage their behaviour. Expert staff help them effectively. As a result, these pupils engage with education increasingly well.

The school's work to support pupils' personal development is highly effective. Preparation for adulthood is a golden thread woven through all aspects of school life. A carefully constructed programme of opportunities readies pupils for their next steps. This includes effective careers guidance and thoughtful opportunities for work experience. Furthermore, pupils learn about healthy relationships and the importance of consent in ways that are appropriate to their age and needs. Staff help pupils to build their social and emotional

understanding in a range of informal settings. For example, pupils learn to take turns and to respect each other's differences.

The trust's support has reinvigorated the school. Until recently, a period of unsettled leadership had a detrimental effect on staff morale. The trust and members of the local governing body have successfully addressed concerns raised during that time. They have taken action to stabilise staffing and leadership. Most staff feel well supported by the school. They welcome the trust's increased consideration of their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some staff do not make effective use of information about pupils' starting points and needs when they design learning activities. At times, this slows the progress that some pupils make towards the objectives in their EHC plans. The school should ensure that staff receive appropriate guidance and support to enable them to use this information effectively.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be outstanding for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, of the same name, to be outstanding for overall effectiveness in October 2013.

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	143062
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	10348339
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	192
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	60
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Eddie Austin
CEO of the trust	Paul Eckley
Headteacher	Andrew Taylor
Website	www.chatsworthacademy.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	11 and 12 September 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher was appointed from September 2024. At the same time, a new chair was appointed to the local governing body. The school joined the Sovereign Trust in October 2024.
- A large number of new staff have recently joined the school.
- The school provides education for pupils with complex learning difficulties, many of whom have severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Some pupils also have physical disabilities. All pupils at the school have an education, health and care plan. Places at the school are commissioned by Salford local authority.
- The school operates from three different sites. The main and Wentworth sites are both located on Chatsworth Road. The Deans site, for pupils and students with a greater

degree of independence, is co-located with the trust's specialist provision for adult learners.

- 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.
- The school makes use of one registered alternative provision for a very small number of pupils on a part-time basis.

Information about this inspection

- 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.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, other school leaders and staff. The lead inspector also met with the chair of the local governing body and the CEO of the trust.
- The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority by telephone.
- The inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to pupils and looked at examples of their work. They also considered the school's self-evaluation document, along with other documentation and analysis provided by the school.
- The inspectors observed pupils during social times.
- 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 considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.
- The inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. An inspector also spoke with some parents and carers in person.
- Inspectors visited all three of the school's sites during the inspection.

Inspection team

Ben Hill, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Kevin Simpson

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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