

Inspection of a good school: Churchdown School

Winston Road, Churchdown, Gloucester, Gloucestershire GL3 2RB

Inspection dates:

24 and 25 November 2021

Outcome

Churchdown School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at school. They feel proud to attend and enjoy their time here. Some pupils say that they 'love' the school. Pupils from all year groups feel safe and secure. Pupils know that staff care about them. They believe that all staff treat everyone fairly. Pupils can talk easily to staff, including the headteacher and senior leaders.

Pupils describe lessons as being interesting and fun. They work hard to match their teachers' high expectations. Pupils receive helpful feedback. This enables them to improve their work and learn more. The school provides extra classes after school for English, mathematics, and science. Pupils appreciate how these are helping them to deepen their learning after a year in which they have missed much school.

Pupils behave well in lessons and at social times. Pupils are kind and friendly to each other. Bullying is rare. If bullying does occur, staff manage it quickly and effectively. Pupils feel that their voices are heard and that they have a say in the direction of the school.

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

The school is well led. Leaders pay great care and attention to managing the workload of staff. As a result, there is a strong sense of purpose and morale within the staff group. Leaders are high profile around the school. Staff and pupils feel that leaders are approachable and supportive. Leaders ensure that the school is a welcoming place for all pupils. Few pupils leave during the course of a year.

Leaders give much attention to the development of the curriculum. It is particularly strong in some subjects. For example, in English, it has been subject to considerable thought and collaboration. Curriculum plans are well-structured and sequenced in a logical order. The quality and consistency of the English curriculum ensures that pupils achieve highly.

In mathematics, leaders have established a well-planned curriculum. Teachers implement plans effectively. Consequently, pupils do well. Even though the curriculum is generally

well planned and structured, in a minority of subjects, leaders have not identified the important building blocks of knowledge. As a result, some pupils do not acquire sufficient depth of knowledge and understanding in those areas.

The school's policies ensure teachers implement the curriculum well. Teachers' use of assessment to check pupils' learning is effective. Teachers' approaches help pupils to remember what they have learned. However, there is some slight variation across departments in the consistency of the use of these approaches. For example, in teachers' use of language. Leaders are aware of this and they are working to improve it.

The proportion of pupils who are entered for the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) suite of subjects is increasing over time, but remains below average. Leaders recognise that there is more work to do to place EBacc at the heart of the curriculum.

The school has an inclusive approach to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders are ambitious for these pupils to be fully included in all aspects of school life. They achieve well from their starting points as they receive the right level of support.

Leaders give good attention to the development of pupils' reading skills. Leaders implement a range of strategies that support those pupils who find reading difficult. This helps these pupils to catch up.

Sixth-form leaders are ambitious for students. Sixth-form students study a wide range of subjects, which they enjoy and appreciate. Students are well prepared for their next steps. The number of them accessing higher education continues to increase.

Leaders have ensured the curriculum goes beyond the academic to deepen pupils' wider development. This is evident in personal, social and health education, tutor time, social skills lessons and assemblies.

Pupils' behaviour is calm and orderly across the school, within lessons and at social times. Pupils show positive and mature attitudes towards school. They manage their own behaviour very well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school has well organised and efficient processes for the management of safeguarding. Leaders have systems in place that identify pupils who may need additional help and ensure that they are referred to those who can provide help and support for them. There is a well-developed and strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school that results in pupils being well-informed and confident to speak to staff.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a minority of subjects, leaders do not identify the precise knowledge that pupils need to learn. As a result, some pupils do not gain the depth of knowledge needed. Leaders need to ensure that curriculum plans clearly set out the detailed knowledge pupils need to learn in all areas.
- Some teachers use of language in the classroom to promote learning is not as clear as it could be. As a result, pupils in some areas are not taught to express their thinking with enough clarity. Heads of department need to ensure that teachers are precise in their language, so pupils understand what is expected of them.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour, or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 4 July 2012.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	137634
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10199894
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1416
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	189
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Christopher Widden
Headteacher	David Potter
Website	www.churchdownschool.com
Date of previous inspection	29 June 2016

Information about this school

- The school is an academy converter in a stand-alone trust.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision at a registered provider.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection that the school has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other members of the leadership team. The lead inspector met with six representatives of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body.

- Inspectors examined the school's arrangements for safeguarding by meeting with the designated lead for safeguarding. They also scrutinised policies, procedures and record keeping and reviewed the safeguarding checks made on staff when they are recruited.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, mathematics, languages, history, and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, looked at a range of pupils' work, and held discussions with teachers and pupils.
- Inspectors spoke informally to pupils around the school site and held meetings with boys, girls, and a mixed group of pupils.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including policies and record keeping for behaviour management, exclusions, and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, the online inspection questionnaire, including the free text comments.

Inspection team

Malcolm Willis, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Trudi Baker	Ofsted Inspector
Jon Jones	Ofsted Inspector

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