

Inspection of Chaffinch Brook School

32 Morland Road, Croydon CR0 6NA

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 May 2024

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Abbie Venum. This school is part of The Beckmead Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Jonty Clark, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Laurence Nesbitt.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to the school. They like their lessons and the regular trips and visits to interesting places. Pupils soak up the knowledge that they gain from the school's curriculum and remember what they have learned. They value the special days that the school organises to celebrate different aspects of the school's life and community, for example World Book Day and events to promote the acceptance and awareness of autism.

Pupils are proud of their talents and unique qualities. Staff support pupils to deal with any challenges. They enable pupils to get better at managing social situations in everyday life. Pupils learn to develop their communication skills. The school helps pupils to notice and understand their own feelings and the feelings of others.

The school has very high expectations of pupils to do their best at school. Pupils behave exceptionally well. When required, staff offer pupils support in a professional and kind way. This helps pupils to quickly get back on with their studies. Pupils feel safe at school. If there are ever any problems with friendships or unkind behaviour, this gets sorted out very quickly.

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

The school has put in place an ambitious curriculum which clearly identifies what pupils should learn and when. Staff who work at the school feel very well supported by leaders, including the trust. They say that leaders at all levels consider their well-being.

Pupils acquire knowledge in a sequential way, with each step building on the one before. Teachers bring the curriculum to life with imaginative and fun teaching. This helps pupils remember what they have been taught. Working relationships between adults and pupils are a strength of the school. The secure attachments that exist help pupils to feel relaxed, positive and ready to learn. All pupils at the school have autism, and there is a strong culture of being positive about what this means for the pupils.

The school nurtures pupils' talents and interests. This means that pupils grow in self-confidence and respect for themselves and other people. Teachers check each pupil's journey through the curriculum in a systematic way. This includes pupils' social and communication as well as their academic development. In some parts of the school, the implementation of the school's curriculum aims are not as secure. This limits pupils' deeper knowledge and skills over time. The school has clear plans and actions to develop staff's expertise further.

Reading has a special place at the school. There are high-quality books and reading material widely available. Pupils read widely and often. They enjoy adults reading ambitious texts to them. Pupils take part in reading with enthusiasm. They like to pause and discuss parts of stories that have caught their attention and imagination.

Pupils experience a wide range of authors, including from diverse cultures and backgrounds. Books are chosen that present ethical and moral content from history and modern day life. This enriches pupils' understanding of diversity and equality. Pupils who are at the early stages of reading are supported by a well-organised approach to teaching phonics.

The school is an excellent and calm place for pupils to learn in. There are times when pupils need help to manage their emotions and behaviour. When this happens, staff know what to do. This is because of staff's immense expertise to understand pupils' individual needs. Staff use their utmost knowledge of pupils to enable them to remain focused on learning. Pupils attend well, and the school takes prompt action if there are any barriers to a pupil attending school.

The school's provision for pupils' personal development is excellent. It provides many opportunities for pupils to develop their resilience, personality and sense of self-worth. Staff teach pupils about how to keep safe and independent, for instance how to use vocabulary and language to share their feelings. There are many sporting and cultural visits and activities that pupils remember and talk about enthusiastically. These include a professional storyteller, regular trips to go sailing, overnight stays and other outdoor and adventurous activities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some parts of the school, the implementation of the curriculum is not fully secure. This means that, on occasion, pupils' knowledge and skills do not develop deeply over time. The school should continue with its plans to ensure that all teachers are able to deliver the ambitious curriculum precisely.

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	148768
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	10323450
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	95
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Laurence Nesbitt
Headteacher	Abbie Venum
Website	www.beckmeadtrust.org/Chaffinch
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Beckmead Trust.
- The school is on two sites. The lower school, and the registered address, is at 32 Morland Road, Croydon, CR0 6NA. The upper school is at Monks Orchard Road, Beckenham, BR3 3BZ.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- All pupils who attend the school have special educational needs and/or disabilities. All pupils have an education, health and care plan which names communication and interaction or autism as the primary area of need. Some pupils have other needs as well, including social, emotional and/or mental health difficulties.
- 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

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time 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 the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders at the school. Inspectors also met with the chair of the governing body and trust leaders, including the CEO.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, physical education and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff 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 considered the views of parents, staff and pupils, including through online surveys.

Inspection team

Gary Pocock, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Phil Garnham

His Majesty's Inspector

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