

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Chadwick High School

Mainway, Skerton, Lancaster, Lancashire LA1 2AY

Inspection dates:

17 and 18 June 2025

Outcome

Chadwick High School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

This school offers pupils a fresh start to their education. It provides a warm, nurturing and safe environment. This close-knit school community fosters a happy and calm atmosphere in which pupils can succeed. Pupils appreciate the genuine care and attention that they receive from staff. This support allows pupils to thrive academically and personally.

The school sets high expectations for pupils' achievement. Staff encourage pupils to rise to these and do their best. Staff are deeply committed to helping pupils to achieve well and grow in confidence.

Pupils learn to behave well. Experienced staff support them in finding strategies to manage their emotions and actions. Pupils value the safe areas and resources that the school provides to assist them in calming down and managing their behaviour. They feel confident discussing their concerns with trusted staff. The school offers tailored and effective pastoral care to address pupils' social, emotional, and mental health needs.

Pupils take part in an extensive range of activities that develop their talents and interests, including swimming, darts, and access to outdoor education. These activities allow pupils to cultivate new skills and to develop resilience.

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

Most pupils join Chadwick High School having experienced considerable difficulties in their mainstream schools. Some pupils have had periods of absence and, as such, have developed gaps in their learning. Staff assess pupils' needs thoroughly when they join the school. They use this information to create specific targets for pupils.

The school has designed a broad and balanced curriculum that is suitably ambitious. In many subjects, the school has identified the important knowledge that pupils will learn. This carefully selected subject content helps pupils to close any gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding. Within these subjects, teachers design appropriate activities that support pupils' learning.

In a few subjects, the school is in the process of finalising the essential knowledge that pupils will learn. This means that, in these subjects, teachers are not clear enough about which content to emphasise. This hinders how well some pupils learn.

Pupils enjoy learning in a safe and inclusive environment. They appreciate that staff understand their needs. Pupils, all of whom have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are well supported. The school assesses, identifies and meets pupils' individual needs in a timely and precise way.

Reading is promoted and prioritised at the school. Across subjects, staff use effective literacy strategies to support pupils' vocabulary development. The school identifies and supports any pupils who have gaps in their reading knowledge. However, for a small number of pupils, the help that they receive does not match their specific needs as well as it could. This hampers how quickly these pupils develop confidence and fluency in their reading.

Supporting pupils' behaviour is a major strength of the school. Staff model kindness and respect. They ensure that pupils are ready to learn. Potential incidents are often avoided because staff are highly attuned to pupils' feelings and anxieties. Pupils' attendance typically improves once they join the school. The school constantly seeks alternative ways to support pupils with lower rates of attendance and to overcome any barriers that prevent them from attending school regularly. The school works closely with families, carers and external agencies to achieve this.

The school puts pupils' wider development at the centre of all that it does. Pupils learn how to keep safe, including how to recognise healthy relationships. Through the careers programme, pupils learn about the range of opportunities available to them. They discover different job roles and attend taster sessions at local colleges. This helps pupils move on to positive destinations when they leave school.

The school is led with a strong moral purpose. Governors support leaders to make decisions in the best interests of pupils and their families. Staff are positive about working at this school. They recognise that leaders listen and consider their workload when change is needed.

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, the school has not made clear to teachers the key knowledge that pupils need to learn and remember over time. This hinders some pupils from building successfully on what they know or from making relevant links in their learning. The school should ensure that the key knowledge in each subject is clearly defined and logically sequenced.
- Some pupils do not receive the most appropriate reading support to address the deficits in their reading knowledge. This prevents these pupils from fully accessing the curriculum and hampers their achievement. The school should ensure that pupils who struggle with reading receive the specific support that they need to read fluently, accurately and with good comprehension.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 first inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in January 2020.

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	133398
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10377986
Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	135
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kirstin Jarman
Headteacher	Andrew Murray
Website	www.chadwickhigh.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	14 and 15 January 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 10 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships
- Some pupils join Chadwick High School when they have been permanently excluded from a mainstream secondary school. Other pupils attend the school for a short period of time as respite from their secondary school. The school also has provision for pupils with medical needs. This includes pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. Many of these pupils have been out of education for a long time.

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 that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- The inspectors met with the headteacher, other school leaders and staff. The lead inspector also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to groups of pupils and looked at examples of their work. They also considered the school's self-evaluation document, along with other documentation and analysis provided by the school.
- The inspectors observed pupils during social times.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders to discuss pupils' rates of attendance and pupils' behaviour.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Rebecca Sharples, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jen Ashworth

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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