

Cheriton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118480
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	358357
Inspection dates	27–28 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Helen Hutchings

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	345
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rob Coward
Headteacher	Angela Maxted
Date of previous school inspection	13 May 2008
School address	Church Road Cheriton Folkstone CT20 3EP
Telephone number	01303276112
Fax number	01303272305
Email address	amaxted@cheriton.kent.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 22 lessons involving 15 teachers, and held meetings with the chair of the governing body, representative staff and a group of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at planning documents, assessment information and pupils' work. In addition, inspectors received and analysed questionnaires from 138 parents and carers, and scrutinised others from staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The sustainability of recent improvements in pupils' progress, particularly of girls and the most able pupils, because the attainment of these groups has been relatively lower than other groups in the past.
- How well teaching interests and challenges pupils of all abilities.
- How effectively teachers use assessment information to identify pupils who are not making the expected progress, and the impact of the school's mentoring programme on their achievements.
- The impact of the school's links with parents and carers and the work within the local community on pupils' personal development and achievement.

Information about the school

In this above average-sized school, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is high. The school has a small unit for children with hearing impairment and currently pupils are taught within mainstream classes. A higher than average percentage of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, mainly from Bruneian families posted to the local military barracks for limited periods of duty. As a result, the proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language is high, as is the proportion of pupils who join or leave the school at times other than at the beginning or end of their primary education. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The Early Years Foundation Stage is made up of two Reception classes. A breakfast club managed by the governing body runs daily. The school has a number of awards for its work, including Healthy School, Travel Plan and Modern Language awards.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Cheriton Primary School provides a good education for its pupils. Parents and carers hold the school in high regard, recognising the rapid improvement since the last inspection. Almost all areas have improved from being satisfactory and the school now has some outstanding aspects to its work. The emphasis on working closely with parents, carers and pupils to remove possible barriers to learning is central to the school's work and is outstanding. Consequently the school lies at the heart of its community and its friendly, caring ethos is reflected in the way pupils and their parents value the school and willingly contribute to it. Adults are consistent in their approach and provide outstanding care so that pupils know that there is always someone to turn to in time of need. Pupils gain greatly from the cultural diversity within the school, and understand and value the different faiths, backgrounds and beliefs represented in their community. As a result, community cohesion and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding.

Children start well in Reception, developing good social skills and a readiness for later learning. Pupils continue to make good progress through the school due to the school's determination to improve teaching and learning, which are now good. Attainment is in line with national averages at the end of Year 6. Teachers have an accurate understanding of pupils' progress and use this well to target work which is generally matched accurately to the needs of individuals. Improvements in the teaching of sounds and letters (phonics) have raised reading skills. Teachers are implementing focused plans to improve writing and mathematics further. These include developing more opportunities for pupils to write within everyday relevant contexts and to strengthen their mental arithmetic through more daily practice. At the moment, pupils are not expected to write at length regularly enough. Pupils are keen to do well and present their work carefully because they find the tasks planned for them interesting. When required to do so, pupils respond to teachers' comments on the quality of their work, but this expectation is not consistent across the school. On occasion, marking emphasises what pupils have achieved, with insufficient guidance on exactly how it could be improved further.

The improvements made since the last inspection demonstrate the ambition and drive within the school and its good capacity for sustained development. The governing body and school staff have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and a clear understanding of exactly what has to be done to bring about further improvement; this reflects leaders' good self-evaluation of the work of the school. ♦

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress to raise their attainment by;

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- requiring pupils to write at greater length
- giving them more opportunities to write for real purposes or within the context of other subjects
- providing more practice in oral and mental mathematics
- ensuring that marking consistently gives pupils feedback on how their work can be improved.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils are supportive of each other and their habitual good behaviour helps to create a positive learning environment where everyone is able to share their ideas openly, knowing that they are valued and appreciated. This includes pupils with hearing impairment and those who are at relatively early stages of speaking English. Pupils are encouraged to articulate their ideas and learn from the sympathetic evaluation of each other's work. This is effectively promoting good speaking skills. Pupils say that teachers try to make learning fun. This was seen in a lesson when the teacher added additional challenge to a computer program which helped pupils to manipulate numbers, helping them to learn their tables. This was a good example of how the school is promoting mental mathematics, but teachers realise that further strategies are needed to improve pupils' mental skills further. Pupils work well independently, although they do not always write at sufficient length, often because the expectation is not made clear enough or the time devoted to writing is too short.

Pupils achieve well from their starting points when they join the school, as a result of effective learning, and their attainment is broadly in line with national averages. All groups of pupils make good progress, including girls, the most able and those who join the school part way through their primary education. Pupils have good opportunities to discuss their work and progress with their teachers. Individual teaching and the additional mentoring, particularly for older pupils not making the expected rate of progress, are proving effective in boosting the achievement of these pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress because they receive regular, good quality support individually or in small groups.

The development of pupils' skills, including literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, together with their good personal qualities, equips them well for the future. Pupils' financial awareness is strong, partly helped by the school bank run by older pupils. Pupils appreciate opportunities to share their opinions. For example, the views of the school council have been instrumental in shaping the redevelopment of the local park as well as influencing the colour schemes for the school building. Parents are confident that the school helps their children to lead healthy lives, which is also apparent from the Healthy School and Travel Plan awards. Pupils have a good understanding of things that contribute to a healthy lifestyle and enjoy sporting activities. Compared with other schools in the county, a greater proportion of pupils walk to school. Pupils recognise the importance of mental and emotional well-being and are aware of strategies to manage anger and conflict. They are aware of what might be an unsafe situation, for example when using the internet or mobile phone. Pupils have a strong sense of responsibility and service to others. Their strong spiritual and moral awareness and ability to empathise with others during difficult times is demonstrated frequently, such as when Gurkha fathers are on active service. Because pupils feel valued, trusted and respected, they relish their

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involvement with, and support of, the local community. Their participation in cultural events locally and in the school makes a strong contribution to broadening their perceptions through direct involvement in celebrating the diverse cultures represented within the community.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Improvements in teaching have led to improved literacy levels and lessons with greater challenge in learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are increasingly using this to link learning across subjects, making lessons more enjoyable for pupils. Changes to the curriculum and the topics studied have widened the range of enrichment activities and visits to enliven and strengthen learning. Additional provision such as extra-curricular activities and the breakfast club provide good quality experiences for those involved. As they evaluate topics against their impact on pupils' attainment, teachers are developing their planning further to ensure that there is a clear progression for pupils to develop subject skills. Teachers model expected learning well, as shown in a lesson where pupils were editing their first draft of a piece of writing based on a picture of life in Tudor times. However, planned opportunities for pupils to develop and use their writing within real and relevant contexts across the curriculum are underdeveloped. Teachers use a range of approaches, such as target bookmarks, to help pupils to understand what they have to do next. Consequently, pupils generally have a good understanding of the quality of their

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work. However, approaches to marking are not consistent across the school and sometimes emphasise pupils' successes at the expense of helping them to identify how their work could be improved further.

Staff are good role models for pupils, and provide high quality care, guidance and support, shown in the wide-ranging, compassionate and considerate arrangements to support pupils and families whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.. Regular exchanges between the school and Army support services provide significant emotional support for pupils and their families. Another example of the school's link between pastoral care and pupils' academic achievement is seen in the careful transition arrangements to help pupils joining the school, many of whom are new to living in Great Britain. Bridging units of work at the end and beginning of each academic year help pupils to settle into their new classes and also contribute well to pupils' learning at home. The emphasis on reducing absence has successfully improved attendance, which is now above average in spite of the necessity for some families to take holidays during term time.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The governing body provides good support to the school, and senior leaders and governors work as an effective team. Together, leaders at all levels have a thorough understanding of how to build on recent improvements. Governors, some of whom are new to their role, are increasingly gaining first-hand knowledge of the school through visits on specific areas of the school's activity. The headteacher provides strong, focused leadership and successfully encourages teamwork. Any discrepancy in the achievement of different groups is identified and addressed quickly, showing the firm commitment to promoting equal opportunities and addressing any discrimination, and ensuring that all pupils are included in school life.

Community cohesion is at the heart of the school's values so that the school operates as a highly cohesive community with care and support for pupils based on a thorough understanding of individual circumstances. The school is constantly seeking to forge greater and stronger links with its local community, which values it. Pupils have extensive opportunities to understand the way of life in other parts of the United Kingdom and in other countries. Links with parents are particularly strong and supportive, with the school acting as a point of contact for parents new to the area. A wide range of activities, such as fathers' football, curriculum information sessions and English lessons, help parents and carers to understand and support their child's learning.

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Arrangements to safeguard pupils are well considered, and meet government requirements. There are checks on those who work in school, appropriate health and safety checks within the school and for visits, and the site is managed securely. The school's effective links with other schools extend beyond those established locally to promote professional development. Communication with a school in Nepal is developing well. Pupils are involved in web conferences and staff share curriculum development to help children as they move between schools.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The ethos in the Early Years Foundation Stage is friendly and welcoming, helping children to settle quickly into school routines. Children enter the Reception classes with skills, knowledge and understanding generally below those typical of their age group. Teachers' planning for children's next steps takes account of their interests and preferences and parents' views, so that it is well matched to children's needs and enables them to make good progress. However, children generally enter Year 1 with below expected early literacy and numeracy skills, often because many are learning to speak English as an additional language. Adults organise classrooms and the outside area well, with resources easily accessible and carefully labelled. Children's work is attractively displayed, providing encouragement and opportunities for parents and carers to share children's achievements. There is a good balance between taught activities and planned play opportunities. However, links to encourage children to undertake tasks which do not immediately appeal to them, such as those to develop writing and calculation skills, are not promoted sufficiently. Children who may need extra help are identified quickly and the necessary support put in place. ♦

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The Early Years Foundation Stage adheres to, and is supported by, the whole-school safeguarding systems. There is a strong focus on teaching children to keep safe and good hygiene practices, such as washing hands and using hand-gel, are taught and frequently reinforced. Children are engaged by the school's behaviour management system, being keen to move into the 'silver and gold' areas. This helps them to develop positive relationships. The outside area has improved well since the last inspection and there are good plans for further improvements. Good leadership and management is shown in effective teamwork and a consistent approach by all adults, who are dedicated to ensuring the safety and well-being of all children. The use of translators and a good understanding of the culture of the Nepali community help to build a strong partnership with home and to ensure that all children are fully included. The staff make exceptional efforts, both when children transfer from nurseries and during the time children are in Reception, to keep parents involved and enable them to support their children's learning and development. In response, parents share their skills and expertise in visits to enrich children's experiences.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

A higher than average proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire and the overwhelming majority are extremely happy with the school and their child's experience. Very few raised concerns, and these mainly related to the way in which the school deals with behaviour and the level of challenge for more able pupils. Inspection evidence finds that staff deal well with behaviour. As indicated above, there are occasions when the level of challenge is not sufficient, but this relates to all abilities, not just to more able pupils.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cheriton Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 138 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 345 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	88	64	48	35	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	90	65	45	33	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	69	50	64	46	4	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	56	41	77	56	4	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	72	52	62	45	2	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	58	42	76	55	2	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	60	43	73	53	3	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	53	38	73	53	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	57	41	76	55	2	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	47	34	79	57	5	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	48	35	84	61	2	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	59	43	75	54	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	69	50	67	49	1	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



31 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cheriton Primary School, Folkestone CT20 3EP

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We thoroughly enjoyed meeting you and seeing how much you learn in school. You go to a good school, and this letter is to explain what we found out.

Adults look after you and care for you exceptionally well and plan work which really helps you to enjoy your learning. ♦ You know how to look after yourselves well and to stay safe, fit and healthy. You behave well and this helps new pupils to settle in quickly. Teachers and teaching assistants help you to make good progress so that you achieve well during your time at the school. You have a good range of interesting activities and these help you to enjoy your time in school. You help one another well around the school and play a full part in local activities. We are very impressed by the way that you know and respect others whatever their religion or culture. Your parents and carers work especially well with the school, which helps you and leads to a very happy community.

We have made some recommendations for your teachers to help you to do even better. We have asked the school to;

- improve writing by expecting you to write at greater length
- plan writing tasks with better links to the topics you study, or for a real purpose, to make writing even more interesting
- help you to learn your tables by giving you more practice in oral and mental numeracy
- ensure that marking always gives you feedback on how your work can be improved.

We are sure that you will continue to work hard, and remember to ask if there is anything you do not understand. Please thank your parents or carers for returning the questionnaires. It was very helpful for us to know their views.

We wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Helen Hutchings ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Lead inspector

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