

Chase High School

Prittlewell Chase, Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex SS0 0RT

Inspection dates

15–16 March 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils' outcomes are well below average across a range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Poor teaching over time has led to successive cohorts of pupils underachieving. Too many pupils continue to underachieve.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not good enough across the curriculum. Pupils' experiences in science and humanities are too variable.
- Teachers do not always plan work that takes pupils' starting points into account. When they pitch work at the wrong level, pupils make slow progress and the most able pupils are not stretched.
- Leaders have an overgenerous view of the quality of the provision in the school. Their plans do not sufficiently address the key priorities for improvement.
- Leaders have not used the additional funding that they receive for disadvantaged pupils with enough precision to raise outcomes consistently for those pupils.
- Leaders do not effectively address the poor behaviour of a small minority of pupils. The number of fixed-term exclusions is high.
- Too many pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, are persistently absent.
- Outcomes in the sixth form are not yet good enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have adapted the curriculum to improve outcomes for pupils. It has been well planned across all key stages. Pupils' and students' needs and aspirations come first when deciding on their provision.
- Outcomes for pupils who speak English as an additional language are in line with the national average.
- Pupils in all years, and students in the sixth form, receive high-quality careers information and guidance.
- The school is calm and orderly.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well throughout the school.
- The Learning Resource Base provides highly effective support for those pupils who have cognition and learning needs.
- Pupils who receive their education at off-site provision are making stronger progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes so that all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make at least good progress by ensuring that teachers, especially in science and humanities, plan learning that matches pupils' needs and abilities and challenges them sufficiently.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - ensuring that teachers have high expectations of what pupils are able to achieve, particularly the most able pupils
 - providing teachers with more focused training to increase their effectiveness.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - planning more carefully to address the school's key improvement priorities
 - reviewing and evaluating the impact of interventions with greater precision
 - addressing more precisely the barriers to learning that some pupils face, particularly those who are disadvantaged.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - dealing more effectively with the poor behaviour of a small minority of pupils
 - analysing and addressing incidents of low-level disruption more systematically
 - engaging more determinedly with some parents and carers to increase the attendance of groups of pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged.
- Improve outcomes in the sixth form by ensuring that students attend regularly.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to ascertain how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have an overly positive view of the quality of provision provided by the school. This is because they have not implemented robust procedures to review the impact of their actions, and key aspects of their work have lacked sufficient oversight.
- Senior leaders have failed to engage effectively with a significant minority of parents, which has resulted in a high level of persistent absence.
- Leaders do not systematically record and analyse incidents of poor behaviour and bullying. As a result, they do not have sufficient information to deal effectively with the root causes of this behaviour. This has led to a high level of exclusions, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.
- Until recently, leaders have not tracked pupils' progress carefully enough. This has meant that they have not identified gaps in pupils' learning and intervened effectively to ensure that all groups of pupils make at least good progress.
- Leaders have not used additional government funding well enough to support disadvantaged pupils. They do not routinely plan interventions that meet the specific needs of individual pupils and acknowledge that they do not properly evaluate the impact of what they do to improve outcomes.
- Leaders' actions to support those in Year 7 who need to catch up with their reading and writing lack rigour. They use additional funding to support extra reading programmes but are not evaluating its impact on pupil progress effectively.
- Leaders do not ensure that the school's plans for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, are written or reviewed effectively. The review process does not always involve parents or focus sufficiently on pupils' achievement.
- The deputy headteacher responsible for the management of the school's assessment information has ensured that systems to track pupils' progress are now more effective. There are initial signs that these actions are accelerating the progress that pupils make.
- School leaders, with support from the trust, have identified whole-school training priorities through their routine monitoring of teaching and learning. Teachers are encouraged to share good practice through, for example, the 'Tweak of the Week' and plan how to provide all pupils with greater stretch and challenge. However, leaders do not systematically identify and support the training needs of individual teachers. Nor do they review the impact of this training on pupils' outcomes.
- The subject leaders of English and mathematics demonstrate high expectations in their detailed analysis of pupils' assessment information. The interventions they have planned for some groups of pupils have enabled those pupils to make more rapid progress.
- Newly qualified and trainee teachers are passionate advocates of the school and its pupils. They feel well supported by senior leaders and see themselves very much as part of the school community.
- Leaders and the trust recognise the importance of working together effectively to win

back the support of the local community and to bring about improvements. There are signs that the school has begun to 'turn the corner'. Students in the sixth form, for example, say that the school has become more inclusive over the past two years.

- The quality of careers information and guidance that pupils receive is good. Pupils in all years attended a recent careers fair which attracted a large number of local employers and training providers.
- Pupils have extensive opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Across the curriculum, as well as in assemblies, pupils are encouraged to consider relevant issues such as equality and diversity. Pupils appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer.
- Leaders have developed a balanced curriculum that now better meets the needs of pupils at the school. They have retained a three-year key stage 3 so that pupils continue to study a broad range of subjects in Years 7, 8 and 9. They have also guided a larger proportion of pupils in key stage 4 towards studying the full range of EBacc subjects.
- The local authority has a positive relationship with the school and the trust and values the support they provide to the local education community.

Governance of the school

- Members of the local governing body are ambitious for the pupils at Chase High and recognise the priorities the school faces. They realise that outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are still not good enough. Until recently, however, they had not effectively challenged leaders over the use of resources and funding for this group of pupils and the consequent impact on outcomes and achievements.
- Scrutiny of the minutes of governors' meetings confirms that governors are now providing the headteacher and his senior team with a greater level of challenge. They scrutinise leaders' improvement plans more rigorously and have, on occasion, asked for them to be redrafted and made more evaluative.
- Governors are fully aware of their responsibilities to safeguard pupils in the school, and the safeguarding governor regularly reviews the school's practices in this regard.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that they undertake all statutory checks when recruiting staff, and they record and maintain the single central record of these checks well. Leaders ensure that there is a thorough approach to safer recruitment and that all appropriate procedures and checks are in place when new staff are appointed.
- Pupils say that they feel confident about their personal safety, particularly keeping themselves safe online. They have faith in the school staff to support them should problems arise.
- Staff are well trained in the most up-to-date guidance on child protection and safeguarding. This includes training in the 'Prevent' duty, which supports pupils who

are vulnerable to radicalisation and extremism.

- Staff are aware of the signs of potential abuse, neglect or concern, and make appropriate referrals to the designated safeguarding team.
- The designated safeguarding team is highly skilled in attending to the well-being and care of the most vulnerable pupils. It acts to ensure that these pupils get access to the right care and support, including that internally within the school, and from external agencies.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment does not secure consistently good progress for pupils across all year groups and across the curriculum.
- Leaders know where the strengths lie in teaching, learning and assessment. However, they are overgenerous in their view about the overall impact of teaching on pupils' learning across the curriculum.
- The quality of teaching in science and the humanities subjects is inconsistent. This is because some teachers' planning does not take enough account of what pupils already know and can do. This means that many pupils find activities too easy or too difficult.
- When teachers' expectations are not high enough, some pupils, including those who have low prior attainment, lose focus in lessons. When teachers' planning does not engage pupils' enthusiasm or enable them to apply new learning, they become more passive and make slower progress. On these occasions, teachers do not always refocus pupils promptly enough.
- Pupils have the opportunity to develop their writing skills in different subjects, but these opportunities have not been embedded across the curriculum. Pupils are not expected to write at length and in detail regularly enough.
- Most Year 7 pupils are happy, confident readers who read fluently and understand that reading is important. However, teachers do not consistently promote literacy across the curriculum and some are not adept at developing the literacy skills of those pupils who are less confident.
- Feedback to pupils varies considerably in its impact because teachers do not follow the school's policy consistently enough. When it is used most effectively, teachers explain clearly what pupils need to do to make progress. In Year 11 English lessons, for example, pupils said that they understood precisely how to improve their work and demonstrated this in their purposeful attitudes to learning.
- Teaching is strong in English and physical education. It is most effective when teachers make it clear what they expect pupils to learn during their lessons and question them carefully. Some teachers are particularly skilful at using focused questioning to extend pupils' understanding when they talk to them individually. Consequently, pupils make strong progress.
- The majority of teachers have good subject knowledge and use this to plan learning that challenges and extends pupils. In mathematics, for example, pupils in Year 7 regularly tackle GCSE questions in their lessons.

- Pupils are often highly articulate when talking about their learning. They say that they learn more effectively when teachers make the link between what they are learning and clear assessment criteria.
- Pupils' relationships with teachers and their attitudes to learning are positive. They speak highly of the teachers who foster good relationships with them and who plan lessons that bring a real-life context to their learning.
- From their scrutiny of books, inspectors could see that most pupils take great pride in their work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They told inspectors that people realise the school is improving.
- They are confident that bullying will be dealt with effectively. They are aware of different types of bullying, including physical and homophobic, and know how to stay safe online.
- They have a clear understanding of the need to treat all people with respect, and a positive culture of equality and diversity prevails. For example, pupils feel safe about discussing their sexuality as a result of the strong focus on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) rights.
- Leaders meet regularly with the leaders of alternative provision and effectively monitor the attendance, welfare and progress of all pupils who are educated elsewhere to ensure that these pupils are successful and kept safe. Pupils in the Learning Resource Base feel safe and well integrated within the school because their social and emotional needs are thoughtfully considered and met.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Teachers do not consistently set work that meets pupils' different learning needs. When this is the case, pupils lose interest in their work and disrupt the learning of others.
- Most pupils' attitudes towards one another and adults are polite and cooperative. They wear their uniforms with pride. Pupils generally conduct themselves well between lessons and during social times, although inspectors observed some low-level disruption during the inspection. This behaviour was well managed by staff. Pupils told inspectors that behaviour in lessons and around the school site has improved over the past two years.
- The number of fixed-term exclusions is high but is falling steadily.
- Leaders have implemented a structured intervention programme for those with low

attendance and regularly reward those pupils whose attendance is good. As a result, the attendance of all groups has improved steadily over the past two years. The proportion of pupils that are persistently absent, including disadvantaged pupils, has also decreased, but is still well above the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes for all groups of pupils are well below national averages in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Pupils generally enter the school with levels of attainment in the basic skills of English and mathematics that are below average. In the past, they have then fallen further behind other pupils nationally because they have failed to make sufficient progress at Chase High. This has been due to the inconsistent quality of teaching across the school and, until recently, leaders' lack of precise checks on pupils' progress.
- In 2017, most Year 11 pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, made significantly less progress than other pupils nationally. This was the case across a broad range of subjects, including English, mathematics, science, geography and history. As a result, disadvantaged pupils' attainment was also well below that of their peers.
- Year 11 pupils who speak English as an additional language made progress in 2017 that was in line with that made by other pupils nationally.
- The school's own performance information indicates that pupils currently in Years 10 and 11, including those who are disadvantaged, are now making more sustained progress across the full range of subjects. The gap in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in these two year groups is narrowing.
- Pupils' progress across key stage 3, particularly in Year 7, is improving more rapidly. There are variations in performance in different subjects across key stage 3, but the progress of disadvantaged pupils is now at least in line with that of other pupils in the school.
- Pupils who receive their education at off-site provision attend well and take part in courses which are suitable to their needs. They are making stronger progress than previously in a range of subjects, including English and information technology, but not in mathematics.
- Those pupils in the Learning Resource Base who have SEN and/or disabilities are making slow but measurable progress, and it is in line with expectations. Leaders are now able to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' performance because they are implementing a more rigorous analysis of pupils' assessment information. Leaders acknowledge that there is still work to do to ensure that all staff use this information consistently well in order to promote pupils' higher achievement.
- All pupils who left Year 11 in 2017 maintained their participation in education and training, in either the sixth form, further education or work with training. An increasing number of disadvantaged students entered the school's sixth form. The range of different courses indicates that guidance is effective and appropriate.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is too variable across a range of subjects and does not ensure that students make good progress. For example, the most able students are not making as much progress as their peers on some A-level courses.
- Recently, leaders have begun to check on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the 16 to 19 programmes. This has enabled them to identify areas of strength and weakness in different subjects and to take action to bring about improvements.
- Where practice is stronger, it is because teachers use their extensive subject knowledge to provide high-quality feedback, which students use well to improve their work.
- On some courses, students' poor attendance is having a negative impact on their progress. This is especially the case for those students who are required to resit GCSE English or mathematics on entering the sixth form. Leaders are yet to evaluate fully the impact of their actions to address this issue.
- In 2017, students on vocational courses tended to achieve at a higher level than those on academic courses.
- The recently appointed leader with responsibility for the sixth form has brought a strong sense of moral purpose and successfully raised students' aspirations. He is well supported by the sixth form team, who know students well. Together they ensure that students are guided carefully through the process of choosing and applying to universities, and of securing apprenticeships and jobs. Careers advice and guidance are of a high standard.
- Students in the sixth form follow study programmes that are carefully designed to meet their individual needs and provide progression routes that are not offered elsewhere locally. Students are supported to make appropriate curriculum choices through highly effective guidance that focuses on their talents, interests and aspirations.
- The sixth form meets the requirements of the 16 to 19 study programmes. All students have the opportunity to develop their employability skills through work experience and by meeting the many representatives from the world of work that visit the school.
- Leaders encourage students to work with younger pupils, for example by providing support in mathematics lessons, but these opportunities for students to act as effective role models are not fully developed.
- Students talked very positively about the quality of the pastoral support they receive in the sixth form. Consequently, they understand the need to respect all people, including those who are different from themselves. They also know how to keep themselves safe, including online, when in relationships and out in the local community.
- The proportion of students completing sixth-form courses is above average and the proportion of students attending university after sixth form is increasing.

School details

Unique reference number	141741
Local authority	Southend-on-Sea
Inspection number	10041753

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,072
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	186
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Anthony McGarel
Headteacher	Andrew James
Telephone number	01702 354441
Website	www.chasehigh.org/
Email address	chasehigh.school@chasehigh.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy

Information about this school

- Chase High School opened as an academy sponsored by Brentwood Academies Trust in April 2015.
- The school is larger than the average secondary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage, and about a quarter are from minority ethnic groups or speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, with a statement or an education, health and care plan, is above the national average. The proportion of

pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities without a statement or an education, health and care plan is in line with the national average.

- In 2017, the school did not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment in English and mathematics.
- The school does not meet the requirements on the publication of information about the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium.
- A small number of pupils attend off-site provision at Southend YMCA Community School and Victory Park Academy.
- The school manages a special resource base, called the Learning Resource Base, for 14 pupils with cognition and learning needs.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 48 lessons across a wide range of subjects and in all key stages. Some lessons were jointly observed with senior leaders. Inspectors also observed tutor time and one assembly. They looked at pupils' work in lessons across all year groups.
- The lead inspector met with the headteacher, members of the safeguarding team, newly qualified and trainee teachers, the 'achievement lead', members of the local governing board and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with the local authority's director of learning.
- Inspectors held a range of meetings with the school's leaders, including the designated safeguarding lead; senior leaders responsible for behaviour and attendance, teaching and learning, and the curriculum; the senior leader responsible for the sixth form; leaders with oversight of the use of the pupil premium; the careers leader; subject leaders.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and during breaktimes and lunchtimes. They listened to pupils reading and spoke formally with pupils from key stage 3 and key stage 4, as well as students in the sixth form. Over the two days, inspectors spoke informally with pupils about their experiences, their learning and their safety.
- An inspector visited an alternative provider that pupils from the school attend and also held a telephone conversation with another alternative provider.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the school's development plan, minutes of meetings of the local governing board and the trust, information about the attainment and progress of all pupils, records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding, and information on the school's website. The lead inspector also checked the school's single central register and the school's system for recruiting staff.
- Inspectors evaluated 115 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 104 free-text responses, as well as an additional written communication received from a parent.

Inspection team

Peter Whear, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Bell	Ofsted Inspector
Lynn Ayling	Ofsted Inspector
Dan Leonard	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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