

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Chaucer Junior School

Cranmer Street, Ilkeston, Derbyshire DE7 5JH

Inspection dates:

1 and 2 April 2025

Outcome

Chaucer Junior School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Tiffany Smith. This school is part of Embark Multi-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 (CEO), Matthew Crawford, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David King.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils describe Chaucer Junior School as fun and friendly. They have trusting relationships with staff, who know and care for them well. They talk proudly of the school's values: appreciation, aspiration, cooperation, kindness, resilience and tolerance. These words are not just part of displays or assemblies. Pupils live out these values in how they treat one another and approach their learning.

The school is a safe space, where pupils feel listened to. Staff know pupils well and notice when something seems wrong. Pupils say there is always someone to talk to. They value the school's reflection process for behaviour. It helps them to sort out problems like bullying and to think carefully about their choices. Pupils know they can be themselves if they respect others. One said, echoing the views of others, 'We all have a voice here.'

Expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement are high. Pupils rise to them. They enjoy their learning and achieve well. There is lots to do at lunchtime, from racing with 'monster feet', to helping out in the garden. Pupils readily take on responsibilities and act as role models for others. They are friendly, respectful and confident, and take genuine pride in their school.

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

Pupils build their knowledge and skills across a well-thought-out curriculum. Teachers use clear explanations and modelling to help pupils secure their understanding. Such approaches help pupils to succeed. By the time they leave, they are ready for secondary school.

Reading is a priority. Pupils who need help with reading get the right support to catch up quickly. The staff supporting them are well trained. They know when pupils are ready to go beyond sounding out words and they help them to start to read with fluency. Pupils read widely and often, enjoying a range of high-quality, engaging texts. In class, they encourage one another to read with confidence and expression.

Pupils develop essential foundational knowledge. For example, in writing, pupils develop a secure understanding of grammar, vocabulary and the structure of English. Teachers model sentence construction to pupils precisely. They set tasks that challenge pupils to apply and refine these skills well. In mathematics, pupils become fluent with number facts and calculation strategies. They apply these confidently to problem-solving tasks and can explain their reasoning. Once secure, they take on more challenging tasks that deepen their understanding.

Teachers use a range of strategies skilfully to check that pupils have understood their learning. For example, they select pupils at random to answer questions. This approach keeps everyone engaged. It helps staff to spot pupils' misconceptions and to know what to teach next. Pupils take pride in improving their work.

The school has identified the essential knowledge that pupils need to learn. Nevertheless, at times, some of the work set by teachers does not help pupils to meet these aims. Activities sometimes focus on creativity rather than the necessary subject matter. As a result, some pupils do not secure the knowledge that the school intends.

From the moment that they join the school in Year 3, pupils learn what is expected of them. They show kindness, resilience and responsibility. Classrooms are generally calm and focused.

The school ensures that pupils' needs are identified early and understood by staff. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn the same curriculum as their peers. Staff provide pupils with well-judged support when needed. In most cases, this enables pupils to learn well and alongside others, without lowering expectations.

Personal development is a clear and successful focus of the school's work. Pupils know how to stay physically and emotionally healthy and seek help if they have a worry. The school has helped them know how to speak maturely about relationships, equality and consent. Pupils reflect respectfully on differences between people. The school's work on values and mental health helps pupils develop confidence, empathy and character. Pupils show a thoughtful understanding of fundamental British values.

Strong, shared leadership is driving positive improvements in the school's work. Trustees and the local governing body understand the school well and provide effective challenge. Staff morale is high. Across the school, there is a clear sense of pride and purpose.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- At times, in some foundation subjects, the work that the school gives to pupils does not support the aims of its curriculum well enough. As a result, some pupils do not secure or deepen the knowledge and skills that they need to build over time. The school should ensure that teaching provides pupils with tasks that match its curriculum goals, so that all pupils can learn the intended content in depth.

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 good 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 to be good for overall effectiveness in April 2018.

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	147748
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10347693
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	235
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Matthew Crawford
CEO of the trust	David King
Headteacher	Tiffany Smith
Website	www.chaucerjunior.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up post in January 2022.
- The school is part of the Embark Multi-Academy Trust. The school converted to become an academy in March 2020. When the predecessor school was inspected in April 2018, it was judged to be good.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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. 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 with leaders from the trust, including the chief executive officer and the primary school improvement lead, and two trustees, including the chair of the trust board. The inspector also met with members of the local governance team, including its chair.
- The inspector visited lessons, spoke with pupils about their work and looked at their books.
- The inspector spoke with leaders about the school's offer for pupils' personal development. The inspector met with several groups of pupils, including some 'class MPs' and school prefects.
- To review the arrangements for 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 took account of responses to the Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Deirdre Duignan, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked-after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

© Crown copyright 2025