

Inspection of a good school: Cheddington Combined School

High Street, Cheddington, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire LU7 0RG

Inspection dates:

8–9 October 2019

Outcome

Cheddington Combined School continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that standards may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel very safe at this school. They are happy here and get on well together in class, in the playground, and in a wide range of other activities which adults organise for them. Some older pupils enjoy being buddies for the younger children. Younger children like the help they get from their buddies.

Pupils value learning about subjects other than mathematics and English. They enjoy learning how to work well in teams, how to develop their cookery skills, and learning about their local environment. Leaders have made these opportunities a central part of the wider curriculum which pupils benefit from. Many parents like the fact that their children get to do these things as part of the normal school day. Most parents are positive about the school and feel that leaders are caring and approachable.

Pupils behave well. They are respectful of each other. They are polite to adults. Pupils say bullying rarely happens. One pupil spoke for many in saying, 'It is not nice to say jokes about others. They might not like it.'

Leaders want the best for every child. However, some subjects are not planned well enough to help this happen, for example in mathematics and science.

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

Leaders' work to provide opportunities for more than just academic learning is a strength of the school. This enables pupils to take part in a wide range of sporting, musical and other enrichment activities on a weekly basis. Younger children also benefit from such things as nursery rhyme drama classes, for example. Older pupils also enjoy the educational visits organised for them, such as a recent trip to a local stately home.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well across the school. Teachers work closely with other adults to support these pupils. As a result, pupils with SEND are helped to develop confidence and independence, as well as building their subject knowledge and skills across the curriculum.

Staff feel that they are supported well by leaders. They feel listened to and part of the decision-making processes that affect their day-to-day work. However, changes in some subject leadership roles and responsibilities in recent years have resulted in inconsistency in the planning and delivery of some subjects. Furthermore, senior leaders have not been able to monitor the quality of education well enough to ensure that the school improves over time. As a result, there have been dips in pupils' outcomes, some of which are taking too long to address, especially in mathematics and writing by the end of key stage 2.

Children have a good start to learning in the early years. Parents are positive about the information they receive from the school. They regularly join specially planned classes to see how their children learn, including in developing early numeracy skills, for instance. Children make good progress with their phonics (letters and the sounds they make) skills here. This good start means that the very large majority make the expected standard in national phonics screening checks during Year 1.

Some subjects are planned well. In these subjects, teachers plan learning that builds on the things pupils have learned before in a well-considered order. For example, in art and design pupils in Year 4 learn about the collage technique of Matisse before moving on to more skilful and challenging work based on the work of Francis Bacon. As a consequence, Year 4 pupils were able to talk confidently about how their previous work on Matisse helped them create their new piece of art work. However, this level of thought about sequenced learning is not apparent in all subjects. As a result, pupils cannot always make strong connections to their previous learning to help them move on securely.

Despite early phonics provision being sound, some pupils do not have the vocabulary they need to help them learn the topics planned for them, or to write as well as they should as they move through the school. Where this is the case, teachers have to spend additional time supporting pupils to develop their comprehension skills in order to access the learning planned for them. Consequently, time is not used well enough to support new learning, because pupils have not developed their comprehension and writing skills sufficiently and are spending too long catching up. This catch-up also happens as children move from the early years into Year 1, in mathematics for example.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a culture where the safety and welfare of children is given a high priority. They have strong processes in place to ensure that the information they receive is acted upon quickly. Staff are well trained and know how and when to report any concerns about a child's welfare that they may have. As such, any concerns are addressed swiftly and appropriately.

Governors know and carry out their legal duties regarding safeguarding well. They visit the school often to check that the systems in place are as they should be.

Leaders work with other agencies in a timely and constructive manner. Consequently, vulnerable pupils and their families receive appropriate support to help them if it is required.

Pupils play safely together at play time. They are well supervised by highly visible staff. Parents are very positive about the welfare of their children and the care and support that staff offer.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not adapted the curriculum well enough to address dips in pupils' achievement over time. Outcomes at the end of key stage 2 are not strong enough in writing and mathematics. Sometimes learning is not planned well enough to build on the knowledge and skills pupils have learned before. In particular, pupils' comprehension skills are not as strong as they could be. Leaders need to ensure that all subjects are planned logically and sequentially, so that more pupils remember the knowledge and skills they have been taught over time, leading to better outcomes at the end of key stage 2.
- Pupils who struggle to read well are starting to catch up because leaders have recognised this is a problem. Leaders' plans to review how pupils' reading skills are developed across the school are well founded. This should take place as a matter of urgency. Leaders also need to ensure that additional support that some pupils are given is fully effective, so that their reading skills improve more rapidly.
- Over time, leaders have not had enough impact on developing the curriculum. There have been recent changes in the roles and responsibilities of leaders to improve this. However, some subjects' standards are still declining or not improving rapidly enough, for example writing and mathematics. Senior leaders need to ensure that subject leadership is strengthened further, to provide more impact on improving the quality of education which the school provides.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged Cheddington Combined School to be good on 25 November 2010.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	110215
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10111277
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mr Simon Aulton
Headteacher	Mrs Kathryn Tamlyn
Website	www.cheddingtonschool.org
Date of previous inspection	26 February 2016

Information about this school

- The school shares the site with Cheddington Pre-School.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector met with senior leaders, teachers (most of whom are subject leaders) and pupils. He also met with a representative group of teaching and non-teaching staff.
- The inspector reviewed safeguarding systems and procedures, including the single central record of checks on adults and child protection and safeguarding policies. He also met with the designated safeguarding lead.
- The inspector reviewed the school website, publicly available pupil performance information, and other school documentation.
- Seventy-eight responses to Ofsted's Parent View, 18 staff survey responses and 85 pupil survey responses were considered as part of the inspection. The inspector met with parents at the start of the school day on one day of the inspection.
- The inspector met with members of the governing body. He also held telephone conversations with a representative of the local authority and with an independent education consultant working with the school.

- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtime and as they moved around the school.
- Reading, science and art and design were considered in more depth as part of this inspection.

Inspection team

Dylan Davies, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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