

Inspection of Chestnut Lane School

105 Chestnut Lane, Amersham, Buckinghamshire HP6 6EF

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 January 2025

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since January 2014. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this happy school. There are caring relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils feel safe and secure. They say that they can tell staff about anything that worries them. They know it will get sorted out quickly. Pupils say that they like the school because 'everyone is really kind, they respect each other and it's fun to play with friends'.

The school has high aspirations. Children's learning gets off to a great start in the Nursery. They quickly settle into the school's routines. The well-planned curriculum helps to capture pupils' imaginations. Pupils try their best in lessons. They listen carefully to their teachers and have excellent learning behaviours. This helps pupils to be successful in their learning throughout the school.

The school provides an impressive offering of clubs to develop pupils' talents and interests. These include yoga, judo, French, gardening, environment and art. Those in the school's chess club recently attended a national championship. Pupils know how to keep safe in a range of situations. For example, they learn about staying safe when online. Pupils have a deep understanding of the school's values. They show kindness and respect towards each other.

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

The school's curriculum is ambitious for all pupils. It identifies the essential knowledge that pupils should learn in each subject. Often, the curriculum links in with the local area. For example, in history, pupils learn about past events in Amersham. The curriculum builds carefully from the early years and helps children to be well prepared for their learning in Year 1 and beyond.

In lessons, staff use the curriculum to ensure that new learning builds on what has been learned before. They check pupils' understanding carefully and use this information to make sure pupils develop their learning in a step-by-step way. However, in a few subjects where the curriculum is new, the way it is implemented does not consistently support pupils to know more and remember more.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well. This is because staff identify with accuracy any additional needs a pupil may have. The school works closely with parents and external professionals to ensure that pupils with SEND receive the support they need. When needed, staff make well-considered adaptations to the curriculum.

Right from the start of Nursery there is a strong focus on developing children's communication and language skills. Staff model the words that they want children to learn. This helps children to broaden their vocabulary. When they are able to, children are encouraged to answer questions in full sentences. This helps them to communicate their ideas with increasing accuracy.

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. The school has an effective programme for teaching phonics and early reading. Staff are well trained so they know how to teach pupils to read well. In the Nursery, children learn to identify letters and the sounds they make. As they progress through the school, pupils quickly become secure in their phonics knowledge. They become confident and fluent readers. Any pupils who fall behind are given the right support to help them catch up. Inviting reading areas around the school foster pupils' love of books.

Pupils behave exceptionally well. They carefully follow the teachers' instructions. At playtimes, pupils show kindness and consideration towards each other. Pupils' attendance is very strong. They arrive at school on time, keen and ready to learn.

The school provides excellent experiences for pupils' personal development. Pupils have many opportunities to learn through the expansive personal, social and health education curriculum. For instance, they learn about the importance of keeping both physically and mentally healthy. Trips and visitors, such as an animal workshop, enrich the curriculum. The large garden areas which surround each classroom are well used to support pupils to understand about planting seeds and growing vegetables. These sessions help pupils to understand where food comes from. Pupils learn about different cultures and religions within the curriculum. They are encouraged to value and celebrate their individual differences.

The school is led well and staff are proud to work here. They appreciate that leaders consider the well-being of both pupils and staff and that their workload is carefully considered. Governors provide a clear, strategic vision. They offer challenge and support in equal measure.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects where the curriculum is new, the way it is implemented is not yet effectively supporting pupils to know more and remember more. On occasion, this slows pupils' learning. The school should continue to develop teachers' pedagogical understanding so they deliver the curriculum as intended to build pupils' learning and deepen their understanding.

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	110294
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10341278
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Christine Plimsaul
Headteacher	Gemma Rehal
Website	chestnutlane.bucks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 January 2014

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- 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 inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject

leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors observed pupils reading to an adult. They also looked in books and discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.

- Inspectors had discussions with groups of pupils about their experience of school. They also observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at social times.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: 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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors spoke with staff to discuss their workload and well-being. They also met with governors, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector spoke with two representatives of the local authority on the telephone.
- Inspectors spoke to parents and carers at the end of the school day and considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered responses to Ofsted's online staff survey.

Inspection team

Liz Bowes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Lucy Hillyard

Ofsted Inspector

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