

The Chase

Geraldine Road, Malvern, Worcestershire WR14 3NZ

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| Inspection dates | 12–13 July 2016 |
| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Good |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Good |
| Outcomes for pupils | Good |
| 16 to 19 study programmes | Outstanding |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Requires improvement |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders and governors have a clear vision for the school and have brought about sustained improvements in leadership, teaching and outcomes since the previous inspection.
- Leaders know their school very well indeed, including its strengths and weaknesses. Weaknesses are tackled with vigour.
- Staff strongly value the support they get from leadership. They welcome the opportunities to improve their expertise.
- Progress is increasingly above average at key stage 3 and 4 for many groups of pupils.
- The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Pupils have a good understanding of British values and the nature of life in modern Britain.
- The curriculum is well planned and inclusive. Pupils study a broad range of subjects that meet their individual needs, interests and future aspirations.
- Very high-quality careers information supports learners to make informed decisions about their next steps in education, employment or training.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are keen to learn and positive relationships with teachers and other pupils in the classroom support learning. Pupils rightly feel safe in school.
- The sixth form provides outstanding education for learners aged between 16 and 19. Learners can choose from an extremely large range of subjects. Strong leadership, very high expectations and excellent pastoral care support the outstanding progress learners make.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is still a small amount of teaching where the quality of teaching and learning does not consistently meet leaders' expectations.
- There are gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and their peers.
- Attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is still not high enough.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that leaders' expectations for teaching, learning and assessment policies are consistently applied so that teaching meets the high standards and practice evident in most parts of the school.
- Further improve progress and outcomes by:
 - ensuring that strategies to improve progress of disadvantaged pupils are wholly effective
 - improving the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities to avoid gaps in their learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors have worked hard to successfully improve leadership, the quality of teaching and pupil outcomes since the last inspection. The vast majority of staff feel that the school has improved since the last inspection.
- Self-evaluation is robust, accurate and honest. Senior leaders know the work of the school exceptionally well and there were no surprises in any of the inspection findings. They have accurately identified weaknesses and have focused plans to ensure improvement happens quickly.
- The expectations leaders have for the quality of teaching are exceptionally high. Very high-quality training and mentoring further enhance teachers' skills and ensure that staff know the pupils and their learning and support needs. Teachers at the school welcome and value the opportunity to further improve their teaching.
- The school has a wealth of information about pupils' performance and this is used to understand every aspect of achievement. The tracking and monitoring of pupils' progress is thorough and accurate, and informs learning activities and intervention programmes.
- Leaders set aspirational targets for teachers. High levels of accountability are balanced by high-quality constructive support. School systems to monitor the performance of teachers are comprehensive.
- Leaders have a very strong commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils. One way this is achieved is through the design of the curriculum. Pupils study a broad and balanced suite of subjects and select from a very large range of optional subjects. These subjects engage and enthuse pupils, and prepare them very well for the next steps in their education.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is integrated into the school's curriculum. Assemblies, tutorial programmes, enrichment activities and learning opportunities in lessons provide effective and rich experiences for pupils. Pupils understand the nature and responsibilities of citizenship in modern Britain and they demonstrate high levels of respect for and tolerance of diversity.
- Pupils' experiences are enhanced by a broad range of extra-curricular clubs, activities and opportunities. All pupils take part in at least one sporting, artistic or academic club. These opportunities positively enhance pupils' broader development as young people. Leaders are planning to increase the range of extra-curricular opportunities as part of the new house system.
- The Year 7 catch-up funding is used effectively to support those pupils who enter the school with lower attainment in English and mathematics or both. Pupils receive in-class and additional small-group support which is successfully improving achievement in these subjects. The impact of the accelerated reading programme, which is used to improve reading comprehension, is not always checked rigorously enough to ensure it has the desired effect on pupils' progress.
- Parents are kept well informed regarding the progress that their children make at the school. However, recent justified and appropriate restructuring of staff roles has created anxiety and uncertainty for some parents. A number said they would like to understand more about the way these changes will benefit their children while at the school.
- Middle leaders understand their roles and responsibilities clearly and focus on improving pupil outcomes. They contribute to monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and learning within their subject areas. Their skills and confidence in using information about the performance of pupils are developing rapidly. Senior leaders meet regularly with middle leaders to thoroughly discuss and evaluate their actions. As a result, leaders have good capacity to improve the overall effectiveness of the school. However, there remain inconsistencies in application of the school's teaching, learning and assessment policy.
- Leaders use pupil premium funding to employ additional teachers in English and mathematics, and to fund curriculum trips and visits. The improvements in outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are inconsistent, with interventions having more impact on some pupils than others. Leaders recognise that consistently improving outcomes for these pupils remains a key priority for the school.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors bring a wide range of professional experience which informs and enhances the school's development. Recently appointed governors are supported in their work through appropriate training and induction. As a result, governors challenge and support leaders effectively at all levels, question variations in performance and check that actions taken are having a positive impact.
 - Governors have a clear understanding of the school's priorities, based on regular meetings and visits to the school to meet with leaders. They have a detailed understanding of information about pupil progress and attainment. Governors know how different groups of pupils in the school are performing, and that the pupil premium funding has had an inconsistent impact on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

- Governors manage the performance of the headteacher effectively. They have a good understanding of teachers' performance management targets and ensure that pay progression is linked to improvements in teachers' performance.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All staff have received appropriate training related to safeguarding and so understand their responsibilities in keeping pupils safe. Staff can identify pupils who may be at risk and act swiftly, involving external agencies where necessary. Leaders ensure that pupils receive relevant and appropriate information through the curriculum about how to keep themselves safe. As a result, pupils feel safe and parents agree with this view.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching, learning and assessment across the school have improved since the previous inspection and are now good. The combination of good teaching and pastoral support and a well-designed curriculum has a positive impact on pupils' progress. However, the impact of provision on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils remains variable.
- There is a positive climate for learning within classrooms. Pupils have excellent attitudes towards learning due to strong relationships with teachers. Teachers encourage pupils to become confident learners. Inspectors saw many examples where pupils were confident in answering questions and contributing their ideas. Pupils concentrate, support each other's learning, work hard and are keen to succeed.
- Teachers in the school have good subject knowledge which they use effectively to provide interesting and engaging lessons. Pupils say they enjoy their lessons because their teachers are enthusiastic, approachable and supportive.
- Teachers generally use excellent questioning skills that promote thinking and discussion among pupils. Pupils enjoy thinking creatively and contributing to class discussions and as a result they learn from the contributions of other pupils. For example, in religious education, when pupils learn about religious attitudes towards drugs and alcohol, questions challenge pupils to use interpretative skills and provide more depth and detail in their answers.
- Teaching assistants support pupils effectively in lessons. They use questions to structure learning and help pupils develop their answers. As a result, pupils who receive additional support extend their knowledge and skills.
- The school has a clear policy on the nature and frequency of marking and written feedback to pupils. When used effectively, this policy has a positive impact on pupils' progress. For example in French, teachers' comments to pupils are precise, individual and aspirational, enabling improvement in language skills. However, some inconsistencies remain in leaders' expectations for providing feedback.
- Teachers carry out regular and accurate formal assessments which they use to monitor the progress of pupils. As a result, teachers know their pupils very well. They have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and routinely plan lessons with appropriate levels of challenge. They use their comprehensive knowledge of pupils to target learning activities appropriately. Careful and targeted planning enables almost all groups of pupils to make at least expected rates of progress.
- In many lessons, inspectors noted that teachers took opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. For instance in English, pupils explored experiences of war through poetry which promoted high-quality reflection and discussion.
- Homework is set regularly in accordance with the school's expectations. Assignments help to reinforce learning in lessons and encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. Pupils state that these tasks are relevant and useful to their learning; however, parents are less positive about this.
- Pupils expand their vocabulary as a result of teachers' insistence on the use of subject-specific language in lessons. For example, in mathematics as new key terms are explained and regularly used by teachers, pupils use them with growing confidence. Teachers provide activities that develop writing and reading within a range of lessons. As a result, pupils have strong literacy skills.
- Pupils make less progress in a small number of lessons where teaching is less effective. In these lessons, teachers' questioning does not deepen pupils' learning and work is not sufficiently challenging to ensure pupils make progress. On occasion, feedback is not specific enough so pupils do not understand what they need to do to improve their work and they repeat the same errors.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stages of their education. For example, pupils receive excellent impartial careers information, advice and guidance throughout their time in school. Pupils participate in careers fairs at the school and experience a wide range of types of educational institutions through visits that the school arranges. As a result, pupils make informed choices and destinations of Year 11 pupils compare favourably with national figures.
- Pupils show tolerance and respect for each other. They take responsibility for their actions and know how to be good citizens through contributing to wider society and life in modern Britain. A comprehensive and effective programme ensures pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are able to talk confidently about a wide range of issues and demonstrate respect for the views of their peers.
- Leaders ensure a high level of care and support for all pupils. Pastoral staff direct additional appropriate support and intervention provided by many different external agencies for those who are most vulnerable. As a result, pupils state that they feel well supported in school. Pupils recognise that there are always adults in school they can talk to if they have any problems or feel at risk.
- Pupils take advantage of the wide range of clubs, trips and other activities that are available outside of lessons. Pupils' personal development is greatly enriched by participation in the additional activities provided. Pupils are looking forward to additional opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities that will be developed along with the new house system.
- Pupils play an active part in the school. This includes being sports leaders or coaches and acting as volunteers within the local community, as well as participating in charity work. Pupils carry out their roles with a high level of maturity and commitment. Pupils said that they value these opportunities.
- Bullying is rare, and pupils say that should it occur they are confident that adults in the school tackle it quickly and well. Derogatory and offensive language is extremely rare and is always challenged by staff.
- Pupils and parents say they feel the school is a safe environment. Pupils can describe ways to keep themselves safe from risks, including the use of the internet. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a range of different situations.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' conduct around the school when moving between lessons and at social times is orderly and calm. Pupils respond promptly to instructions from staff. They demonstrate a sense of pride in their school by keeping the environment free from damage and litter and wearing their uniform neatly and correctly.
- Pupils are punctual and well prepared for lessons. This enables crisp and prompt starts to learning.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Pupils are courteous and polite to each other, other adults and visitors. Pupils maintain high standards of behaviour when not directly supervised by staff.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. They know that their education is important, and are keen to learn. Inspectors observed only a very small amount of inattention and disengagement from learning in lessons. Teachers state that pupils' behaviour is positive in school and that leaders are supportive in implementing the school's behaviour policy.
- Rates of exclusion of pupils from the school are usually low and have decreased over time. However, the number of fixed-term exclusions has increased this year. This rise coincided with higher expectations for pupil conduct and changes to the school's behaviour policy.
- Pupils' attendance is in line with other pupils nationally. Leaders are aware that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils attend school less frequently than their peers. Measures introduced to tackle this have had limited impact, and tackling this remains a priority for leaders.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- The proportion of pupils in both English and mathematics who make or exceed the expected level of progress from their various starting points is higher than the national average, with proportions being much higher in English. Pupils make good progress in almost all subjects during their time at school. Pupils' progress in science and humanities is particularly strong. However, there is some inconsistency in outcomes between subjects where pupils' progress is not as high, for example in art and business studies.
- GCSE results show that the proportion of pupils achieving at least five good GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, is exceptionally and consistently high. The school's own assessment information suggests this trend is set to continue this year.

- The proportion of pupils securing A* and A grades at GCSE is much higher than the national average in many subjects including English, mathematics, geography, and modern foreign languages. The proportion of pupils who achieved the English Baccalaureate qualification is well above the national average and has been so for some time.
- Low- and high-attaining pupils make better progress from their starting points and achieve GCSE grades higher than similar pupils do nationally. For example, the most able pupils achieved, on average, half a grade higher in each of their GCSE qualifications in 2015 than pupils with similar starting points nationally. The high aspiration of teachers for pupils to succeed, and effective additional support, contribute to the good outcomes for these groups of pupils.
- A higher proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make expected levels of progress compared with similar pupils nationally. Their progress is in line with other similar pupils nationally across a wide range of subjects. This is because they receive high-quality support from teachers and other teaching assistants, both in class and through additional lessons.
- Pupils who join the school with low levels of literacy and numeracy are supported effectively. Following high-quality interventions, these pupils develop the skills they need to be successful learners and catch up with other pupils.
- Pupils' progress at key stage 3 is also strong. All groups of pupils are on track to achieve outcomes expected for their age and prior ability.
- Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their learning. They leave The Chase with qualifications and learning behaviours well suited to the demands of further education or training. As a result, the proportion of pupils who continue into education or training compares very favourably with the national average.
- In English and mathematics, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who made the expected level of progress in 2015 was lower than for non-disadvantaged pupils in the school and nationally. For example, in 2015 half of disadvantaged pupils made expected progress in mathematics compared to four out of five other pupils. School information demonstrates that gaps between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in school are narrowing for pupils lower down the school but this is less evident for pupils currently in Year 11.

16 to 19 study programmes

are outstanding

- Learners make outstanding overall progress on 16–19 study programmes. Historically, progress in nearly all academic qualifications has been outstanding. Learners' progress in vocational courses has improved this year and is expected to be above the national average. Almost all groups of learners make significantly better progress from their starting points than similar learners nationally. The school's monitoring information indicates that learners' achievement across a range of subjects in 2016 is likely to maintain the outstanding progress achieved previously. The school's system for tracking progress has demonstrated a very high degree of accuracy in predicting learners' outcomes in previous years.
- Attainment for learners on academic and vocational courses is higher than the national average. For example, in 2015 learners on academic courses achieved on average almost one third of a grade higher for each qualification they achieved compared to all learners nationally.
- Leaders in charge of post-16 provision set high expectations for attendance, conduct and work for learners in the sixth form. This highly effective leadership has a positive impact on teaching and outcomes.
- Leaders rigorously monitor learners' progress and swiftly identify underperformance. Appropriate and timely interventions are targeted to learners who require additional support, particularly for disadvantaged learners. Intervention has resulted in learners getting back on track and this contributes to the outstanding rates of progress.
- Sixth form leaders ensure that a very wide range of academic qualifications and a number of vocational courses are available for learners. A wide range of suitable and relevant non-qualification activities allow positive development of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. These activities include two weeks of work experience, which foster strong links within the local community. Leaders strive to ensure work experience placements are relevant to learners' future aspirations. Learners demonstrate commitment to British values, for example through their contribution to society by raising significant sums of money for charities. The school's sixth form meets the 16–19 study programme requirements.
- High-quality teaching, evidenced by leaders' monitoring, evaluation and review of sixth form teaching, complements the excellent curriculum offer for 16–19 study programmes. Learners take pride in being members of the school's sixth form, are proud of their work and committed to doing well.

- The very small number of learners joining the sixth form without GCSE passes at grade C or above in English and/or mathematics make good progress in retaking these subjects. The school realises how important these qualifications are to enable progression to further study or employment with good training prospects.
- Learners have a secure understanding of how to keep themselves safe and say they feel safe. Learners also successfully develop life skills through a well-planned tutorial and enrichment programme.
- Clear and helpful careers advice and guidance has resulted in high rates of retention of learners in the sixth form and has successfully supported many learners to gain places in university or to secure high-quality apprenticeships after they leave the sixth form. As a result, the successful destinations of learners from The Chase exceeds those of all learners nationally.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 137625 |
| Local authority | Worcestershire |
| Inspection number | 10009287 |

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

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| Type of school | Secondary comprehensive |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 11–18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 1,482 |
| Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes | 322 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr M May |
| Headteacher | Mr R Jacobs |
| Telephone number | 01684 891 961 |
| Website | www.chase.worcs.sch.uk |
| Email address | office@chase.worcs.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 4–5 February 2014 |

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average secondary school and has a sixth form.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is lower than average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- A very low proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, and very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is very low. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities supported by the school is above average.
- There are currently no pupils who attend alternative provision.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- The school meets the government's current interim minimum standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment for learners by the end of 16–19 study programmes.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 43 lessons; 11 of these observations were carried out with members of the school's senior leadership team. Lessons visited covered a wide range of subjects and year groups. No key stage 5 teaching was observed because Year 12 learners were undertaking work experience and Year 13 learners had completed their studies at the time of the inspection. Inspectors observed tutor time. Pupils' behaviour between lessons and at social times was also observed by inspectors.
- Pupils' work was reviewed by inspectors in lessons and through a work scrutiny of sixth form work.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders and with three members of the governing body.
- Inspectors evaluated the 173 responses from parents to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and school questionnaire analysis. Inspectors took into account the views of 80 members of staff through responses to the inspection questionnaire and through three formal meetings.
- Pupils met formally with inspectors on four separate occasions, including members of the sixth form who came into school specifically to meet with inspectors. Inspectors evaluated the 78 responses from pupils to the Ofsted online questionnaire for pupils and also conducted many informal discussions with pupils during lessons and in social times.
- Inspectors reviewed documentation from a variety of sources, including: the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, school policies and school information about outcomes, teaching and behaviour.

Inspection team

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Rob Hackfath, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Sara Arkle | Ofsted Inspector |
| Derek Barnes | Ofsted Inspector |
| Melanie Callaghan-Lewis | Ofsted Inspector |
| Alan Johnson | Ofsted Inspector |

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