

South Chingford Foundation School

Address: Stadium Close, Chingford, London, E4 8SG

Unique reference number (URN): 138859

Inspection report: 20 January 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Pupils' progress through the curriculum is inconsistent. This is reflected in national tests and in the classroom. In national tests, pupils achieve significantly below the average in most measures for attainment and progress. The picture for the progress made by disadvantaged pupils is slightly better, with these measures being close to average in some years. Over time, pupils' attainment and progress are typically evident when teachers successfully implement strategies in lessons to check pupils' understanding, identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and provide guidance to help pupils make secure progress.

Leaders have also correctly identified that those pupils who do not attend school often enough do not make suitable progress from their starting points and have significant gaps in their learning.

Despite pupils' inconsistent achievement over time, leaders support pupils well with their progression beyond school, and most pupils successfully move on to the next stage of their education, employment and training.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

Too many pupils do not attend school often enough. As a result, pupils' attendance is significantly below national figures, including over time. Leaders are taking clear steps to improve attendance. For instance, they analyse attendance closely, looking at groups and individual pupils, and provide targeted support for those who attend least. Leaders take every opportunity to promote and reward pupils who attend regularly. Pupils' current attendance is shifting closer to the national average, but leaders know that there is more work to be done to improve attendance.

The school has recently implemented a new behaviour policy. It is based on the principles of pupils being 'ready, respectful and responsible'. Staff have received training on the new policy, and pupils understand the system of rewards and sanctions. However, the policy is not applied consistently by all staff. Pupils generally behave well in lessons and around the school. Discriminatory language is not tolerated and pupils show one another mutual respect. Pupils' learning is not disrupted in lessons, but, at times, some pupils do not display positive attitudes or enthusiasm for their learning.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

Pupils study a broad and balanced curriculum. Nevertheless, most pupils do not embed the knowledge and skills in all subjects and are not well prepared for the next stage of their learning. This means that pupils' outcomes are well below the national average over a sustained period of time. Leaders have reviewed the curriculum to ensure that it is well organised so that pupils build their knowledge progressively in all subjects.

Leaders have introduced a programme of professional development to help improve teaching expertise. This training is underway and there are some early signs of

improvement where teachers check carefully that pupils embed the important knowledge and make links in their learning. For example, in Year 7 history, pupils use their previous learning about the feudal system to explain why William the Conqueror won the Battle of Hastings. However, there are too many pockets of inconsistent teaching. Where this happens, pupils have key gaps and misconceptions in their knowledge and understanding. In addition, some pupils have gaps in essential foundational skills, for example multiplication tables in mathematics and reading.

Leaders use effective systems to identify those pupils who need help to become accurate and fluent readers. All pupils complete reading assessments, and staff provide appropriate support, including phonics interventions, where required, to help fill gaps in knowledge.

Inclusion

Needs attention 

The school's work to remove barriers to learning, especially for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), is not consistently effective. Leaders are aware of this and have begun to address the weaknesses. A recent review by the trust has helped them identify the main issues, and leaders have created an action plan to improve support for pupils with SEND especially. They have introduced new systems to check pupils' needs more carefully and to put support in place more quickly. However, these systems are not used consistently across the school.

Staff have started to receive training on how to adapt their teaching for pupils with SEND. Leaders have also begun a cycle of planning and reviewing support for these pupils, including checking whether pupils with SEND are making the progress they should from their starting points. This work is still at an early stage and it is too soon to see clear improvements in pupils' learning or achievement.

Leaders work well to identify pupils' wider social, emotional or behaviour needs. They particularly work well with primary schools to understand pupils' needs before they arrive in Year 7. All pupils are assessed when they join the school, including those who arrive mid-year. Leaders work purposefully with families and outside professionals to help pupils settle.

Leaders recognise that disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND do not achieve as well as other pupils nationally. They have recently developed a strategy to support disadvantaged pupils. However, it is too early to see the impact of this work.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention 

Leaders have introduced a range of important actions to improve the school so that pupils benefit from a high quality of education. However, too many of these strategies and systems are at an early stage of implementation, and the impact is not consistent or visible at this point in time.

Leaders know their school well and have accurately identified the school's strengths and development areas. These are clearly outlined in the school's improvement priorities and its strategic development plan, and these are shared with governors and trustees. Leaders have not been able to implement change as swiftly as they would have liked. In part, this is

due to historical challenges in implementing change. However, the school is now in a healthier position, and leaders are working purposefully with staff to implement their improvement strategies in all areas.

Typically, staff appreciate leaders' care and consideration for their workload and wellbeing. Teaching and support staff also have opportunities to access professional development outside of school, including through nationally accredited training.

Governors and trustees work closely with the school. They fulfil their statutory duties well and have a detailed knowledge of the school's work.

Personal development and wellbeing

Needs attention 

The personal development programme is not delivered consistently well. Staff lack the training they need to implement the programme effectively, and the time allocated to it is limited. Additionally, at times, challenges with staffing hinder the continuity of the programme. As a result, not all pupils receive the same quality of provision. Leaders are in the process of developing a long-term solution to these issues.

Leaders have designed a personal development programme that meets pupils' social, emotional and wellbeing needs as they progress from Year 7 to Year 11. The programme covers a range of topics, including relationships, online safety and the fundamental British values. The programme is delivered during tutor time and is enhanced with assemblies and external speakers visiting the school. This allows leaders to be flexible and respond to local or national issues that may have an impact on pupils.

The school's careers programme is well organised. Leaders ensure that all pupils receive high-quality careers advice and guidance. The programme takes pupils' starting points into consideration and ensures that disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities get the right support to realise their career ambitions. Leaders introduce pupils to local businesses and those from further afield to inform them about potential careers. Pupils in Year 10 currently attend a 2-day 'take your child to work' programme, which gives them experience of the world of work.

Leaders ensure that all pupils benefit from a 'curriculum enrichment' programme. There are 6 specific days a year to facilitate educational visits to museums and the theatre, for example. All pupils are included, and financial support is provided where necessary so that cost is not a barrier. There are a range of leadership opportunities for pupils, and a large group are successfully completing the bronze and silver Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Overall, pupils like coming to school, and they enjoy their lessons mostly. They particularly like the sense of community and belonging that they gain from being in a small school environment. Pupils are respectful towards each other. Older pupils look out for their younger peers. As a result, bullying is rare and pupils feel safe. Relationships between

pupils and staff are positive. Pupils mostly behave well, and teachers address any instances of poor behaviour in a calm and caring manner. However, pupils' attendance over time is not high enough. Leaders are working resolutely to address this. They have implemented a range of well-considered strategies, and their actions are beginning to bear fruit.

Pupils study a broad and interesting curriculum. However, their learning experiences across the curriculum are too varied. In lessons where teachers implement leaders' teaching and learning strategies well, pupils learn new knowledge and skills effectively. However, when this is not the case, pupils struggle to access the lesson content, and this prevents them achieving the learning aims of the lesson. Consequently, pupils' achievement across the curriculum over time has been significantly below national averages.

While leaders identify any additional needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), or disadvantaged pupils quickly, systems to check and monitor the progress of these pupils are at the early stage of development. This means that disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND do not achieve as well as they should.

The school provides a range of trips and enrichment activities to enhance pupils' wider experiences. For example, pupils take part in planned academic and cultural visits throughout the academic year. They are keen citizens who contribute to the school community in their roles as 'peer mentors'. Pupils are well supported for their next steps when they leave school and for making a positive contribution to their community.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that they complete and evaluate effectively the first cycle of assessing and reviewing the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities so that these pupils make secure progress from their starting points.
 - Leaders should ensure that teachers have the training and support that they require to adapt their teaching so that all pupils make secure progress through the curriculum.
 - Leaders should ensure that teachers have the expertise to check for gaps in pupils' foundational knowledge, for example in reading and numeracy, and address these effectively.
 - Leaders should keep a tight focus on their attendance strategy to ensure that pupils' attendance is at least in line with the national average so that all pupils benefit from all that the school has to offer.
 - Leaders should ensure that the personal development programme is resourced in a way that there is sufficient time to deliver it and that staff have the right training to implement it as intended.
 - Leaders should ensure that they implement swiftly the school's strategic development actions so that pupils achieve the best possible outcomes academically and personally.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Chingford Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Rob Mammen, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Tony Young.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the head of school, vice principals, other senior leaders, the CEO, the chair of the trust, the chair of governors and other governors during the inspection.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school makes use of 3 registered alternative provisions.

The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection: The head of school took up post in September 2023.

Head of School: Emma Hobbs

Lead inspector:

Mark Smith, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Katerina Christodoulou, Ofsted Inspector

Ray Lau, Ofsted Inspector

Richard Poddington, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 20 January 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

617

Well below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

675

Well below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

41.65%

Above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

4.70%

Above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

10.37%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Above average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	29.2%	45.2%	Below
2023/24 (final)	26.2%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	36.8%	45.3%	Close to average

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	32.8	45.9	Below
2023/24 (final)	35.2	45.9	Below
2022/23 (final)	40.6	46.3	Below

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.79	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.24	-0.03	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	25.0%	25.6%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	13.2%	25.8%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022/23 (final)	35.3%	25.2%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	28.1	34.9	Below
2023/24 (final)	29.0	34.6	Below
2022/23 (final)	37.4	35.0	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-1.11	-0.57	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.46	-0.57	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (provisional)	25.0%	52.8%	-27.8 pp
2023/24 (final)	13.2%	53.1%	-39.9 pp
2022/23 (final)	35.3%	52.4%	-17.1 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (provisional)	28.1	50.3	-22.1
2023/24 (final)	29.0	50.0	-21.0
2022/23 (final)	37.4	50.3	-12.9

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-1.11	0.16	-1.28
2022/23 (final)	-0.46	0.17	-0.63

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (provisional)	91%	91%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	92%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	91%	94%	Average

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	12.2%	8.1%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	11.8%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	9.8%	9.0%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	36.6%	21.9%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	37.4%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	35.0%	26.5%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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