

Chesterton Community College

Gilbert Road, Cambridge, CB4 3NY

Inspection dates

6–7 July 2017

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher, ably supported by other leaders, has instilled a culture of high expectations across the school. She has successfully brought about significant sustained improvements in the quality of education since the previous inspection.
- Teachers are skilled in, and routinely seek opportunities to improve their practice. Leaders provide effective and specific professional training for staff. As a result, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding.
- Over a number of years, pupils have made exceptional progress across the curriculum. Teachers are persistent in ensuring that pupils realise their potential. As a result, outcomes by the end of key stage 4 remain significantly above national averages.
- Leaders, including middle leaders, have an accurate understanding of the progress pupils make. Precise support is swiftly and effectively put in place for any pupil who falls behind.
- Pupils are set ambitious academic targets. They have a hunger to succeed and go about their learning with great enthusiasm, often seeking to exceed challenging individual targets.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are extremely well provided for. They make significantly better progress from their individual starting points than all pupils nationally.
- Leaders use additional government funding precisely and very well. Disadvantaged pupils make progress across the curriculum that at least matches that of other pupils nationally.
- The most able pupils achieve excellent results. This is because, across the curriculum, teachers provide consistently well for them.
- Leaders have skilfully developed a curriculum that interests and motivates pupils. Pupils have many opportunities to thrive socially and academically, irrespective of their prior ability.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils understand and celebrate the diversity that exists within the school community with a maturity that is beyond their years.
- Leaders have developed a high-quality programme of impartial careers information, advice and guidance. Pupils are very well placed to make decisions about their futures.
- Pupils are polite, articulate and justifiably proud of their harmonious school.
- Governors are highly effective in checking the standard of education provided. They offer insightful challenge and support to senior and middle leaders.
- While many parents are very supportive of the school, a small number would welcome clearer communication about the school's work and the decisions made by leaders.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Promote strategies to ensure that parents are well informed about the positive work taking place in the school.
- Ensure that the outstanding quality of education provided is sustained over coming years.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher is unrelenting in pursuing her ambition that each pupil will realise their potential. She has established a successful culture of high expectations which is shared and willingly implemented by staff and pupils alike. Through this collaborative approach, there has been consistent improvement in the quality of education since the previous inspection so that it is now outstanding.
- The headteacher has made her high expectations plain, and correctly challenges practice that falls below the standard she expects. School staff welcome her 'candid honesty' as she rigorously manages their performance. The headteacher is equally rigorous in recognising colleagues' potential and in supporting them to realise this. Consequently, since the previous inspection, the quality of leadership and that of teaching, learning and assessment has improved and is now outstanding.
- Leaders, including middle leaders, have a precise understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Comprehensive and regular checks are made to identify any aspect of provision that falls below leaders' high expectations. This approach ensures that standards remain high and improvements continue to be sustained across the school.
- Leaders make systematic use of their extremely well-organised and highly effective model for ensuring that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment continues to improve. Teachers told inspectors that leaders are 'valued contributors' to the weekly training opportunities they receive. Part-time teachers have equal access to training opportunities, in what one teacher described as a 'positive and inclusive' approach.
- Teachers are highly reflective and welcome opportunities to improve their practice. One commented that they see themselves as 'lifelong learners' while another explained that the training 'makes me think what has been my impact in the classroom'. Examples of the best teaching practice are shared on a frequent and regular basis. Newly qualified teachers are supported exceptionally well. One commented that Chesterton is 'a brilliant place to start my teaching journey'. Her colleagues supported her view.
- The headteacher rightly places great importance on staff having a detailed knowledge of each pupil and responding swiftly when a pupil needs support. Leaders analyse pupils' assessment, attendance and behaviour information well. Teachers then use this accurate information very effectively to put in place support for any pupil who needs it. Pupils appreciate the high levels of care and attention paid to their academic and social well-being. One pupil commented, 'Their [adults in school] priority is us.' His peers agreed that this was the case.
- Using information from a range of sources, including local primary schools, leaders have developed an inclusive curriculum that is skilfully matched to the needs and capabilities of pupils. Leaders, including middle leaders, keep the curriculum under careful review and make appropriate amendments to ensure that pupils have equality of opportunity.
- Pupils in need of additional support now benefit from the school's personalised curriculum which is underpinned by the careful development of pupils' literacy and

numeracy skills. Most-able pupils have access to a broad range of additional courses, including Latin and Mandarin. Leaders have ensured that the same high expectations of pupils' progress are evident across each curriculum pathway.

- School leaders have supplemented the curriculum with a wealth of additional activities that prepare pupils well for the next stages of their education. There is a rich creative arts and sporting offer. Examples of this include the Chesterton Youth Theatre, The Chesterton Choir, the Chesterton Lectures, sports leader activities, orienteering and sports clubs.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is very well led and funding is effectively and efficiently used. Leaders quickly gain an accurate understanding of these pupils' needs to provide them with excellent support, challenge and a highly effective curriculum. As a consequence, pupils are able to realise their potential socially and academically.
- Leaders make very skilful use of additional funding to help pupils who need it. Disadvantaged pupils are successfully supported to overcome barriers to learning through the work of the school's learning mentors and 'realising potential leaders'; additional careers information, advice and guidance; and extra literacy support. Pupils eligible for Year 7 catch-up funding make significant progress because of the well-focused activities they are provided with.
- Several parents of former Chesterton pupils told the inspection team about how well the school had prepared their children for their post-16 studies. Pupils have access to a high-quality careers information, advice and guidance programme. Leaders are careful to ensure that vulnerable pupils receive additional support so they are able to make informed decisions about their future. A higher proportion of Chesterton pupils enter education, employment or training than is nationally the case.
- Leaders have put in place many strategies to enable parents to access information about their children's education. These include one-to-one interviews and an online system to enable parents to check their children's progress, behaviour and attendance. Many parents attended a recent open afternoon to share their children's work.
- A small number of parents expressed frustration with aspects of the school's communication and the reasons for some of the recent decisions made by school leaders. Leaders and governors acknowledge that more needs to be done to ensure that these parents are well informed about the work taking place within the school.

Governance

- Under the energetic and knowledgeable leadership of the chair of the governing body, governors carry out their duties extremely well. Governors share the headteacher's highest expectations of what pupils should achieve and play their full part in ensuring that pupils reach their potential.
- Teachers told inspectors how much they appreciate governors' efforts, in particular those of the chair of the governing body, to get to know staff and pupils. Pupil representatives attend some governor meetings to offer their experience of the education provided at the school. Governors are also regular visitors to school. In

making use of information gathered from these activities, governors gain a very detailed understanding of the quality of provision.

- Governors are very well trained in understanding information about the progress pupils make. They use this information to ask pertinent and challenging questions of leaders to hold them to account effectively.
- Governors carefully monitor how resources, including additional government funding to support vulnerable pupils, are allocated and successfully used. Evidence from notes of meetings demonstrates that the governing body regularly checks on the progress of disadvantaged pupils and of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Governors ensure that the teachers' performance is managed in line with the school policy.
- Governors ensure that senior leaders carry out the appropriate checks on adults employed to work at the school, and that records of these checks are accurately maintained.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and there is a clear culture of safety within the school.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe and very well cared for. An overwhelming majority of parents agreed that their children are safe at school. A strong sense of security and well-being exists. This is a significant factor in shaping the confidence with which pupils go about their activities during lessons and breaktimes.
- Pupils explained that the school 'does all it can to ensure the right people talk to us about our safety'. Pupils develop an age-appropriate knowledge of risk because adults from suitable outside organisations, such as health and law enforcement agencies, visit the school to present relevant and thoughtful information. Pupils spoke maturely about the strategies they use to help them minimise any risks to themselves, including those when using the internet.
- Leaders provide staff with regular, relevant safeguarding training, including that relating to the government's 'Prevent' duty. Staff are fully aware of the school's expectation that, were they to have any concern about a pupil's well-being, they should 'if in doubt, report it'. Adults spoken with were also confident that if they reported a concern it would be dealt with swiftly and well. School records of action taken to protect vulnerable pupils confirm this to be the case.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have placed the improvement of teaching, learning and assessment at the core of the school's work. Through a combination of clear direction, high-quality training and a refusal to accept poor practice, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved and is now outstanding. Pupils

typically make exceptional progress as a result. The overwhelming majority of parents agreed that their children are taught well.

- Teachers successfully create industrious working environments in which pupils are able to learn with great confidence. Pupils of all abilities understand the ambitious targets teachers set them. One pupil's comment that these targets 'set a marker for us to beat' was typical of the high level of motivation that many pupils demonstrate in their learning.
- Teachers make skilful use of information about pupils' different starting points to plan interesting and challenging learning activities. Through their detailed knowledge of each pupil, teachers are equally adept at making sure that the activities they plan are effectively implemented in the lessons. For example, in a key stage 4 drama lesson, the teacher used her accurate understanding of each pupil's strengths and weaknesses to offer precise guidance on improving aspects of their performance.
- Teachers use their thorough subject knowledge, familiarity with the curriculum and questioning techniques to develop pupils' skills and deepen their understanding. Teachers challenge most-able pupils to excel very well. Evidence of this strong practice was seen in lessons across the curriculum, notably in English, drama, history, music and physical education (PE).
- Pupils, including those who are most able, respond exceptionally well to teachers' high expectations. They are very supportive of each other in their learning. As one pupil commented about the level of work, 'It is challenging, but we get support from each other.' In subjects such as art, food, history, media, PE and science, inspectors saw numerous examples of pupils working very effectively together.
- Pupils carry out assessment work in their 'feedback books' in which teachers consistently provide high-quality guidance in line with leaders' expectations. Teachers provide pupils with clear direction as to what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils are admirably reflective on their learning and respond very well to this guidance. One pupil told inspectors how much she valued this 'personal form of feedback between me and my teacher'. Her views were typical of those expressed by pupils over the course of the inspection.
- In the classroom, the school's 'pupil progress workers' provide pupils with additional support when it is needed. Pupils welcome the help that these adults, who are often qualified teachers, provide. As a result of this expert work, vulnerable pupils including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good and often better progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. The school is a harmonious school in which pupils from a wide range of social, economic and cultural backgrounds get along very well.
- While considerable emphasis is placed on pupils' academic achievement, leaders place equal importance on ensuring that pupils are well cared for. Pupils appreciate the work

of adults in the school, such as the mentors and school nurse, in supporting them. Pupils told inspectors that if they had any concerns, they could approach any adult at the school. The view of one pupil that 'the school takes us seriously and listens' was endorsed by her friends.

- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are very well provided for through the school's enthusiastically led induction and support programme. Consequently, these pupils gain in confidence and make excellent academic progress.
- Leaders provide exceptionally well for pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development across the curriculum. Through activities, such as 'Worldly Wednesdays', visits to faith centres, charity work and mock elections, pupils develop their understanding of the breadth of British society. One pupil proudly stated that the school 'celebrates the diversity that exists here'. Inspection evidence confirms this to be the case. Pupils are not only familiar with differences in culture and faith but also understand why it is important to be aware of these aspects of their community.
- Pupils make a significant contribution to the improvements that take place at the school. For example, the pupil council has worked with leaders in making improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Pupils from this council attend some staff briefings and governor meetings to offer their perspective on the quality of education they receive.
- Pupils told inspectors that bullying is a very rare occurrence at their school. They also explained that if it were to happen adults would deal with it swiftly and well. One pupil summed up the views of others when she explained that she knows school leaders 'would not stand for it here'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are valued and proud members of the school community. This widespread sense of pride was evident in the words of one pupil who explained, 'We are lucky to be here.'
- Pupils' excellent behaviour is a reflection of the high expectations modelled by the headteacher and her staff. Break and lunchtimes are cheerful, sociable times in which pupils mix easily and well. Very many choose to go to the library, where they read, work on their tablet computers or simply enjoy each other's company. Pupils told inspectors that this was normal at Chesterton Community College.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. Lessons are characterised by supportive and good-humoured relationships. Pupils told inspectors how much they enjoy the atmosphere in the school. One commented, 'There is no tension between teachers and pupils.' Inspectors noted the ease with which pupils interact with their friends and adults.
- Learning is almost always able to proceed unhindered by low-level disruption. Pupils explained that in the 'uncommon' event that pupils do not behave well, teachers and leaders act swiftly and appropriately. School records confirm this to be the case.
- Pupils' highly positive attitudes to their education are reflected in their above-average attendance and low levels of persistent absence. Where a pupil's absence causes concern, leaders work tirelessly and to good effect to ensure that their attendance

improves. This has led to a significant reduction in the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are persistently absent. While rates of persistent absence for disadvantaged pupils are now lower than the national average, leaders have plans to improve their attendance even further.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils typically enter the school with prior attainment above that of their peers nationally. As a result of shared high expectations, the strength of teaching, and the interesting and appropriate curriculum, pupils have, over the previous four years, made impressive progress from their individual starting points. This is why outcomes are judged to be outstanding.
- From 2013 to 2015, at the end of key stage 4, pupils made significantly better progress than their peers nationally across the curriculum, including in English and mathematics. In 2016, under a different accountability measure, pupils also made significantly better progress than other pupils nationally.
- In 2016, pupils' achievement in modern foreign languages and in the humanities subjects at the end of key stage 4 was in the top 5% nationally. Evidence from work in pupils' books demonstrates that pupils currently in the school continue to make very strong progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress has improved considerably since the previous inspection and now compares favourably with that of other pupils nationally. Leaders judge that disadvantaged pupils, including those who are most-able, in both key stages 3 and 4, make good and often better progress, in line with that of their peers. Based on the evidence seen, inspectors agree.
- In 2016, pupils who had special educational needs and/or disabilities made excellent progress. This was also the case in 2015. Because of the precise, skilful teaching and support they receive, these pupils continue to make very strong progress.
- Since the previous inspection, most-able pupils' progress has been impressive and continues to improve. In 2016, most-able pupils performed very well, making considerably more progress than pupils of a similar ability nationally. Leaders appropriately support and challenge most-able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, so that, in very many cases, they are able to achieve their potential.
- In 2016, pupils who speak English as an additional language made significantly better progress than other pupils nationally. Inspection evidence indicates that this remains the case for pupils currently in school. This is due to the precise and effective support they receive.
- Evidence seen in pupils' books and folders confirms the school's assessment that pupils achieve equally well across a range of subjects in all year groups. This high level of achievement is a result of leaders' careful curriculum planning and the high-quality teaching that pupils receive.

School details

Unique reference number	136887
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10031631

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	959
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon Peyton-Jones
Headteacher	Lucy Scott
Telephone number	01223 712 150
Website	www.chestertoncc.net
Email address	office@chesterton.cambs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9–10 October 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- Chesterton Community College is an average-size secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding is below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is in line with the national average.
- The school does not make use of alternative education provision.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which sets the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 46 lessons. Several of these observations were carried out jointly with school leaders. Inspectors also made two visits to 'The Pavilion', an educational facility run by the school which is situated a short walk from the main school site.
- Inspectors spoke with three groups of pupils and held informal discussions with many more pupils in lessons and when moving around the school site at break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, middle leaders, teachers, four governors and one group of eight parents. The lead inspector also held a telephone discussion with one parent.
- Inspectors considered 52 free-text responses from parents; 111 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View; 24 emails and four letters from parents received over the course of the inspection. Inspectors also took account of 65 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 21 responses to the pupil survey.
- The inspection team analysed a wide range of school documentation including information relating to safeguarding, pupils' behaviour and attendance, pupils' achievement, leaders' evaluations of the school's performance, school improvement planning, minutes of governors' meetings, and school policies and procedures.

Inspection team

John Lucas, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Gwyneth Gibson	Her Majesty's Inspector
Nicola Hood	Ofsted Inspector
David Piercy	Ofsted Inspector
Jeremy Rowe	Ofsted Inspector
John Wilson	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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