Inspection of a good school: Chislehurst School for Girls

Beaverwood Road, Perry Street, Chislehurst, Kent BR7 6HE

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 January 2023

Outcome

Chislehurst School for Girls continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a vibrant, supportive and inclusive school. Leaders are ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils are rightly proud of their contributions to school life. This is because leaders value their ideas and experiences. Pupils respect each other and behave well. When bullying occurs, leaders act quickly to stop it.

Pupils' cultural awareness is well supported through the ambitious curriculum. For example, pupils learn about the music of the Caribbean as well as the Baroque period. Similarly, in English, pupils compare classical literature with contemporary writing inspired by myths and legends. Pupils produce work of good quality in a range of subjects because teachers expect this of them.

Pupils have regular opportunities to develop their own leadership, including in the sixth form. For example, they can participate in the student leadership team, school council and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award programme. Student leaders are strong role models for younger pupils, and have organised a range of school events, initiatives and extra-curricular activities. They present in whole-school assemblies on important topics such as the life of Martin Luther King and the role of women in science.

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

All pupils follow a broad and balanced curriculum. In many subjects, leaders have established clear curriculum goals. Content has been sequenced to ensure that pupils develop their knowledge over time. For example, in history, leaders have thought carefully about what younger pupils need to know about the Ottoman, Songhai, Mughal and British empires. This supports older pupils to compare different empires throughout history. However, in a few subjects, the knowledge that pupils need to remember is not as clearly defined. This means that teachers do not routinely focus on the most important things that pupils need to remember in these subjects.

Teachers know their subjects well. In most subjects, they explain complex ideas clearly. Pupils are given sufficient opportunity to practise and recall prior knowledge. This means that teachers identify and address any misconceptions swiftly. Pupils are given regular opportunities to improve their work through 'focused improvement time' in each subject. Disruption to learning is rare and when it does occur, teachers quickly address it.

Leaders have high ambitions for pupils with SEND. Leaders identify pupils' needs and ensure that appropriate support plans and strategies are in place. This means that teachers are knowledgeable about how to support these pupils to follow the same curriculum as their peers wherever possible. The newly created 'Lighthouse' is a space for pupils to receive specialist support and to nurture positive relationships with peers and staff. Pupils who are at an earlier stage of learning to read are given additional support to help them to catch up quickly.

Leaders have prioritised the wider development of pupils, including in the sixth form. Pupils and students are proud to be taking on increasing responsibility for contributing to the school's community. Membership to the student leadership team is through application, and prefects play an important role in encouraging younger pupils to follow routines. The school council meets regularly, and student-led committees have supported leaders to review the curriculum and organise school-wide cultural events. For example, a recent student-led gala celebrated Black and Caribbean culture through an evening of poetry, music, performances and food.

Leaders and staff have developed a wide offer of additional activities and educational visits. Increasingly, pupils and students are involved in setting up and leading activities independently. The careers programme is coherently planned and ensures that pupils have access to a range of opportunities to learn about their next steps and the world of work.

Staff enjoy working here and feel well supported. Leaders engage with staff regularly and seek their views on workload and well-being. There is a staff well-being team that reviews new policies. Trustees share leaders' ambitions for all pupils and know their roles well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that there is a strong culture of safeguarding. The members of the safeguarding team are knowledgeable and tenacious in their work with local agencies and external partners. They identify pupils who may need additional help and put in place appropriate support. Leaders ensure that records are accurate and up to date.

Staff receive training on safeguarding risks and how to report any concerns that they may have. Pupils know who to report concerns to. The curriculum has been designed to help pupils understand how to keep themselves safe, including when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, the curriculum does not identify the knowledge and skills that pupils should learn throughout key stage 3. As a result, teachers do not focus sufficiently on ensuring that pupils develop a deep understanding of important concepts in these subjects. Leaders should continue to develop the curriculum so that key knowledge is clearly identified and carefully sequenced. This will support pupils to learn and remember more in these areas.

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

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in December 2017.

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.

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	136467
Local authority	Bromley
Inspection number	10268748
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,060
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	154
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jatin Mehta
Headteacher	Maria French
Website	www.chislehurstschoolforgirls.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 December 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Chislehurst School for Girls is part of a single academy trust.
- The current headteacher took up post in September 2020.
- Leaders currently use four alternative education providers, one of which is unregistered.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, subject leaders and groups of staff. The lead inspector also met with trustees.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, history, mathematics and music. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning, and reviewed samples of their work. Inspectors also looked at the curriculum in other subjects.
- Inspectors held meeting with leaders responsible for the school's safeguarding arrangements. They also looked at safeguarding records, including pre-employment checks for staff.
- Inspectors considered pupils', parents' and staff's views of the school through both discussions and responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Olly Wimborne, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Jonathan Newby	Ofsted Inspector
Lascelles Haughton	His Majesty's Inspector

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