Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Chestnuts Primary School

Buckingham Road, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK3 5EN

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 April 2025

Outcome

Chestnuts Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Becky Skillings. This school is part of Inspiring Futures Through 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 (CEO), Sarah Bennett, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Marilyn Hubbard.

What is it like to attend this school?

Happy pupils learn eagerly at this inclusive, aspirational school. The school is ambitious for what pupils should learn. Pupils learn the key knowledge across the curriculum, including in reading, writing and mathematics, that prepares them well for the next stages in their education.

Pupils' conduct embodies the high expectations of the 'Chestnut Way'. Staff establish positive relationships, which pupils enjoy and mirror with their classmates. Most pupils show consistently positive attitudes towards their learning. On the rare occasions when pupils find managing their behaviour more difficult, they are supported by adults well. Staff act quickly to resolve issues swiftly, including when dealing with bullying if it ever happens.

The school provides pupils with a strong range of opportunities to enrich their personal development. Pupils' learning is enhanced through useful school trips, such as to local museums and visits to the local area. The school nurtures pupils' talents through a wide range of clubs. Pupils carry out meaningful roles in school and the local community proudly. For example, they interact regularly with older members of the community when visiting the local care home and play an active role in maintaining the local park.

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

The school's broad and engaging curriculum sets out clearly what pupils should learn. It identifies and develops common themes across the curriculum which helps pupils remember and do more over time. This starts from the beginning of the early years, where children get off to a flying start. There are clear systems in place to identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) quickly and accurately. The school ensures that staff get the information they need to meet the needs of pupils with SEND effectively. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve well and are integrated fully into school life.

The school rightly prioritises pupils' communication and language skills from the start. Children in the early years who have speech and language delays, are identified quickly and supported to catch up. As pupils move through the school, they are encouraged to use sentence stems to structure their talk. Across the curriculum, pupils have many opportunities to discuss their learning with peers, which helps to deepen their understanding across the curriculum.

Skilled staff deliver phonics well. Phonics teaching begins as soon as children arrive in Reception. Children use the sounds they know when writing their first words. Most pupils become fluent and confident readers in key stage 1. The school ensures that pupils are exposed to different genres and cultures within the well-stocked library. This, together with a focus on important grammar and punctuation skills, ensures most pupils write with increased sophistication by the end of Year 6.

With the support of the trust, the school has responded swiftly to the disappointing Year 6 2024 mathematics outcomes by making carefully considered changes to the curriculum. Teachers help pupils learn accurate facts and methods effectively. As pupils progress through the curriculum, they can apply these facts and methods to solving different types of mathematical problems.

The school supports staff to develop the skills to deliver the curriculum well. Typically, staff set out learning in clearly explained steps. They use tailored resources to reinforce learning and help pupils to revisit and consolidate key learning. For example, in mathematics, visual aids on iPads are used to support pupils with problem solving. This helps pupils develop a strong understanding of the information that they need to know. However, sometimes teaching does not use information about pupils' prior learning to ensure that activities build on what pupils already know and can do. When this happens, pupils struggle to make connections in their learning and their knowledge is less secure.

Pupils are well prepared for life beyond school. They are provided with valuable skills and knowledge for later life. The school teaches pupils to be healthy and safe. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of other important topics, such as healthy relationships and online safety. Pupils are respectful of difference and are keen to learn about cultures and religions that are different from their own. There is a wealth of pupil leadership opportunities. Pupils undertake responsibilities in school proudly, such as 'digital leaders' and 'German ambassadors'. The elected school council provide pupils with a meaningful

voice to share their views and shape future initiatives such as planned changes to playground routines.

The school is well led and managed. Trustees and governors have a very strong oversight of the school's work. They provide an effective level of support and challenge. Leaders engage effectively with staff who are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Occasionally, the checks made on pupils' learning do not identify clearly how well they have understood the subject content that has been taught. Where this is the case, the activities pupils are asked to complete do not align well enough to address gaps in their understanding and misconceptions. This affects some pupils' learning. The school should ensure that teaching checks pupils' understanding consistently well to identify and address misconceptions.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in February 2019.

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	143265
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10341817
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	428
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Marilyn Hubbard
CEO of the trust	Sarah Bennett
Headteacher	Becky Skillings
Website	www.chestnutsprimaryschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	6 and 7 February 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Chestnuts Primary School is part of Inspiring Futures Through Learning Trust. The school is registered for two-year-olds but currently do not have any children of this age on roll.
- The before- and after-school provision is managed by the school.
- The school currently makes use of one registered 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. They also met with members of the governing body and representatives of the trust.
- The inspector focused inspection activity on the following groups of subjects: English and mathematics; geography and art and design. For each group of subjects, the inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to them informally during social times.
- The inspector met some parents to gain their views of the school. They reviewed the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. The inspector also took account of staff responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of 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.

Inspection team

Laura James, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector

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