

Chichester Free School

The Courtyard, Vinnetrow Road, Chichester, PO20 1QH

Inspection dates 10 – 11 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Early years provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The Principal has managed the many challenges of establishing a new school with resilience and a determined focus on pupils' education.
- The school benefits from several strong senior and middle leaders. These leaders are highly committed and are effectively raising standards across the school.
- Pupils make good progress across the school, and particularly in the secondary phase. This is because of their enthusiastic and knowledgeable teachers.
- Pupils behave well. They are polite and welcoming to visitors and treat each other with respect. Pupils are usually keen to learn and respond well to teachers' questions.
- Teaching is good overall. Good planning, which takes account of the needs of all pupils, and creative activities ensure that most pupils make good progress.
- Early years provision is good. Children make good progress from their starting points, and the majority achieve good levels of development so that they are ready for Year 1.
- Leaders ensure effective training and development for teachers, who welcome opportunities to share good practice with each other.
- Governors are increasingly effective because they have received useful training.
- The school meets statutory safeguarding requirements. Pupils feel very safe in school, and parents agree.
- Parents are hugely supportive of the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all middle leaders are as strong as the best. The school has not yet put any leadership training in place.
- Systems for monitoring progress and the quality of teaching are not as strong in the primary phase as they are in the secondary phase.
- Although most teaching is good, changes in staffing and some weaker practice means that some pupils have not made such good progress as the majority.
- Not all teachers give pupils effective feedback that helps them make rapid progress.
- Whilst governors have a better understanding of their role in monitoring improvements, this is not yet sharp enough.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors carried out 20 lesson observations, six of which were carried out jointly with senior leaders. In addition, inspectors visited six classrooms to look at pupils' work in books. Inspectors looked at a range of after school activities including the school's 'prep' sessions. An inspector made a brief visit to a house assembly.
- An inspector visited the off-site 'Forest School' provision for the Reception class.
- Inspectors met with the Principal and senior leaders, two governors including the Chair of the Governing Body and a group of the school's middle leaders. Inspectors met formally with groups of pupils, and also held informal discussions with pupils during lessons and at break and lunchtime. An inspector talked with a group of parents as they dropped children off in the morning. Inspectors reviewed parents' responses on the Ofsted online survey Parent View and also considered the school's own parents' survey. The lead inspector spoke with the School's Improvement Partner on the telephone.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of the school's documentation and the school website. This included data concerning pupils' academic progress, behaviour and attendance and the monitoring of teaching as well as the school's improvement plan and evaluation. In addition, inspectors reviewed 21 staff questionnaire responses.
- Inspectors looked through a wide range of pupils' books in and out of lessons.
- Inspectors checked the school's single central record of staff vetting checks and considered the safeguarding policy and procedures in the school.

Inspection team

Catherine Anwar, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Martin Marsh

Additional Inspector

Alison Botarelli

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Chichester Free School is an all-through free school and is smaller than the average secondary school. It opened to pupils in September 2013. This is the school's first inspection. Currently there are pupils in Reception class, Years 1, 2, 4, 7, 8 and 9. The school will admit an additional Year 4 class in September 2015.
- The school currently occupies a temporary site. Additional temporary buildings will be added this September. The school plans to move to its permanent site, following some delays, in September 2017.
- There is no published data for the school other than for the early years.
- Children attend early years provision on a full time basis at the school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is much lower than that seen nationally.
- Just over one in 10 pupils is from a minority ethnic heritage, which is lower than average, and very few pupils speak English as a second language.
- The proportion of pupils with disabilities or special educational needs is lower than average overall. However, this varies between different year groups. There is no specialist provision on the school site.
- No pupils attend alternative provision away from the school.
- The school has recently established links with Bohunt School in Hampshire and these will be formalised in September.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that leaders are as swift and robust in addressing any dips in pupils' progress or the quality of teaching in the primary phase as they are in the secondary phase so that all pupils achieve consistently well.
- Ensure that all teachers offer effective feedback to pupils so that all pupils make consistently rapid progress.
- Sharpen the way that governors evaluate the improvements in the school.
- Be more proactive about seeking external links and sharing practice with other schools so that leaders and governors can check their own judgments about the school more frequently.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The Principal has managed the creation of a new school, with the strong support of the governing body, with resilience. Despite the multiple practical demands on his time, he is determined to ensure that the quality of pupils' education is the key priority.
- Leaders have created a strong and positive ethos in the school which permeates all aspects of their work. The school is organised around the four cardinal virtues: Temperance; Wisdom; Justice and Courage. These are referenced frequently in lessons, through the effective behaviour management system, in assemblies and in the names given to each school term. As a result, pupils subscribe well to these values.
- The Principal has ensured that several strong leaders are in place in the senior and middle leadership teams. As a result, robust systems for checking the quality of teaching and the evaluation of data on pupils' progress have been established and these are particularly effective in the secondary phase. Primary leadership is effective.
- The Deputy Principal has created a rigorous programme of training and development for teachers. Teachers welcome the opportunity to share good practice on a regular basis and know that high standards are expected. Leaders observe lessons frequently and are quick to address any issues of weaker performance through robust discussions and focused support. Senior leaders' judgments of the standards of teaching are accurate. However, the school does not use enough external support to check these judgments on a regular basis.
- Leaders recognise that they need to provide pupils with opportunities to experience other cultures as well as exploring their own. Pupils study a range of religions and faiths in most year groups. Moreover, visitors to the school, such as a holocaust survivor, offer meaningful experiences to pupils and support the school's commitment to promoting equality. Through these and other activities, the school promotes equality well. Pupils enjoy an ethos of tolerance where all discrimination is tackled by leaders. Pupils are increasingly well-prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school's positive behaviour management system is very effective because it is well-led and managed. Pupils are all clear about the standards expected of them and most teachers consistently apply sanctions and rewards.
- The pupil premium funding is used well to ensure focused support for eligible pupils. As a result, disadvantaged pupils achieve at least as well as their peers, and sometimes better.
- The coordination of support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is exceptional because it is led with rigour, passion and determination. These pupils are closely monitored and are given precisely planned support. As a result, they make very good progress from their starting points. Teachers are offered excellent guidance and training to ensure that they have the skills to teach this group of pupils effectively.
- There are some real strengths in the team of middle leaders, for example in the leadership of English. However, not all middle leaders are as strong. The school has not yet established leadership training for staff.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements. All staff are well-trained on safeguarding issues and the school has provided additional training from outside agencies, for example, 'Prevent' training to combat radicalisation.
- The school makes good use of the primary physical education (PE) and sport funding. Pupils enjoy being taught by secondary PE teachers and benefit from new sports equipment. Recently, external sports fixtures have been arranged for pupils.
- The school's curriculum is well-balanced. Pupils in all phases study a range of subjects through well-planned schemes of work. There is a very good range of activities every afternoon. Pupils, who all attend at least two sessions a week, thoroughly enjoy them. Inspectors heard some excellent singing in preparation for the school show and saw part of a very good knitting session.
- The school has already begun to widen pupils' horizons by organising visits to universities for those in Years 7, 8 and 9. In addition, a careers fair with several external visitors will offer independent advice and guidance for secondary pupils this term.
- Senior leaders have recently set up links with Bohunt School, an outstanding academy in Hampshire. Nevertheless, the school is not proactive enough in making links with other establishments in different areas in order to benefit from additional expertise.
- Parents are extremely supportive of the school and are positive about all aspects. There is an active parent forum. Leaders use this group as a way of gathering parents' opinions and ideas, for example on improving travel arrangements.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governance is increasingly effective. During the school's first year of operation, governors' work was largely focused on practical and organisational matters. Effective training from the School's Improvement Partner has started to ensure that governors have a better understanding of their responsibilities.
- Governors understand the school's data on pupils' performance well. However, the school's presentation of data is not always as clear as it might be to ensure that governors are absolutely clear about how well pupils are doing.
- Governors know how the school's management of teachers' performance works, and are clear about how good teaching is rewarded and weaker performance is tackled. Nevertheless, they have not ensured that the performance of all staff is monitored. For example, teaching assistants are not part of the performance management system, although the school has plans in place to implement this.
- Governors know how the pupil premium funding is used and what impact this has had on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. They are less clear about the use of the primary PE and sport premium funding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors. They get on well together and respect each other's differences, including in Reception class. Secondary pupils report that there is little bullying at the school and that when it occurs teachers deal with it swiftly and effectively. Pupil 'learning ambassadors' greet visitors to lessons warmly, explaining clearly what they are learning.
- In lessons, pupils behave well. They are usually well-prepared to learn, and respond well to teachers' questions and instructions. Pupils are generally eager to make good progress and are keen to learn. In some less effective lessons, some pupils are less engaged and take the opportunity to chat rather than work hard.
- Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy the positive relationships they have with teachers. They feel well supported and know that there is always someone there to help if they need it.
- Pupils' attendance is good, and better than the national average. All groups of pupils attend well. This is because the school tracks pupils' absence robustly.
- Most pupils take pride in their work. However, in a minority of books scrutinised by inspectors, the presentation of pupils' work was rather messy with careless mistakes.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- The school offers a wide and effective range of safeguarding training to all staff. All staff are aware of safeguarding procedures. The school makes good use of external agencies when appropriate.
- Leaders pay particular attention to the challenges of site safety as the school grows. For example, pupils in Reception class are escorted carefully across the road when necessary. Leaders act swiftly to ensure any safeguarding issues are dealt with effectively.
- Pupils report that they feel very safe in school, and parents agree.
- Reception pupils' safety during visits to the 'Forest School' is very good. Staff ensure that they are well supervised and looked after.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers at Chichester Free School are enthusiastic and have good subject knowledge. Secondary pupils comment that they enjoy lessons because of the teachers' enthusiasm. Inspectors saw examples of this impacting very well on pupils' progress in an English lesson, through the teacher's imaginative use of dramatic techniques, and in an art lesson where the teacher's expertise resulted in high quality work from pupils.
- In the best lessons, activities are well planned to meet the needs of pupils. Pupils are encouraged to think for themselves and to share ideas with others. This helps them to learn well. Pupils make good use of their tablet computers in the secondary phase, for example to review and improve their performance in

recent examinations. Teachers question pupils well to develop their deeper understanding of topics. Pupils' responses are often keen and articulate and demonstrate good knowledge and understanding.

- Teachers use data about pupils' progress and they track achievement well. Individually targeted and effectively delivered support is provided for pupils that require extra help to make better progress in English and mathematics. As a result, any pupils who are falling behind catch up quickly.
- In some lessons in the primary phase, learning is less successful, particularly in Year 4. Activities do not always challenge pupils of all abilities and some pupils, particularly the most able, do not make consistently good progress.
- English and mathematics are very well led, and the teaching in these subjects is good. However, the teaching of literacy across other subjects is more variable. Leaders have robust plans in place to address this.
- Pupils' books show that teachers often give effective feedback so that pupils can improve their work. This is particularly the case in English and mathematics. In addition, pupils have valuable opportunities to reflect on their own work and to consider the work of other pupils. However, teachers' feedback does not always help pupils to make the rapid progress they are capable of.

The achievement of pupils is good

- There are no published data for the school other than that for the Reception class in 2014. This data show that a higher proportion of children than nationally achieved a good level of development. However, although girls achieved extremely well, boys did not achieve as well as the national average, particularly in writing. Currently, the school's own data show that a higher than average proportion of children in Reception class are achieving good levels of development.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 all make expected progress in English and mathematics according to the school's tracking systems. This is a higher proportion than is the case nationally. However, very few make more than expected progress. Leaders are aware of the need to ensure that pupils are challenged appropriately and have the opportunity to reach higher standards. Most work in pupils' books shows good progress, and this was also seen during the inspection in many lessons.
- More-able pupils make expected progress in Key Stage 1, but few make more than expected progress or achieve the highest levels. Leaders have plans in place to tackle this.
- Most pupils, including the most able in Year 4 make expected progress in English and mathematics. However, few make better progress than this. Work seen in several pupils' books and progress made by pupils in observed lessons was not good overall. This is because there has been some turbulence in staffing for this year group and the checking of standards by leaders has not been rigorous enough. Leaders acknowledge that a keen focus on this cohort is required to ensure that they are ready for Year 5.
- At Key Stage 3 pupils make good progress and attain well in English and mathematics. The proportion of pupils making more than expected progress is higher than average. More-able pupils achieve well. They demonstrate a keenness to learn in lessons, and their responses to teachers' challenging questions shows good knowledge and understanding.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve at least as well as their peers, and sometimes better. They make rapid progress from their starting points. In year 7 English, for example, a very high proportion of disadvantaged pupils make better than expected progress and attain the highest levels. As a result, there are no gaps between their achievement and that of other pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well because of the exceptional leadership of this area. These children make progress in line with or better than their peers because of well-targeted support and individual help.

The early years provision is good

- Children in early years achieve well compared to national averages. Overall, a higher proportion of children achieved good levels of development in 2014 than was the case nationally. Girls achieved particularly well. However, boys' achievement overall was below national levels, and particularly for writing. Boys achieved better than average outcomes for speaking, reading and mathematics, but in the majority of areas of learning their achievement was below that of the girls. The school has put effective strategies into place to address this. Boys have made more rapid progress this year, and are catching up with the girls. The school estimates that overall, the proportion of children set to achieve a good level of

development will exceed the national average this summer.

- The school ensures that all areas of learning are addressed appropriately during the children's first year. However, the outside provision does not provide enough opportunities for children's reading, writing and number development.
- Teaching in early years is good overall. There has been some turbulence in staffing during the year. However, leaders have responded well to address weaker teaching in one class and their actions have ensured that there is little difference in the progress made by children in this group.
- Teachers use assessment well to inform their planning. They have a good understanding of what children know and the next steps in their learning. Activities are well planned and children enjoy their learning and engage well with the activities provided.
- Children behave well and demonstrate good levels of social development. They get on well with each other and know how to share.
- The 'Forest School' provision used by the school is a rich and valuable experience for children in the early years. A range of different skills are developed, and children learn about risks and how to manage them. For example, the inspector observed children using drills to make wooden snails. Children thoroughly enjoyed the very exciting snail races using snails that they had found earlier in the afternoon.
- The early years leader has a good understanding of best practice in this phase and this is now being disseminated effectively so that all children benefit from good teaching. Leaders are now using data about children's progress more effectively to ensure more rapid rates of progress. A more detailed analysis of how different groups of children are doing means that teachers are now aware of the need to further challenge the more-able children.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	139668
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	450138

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4-19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	359
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen King
Headteacher	Guy Martyn
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01243792690
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