

Chestnut Grove School

Chestnut Grove, Balham, 45 Chestnut Grove, London SW12 8JZ

Inspection dates

29–30 January 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The quality of leadership is exceptional. The headteacher and his team are unwavering and unstinting in their drive to improve the school. The strongest impact of their work has been in embedding the right culture for learning.
- Leaders at all levels, including governors, know their school very well. They address quickly any areas that fall short of their high expectations. They have effective systems and procedures in place to monitor, track and evaluate the school's effectiveness.
- Pupils achieve well across the curriculum because of strong teaching and the outstanding support and care they receive. The provision of pastoral care is excellent and includes a strong focus on mental health and well-being.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They are courteous, friendly and regulate their own behaviour. Pupils have high expectations of each other's behaviour.
- Leaders have designed a strong curriculum that offers a wide range of academic and vocational courses. The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively. As a result, pupils value their education and rarely miss any time from school.
- Leaders' arrangements for supporting disadvantaged pupils are effective, and their progress is good. There is still further room for improvement in their overall achievement, however.
- Governors bring a breadth of educational and professional expertise to their roles. They challenge and support senior leaders very effectively.
- The quality of provision and outcomes in the sixth form are outstanding. Teaching and assessment are consistently strong. Students study a curriculum that supports their specific needs, interests and future plans very well.
- Pupils receive high-quality careers guidance, enabling a high proportion of pupils to access further and higher education, and apprenticeships.
- In a minority of lessons, pupils spend too much time completing tasks that do not make them think and reflect deeply.
- Some teachers do not use questioning skilfully to assess and deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- There is some inconsistency in the quality of teaching, especially in key stage 3.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to raise pupils' achievement further, in particular for disadvantaged pupils, by ensuring that:
 - pupils routinely complete tasks that stretch and challenge their thinking and deepen their learning
 - teachers are consistently effective in using questioning to probe pupils' understanding
 - any remaining inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, especially in key stage 3, are fully addressed.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leaders are unwavering and unstinting in their drive for excellence. They know the school's strengths and few remaining weaknesses, and work collaboratively to address any underperformance. For example, turbulence in staffing has been an issue in the past, especially in mathematics and science. Leaders have addressed this and, as a result, the school is fully staffed with expert teachers in every learning area. Leaders regularly review their own and colleagues' performance, and put in place well-focused plans to address any aspect that needs improvement.
- Leaders and governors have successfully overseen a major building programme over the past two years. They have invested a lot of time and effort into embedding a culture that supports outstanding behaviour for learning. The constant determination to raise standards of behaviour and build positive attitudes to learning is evident in pupils' excellent conduct in lessons and around the school. As a result, pupils are very responsive to teaching and their progress across the curriculum is improving strongly.
- Leaders have created an inclusive ethos where everyone is supported and cared for. Pupils and staff feel valued. Leaders' focus on high performance is underpinned by support for everyone's mental health and well-being, which is greatly appreciated.
- Middle leaders form a dedicated and highly focused team. They are consistent in their messages and their desire for excellence. A shared language is used consistently among middle leaders. This enables them to identify any underperformance, share best practice and disseminate that practice within their departments.
- The school's redesigned curriculum offers a broad range of learning experiences, which are tailored to pupils' individual needs. Greater depth has been embedded in the key stage 3 curriculum so that pupils are better prepared for the demands in key stages 4 and 5. Leaders are perceptive in adopting a long-term view, and draw on research evidence about curriculum design to plan and deliver the best. For example, they have developed their own, very effective, 'pedagogical framework' to ensure that teaching is consistently strong.
- The curriculum makes an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and their preparation for life in modern Britain. Pupils are provided with a well-established programme of personal, social and health education, cultural activities, theatrical productions and assemblies. As a result, they are able to demonstrate their understanding of British values such as democracy, the rule of law, personal freedoms and respect for difference.
- The additional funding received for disadvantaged pupils is used well, and is informed by evidence of what works well for individual pupils. Leaders' effective monitoring ensures that the use of additional learning support assistants and specific literacy and mathematics interventions have the required impact.
- Strong leadership for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) ensures that there is good provision to meet the wide range of pupils' needs. Leaders have acted on the recommendations made in a review of SEND that was carried out in the previous academic year. The programmes and the adjustments to pupils'

experience of school are improving outcomes. This is reflected in the strong progress of many pupils with SEND.

- Leaders make a strong contribution to the development of teaching and pupils' learning. They benefit from effective professional development, and are skilled in evaluating performance and guiding staff. Leaders are currently addressing the few inconsistencies that remain in the quality of teaching and assessment.

Governance of the school

- This school is part of a small multi-academy trust comprised of two schools. Governance for the school is provided by the local academy committee (governing body) and overseen by the Wandle Learning Trust.
- Governors know their school very well, and have a clear view of its strengths and the few areas where further improvement is needed. They are dedicated to the school, and bring a range of relevant experience and expertise to their roles.
- Members of the governing body have high expectations of the school's performance, and provide an effective balance of support and challenge to the school's leaders. They use information gathered through visits to school, as well as from reports provided by leaders, to ask challenging questions.
- Governors discharge their statutory duties with diligence. They monitor the school's budget carefully. They check that safeguarding arrangements are robust, and ensure that systems to manage teachers' performance focus on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders promote a culture of vigilance to reduce risks to children and protect them from harm. Robust arrangements are in place for the training of all staff and governors. As a result, all adults are aware of the risks pupils may face, including abuse, neglect, domestic violence, extremism and radicalisation. Training and guidance also ensure that staff are alert to potential risks, and know how to act in the event of a concern.
- The safeguarding and pastoral teams work effectively with relevant external agencies, when required. Staff are persistent when they are concerned about a pupil's welfare and follow up concerns with these agencies as necessary. Leaders complete appropriate employment checks and keep accurate records.
- All pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they feel safe in school. Pupils have a secure understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. They understand the risks surrounding online safety and social media, for example.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Following a brief period of instability in a few subjects, changes to staffing have reduced. Teachers have established positive relationships with their pupils and set high

expectations. Pupils are appreciative of this, and of the efforts their teachers make to help them to learn well.

- Teaching is consistently strong in English, and pupils benefit from a good level of challenge. This supports pupils to make strong progress in reading and writing. They study a wide range of authors and texts, which are suitably demanding. This gives pupils an appreciation of a variety of writing styles.
- Teaching has improved in mathematics and science, where pupils' progress, historically, has been less strong. Typically, there is clarity in lessons about what pupils are learning and where this fits within the overall sequence of what is being taught. Teachers are effective at modelling the thinking processes involved when solving mathematical or scientific problems. As a result, pupils are increasingly confident in their use of different methods, which helps them to understand some of the more demanding learning.
- Leaders have introduced an effective and reliable system of assessing and collecting information about pupils' progress. This has led to teachers putting timely and effective interventions in place. This has helped pupils catch up and close any gaps in their knowledge. Consequently, pupils' outcomes improved in 2018, and current pupils' progress continues to improve.
- Learning support assistants are deployed effectively to enhance pupils' learning. They are suitably trained. Teachers give them helpful advice about the pupils they support, including those with SEND. Their relationships with pupils are productive and they skilfully check on their learning and reassure them. Consequently, the pupils they support make good progress.
- Teachers use questioning to assess pupils' understanding, and challenge them to apply their knowledge in new contexts. At times, however, teachers' questioning is too shallow and does not secure all pupils' understanding about the more complex processes involved in a particular problem.
- Teachers generally plan lessons that are well matched to pupils' needs and abilities. Occasionally, however, when tasks are too easy or just more of the same, pupils do not deepen their thinking or learning. As a result, some pupils, especially the disadvantaged, have underperformed in the past. Leaders are aware of this and have put plans in place to address this. It is too soon to judge the impact of these actions.
- Leaders monitor the quality of teaching across the curriculum and provide effective support and targeted training, when required. As a result, teaching has improved, especially in key stage 4. There remains, nonetheless, some variability in the quality of teaching at key stage 3. Leaders have identified this and have effective plans in place to make teaching outstanding.

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's 'PROUD' values are well embedded in the day-to-day life of the school. Inspectors did indeed find that pupils are 'positive, resilient, open-minded, unified and

determined'. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the importance of equality and diversity in society, and have established a harmonious community in their own school.

- Pupils are fully committed to their school and the wider community. They undertake positions of responsibility, including organising numerous school shows, the school council and charitable appeals. They are supported very effectively to participate in competitive sports and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.
- Pupils are particularly effusive about the wide range of extra-curricular sports and arts activities in which they can engage. Participation levels are high, especially for disadvantaged pupils. Such rich provision makes an excellent contribution to improving pupils' physical, emotional and mental health.
- Pupils wear their uniform with pride, and look smart. They are proud of their school, and look after the school environment.
- Pupils have a strong awareness of many of the risks they may face in their local community and when online. For example, pupils spoke knowledgeably about keeping themselves safe from the risks in the locality that the school has accurately identified.
- Pupils said that bullying is extremely rare. They have every confidence that when it does occur, staff deal with it swiftly and effectively.
- Leaders provide excellent careers information and guidance for pupils, enabling pupils to select the most appropriate courses at key stages 4 and 5. Consequently, year-on-year, almost all pupils stay in education or training after Year 11.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils are loyal to the school and greatly value their time here. Pupils are very polite and well mannered. They are thoughtful and articulate in expressing their views.
- Throughout the school, there is consistently calm and orderly conduct. Pupils move around the school very sensibly, and show admirable consideration for staff, other pupils and visitors.
- Leaders have been determined to establish the right conditions for exceptional behaviour to be embedded across the school. This is clearly paying dividends. In lessons, and around the school, behaviour is outstanding. At social times, pupils play well together, with many engaging in sports. Conduct in the school canteen is excellent. In classes, incidents of pupils disrupting learning are very rare.
- The number of fixed-term exclusions has declined in recent years, and is now broadly average. Leaders use a range of therapeutic provision to help pupils manage their social, emotional and mental health needs, with much success. Additional, tailored support is provided for the small number of pupils who have displayed unacceptable behaviour, enabling them to reintegrate back into lessons.
- Attendance is above national average, year-on-year. When a pupil is absent, leaders have robust and clear procedures in place to check on them. This ensures that they come back to school as soon as possible.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- For the past few years, pupils' progress in English, humanities and languages has been consistently above average by the end of Year 11. In 2017 and 2018, the most able pupils and disadvantaged pupils also achieved well in these subjects. Historically, pupils' progress in mathematics has been broadly average, including in 2018. Although the small minority of pupils taking separate science GCSEs achieve well, the progress of the large majority studying combined science has been below average in recent years. However, pupils' attainment in many subjects, including science, has been rising, and the picture in 2018 was stronger than 2017.
- Leaders' analysis of recent assessment information and pupils' work suggests that the improvements from 2018 are set to continue and, in many cases, improve further. This is true for all pupil groups, including the disadvantaged and most-able pupils in a wide range of subjects, including science and mathematics.
- The progress of pupils with SEND is good across the school from their different starting points. Leaders ensure that these pupils receive effective provision and support, following accurate identification of their needs.
- Pupils follow an appropriate curriculum at key stages 3 and 4, which is designed to prepare them well for their next steps in education or training. A greater number of pupils now take courses leading to the English baccalaureate, where they achieve increasingly well. Leaders use the information they have about pupils to plan individually designed GCSE pathways. This, paired with excellent careers advice and guidance, ensures that pupils receive high-quality information. Consequently, the number of pupils who leave school and go onto further education, employment or apprenticeships is high and rising.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their different starting points. This is because of the school's work to assess them accurately and remove barriers to their learning, including around attendance. However, leaders have identified raising the achievement of disadvantaged pupils as a key area to continue to improve. This is because their progress has been significantly below that of other pupils, nationally, in some subjects in recent years, especially in science and mathematics.

16 to 19 study programmes

Outstanding

- The majority of students take academic A-level courses; in recent years, students' progress in these subjects has been consistently above average. Inspection evidence also shows that students make strong progress and achieve well in vocational subjects. A high proportion of students receive offers from the top Russell Group universities in England.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the sixth form is outstanding. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and share their enthusiasm for their subjects with students who are keen to learn. Teachers routinely plan lessons which engage and motivate students.

- Students have very positive relationships with staff, which motivate them to engage fully with their courses. This, together with consistently high-quality teaching, ensures that students make outstanding progress.
- The entry requirements into the sixth form and the curriculum have been revised to ensure that students access and complete courses that match closely with their abilities and needs. Students currently choose from a wide range of academic and vocational courses that support their future career aspirations and prepare them exceptionally well for their next steps.
- The school's work to ensure that students have the opportunity for work-based learning is very effective. All students benefit from appropriate work experience placements. As a result, students gain an insight into the world of work and future career choices.
- Students who have not achieved the minimum expected GCSE qualifications in English and mathematics make strong progress towards achieving them by the time they leave the sixth form.
- Leaders ensure that students benefit from effective careers advice and guidance. Consequently, the vast majority of students move on to universities, further education, apprenticeships or employment. Leaders track students' destinations rigorously. For example, almost all students who left the sixth form last year went on to employment, higher or further education or apprenticeships.
- Students behave impeccably. They are courteous and very complimentary about their sixth form. They feel safe and well supported, and all would recommend the sixth form to their younger peers.

School details

Unique reference number	136883
Local authority	Wandsworth
Inspection number	10086813

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
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,084
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	226
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Judi Dumont-Barter
Headteacher	Christian Kingsley
Telephone number	020 8673 8737
Website	www.chestnutgrove.wandsworth.sch.uk/
Email address	info@chestnutgrove.wandsworth.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized 11 to 19 school serving a culturally diverse community. It converted to an academy in February 2012.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than that found nationally.

- The majority of students are from a Black and minority ethnic heritage, and many speak English as an additional language. A significant minority of pupils are White British.
- The school does not use any off-site provision to educate its pupils.
- In January 2018, the school became part of the Wandle Learning Trust, a small multi-academy trust comprising Chestnut Grove Academy and Chesterton Primary School. The school is also a hub for the Wandle teaching school alliance.
- The current headteacher has been in post since September 2014.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and middle leaders. A meeting was also held with the chair and vice-chair of the local academy committee (governing body) and the chair of the Wandle Learning Trust.
- The lead inspector spoke with the school's link inspector from the local authority by telephone.
- Inspectors observed learning in all year groups across a range of subjects, some of which were conducted jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of pupils' work.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including minutes of governing body meetings, improvement plans, analyses of pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour information, safeguarding records and the school's self-evaluation documents.
- Discussions were held with pupils throughout the inspection and formally in groups.

Inspection team

Nasim Butt, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Desmond Deehan	Ofsted Inspector
Bruce Goddard	Ofsted Inspector
Stephen Hall	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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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