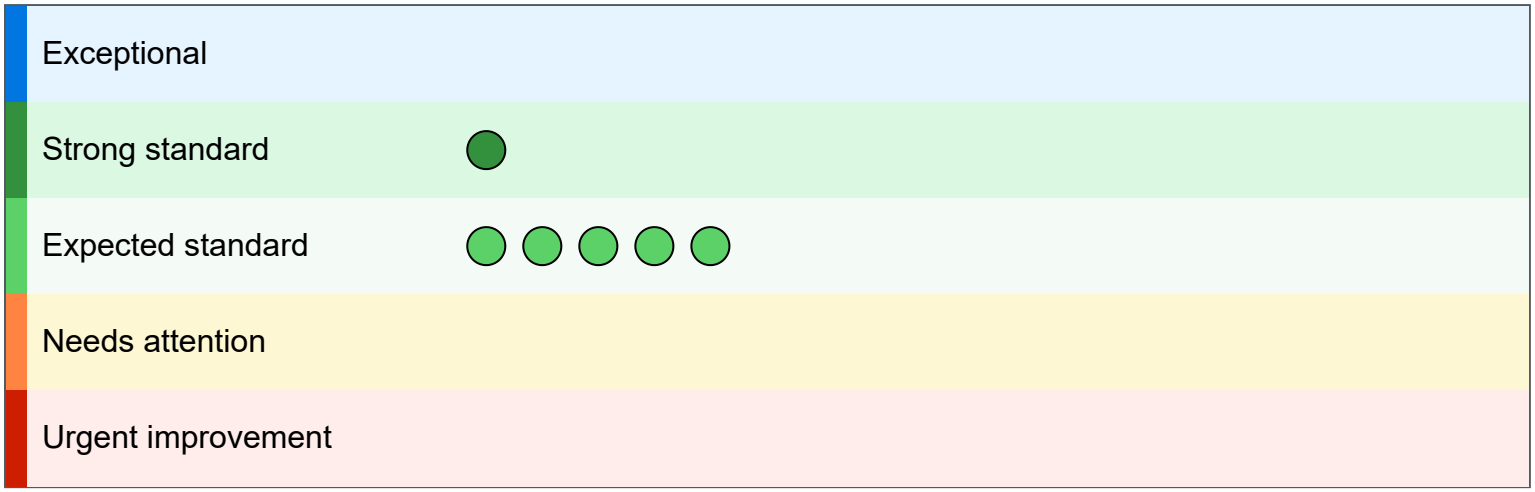
Chelwood Nursery School

Address: Chelwood Walk, Turnham Road, Brockley, London, SE4 2QQ

Unique reference number (URN): 100668

Inspection report: 21 April 2026



Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met: The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- Not met: The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard

Personal development and wellbeing are woven through daily practice in the nursery. Leaders' consistent emphasis on supporting children's confidence, emotional security and independence is evident in how the curriculum, routines and wider experiences are planned. Children are supported to manage daily routines, make choices and build relationships through everyday interactions and play. This helps them to develop highly positive attitudes and behaviours that support learning and prepare them well for the next stage of their education.

Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is promoted through routines, play and planned experiences that reflect their age and stage. Adults introduce fundamental British values in age-appropriate ways, including for example, through discussions, play and demonstrating to children what these values mean in contexts familiar to them. Children learn to share, take turns and cooperate with others. They are supported by adults who model positive interactions and respectful behaviour. Children are helped to recognise difference and learn about their community through experiences such as festivals, stories and shared events.

The relationships and health education programme supports children to develop a secure early understanding of keeping safe, healthy eating, personal hygiene and emotional wellbeing. Children apply this learning confidently in daily routines. For example, they learn about brushing their teeth and can explain why this is important. At snack time, children talk about making healthy choices and the importance of fruit and vegetables in keeping their bodies healthy.

Staff know children well. They respond promptly and effectively when children need additional reassurance or support. Children seek help confidently from trusted adults and show increasing emotional security. Families are welcomed into the life of the school. For example, they access shared spaces that support children's attendance and wellbeing. This strengthens partnership working and children's sense of belonging. The school's inclusive approach ensures that all children, including those with additional needs, participate fully in personal development opportunities and benefit consistently from them.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Children typically develop the essential knowledge and skills they need for the next stage of their education. From their starting points, children make appropriate progress through the curriculum, particularly in communication, language and personal development. However, at times, children's achievement is not as positive as it could be. Sometimes, checks on what children know are not sharp enough to identify specific gaps in learning and build on what children already know. This affects how securely and deeply children develop knowledge.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged take part fully in the same curriculum and provision as their peers and, in most cases, achieve well. Staff know children well and use their understanding of individual needs to support these children's learning and development across the curriculum.

Children are generally prepared for the transition into Reception by the time they leave. They gain knowledge, confidence and independence, both through the daily routines and learning experiences.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Leaders rightly emphasise the importance of regular attendance in establishing routines and supporting children's learning from the outset of their education. Staff know families well and provide practical, flexible support where circumstances are challenging for families. However, leaders' analysis of attendance information is not as systematic as it could be in identifying patterns or evaluating the impact of actions taken. Leaders are beginning to strengthen their oversight to secure more consistent improvements in attendance, especially for those children with more variable attendance.

Children experience a calm, purposeful environment shaped by clear routines and consistent adult support. Adults interact thoughtfully with children, modelling expectations and helping children understand what is coming next. This enables children to move confidently between activities and engage well in learning and play.
Staff support children to manage any social challenges positively. When disagreements arise, adults respond calmly. They help children to recognise feelings and guide them towards finding solutions together. This supports the development of empathy, cooperation and respect for others, and helps children build the skills they need to manage relationships independently over time. Adults also place strong emphasis on developing resilience and independence. Children are encouraged to persevere with challenging tasks, make choices and take increasing responsibility within routines. Staff nurture curiosity by supporting exploration and problem-solving. This helps children to become confident, inquisitive learners.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders have a clear vision shaped by a strong focus on children’s personal, social and emotional development. Staff know children as individuals and use this knowledge to shape inclusive learning, including choosing texts, activities and experiences that typically support early language development.

Children, irrespective of their starting points or needs, are supported to access a broad range of experiences across the different areas of learning. Staff think about how to support children's development in each area. However, in some aspects, the school's curriculum does not set out precisely enough how children’s knowledge and skills are intended to build progressively over time. Expectations for children's progression are sometimes not clearly defined or consistently understood. As a result, at times, teaching is not as effective as it could be in building children's understanding or spotting and addressing any potential gaps.

Teaching fosters children's independence, enabling them to typically explore and build knowledge in many contexts, from completing jigsaws, managing routines at breakfast and taking turns on bicycles. Teaching also includes real-world experiences to enrich learning. For example, children observe frog spawn outdoors, return to it over time and discuss changes they notice. Such approaches support early scientific thinking, vocabulary development and curiosity about the natural world.

Teaching generally supports children's communication and language effectively. The curriculum's strong emphasis on high-quality texts, including giving children repeated opportunities to engage with these texts, helps children to develop early language, listening skills and an enjoyment of books.

Inclusion

Expected standard

Leaders identify children's needs quickly and take appropriate steps to reduce barriers to learning and wellbeing. Staff know and care for children well. They use this knowledge to provide support that is generally tailored carefully to children's needs. This helps children to access the provision and engage positively in learning. Children known to social care, and those facing other challenges, are supported sensitively. However, at times, there is inconsistency in how well staff interact with some children, particularly those less confident in communicating, to fully support their learning.

Disadvantaged children are supported through a range of suitable approaches, including, for example, access to provision such as breakfast club and wider experiences. While funding is used well overall to support children's needs, occasionally, leaders' evaluation of the impact of early years pupil premium funding is not as precise as it could. At times, this reduces leaders' ability to understand clearly how effectively this funding improves outcomes for children, and in turn, to refine the school's strategy when needed.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified and supported appropriately. This support is increased step by step as children's needs are identified. Staff benefit from relevant training, such as on communication strategies, to support children's engagement and development. Leaders involve external agencies, for example speech and language or health professionals, where needed.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Strategic leadership is effective and clearly focused on securing the best outcomes for children. Leaders know the school's strengths well, particularly with regard to safeguarding and personal development. They are also realistic about areas that require further refinement, especially in relation to curriculum thinking and the use of assessment information. Leaders have appropriately prioritised improvement work to focus on these areas.

Professional learning for staff is developed well overall. Leaders have put in place targeted training to support staff in areas such as communication strategies and inclusive practice, including, for example, the use of visual supports to help children to communicate. Nevertheless, leaders recognise the need to put in place a more structured and strategic approach to curriculum development to further strengthen staff expertise over time.

Governors are knowledgeable and committed. They articulate a strong understanding of the school's context and priorities. Governors fulfil their statutory duties, including safeguarding oversight. They are supportive while also appropriately challenging leaders. They share a clear vision for the school as a nurturing, inclusive early years setting.

Staff wellbeing is considered carefully. Leaders are mindful of workload and have worked to ensure staff feel supported, particularly given recent organisational change.
Families are highly positive about the school and its welcoming ethos. Leaders maintain open communication with parents and carers and provide flexible support to meet family needs, including in relation to attendance. The school's links with the community are used to broaden children's experiences appropriately.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Children experience a warm, welcoming and nurturing environment where they are known remarkably well by staff. Children feel safe and secure, and parents and carers express strong confidence in the care provided by the school. Staff build close, trusting relationships with children, taking time to understand each child's personality, needs and routines. Many parents describe how staff from across the school know each child by name and greet them warmly, which reinforces a strong sense of belonging.

Children behave well. They understand routines and expectations, respond positively to staff's guidance and show increasing self-regulation. Where minor disagreements occur, staff support children calmly to talk about feelings and repair relationships. Parents consistently report that children feel emotionally secure and confident to express themselves. Bullying is not a feature. Children are supported to develop empathy, cooperation and respect for others.

Children enjoy learning and are motivated to attend. Many parents describe their children 'skipping into nursery' and looking forward to each day. Learning is rooted in purposefully designed activities and resources, with rich opportunities indoors and outdoors. For example, children explore climbing, den-building, imaginative role play, reading, making and investigation. Such activities support children's curiosity, physical development and resilience. Activities routinely grow from children's interests, helping them to remain engaged for sustained periods of time.

Children develop confidence, independence and communication skills. They learn to manage routines, make choices and take responsibility for themselves, for example by helping themselves to breakfast or pouring drinks. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged children are fully included and supported to succeed alongside their peers.

Overall, children achieve well from their starting points, particularly in communication, language and personal development. They leave prepared for the next stage of education with positive attitudes to learning. Attendance is variable for some children, which can interrupt their learning and routines. That said, leaders work closely with families to support regular attendance.

Next steps

- Leaders should clarify and strengthen curriculum sequencing so that staff are clear about the key knowledge and skills children need to learn, and how these build progressively over time across the nursery provision.
- Leaders and staff should use assessment information more systematically to identify gaps in children's learning and to plan timely next steps, particularly for those children who are more reluctant to communicate and those who need additional support.
- Although attendance is non statutory in a nursery setting, leaders should strengthen how they track and analyse attendance patterns, particularly for different groups of children, so they can work more effectively with families to promote regular attendance and support children's learning and routines.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Martha Mitchell.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other senior leaders and staff. The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority. He also spoke with a group of governors that included the chair of the governing body. Inspectors visited lessons, spoke with children and looked at curriculum information and reviewed school documentation. Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not currently make use of alternative provision.

The headteacher took up the position in September 2022.

Headteacher: Angelika Alleman

Lead inspector:
Adam Vincent, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:
Rebekah Iiyambo, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

This data is from 21 April 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

139

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

1.8%

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals.

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

2.88%

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

15.11%

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

Location deprivation

Above average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Our grades explained

Exceptional 🔵

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard 🟢

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard 🟢

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention 🟠

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement 🔴

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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