

Inspection of a good school: Chailey School

Mill Lane, South Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex BN8 4PU

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 January 2022

Outcome

Chailey School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a kind school. The school's values of kindness, resilience, independence and creativity permeate everything. The welcome at reception, meetings with staff and discussions with pupils confirm that this is a happy and harmonious school.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They told us that bullying is rare and is dealt with quickly and effectively. Older pupils actively support younger pupils. Welfare and well-being are high priorities in this small, rural community school.

Pupils are knowledgeable about diversity, including Black history and gender equality. They know the terminology relating to sexual orientation and gender identity. Pupils respect different ethnicities and cultures. They value the different contributions that everyone makes.

The curriculum is designed well to meet the needs and aspirations of all pupils, including the most able. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) thrive. The academic curriculum is supplemented by learning outside the classroom, including the 'Chailey Award' and the 'Chailey Diploma'.

Leaders and governors are ambitious for what pupils can achieve. Parents and guardians speak enthusiastically about the school. One parent describes it as a 'rare find' and says it is a school 'that values both academic achievement and the children themselves'.

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

The curriculum is hierarchical and matches the national curriculum and the GCSE requirements. It is carefully sequenced and personalised to meet the needs of pupils. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND are very well supported. Their attendance is improving, and the school has a range of personalised strategies to meet their needs.

Lessons visited were focused and purposeful. Pupils engage positively with the work. Reading and literacy are well supported across the curriculum. Assessment is used well to identify gaps and address shortfalls in knowledge.

Teachers talk confidently about the curriculum. Their subject knowledge is secure and the vast majority of teachers are subject specialists. Training and sharing best practice ensure that teachers help pupils to improve and extend what they know.

Teachers have high expectations of pupils and their behaviour. Routines are followed rigorously, and low-level disruption is not tolerated. Teachers and pupils confirm that behaviour does not disrupt their lessons or the life of the school.

The curriculum highlights the benefits of learning outside of lessons, and this complements what is taught in class. Pupils' physical and social needs are well met. Pupils have a confident understanding of different cultures and religions. Fundamental British values are supported through assemblies and English lessons that choose well-considered poems and texts.

The personal, social, health and education (PSHE) curriculum is extensive. It is helpfully supported through the 'Community and Culture' programme, assemblies, religious education and the beliefs and ethics curriculum. The development of PSHE is still ongoing in key stage 4. The school is working with determination to ensure that the content for older pupils is sequential and developmental.

The school enjoys positive links with a range of post-16 providers. Pupils are well supported in their career choices. The school has a national quality award for careers education, as well as other awards. These include an Artsmark Award, a dyslexia friendly award and an award for learning outside the classroom.

Leadership is a strength of the school; this is recognised by parents, pupils and staff. The headteacher leads with 'vitality and moral purpose'. Parents' views are reflected in the comment: 'The head does a terrific job of managing and has the respect of students.' Leaders engage fully with staff and work diligently to support their workloads.

Governors are effective in the work that they are doing to support the school. They are knowledgeable and experienced. They know their school well and understand the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors regularly visit the school, and this supports them in doing their job.

Parents and guardians speak enthusiastically about the school. One representative parent suggests that 'Chailey is a fine secondary school that has coped superbly well with the challenges posed by COVID-19.' Others talk about engaging, enthusiastic and effective teachers as well as the safe, caring and nurturing environment.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The detailed single central record meets all statutory requirements and is regularly checked to ensure conformity. The designated safeguarding lead and her safeguarding team are well trained and well qualified. Safeguarding policies are embedded. All staff have received safeguarding training, which is regularly updated.

Staff work tirelessly to support pupils' mental health and well-being. Pupils feel safe. They have someone to talk to if they have any concerns. They know how to keep themselves safe, including when using social media. The school ensures that the safety of pupils attending alternative provision is checked through regular contact and rigorous risk assessments.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The key stage 4 PSHE curriculum lacks clarity in terms of sequencing, so it is unclear how the content builds cumulatively to support pupils' knowledge and understanding over time. Leaders should ensure that the PSHE curriculum is organised sequentially, across all areas of the school's wide provision, to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding.

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 or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2012.

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.

If you are the school and you are 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	114594
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10200486
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	787
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	David Whelpton
Headteacher	Helen Key
Website	www.chaileyschool.org/
Date of previous inspection	10 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Chailey School is a secondary school for 11- to 16-year-olds, serving the local rural area.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below the national average, whereas the proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is well above the national average.
- Four pupils attend alternative provision at two registered education providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical educational qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum 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.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and members of the senior leadership team as well as other staff in the school. They reviewed the school's practices and procedures for safeguarding and supporting pupils' health, safety, welfare and well-being.
- Inspectors looked at curriculum documents, school policies and the single central record. The lead inspector met with governors and spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors considered 99 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and a further 86 written responses from parents. Inspectors reviewed the survey responses from 75 staff and 66 pupils.

Inspection team

Paul Metcalf, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Alan Johnson

Ofsted Inspector

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