

Inspection of a good school: Chesswood Junior School

53 Chesswood Road, Worthing, West Sussex BN11 2AA

Inspection dates:

12 and 13 September 2023

Outcome

Chesswood Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at this inclusive and nurturing school. They value the different cultures and backgrounds that make up their community. Pupils are proud to be part of such a happy and caring school, which they describe as the 'Chesswood family'.

The motto of 'dream, aspire and achieve' is the golden thread weaving through all aspects of school life. The school is determined that all pupils will become confident, life-long learners. The well-planned curriculum is enriched by exciting opportunities that bring different subjects to life, such as building electric go carts from scratch with a local architect.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well. They value their learning and work hard in lessons. Relationships between staff and pupils are respectful and kind. Staff know every pupil well. Teachers have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils know that any low-level disruption will be dealt with quickly by their teacher. Bullying is not tolerated and happens rarely. This makes pupils feel safe.

Parents speak highly of the school. They appreciate the exceptional care, kindness and support their children receive. One parent described moving to Worthing, and her child joining Chesswood, as like 'winning the postcode lottery'.

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

The school has developed a highly effective curriculum. It is underpinned by research into effective learning and how children learn best. Important knowledge, skills, concepts and vocabulary have been precisely identified for each subject. These are carefully sequenced and organised into small steps so that pupils can remember more over time. There are regular opportunities for pupils to revisit their learning and practise the skills they have been taught. For example, in mathematics, pupils confidently draw on strategies they have previously learned to help them solve new problems.

Teachers deliver effective lessons which motivate pupils. Staff use appropriate resources and well-considered strategies to ensure that learning is accessible for all pupils. Staff receive ongoing training on how best to support pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged in other ways. Pupils with SEND have their needs identified quickly. They receive excellent support and specific extra help to assist them in keeping up.

Pupils love reading. The school is brimming with high-quality literature. Pupils talk about their favourite stories and authors with enthusiasm. One pupil said: 'Reading books sparks my imagination and helps me to be more creative. I learn new words in the books I read, which helps me in all of my subjects.'

The school has recently changed its approach to supporting weaker readers, by introducing a new phonics programme. Staff have received some training to develop their phonics teaching expertise. However, this has not yet ensured that the teaching of phonics is as precise as it should be for those pupils who are at the earliest stages of learning to read. Staff with specific phonics expertise coach those whose subject knowledge is less strong. The school anticipates that this will ensure that all pupils are supported effectively in order to become confident, fluent readers.

Provision for pupils' wider development is excellent. There is a vast array of clubs and activities for pupils to explore their interests. Pupils are actively encouraged to represent their school in sports competitions and music performances. The school's relentless drive to improve life opportunities for every child is ambitious. The 'Dream, Aspire, Achieve Academy' provides key experiences, opportunities and life skills for pupils at Chesswood. The school's provision for enhancing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is meticulously planned for and threaded throughout the curriculum.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the support they receive for their well-being and workload. They are valued and listened to and feel privileged to work at the school. As one teacher summarised: 'The proof of the pudding is that we send our own children to the school and they're thriving.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There are some inconsistencies in how effectively phonics is used to support pupils who are in the early stages of learning to read. Consequently, these pupils are not catching up as quickly as they could. The school should ensure that phonics teaching is of consistently high quality throughout the school, so that weaker readers are supported to catch up rapidly.

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 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in December 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](#)' 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	125961
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10256510
Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	569
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mike Carpenter
Headteacher	Andrew Jolley
Website	www.chesswood.w-sussex.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	5 and 6 December 2017 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a larger-than-average junior school.
- The school makes use of three unregistered alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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 her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- 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 put pupils' interests first.
- A range of documents were reviewed, including leaders' evaluation of the school, priorities for improvement, external reviews, governor visits and documentation relating to school strategies and behaviour.
- The views of staff and pupils were gathered through both formal and informal discussions.
- The inspector met with representatives from the governing body and reviewed the minutes of governor body meetings.
- The views of staff, parents and carers were considered through their responses and confidential free-text comments to Ofsted's surveys. The inspector also met with a group of parents.

Inspection team

Vicky Matthews, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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