

Churchfield CofE Academy

Cheshunt Wash, Cheshunt, Waltham Cross, Hertfordshire EN8 0LU

Inspection dates

13–14 November 2018

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
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has high expectations and is committed to the school's continued improvement. She provides strong and clear leadership for staff and pupils.
- Since joining the Diocese of St Albans multi-academy trust (DSAMAT) the school has made significant progress. Trust leaders are very effective; they provide high-quality support and challenge.
- Leaders and trustees have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their improvement plans focus on appropriate priorities and demonstrate their high expectations for the school.
- Pupils make good progress and their outcomes have improved considerably. In 2018, attainment at both key stages 1 and 2 was above national averages at the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. It continues to improve, because leaders provide staff with effective support, training and challenge.
- Leaders and trustees ensure that the school's curriculum provides pupils with a wide range of teaching and learning experiences.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Pupils are confident, responsible and caring. They are well looked after and kept safe.
- Pupils behave well in and out of lessons. They enjoy school and they are appreciative of the time and support that they are given by the adults who work there.
- Leadership of the early years is good. This ensures that children get off to a positive start in their education and develop strong attitudes to learning.
- Some leaders are new to their roles, and their skills are not as well developed as those of their more experienced colleagues.
- Teachers do not always challenge the most able pupils sufficiently, particularly in writing. This is notably the case in key stage 1, where teaching is less consistent.
- Overall levels of pupil absence are too high. Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have above average levels of absence and persistent absence.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve pupils' progress by:
 - developing and embedding leaders' strategies to increase the extent of challenge for the most able pupils across early years and key stages 1 and 2, especially in writing
 - ensuring that the quality of teaching across key stage 1 is of a consistently high standard.
- Further develop leadership and management by:
 - providing new leaders with additional support, training and challenge that will enable them to work with the same degree of impact as their more experienced colleagues.
- Improve levels of attendance by:
 - focusing the work of leaders and school staff more closely on reducing the absence and persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEND.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher, supported effectively by senior and middle leaders, has established a culture of high expectation for staff and pupils. She is proud of the school's strengths, but she is not complacent. Her strong leadership since the predecessor school's last inspection has resulted in wide-ranging changes that have raised standards across the school. Consequently, pupils receive a good standard of education.
- Parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. One parent wrote: 'The staff at the school are always visible and are ready to listen to all concerns ... my children have made excellent progress in all areas since starting at the school.' Another stated: 'I'm proud of Churchfield CofE Academy.'
- Leaders and trustees have an accurate view of what is working well and what needs to improve. Leaders' current plans for improvement have correctly identified priorities to help raise standards. The impact of leaders' actions is reviewed by leaders and trustees and the regional hub board. This process of planning and evaluation is effective in improving the quality of provision.
- Leaders are accurate in their evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching, learning and assessment. They use this evaluation to ensure that staff receive training that develops their individual areas of need and supports whole-school goals. Leaders know where the quality of teaching is less consistent and they provide staff with effective support that improves their practice. Recently qualified teachers are well supported. Staff value the professional development that they receive. All staff who completed the Ofsted staff survey say that they are proud to work at the school.
- Leaders provide a wide and varied curriculum. The development of pupils' literacy and numeracy is at the heart of the curriculum, and pupils are supported to develop these skills further through the study of a wide range of topics. Classrooms are well organised, vibrant and reflect the high priority that is given to subjects such as history, science and personal, social and health education (PSHE). Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy the subjects that they study. They appreciate the visits that they undertake and the range of extra-curricular activities that are on offer.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. Equality and diversity are promoted well in lessons, in assemblies and through the behaviour modelled by adults around the school. The school's 'three Rs' (respectful, responsible and reflective) are a central part of school life and pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to demonstrate these characteristics, for example through being 'buddies' to younger pupils and developing the school's links with UNICEF. Pupils also gain a strong understanding of the importance of fundamental British values, such as democracy, respect and tolerance. This is evident in displays of pupils' work around the school and through the many positions of responsibility that pupils hold. As a consequence, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The primary physical education (PE) and sport premium is spent effectively. Leaders have prioritised staff training as a key focus for the funding to ensure that it has a long-term, lasting benefit. Last year, staff were coached successfully to teach more

effective games lessons, while the focus this year is to improve staff confidence in teaching gymnastics. In addition, pupils have also benefited from entry to a wider range of sporting competitions, sports leader training, new PE equipment and the use of the Lea Valley stadium.

- Leaders quickly identify disadvantaged pupils' barriers to learning. They develop plans that make good use of the pupil premium funding and ensure that specialist staff provide support to individuals and small groups of pupils. Leaders also ensure that disadvantaged pupils are able to undertake the same range of activities that are available to their non-disadvantaged classmates. As a consequence of leaders' actions, disadvantaged pupils make good progress across the school. However, their rates of absence and persistent absence are too high.
- The new SEN coordinator (SENCo) quickly identifies pupils' needs and liaises effectively with teaching assistants, teachers and parents. Staff assess the progress that pupils are making and plan strategies to offer them additional help when they need it. Leaders work with a wide range of professionals to meet pupils' needs. As a result, pupils who have SEND make good progress towards the targets set out in their individual education plans. Although their progress is good, the overall absence rates of pupils who have SEND are still too high.
- Leaders are effective at 'talent spotting' and training future leaders. Consequently, the quality of leadership continues to improve. Leaders are aware that they must continue to provide the necessary training and support to ensure that new leaders become as effective as their more experienced colleagues.

Governance of the school

- The support and challenge that DSAMAT offers the school is very effective. The trust board and the regional hub boards have clearly defined areas of responsibility that are communicated clearly to school leaders; both bodies play an important role in supporting school improvement. Leaders value the strategic contributions made by the chief executive officer (CEO), trustees and hub board members. They are particularly grateful for the support, advice and training provided by the trust's executive team. Joining DSAMAT has been of crucial importance in supporting the school's rapid improvement.
- Trustees and members of the regional hub board are very well trained in relation to their specific roles. They know the school's strengths and weaknesses through their attendance at trust board and regional hub board meetings. In addition, they visit the school routinely and receive detailed reports from the trust's executive team and from school leaders. As a result, they provide leaders with high-quality challenge and support.
- Trustees ensure that their statutory duties, especially in safeguarding pupils' welfare, are fully met. The link safeguarding trustee checks safeguarding arrangements, including the record of pre-employment checks, routinely. Trustees receive valuable training that helps them to understand their responsibilities with regard to keeping pupils safe.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff at all levels receive regular safeguarding training and they know how to identify pupils who are potentially at risk. Staff understand, and follow, leaders' clear procedures for the reporting of any safeguarding concerns.
- School leaders ensure that safeguarding concerns are logged effectively. Leaders are tenacious in making sure that child-protection referrals are dealt with appropriately. The maintenance of child-protection files is effective and leaders work well with representatives from other agencies to ensure that pupils get the support they need quickly.
- All required checks are carried out when recruiting new staff to work with pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Leaders' actions have improved the quality of teaching across the school. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, agreed that pupils are taught well. Pupils enjoy learning and told inspectors that they particularly enjoy their mathematics lessons.
- Teachers have high aspirations for pupils. Pupils are set challenging targets in reading, writing and mathematics, and leaders monitor their progress closely. Teachers accurately assess pupils' work and they use this information to plan additional support when needed. Support for pupils is provided quickly and its impact is reviewed regularly. As a result, pupils make good progress overall.
- Pupils undertake individual, paired and group tasks with enthusiasm. They enjoy discussing their ideas and they are not frightened to make mistakes. As a consequence, their ideas are challenged, and their understanding is deepened.
- Pupils make particularly good progress when teachers' planning considers the needs of all pupils. For example, in mathematics, a range of carefully considered and appropriate learning activities support pupils to produce high-quality work from their different starting points.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support to pupils. They work closely with teachers and they understand the needs of the pupils that they are supporting. Their careful explanations of tasks and skilful questioning support pupils who have SEND to make good progress.
- Many teachers question individual pupils, and groups of pupils, skilfully in order to gain an understanding of what pupils need to know. They use this information to provide pupils with specific guidance about what they need to do to improve their work further.
- Teachers' use of assessment develops their understanding of pupils' strengths and weaknesses. They use a range of activities routinely to check pupils' work and understanding. However, there are some occasions, especially when pupils are completing extended writing activities, when this information is not used effectively. In

these situations, pupils, often those who are the most able, are not challenged as much as they should be.

- The quality of teaching and learning is less consistent across key stage 1. At times learning activities are not closely matched to the abilities of pupils, and questioning is not as effective in checking what pupils understand. In addition, expectations of pupils' behaviour are not applied consistently.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident, resilient and caring. They take pride in their work, they work hard in lessons and they are welcoming to visitors. Pupils can explain the school's 'three Rs' and give examples of how staff and pupils act in accordance with them. In discussion, one pupil said that the school is 'a great place to be'.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good, and their behaviour is managed well by teachers. Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive and examples of low-level disruption are rare.
- Pupils say that they are safe at the school. All staff who completed the Ofsted survey and the overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, agreed. Pupils say that bullying is not a problem and that they know who to talk to if they have any worries. Pupils say that staff deal with their concerns quickly.
- Pupils are taught to stay safe, for example through PSHE lessons, assemblies and visiting speakers. Topics covered include friendships, bullying, internet safety and sex and relationships education.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in and out of lessons. They are friendly, polite and well mannered. They follow the teachers' instructions well and they demonstrate good attitudes to learning. Pupils behave well at lunch and breaktimes and are well supervised outside. Pupils, staff and parents are positive about standards of behaviour.
- Leaders' recent changes to the school's behaviour policy have been welcomed by staff and pupils. They say that the school is a much calmer place and that the restorative conversations between staff and pupils lead to longer-term improvements in pupils' behaviour. As a consequence, incidents of poor behaviour are low, as are the rates of fixed-period exclusions.
- Leaders are aware of the importance of good attendance and the need to reduce pupils' absence. The strategies that they use, including issuing penalty notices, have seen a reduction in the overall number of pupils who are persistently absent from school; this is now broadly in line with the national average. However, leaders' work to

reduce the overall rates of pupils' absence has had less impact. The absence of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEND remains too high.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils typically enter Year 1 with levels of prior attainment that are broadly average. They make strong progress over time in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2018, at the end of key stage 1, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the expected standard was above the national average. Attainment at greater depth was close to average.
- Attainment in the phonics screening check for Year 1 pupils was in line with the national average in 2018.
- In 2018, at the end of key stage 2, pupils' combined attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the expected standard was above the national average. Pupils' overall progress at the end of key stage 2 was in line with the national average in both reading and writing. Progress in mathematics was above average.
- In 2018, at the end of key stage 2, the most able pupils made less progress in reading and writing than both their classmates and pupils with similar starting points nationally. Their performance was above average in mathematics.
- Pupils across the school continue to make good overall progress. Current pupils are making strong progress throughout key stage 2. Progress in key stage 1 is less consistent, with pupils in Year 2 currently making less progress than those in other year groups.
- Teachers' assessments show that the attainment of pupils currently in Year 6 is in line with last year's cohort at the same point in the year. However, some pupils, including those with high prior attainment, need to increase their rates of progress further in order to attain at the highest levels.
- Pupils who have SEND and those who are disadvantaged make good progress from their starting points. Their different needs are quickly identified by staff and they are supported effectively in their learning.
- Pupils are well prepared for education after Churchfield. They are provided with a range of opportunities to consider their careers, for example through visiting speakers. Leaders also organise a variety of transition activities so that that pupils are well prepared, both academically and personally, for their transition to secondary school.

Early years provision

Good

- Children join the early years with skills that are broadly typical for their age. As a result of effective early assessment, leaders ensure that children's individual needs are identified quickly and that learning activities support their progress. As a consequence, children make good progress across early years and are prepared for Year 1 effectively.
- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year was broadly in line with the national average in 2018. Leaders' current

assessment information, evidence in children's workbooks and observations of teaching all demonstrate that children this year are making good progress.

- Leadership of early years is strong. Children benefit from a well-qualified and experienced team that focuses on developing them as learners. Leaders' work to support children as they join the school is effective. They work closely with families and pre-school providers to ensure that children make a smooth start at Churchfield. Parents appreciate the effective transition arrangements.
- The early years curriculum provides children with a wide range of opportunities to develop their academic, social and emotional skills. Children's learning opportunities are enhanced by an attractive learning environment where they benefit from individual, small-group and whole-class support which takes place in the well-resourced classrooms and outside areas.
- Adults ensure that children behave well and that they are safe. Children work well together, they listen attentively and they support each other. The environment is safe and adults are well trained to care for and protect the children. Safeguarding arrangements are secure.
- Teaching, including the teaching of phonics, in early years is effective. Children benefit from a range of well-planned activities that interest them and allow them to develop their skills across the different areas of learning. Parents play an important role in completing children's learning journeys.
- Members of the early years team observe children closely in order to check their progress and to see if they need extra help. Although this ensures that children make good progress, there are times when learning could be further enhanced by increasing the level of challenge in some of the activities, especially in their writing.

School details

Unique reference number	143856
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10055015

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	296
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Paul Dickens
Headteacher	Katharine Hardwick
Telephone number	01992463289
Website	http://www.churchfield.herts.sch.uk
Email address	admin@churchfield.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This is the school's first inspection since it joined the DSAMAT in March 2017.
- The school receives support and challenge from the trust's CEO and through its eastern regional hub board. Responsibility for the school's performance lies with the DSAMAT trust board. The trust has longer-term plans to establish local representation at the school through the establishment of an academy council. There are currently six schools within the trust.
- The school is a part of the Diocese of St Albans. In its most recent Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (March 2017), it was judged to be good.
- The school is a larger-than-average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium or who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who receive SEND support is in line with the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is well below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, subject leaders, the SENCo, the early years leader, other school leaders, trustees, members of the eastern region hub board and the CEO.
- Inspectors gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Inspectors observed learning in 35 lessons, in some cases jointly with leaders.
- A wide range of pupils' workbooks were looked at by inspectors throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally in class and around the school at breaktimes and lunchtimes to seek their views about the school.
- Inspectors met with two groups of pupils more formally to discuss many aspects of school life.
- Inspectors heard pupils read. Inspectors talked to pupils about their reading habits and looked at their reading records.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's website and a range of school documents, including assessment information and the school's own evaluation of its effectiveness. Inspectors also scrutinised leaders' improvement plans and their behaviour, safeguarding and attendance records.
- Inspectors considered the 32 responses and 15 free-text comments made by parents to the Ofsted online Parent View questionnaire and spoke to some parents before school. Inspectors considered the 26 responses by staff to the Ofsted staff questionnaire and the 15 responses by pupils to the Ofsted pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

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