

# Inspection of an outstanding school: Chorley Astley Park School

Harrington Road, Chorley, Lancashire PR7 1JZ

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Inspection dates:

11 and 12 June 2024

## **Outcome**

Chorley Astley Park School continues to be an outstanding school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils flourish at this school. They are impeccably polite and well mannered. The high quality of care that pupils receive from staff helps them to succeed. Pupils are taught how to recognise and manage their own emotions. They learn how to create strong friendships with their peers. Pupils speak kindly to each other. They are happy in school.

The school has the highest aspirations for pupils' achievement. Pupils, all of whom have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve exceptionally well. Pupils at the earliest stages of their development benefit from highly nuanced support. This helps them to settle quickly at the school.

The school places the development of each pupil's communication skills at the heart of its curriculum. Pupils enjoy the conversations that they have with each other during their daily social dining experience. They are confident and inquisitive.

Pupils relish the diverse range of opportunities that they have to develop their talents and interests. For example, they enjoy visits to a library, local shops and residential trips, where they take part in outdoor and adventurous activities. Pupils take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and develop their enterprise skills, for instance, when they run the school shop. Pupils become resilient and independent young people.

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

Governors are exceptionally well trained. They carry out their roles with a high level of expertise. Governors have a deep understanding of the school's work. They provide highly effective support and challenge to the school. Governors ensure that the school environment is one where everyone is welcome and where pupils thrive.

The school has designed a highly ambitious curriculum. It has thought carefully about the important knowledge and skills that pupils should learn and when they should learn them. Pupils study a broad range of subjects in each key stage. The curriculum prepares pupils extremely well for each phase of their education. Pupils gain a wide variety of qualifications that set them up well for further education, apprenticeships or employment with training.

Staff have a well-developed understanding of the curriculums that they teach. They make regular checks on what pupils know, remember and can do. Staff use this information expertly to swiftly address any gaps or misconceptions that pupils may have in their learning. Pupils build their knowledge and skills securely over time.

Staff are highly skilled at identifying and supporting pupils' additional needs. They draw extensively on the information in pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans to design engaging and appropriate activities. Pupils achieve exceedingly well.

The school prioritises the development of pupils' reading, language and communication skills. It has established a clear and ambitious suite of reading pathways to ensure that pupils quickly learn to communicate. Pupils with communication needs receive well-tailored and focused support. This includes the use of sign language, visual aids and technology. As a result, pupils learn how to articulate their thoughts and feelings to others with clarity and accuracy.

Pupils at the early stages of learning to read receive the help that they need to develop their phonics knowledge. They read from books that are well matched to the sounds that they already know. This helps pupils to become fluent readers.

Pupils show extremely strong levels of motivation towards their learning. The school takes great care to ensure that staff have a detailed understanding of the needs of each pupil. Many pupils benefit from the intelligent support that the school provides to help them to attend well and to manage their behaviour successfully. As a result, pupils routinely benefit from all that the school has to offer.

The school provides pupils with an array of meaningful experiences. Staff help pupils to develop the self-belief that they need to attempt new challenges. Pupils learn how to look after their physical and mental health. They know how to stay safe in the community, including online. Staff take great care to ensure that pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships and of how their bodies change as they grow.

Pupils access a comprehensive programme of careers education and work experience placements. They have high aspirations for their futures. The school makes sure that pupils move on to settings and destinations that are extremely well matched to their talents and interests.

Staff value the consideration that the school has for their well-being. For example, improvements to the school's approaches to assessment have helped to support staff's workload. Parents and carers appreciate the information that they receive from the

school, including regular updates about their children. This enables parents to celebrate their children's achievements at home. Parents hold the school in extremely high regard.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 outstanding 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 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	119877
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10321379
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	171
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Wendy Blundell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kieran Welsh
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.astleypark.lancs.sch.uk">www.astleypark.lancs.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	30 and 31 January 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- All pupils at the school have an EHC plan.
- The school provides for pupils with a broad range of SEND, including complex needs. These include autism, specific learning difficulties, moderate learning difficulties, social emotional and mental health needs, and speech, language and communication needs. Some pupils have severe learning difficulties, hearing and visual impairments or physical disabilities.
- The school makes use of one unregistered alternative provider for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

Inspections are a point-in-time inspection 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading and communication, mathematics, and personal, social, health and economic education. For each deep dive, the inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors reviewed a sample of pupils' work from some other subjects.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders.
- The lead inspector held meetings with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. He also spoke to a representative of the local authority and the school's improvement adviser.
- Inspectors met with leaders to discuss SEND, pupils' behaviour and attitudes and the provision for pupils' wider development.
- An inspector observed some pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors also considered responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey. Inspectors gathered the views of staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record and took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils. They considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at social times.

### **Inspection team**

Andy Cunningham, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Stephen Ruddy

Ofsted Inspector

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