



School Report to Parish Council

April 23rd 2024



Dear Councillors,

Please find below a report on some key areas at Chesterton Primary School.

Pupil Numbers

The current pupil numbers are shown below.

Class	Year	Pupils
Maple	Reception	30
Beech	1	30
Ash	2	30
Chestnut	3	30
Hawthorn	4	30
Rowan	5	28
Oak	6	16
	Total	194

The school expanded to 7 classes (single form entry) in September 2023 for the first time in its history. We anticipate being very close to capacity (210 pupils) when our current small Year 6 cohort leave in July and are replaced by an intake of between 25-30 Reception pupils in September. It would not be feasible or desirable to expand any further, due to physical space and demand for places in the local area.

Capital and other major projects

The main building development project to add the two classrooms was completed in May 2021. Since then the school has invested heavily in other improvement projects, including:

- Improvement of the 'school house garden' with new paved areas seating and planting (May 2021)

- Replacement play trail (June 2021)
- All-weather surfacing of the Reception outside area (June 2021)
- New playground markings (June 2022)
- Beginning of a 10-year lease of an adjoining field (rear of the school down towards Gaggles Brook). (September 2022) This has been enclosed with fencing and plans to increase the biodiversity of this area (tree planting, wild flower meadow etc. are underway).
- Refurbishment of Year 1, Year 2 and Year 4 (Victorian classroom) classrooms. August 2023.

School Improvement Priorities 2023-24

- Writing attainment
- Phonics and early reading
- Consistency of SEND provision across the school
- Induction, recruitment and retention procedures
- Implementation of school 'vision': Building Firm Foundations for Life

OFSTED

The school was inspected by Ofsted on 7th and 8th March 2023 and you may be aware that we retained our 'Good' judgement.

Our previous inspection took place in March 2017, when the school was also judged to be 'Good'. However, both the school and the Ofsted framework have changed significantly since then, and expectations have never been higher. Therefore, retaining our rating of 'Good' was very pleasing. In the years preceding the inspection, for obvious reasons, it was harder than ever to maintain the rich and varied experience that we value so highly at Chesterton. Therefore, we were very proud that the inspection recognised strengths across a wide range of areas, both from within the curriculum and beyond.

I have included some of the highlights below.

Staff have high expectations. Around the school, pupils behave calmly and respectfully towards each other. Pupils play in cooperative and kind ways and are clear about the school's rules and systems to support behaviour and conduct, such as the school's 'house system' and 'traffic lights'.

Leaders and staff know pupils very well. They form close relationships and are well supported through extensive pastoral support that is on offer.

Pupils learn about democracy and enjoy responsibilities such as 'School Councillor', 'Eco Councillor' and 'Sports Captain'. One pupil said, 'We do things here that when we leave, we will look back at and remember.'

One pupil said, 'You might not like sport before you join our school but by the time you leave you will love it!'

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils. Leaders have developed clear, sequenced, well-planned curriculums that prepare pupils well for their next stage of education. In subjects such as geography, key knowledge that pupils need to know has been mapped out, including subject-specific vocabulary. Teachers understand how to link that knowledge across lessons, and how to help pupils understand and remember the things they need to.

Pupils begin learning phonics from the start of their time in Reception and most pupils progress well through the scheme. If any pupil falls behind, staff recognise this and provide extra support to help them catch up. Staff choose rich, engaging texts to share with pupils that help to weave the curriculum together and make learning memorable.

In mathematics, including in the early years, staff make good use of the training that is provided for them. Staff are very confident in their use of vocabulary and how to support pupils in developing their mathematical understanding.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive and appreciate the efforts of the whole school community. One parent said, 'We have been and continue to be delighted with this friendly school for our children. Staff are united in going the extra mile to support families as well as the children and we feel part of a community where we are cared for and nurtured.'

Extra-curricular activities

A major part of Chesterton School life is our extra-curricular activities and educational visits, from choir to Forest School, Gardening Club to sporting events. We are fortunate to have an enthusiastic team of staff and volunteers who help to make this possible.

This year, our Year 3/4 pupils have been to Shropshire for a 3 day residential and our Year 5/6 pupils spent a week at Kilvrough on the Gower Peninsular.

Finance

The school works hard to budget each year, with significant pressures from rising costs and pay rises that are not fully funded by central government. However, the strong pupil numbers are vital to remaining sustainable and maintaining the quality of education and environment. We are also grateful to a very active and successful School Association, whose fundraising efforts help subsidise us in a number of key areas.

Parking

We know that this is an area of concern for some local residents. However, I'm sure you will appreciate that we are by no means alone in terms of school parking issues at drop-off and pick-up. Please see recent communication with parents regarding parking around the area of the school. Although our powers are limited, we have taken the following steps.

- Email messages to parents regarding considerate parking. (see below)
- Teacher/SLT 'patrols' as a deterrent
- A small number of pupil/teacher patrols
- Annual Walk-to-School and other ad-hoc Park and Stride days
- Contacting individual parents if identified to have parked inconsiderately
- Contact with our PCSO (a couple of visits to monitor over the years)

Dear Parents and Carers,

Unfortunately, in the past few weeks, we have received multiple reports of inconsiderate parking and driving at school drop-off and pick-up, both on Alchester Road and Orchard Rise.

Witnesses (residents, parents and staff) have reported a range of different 'offences' including:

- *parking on the yellow zigzag lines outside school*
- *parking on the solid white line on the corner of Orchard Rise and other solid white lines protecting junctions and turnings*
- *parking across residents' driveways making it impossible for our neighbours to exit or enter safely*
- *dropping off and waiting in locations that cause obstruction, often with the engine running, meaning that traffic cannot pass freely*

**Please note that the school taxi is allowed to park on the yellow zig-zag lines.*

*As always, the school will do its best to encourage safe and considerate driving and parking, but we really do rely on the cooperation of the whole school community, so please can I ask again that you take extra care in the roads around the school to respect pedestrians, other road users and our neighbours? **The last thing that any of us wants is an accident where someone is injured or worse.***

The excuse that we/residents are often given is that parents/carers were 'running late' or 'I am only stopping here for a few minutes'. Neither of these are valid, and would be of no consolation to the victim of an accident. We would much rather an adult parked a bit further away from the school and arrived a few minutes late on those occasions, than leaving a vehicle in an inappropriate location.

If you witness any inconsiderate or dangerous driving or parking, please report to the school office and we will do everything that we can to identify and speak to the individual/s involved.

We will be again be asking our neighbourhood policing team to support in monitoring the situation. However, their capacity for this kind of work is always limited. Governors and staff will also continue to do all they can to observe and challenge offenders. Contrary to what you may or may not have read on the village Facebook page, school staff have directly spoken to or contacted numerous drivers over the years when issues have been raised and when individuals can be identified. For example, only last week, a contractor's lorry visiting a nearby property and parked on the yellow zigzag lines at the end of the school day was told to move on by a member of teaching staff. However, our primary role is supervising children safely on the school premises and 'patrolling' beyond the site is not always possible.

If you have any questions/comments regarding the school, then please don't hesitate to contact me.

I. Horner: Headteacher – 17th April 2024