

Inspection of an outstanding school: The Chauncy School

Park Road, Ware, Hertfordshire SG12 0DP

Inspection dates:

20 and 21 June 2023

Outcome

The Chauncy School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are highly enthusiastic about attending Chauncy School. They appreciate the support they receive from staff, which enables them to succeed. Their personal and academic achievements are widely celebrated.

There is a vast range of clubs available to pupils. These range from athletics, chess and philosophy, to playing musical instruments, such as the kazoo. These broaden pupils' interests. Every morning, Year 7s attend the '8.15 club'. Teachers identify where pupils need to practice their learning. They develop their reading and mathematical skills in line with their needs. This supports their learning in lessons and gets them off to a positive start to their day.

Pupils say that this is a school where everyone's differences are accepted, and everyone is equal. Pupils feel part of a community and feel safe. They treat each other, and staff, with respect. Pupils are engaged and are very well behaved in lessons. Bullying is very rare and, if it happens, teachers make it stop.

Pupils in all key stages are engaged and challenged by a curriculum that is precisely tailored to their needs, promotes thinking and equips them with the knowledge and skills they need for the next stage in their lives.

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

Leaders are single minded in their determination for all pupils to succeed academically and to develop their interests and character. They strive, successfully, for teaching to be the best that it can be. Topics and resources are chosen to reflect the diversity of society, and to raise awareness of sexism, homophobia, and racism.

Leaders have thought carefully about what pupils need to know to achieve well. Their learning is broken down, so learning is clear, and pupils build upon the knowledge they already have. Knowledge is regularly checked. These approaches help pupils know and

remember more. Pupils' work and responses in lessons show that they have gained a rich knowledge across the curriculum. Pupils are highly articulate.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge and are highly skilled in questioning pupils. They check knowledge, promote thinking, and encourage discussion. If there are gaps in knowledge, these are identified, and teachers adapt what they are doing to help pupils close them. Pupils, including those in the sixth form, are taught how to study and work independently, so that they gain further knowledge outside of lessons and practise using it. As a result, pupils achieve highly.

Pupils read widely and often across the curriculum. Leaders celebrate the value of reading, for instance, by arranging visits by famous authors and rewarding the most avid readers. Weaker and reluctant readers are swiftly identified, and personalised support is put in place. This increases pupils' reading fluency and confidence.

Teachers have very high expectations of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They benefit from precise high-quality training. They have detailed knowledge of pupils' needs. They adapt work skilfully to ensure that they achieve highly. Staff are determined that pupils with SEND, as well as other disadvantaged pupils, attend clubs and trips, such as a residential history trip to World War One battlefields. This develops their confidence and broadens their experiences.

At Chauncy School, pupils are expected to act as young adults. They develop self-discipline, for example there are no bells and pupils can use their phones between lessons. They respond to this trust very maturely. Leaders and teachers do not tolerate any misbehaviour in or out of lessons. Disruption to lessons is very rare and is dealt with swiftly and effectively. Pupils attend very well.

Leaders are committed to raising pupils' aspirations and preparing them for the next stage of their lives. The careers programme is comprehensive. Pupils in all key stages gain experience of work. They visit universities and receive much high-quality guidance. As a result, pupils make informed and ambitious choices about their next stage. The school's personal, social and health education curriculum enables pupils to discuss topical issues. Pupils learn how to look after their mental and physical health.

Staff, including early career teachers, say that they are well supported. Leaders have put in steps to reduce their workload.

Leaders put high-quality teaching and pupil achievement at the heart of everything they do. Staff share these aspirations. The curriculum, and its effectiveness, is constantly evaluated, so that it continues to provide an outstanding education for pupils. Governors challenge leaders about how the school is doing and check that pupils are kept safe.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders carry out robust checks on adults who wish to work with pupils.

Staff identify concerns by closely monitoring pupils' well-being and attendance. Leaders work closely with external services to support pupils who need it. All staff receive regular, up-to-date training and know how to report and act upon concerns.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They can use the 'check in at Chauncy' online form to report concerns. Well-chosen external visitors build on what they learn about in lessons. As a result, pupils have secure knowledge of issues, such as consent, the dangers of local waterways and the dangers of drugs and alcohol.

Background

When we have judged outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 school to be outstanding in October 2017.

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](#)' 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	137090
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10288500
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1367
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	190
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Miles Ambler
Headteacher	Dennis O'Sullivan
Website	http://chauncyschool.com/
Date of previous inspection	5 November 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

This is the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders and the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator.
- Deep dives were carried out in five subjects: English, science, mathematics, art, and history. For each deep dive, an inspector met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Members of the local governing body met with the lead inspector.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at other times around school. They met with groups of pupils.
- Inspectors held a series of meetings with leaders and pupils to discuss the school's safeguarding arrangements. They scrutinised a range of records relating to safeguarding, behaviour, and attendance.
- The lead inspector considered the 291 responses and 200 free-text responses received during the inspection to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. He also considered the 99 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the 339 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Steve Woodley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Simon Warburton

Ofsted Inspector

Wayne Jarvis

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 children looked after, 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 2023