

Chartwell House School

Goodens Lane, Newton, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire PE13 5HQ

Inspection dates

16–18 January 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- All of the independent school standards are met.
- School leaders have good knowledge and understanding of the needs of pupils in the school. As a result, pupils at Chartwell House School make rapid progress in their social and emotional development.
- Pupils make good progress because the curriculum is adapted to their needs and interests.
- Pupils are well supported by the adults who work with them because they understand their learning and behaviour needs.
- Teaching assistants develop the skills to work in this school because the headteacher and proprietor ensure that they have access to good quality, relevant professional development.
- The proprietor ensures that the school provides learning resources which are relevant to each stage in the school and which relate to pupils' interests.
- The calm, well-ordered learning environment helps pupils to focus on their learning, attend school regularly and take responsibility for their own behaviour.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding because they understand what the teacher and teaching assistants expect of them.
- Pupils feel safe in the school because they are well supervised. Pupils are confident that staff listen carefully to them when they need to talk.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities which broaden their academic, cultural and social experiences.
- Preparation for pupils' further education is limited.
- Assessments do not provide a good strategic overview of what, and how, pupils need to achieve next.
- The school improvement plans are not precise enough to support the priorities for development.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- The proprietor should strengthen leadership and management of the school by:
 - learning from best practice in similar, and other, schools
 - ensuring appropriate training so that the headteacher can develop a strategic approach to school improvement
 - developing robust systems for assessment to inform strategic plans for pupils' next steps in learning
 - working with placing local authorities to develop pathway plans as early as possible so that pupils have the best possible chance to make effective transitions to the next stage in their education, employment or training
 - ensuring that all pupils get age-appropriate access to careers information and guidance.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher knows the school and each pupil very well. She prepares regular and thorough reviews of education, health and care plans, and pupil education plans in collaboration with placing authorities, parents, carers and the pupils themselves.
- As younger pupils have joined the school, leaders have made effective adjustments to the curriculum, classroom environments and approaches to working with pupils. As a result, the youngest children settle quickly into their new school and make rapid progress.
- The headteacher has been very effective in building teaching capacity in the school. For example, she has prepared detailed curriculum plans so that teaching assistants help plan and deliver individual lessons or sequences of lessons.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural (SMSC) development is a strength of the school because the headteacher has ensured that pupils' learning is linked to these four areas. Classroom displays and resources show how pupils develop awareness of SMSC issues. For example, in one classroom, pupils can use a 'feelings' carpet to express their moods. This helps the teaching staff to respond and support pupils' behaviour appropriately.
- The grounds of the school are pleasant and well cared for. Pupils help to grow vegetables, which they include in their lunchtime menus.
- The school makes use of local facilities, such as a sports centre for weekly physical education and sports lessons.
- Effective teamwork between the headteacher and teaching assistants means that approaches to supporting pupils' learning and behaviour remain consistent and purposeful. The staff team reviews the progress of each pupil each term. However, it is not always clear what the next steps are and who will take responsibility for particular aspects of teaching, learning and assessment.
- The headteacher has started to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in the school. This has helped her to identify areas for professional development of teaching assistants. All three teaching assistants are working with increasing confidence as a result of undertaking the level 3 national training for teaching assistants.
- The school has established very positive collaboration with the headteacher of the Cambridgeshire virtual school. She reported to the inspector that, as part of this collaboration, 'I sometimes pop in and spot check [the school]. Pupils are always calm and working hard.'
- Following the previous inspection, the headteacher attained the National Professional Qualification for Senior Leaders. This has helped her to evaluate how the school is developing. However, at the time of this inspection, the school's improvement priorities were general in nature and therefore it was not clear precisely what improvements are required, how they would be made and over what period of time.

Governance

- The proprietor of Chartwell House takes seriously the responsibility for ensuring that independent school standards are met. For example, the proprietor makes routine checks

of site safety and carries out maintenance work in a timely manner.

- The proprietor ensures that school policies are relevant and up to date.
- The proprietor appoints suitably qualified teaching staff and ensures that pupils have high-quality learning resources.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has robust systems for checking the suitability of staff to work with vulnerable young people.
- The school's safeguarding policies and guidance for staff is up to date and understood by those who work with pupils in the school.
- The designated safeguarding lead is well informed because she attends training and receives regular information updates through Cambridgeshire local authority.
- Safeguarding training for staff is wide-ranging, timely and ongoing. This means that teaching assistants are well equipped to keep the vulnerable young people in this school safe. They know how to report concerns if they arise.
- Pupils in the school feel safe because the school site is secure and well supervised by adults. Pupils trust teaching staff and feel confident that they can share concerns with the adults who support them.
- The school has robust procedures in place to ensure that pupils remain safe online. The young people in the school also understand and respect school rules about mobile phone use.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Pupils receive regular feedback about their work and how to make improvements. The feedback often takes the form of a conversation between teaching assistants and pupils. Pupils value the individual nature of these comments and are positive in their relationships with their teacher and the teaching assistants who work with them because they have detailed knowledge of the needs of each pupil.
- The school has adjusted classroom areas so that pupils at different stages and levels of maturity can concentrate on their learning and this is working well. The classroom for key stages 2 and 3 is now separate from the classroom for key stage 4 pupils. Older pupils are proud of their learning area because they helped to decorate it and they are responsible for keeping it tidy.
- The headteacher and teaching assistants have worked hard to ensure that pupils' learning is well resourced. For example, the school has started to introduce practical science activities and has now set up a small-scale laboratory so that experiments can be done.
- Teachers choose resources for learning carefully. Reading books, reference materials and resource folders relate to the stage of development and interests of pupils in the school.
- The classroom environments are well organised. Displays celebrate pupils' reading achievements, 'WOW' moments, democratic processes and reflections on feelings. Pupils take responsibility for organising their work into folders and each pupil has an individual

storage area.

- Pupils have good attitudes to learning because their teachers know what will interest them. This helps them to learn.
- The headteacher and teaching assistants know pupils very well and respond rapidly to meet their needs, pitching expectations at the right level and planning lesson activities which match their interests and learning needs. For example, a visit to the National Space Centre motivated pupils to learn more and be curious.
- Following the previous inspection, the school has adopted a more rigorous approach to assessing pupils when they first come to the school and then on an annual basis. However, during the academic year, the headteacher is over-reliant on observation to assess pupils' ongoing progress.
- The school has made adjustments to curriculum plans and approaches to teaching as younger pupils have joined the school. Given the gaps in learning of many pupils who are new to the school, school leaders do not take sufficient account of the starting points of the youngest pupils. For example, the school does not yet have a systematic approach to teaching reading and helping pupils to improve their handwriting.
- Learning goals correspond appropriately to individual pupils' stage of development. As a result, pupils make rapid gains because learning activities correspond to their individual needs. For example, in the course of two terms, one pupil's reading improved from well below his chronological age to well above.
- In lessons, pupils usually work with concentration. However, the rapid pace of shifting from one lesson to the next means that pupils do not always complete their work or have the opportunity to do more extended pieces of writing or research.

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 has introduced a 'red book' for each pupil so that there is a daily record of their progress and homework. This helps teachers and parents to highlight positive achievements, as well as day-to-day concerns which might affect pupils' attitudes to learning. As a result, good communication between home and school is maintained.
- The school maintains an inspirational photo album to tell the story of pupils' outings, celebrations and learning activities. A visit to a local haulage firm, celebrations of Diwali and Christmas, a trip to the National Space Museum, the annual school prize giving and the school play are all recent examples of the activities that pupils have taken part in. The photos are a demonstration of the school's commitment to broadening the experiences and cultural understanding of the young people at this school.
- Pupils are respectful of one another. They give one another individual space in the classroom. During a discussion with the inspector, one pupil said to another, 'I would like to use two words I know you don't like. Is that okay?'
- Pupils who are preparing for GCSE examinations are supported to make the transition to independent living. At appropriate stages, the school helps pupils to access work and

study experiences outside the school so that they develop social skills.

- The school prepares pupils well for living independently. For example, the oldest pupils plan, cost and prepare their own lunch. These young people enjoy the additional responsibility and see this independence as a privilege.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- The school's stated intention 'to help the child be happy and relaxed in an education setting' is evident from the minute one arrives at the school. The school environment is calm and, as a result, pupils settle quickly to their learning.
- Pupils understand the school's expectations of their behaviour. They value the school's system for rewarding effort and progress in learning. For example, they respond well to the pink reward cards, which mean that pupils earn privileges, such as trips out to adventure parks, a space museum and the theatre. As a result, pupils strive to respond quickly and positively to teachers' requests and instructions.
- Pupils are confident learners in this school because their teachers ensure that learning activities help pupils to improve. The small scale of the school and the support for individuals means that pupils settle quickly to their learning. As one key stage 3 pupil said, 'I can't concentrate in large groups so this school is right for me.'
- Pupils understand that they make choices about their behaviour. The school system allows pupils to make positive choices but, equally, pupils can opt for 'time out' if they want to have a few minutes to reflect or discuss behaviour challenges with a teaching assistant. As a result, pupils increasingly regulate their own behaviour and disruption to learning rarely happens.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are vigilant in observing and reflecting on pupils' behaviour. This means that they adjust behaviour management strategies to suit the individual pupil. One pupil described how he used to attend his previous school about one hour per day and how he is now in school full time and preparing for examinations: 'The education in this school is really good because you learn.'
- The school has a comprehensive approach to managing pupils' behaviour which extends to lunchtimes. Pupils socialise with one another and staff at mealtimes because routines are well established. Together with their teacher and teaching assistants, pupils share responsibilities for menu choices, preparation of food and washing up.
- The canteen environment is pleasant because teachers model good behaviour for pupils. For example, everyone waits until the last person has finished eating before moving on to the next course or leaving the dining area.
- Staff are well trained to deal with physical intervention if required. Thorough records are kept, the pupil involved is expected to reflect on his behaviour and teaching staff have a detailed debrief with the headteacher. Instances of physical intervention are extremely rare.
- Attendance at the school is often 100%. Pupils want to attend lessons and they enjoy learning.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils in this school make very strong progress from their starting points in academic and emotional development. This is because they attend school regularly and are supported by skilled teaching assistants in lessons.
- By the end of key stage 4, most pupils meet the school's expectation that they will sit GCSE examinations in English and mathematics.
- The wider curriculum provides pupils with a range of options that helps them consider their next steps in education, employment or training.
- Pupils' progress in most subject areas is good because their attitudes to learning are positive. For example, on entry to key stage 2, evidence in one pupil's work showed writing which was illegible and unstructured. Within the first year at Chartwell House School, this pupil has started to write his responses to questions without support from teaching staff and he has recently decided to enter a national short-story writing competition.
- Pupils read regularly with their teacher and parents. Key stage 2 pupils read fluently but they do not always understand what they read because they have gaps in their knowledge of the vocabulary.
- Preparations for the next stage in education, employment or training do not start early enough. For example, pathway plans were not in place for Year 11 pupils at the time of the inspection.
- Careers advice and guidance for pupils are currently limited to the oldest pupils in the school.

School details

Unique reference number	110931
DfE registration number	873/6018
Inspection number	10038901

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	8 to 16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	7
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Mr CE Wright
Headteacher	S Ramp
Annual fees (day pupils)	£57,000
Telephone number	01945 870793
Website	www.thechartwellgroup.co.uk/chartwell-house-newton.html
Email address	enquiries@chartwellgroup.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	24–26 September 2014

Information about this school

- Chartwell House School provides education for boys who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Pupils often have other needs, such as attention deficit and hyperactive disorder, and speech, language and communication difficulties. All pupils attending this school have education, health and care plans.
- Since its previous inspection, in September 2014, the school was granted a change in pupils' age range. It now offers places for up to seven boys aged from eight to 16 years. At the time of this inspection, seven pupils were on roll.
- Pupils can enter the school in Year 3 or at any later point during their primary or secondary education. Usually pupils stay for several years or until they finish GCSE

examinations. Some pupils have joined the school in the last year.

- The school's accommodation consists of two linked classrooms. In addition, there is a 'cabin' where pupils prepare and eat lunch and a workshop for technology lessons. There is a music room.
- The school staff comprises the full-time headteacher and three teaching assistants.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- The school was established in 1987 and is part of the Chartwell Group, which also owns a further school. The two schools share some specialist teachers for subjects such as design and technology, as well as a centre manager.
- The school has a single proprietor.
- The school was inspected previously in 2014 and judged as good. All independent school standards were met at the time of the inspection.

Information about this inspection

- The school was given one day's notice of inspection.
- The inspector observed lessons in key stages 2, 3 and 4 and scrutinised pupils' work.
- Meetings took place with the proprietor, the headteacher, the site manager and teaching assistants. Discussions also took place with all pupils at the school.
- There were insufficient responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, for these to be reported on. However, the inspector considered parents' comments which are part of termly reviews of pupils' progress.
- The inspector took into account five questionnaires completed by staff.
- A range of documents related to the school's work were scrutinised. These included evidence of pupils' progress, attendance registers, policies and records relating to pupils' behaviour.
- The inspector considered the school's procedures for keeping pupils safe. In discussions with leaders, teaching staff and pupils, she checked that these procedures were understood.
- Documents relating to the school's curriculum, such as schemes of work and choice of resources, were considered.
- The inspector observed pupils as they arrived at school, during lunchtime and at the end of the school day.

Inspection team

Jenny Carpenter, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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