Inspection of a good school: Chilwell Croft Academy

Chilwell Croft, Newtown, Birmingham, West Midlands B19 2QH

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 April 2024

Outcome

Chilwell Croft Academy continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Nanette Wragg. This school is part of Equitas Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Alex Lofthouse, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Wadim Wesolek.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Chilwell Croft benefit greatly from their time at the school. The school's motto, 'All different, all equal, all achieving', is fully embraced, and pupils feel accepted for who they are without fear of being judged. Pupils enjoy learning and having fun, thanks to staff who ensure that there are positive experiences both in and outside the classroom. The school offers a range of trips and visitors to enrich their learning.

The school has clear expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils understand these expectations and behave very well. In lessons, pupils are highly attentive and participate in learning enthusiastically.

The school has high expectations for pupils' achievement and does not place a ceiling on what they can learn. Leaders have taken appropriate action to ensure that what pupils learn is of high quality and broadens their experience of the world. Pupils speak very highly of their love of reading and readily talk to visitors about the more challenging work they are completing in mathematics.

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

The school's curriculum is ambitious and purposefully designed to meet the needs of its pupils. For example, many pupils speak English as an additional language so leaders place a strong emphasis on the teaching of early language and reading. The school has worked effectively on early reading and ensures that all pupils are consistently taught how sounds correspond to letters or groups of letters. This work starts from the beginning of the Reception Year. Leaders have worked well with staff to ensure that they are skilled in identifying which pupils are at risk of falling behind. These pupils are rapidly supported to

help them catch up. All of this means that pupils are able to read with appropriate fluency. Furthermore, the school promotes well a love of reading. Pupils benefit from a range of class texts that they study together. For example, pupils in various year groups speak enthusiastically about the work they have completed on different versions of the 'Little Red Riding Hood' story.

In core subjects, the school has ensured greater consistency of learning through a review of the curriculum design. This has been effective in mathematics, for example, where pupils have more secure understanding of the procedural, conditional and disciplinary knowledge they need to be successful. However, pupils' understanding in some of the foundation subjects is not as secure. This is because leaders have not ensured that all staff are sufficiently clear about the key knowledge that pupils need to learn. In addition to this, sometimes teachers do not check pupils' understanding well enough. This means that misconceptions are not always identified and addressed, which slows some pupils' learning.

In response to the low writing scores in key stage 2 last year, the school has reviewed the curriculum. It has identified that there are historic gaps in some pupils' understanding in writing, which it is now beginning to address. This limits pupils' ability to be able to write with fluency appropriate for their age.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have their needs accurately identified. Appropriate adaptations are made in class, with extensive extra support provided by trained staff or external agencies. This means that these pupils achieve well.

The school ensures that pupils understand how they should behave in school, and they behave with high levels of consideration for each other and are attentive in class. Leaders have a clear strategic oversight of behaviour, which enables them to act promptly to support pupils who might find it harder to meet their expectations. Leaders have more recently introduced a strategic approach to attendance, and work effectively to ensure that pupils attend school regularly.

Leaders have designed a personal development curriculum that prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. This includes a carefully chosen series of visits and visitors, including trips to central Birmingham, a residential visit and links with a local football team. The school's spiritual, moral, social and cultural work is of a high quality.

Staff are supportive of leaders' work of in the face of some historic turbulence. They report that leaders are mindful of their workload and appreciate training opportunities. However, in some areas, leaders do not consistently review the impact of how well the curriculum is being delivered. This means that some inconsistencies and weaker practice remain in some areas of foundation subjects.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, teachers do not consistently check pupils' previous learning. This means that misconceptions and gaps in learning are not addressed, so pupils do not always build on their learning effectively. The school should continue to embed consistent approaches to assessment and ensure that teachers carefully check what pupils have learned over time.
- Due to previous issues with the writing curriculum, some pupils have gaps in their writing knowledge and skills. This inhibits their ability to express themselves with fluency appropriate to their age. The school needs to ensure that teachers consistently support pupils to develop their fluency in writing in line with the curriculum design.
- The school has not monitored how well the curriculum has been delivered closely enough. As a result, there are inconsistencies in how well the curriculum is delivered in some foundation subjects. The school should ensure that its quality assurance and professional development support all staff to deliver their curriculum as intended across all subjects.

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 January 2019.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the definition of children in need of help and protection; pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's pupil premium funding (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	138395
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10322833
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	400
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Wadim Wesolek
CEO of the trust	Alex Lofthouse
Headteacher	Nanette Wragg
Website	www.chilwellcroftacademy.com
Dates of previous inspection	16 and 17 January 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Chilwell Croft Academy is one of two schools in Equitas Academies Trust.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

- As a part of this inspection, the inspector met with a representative of the trust board, the chief executive officer, senior leaders, subject leaders and teaching staff as well as other employees in the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also looked at examples of pupils' work relating to writing and met with leaders to consider the curriculum design for writing.
- The inspector reviewed the school's extra-curricular activities, the enrichment programme and the personal, social, health and economic programme with leaders and pupils.
- The inspector reviewed the school's behaviour and attendance records with school leaders.
- The inspector met with members of staff and spoke to pupils, both formally and informally, at various points in the inspection. He took account of responses to a staff survey and to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. He spoke to a number of parents on the playground.

Inspection team

Andrew Madden, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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