

Cheddington Combined School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110215
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	356700
Inspection dates	25–26 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Joy Considine

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	193
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tony Johnson
Headteacher	Kathryn Tamlyn
Date of previous school inspection	25 September 2007
School address	High Street, Cheddington Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire LU7 0RG
Telephone number	01296 668324
Fax number	01296 663859
Email address	office@cheddington.bucks.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 1234 234

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 13 lessons taught by seven teachers and they held meetings with staff, pupils and members of the governing body. They observed the school's work, and looked at school development plans, the governing body minutes, pupil assessment and tracking information, and other documentation relevant to the inspection. Inspectors analysed the questionnaires received from 92 parents and carers as well as responses from pupils.

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

- The attainment and progress pupils make in English to see how effective the school has been in closing the gap in performance between English and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching and learning and how well teachers use assessment information to ensure that pupils make the best possible progress.
- The impact school leaders are making on improving outcomes for pupils.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than most primary schools and serves the local village community. Most pupils are White British. There are very few who speak English as an additional language. No pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than usual. The school has gained Healthy Schools status and was recently awarded the Green Flag for its commitment to sustainability. A new headteacher joined the school in January 2010.

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

This good school provides a welcoming environment for pupils who say they feel safe and secure. Attendance is very high. At the end of Year 6 in 2010, attainment was broadly average in English but significantly above average in mathematics. School leaders have quickly taken action to close the gap between these subjects. For example, they have adjusted the curriculum to provide more opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills when studying other subjects such as history and geography. Scrutiny of pupils' current work shows that their attainment in English is now above average in most classes. Current year 6 pupils are making good progress from their starting points. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and the wider community through projects such as the sensory garden which they helped to plan and design. While pupils have a good understanding of their own local community, they are less sure about the culture, faith and beliefs of those whose lives are different to their own.

The headteacher is ambitious and has high expectations for staff and pupils. She has carried out a thorough evaluation of practice within the school to identify where its strengths lie and what more needs to be done. The outcomes of this analysis have been used effectively to address the immediate developmental needs of the school. While this was a useful short-term exercise, there was no account of the views of all members of the wider school community, including parents and carers. Additionally, there is not yet a long-term strategic plan that shows the future development of the school and this currently limits the school's ability to allocate its resources and plan for longer-term projects.

The governing body has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development and it monitors and challenges school leaders. However, while school practices are effective, governors do not have an established system in place to ensure that policies are monitored and evaluated regularly. There have been some significant improvements to the school since the last inspection and these have had a clear impact on pupils. For example, school leaders have introduced comprehensive systems to record and track pupils' progress so that they can be sure that they are on course to meet their challenging targets. The headteacher has introduced clear lines of accountability for all staff through robust systems for performance management. The school has built well on its good performance at the time of the last inspection and has good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Involve staff, parents and carers, pupils and the governing body in reviewing the school's strengths and areas for development, and use this information to create a long-term strategic plan for development that is understood and shared by all stakeholders by July 2011.

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- Review the curriculum to plan opportunities for pupils to learn more about the cultures, beliefs and lifestyles of those from different parts of Britain and the wider world by July 2011.
- Ensure the governing body establishes a planned programme to review, monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of its policies by February 2011.

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

Children currently join the school with skills that are above those expected for their age, but this varies from year to year. Pupils make good progress from their starting points as they move through the school. They enjoy school and their attendance is excellent, and consequently achievement is good. ♦ Teachers use assessment information well to plan lessons that are matched to pupils' needs so that they make good and sometimes outstanding progress. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, the teacher provided more challenging activities for pupils who were learning to calculate the area of irregular shapes. Pupils take an interest in their lessons and they are keen to answer questions, and to reflect on issues and listen to each other's views. Staff have implemented new systems to teach pupils letters and sounds and this has raised attainment in reading. ♦ Work in pupils' books is of high quality and is well presented in all subjects. Pupils who have special educational needs and/ or disabilities make good progress because they receive targeted support from skilled teaching assistants.

Pupils get on well together and they behave well both in lessons and in the playground. They are considerate and enjoy taking on roles and responsibilities within school such as recycling monitors, house captains and play leaders. They are particularly proud of having been awarded the Green Flag for their work in creating a sustainable environment. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. The award of Healthy Schools status recognises the school's promotion of healthy lifestyles. The school council has actively promoted healthy eating by taking the decision to permit only healthy snacks at break times, except on Fridays, when this rule is relaxed. Pupils throughout the school enjoy the wide range of physical activities available both as part of the curriculum and at the end of the school day. ♦

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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	2
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	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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?

Teaching is lively and enthusiastic and engages the interest of pupils, and this makes a significant contribution to their good progress. Most lessons are well planned and are linked to previous learning so that pupils can develop their skills sequentially. ♦ Teachers have set challenging targets for pupils, although in a very few lessons, expectations are not always high enough and this slows the progress that some pupils make. Pupils know their targets and say this helps them to learn because they know what they need to do next. Teachers mark pupils' work constructively and they provide them with information about what they need to learn next. Relationships between adults and pupils are good.

There is a broad and balanced curriculum which is enriched by a wide range of additional activities including specialist music tuition and cookery lessons taught by an experienced chef. Subjects are linked together and taught within an overall topic or theme. During the inspection, parents and carers and pupils enjoyed a performance in which one class, dressed as Vikings, presented their historical knowledge of the Vikings through music, art, speech and drama. The curriculum is imaginatively planned and is supported by a wide range of visits to places of interest such as the Natural History Museum and Botanic Gardens in Oxford, Whipsnade Zoo and Ironbridge. Pupils in Year 4 and 6 have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit to places further afield such as Woodrow and the River Dart.

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Staff provide good quality care and guidance for pupils. Procedures for checking staff and visitors are thorough and health and safety assessments are carried out regularly. There are good arrangements for child protection in place, although the policy is out-of-date and is due to be reviewed by the governing body. The school makes good use of external partners such as education psychologists to provide extra support for those pupils who have additional learning needs. There are good transition arrangements in place to support pupils entering the school and for those leaving the school at the end of Year 6.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Since joining the school in January this year, the headteacher has quickly established a vision and direction which is shared by staff and the governing body. Staff are enthusiastic and have welcomed changes introduced by the new headteacher. School leaders now have clear roles and responsibilities. There are robust systems in place to monitor the quality of teaching and this has resulted in improvements in pupils' learning. Ambitious targets have been set for pupils and these are monitored termly. The short-term school development plan has been written in consultation with staff and the governing body with targets that are linked to performance management and professional development. Their self-evaluation is broadly accurate.

School leaders are committed to ensuring that all pupils have equal access to what the school provides. They provided good examples of where pupils had been helped to overcome barriers in order to play a full part in school life. Rates of progress for pupils with different needs are broadly similar with no particular group being disadvantaged. Partnerships with parents and carers are satisfactory. The headteacher has introduced some new systems and practices since her arrival in January but these have not always been communicated to parents and carers as effectively as they might have been. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are satisfactory. The school meets all statutory requirements and their procedures for child protection are good. However, the governing body does not have a systematic procedure to monitor and evaluate its policies. The school has satisfactory arrangements to promote community cohesion but it acknowledges that more could be done to give pupils a better understanding of the world beyond their local community.

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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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff care for children and make sure that they are well looked after and that they are safe and secure. Children make good progress in all aspects of their development. This is because adults have a secure understanding of the learning needs of young children and they plan a variety of interesting activities that interest and challenge them. They use assessment information well to match activities to their learning needs and there is a good balance between those activities that are led by the adults and those that children choose for themselves. There are particular strengths in their creative development and their personal development. Children are able to share and to co-operate with each other and they are developing independence and showing initiative. Many are able to work and play with sustained concentration. The learning environment is stimulating and well resourced with a wide range of equipment for use both indoors and outside. The leaders have a clear plan for the development of provision based on an incisive analysis of their work.

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

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Views of parents and carers

Views of parents and carers Most parents and carers agree that their child is happy at school and that the school helps to keep their child safe and healthy. While some have welcomed the changes introduced by the new headteacher, a small minority do not feel that their views are taken into account and they are not well informed about their child's progress. Scrutiny of pupils' work showed that teachers' marking is thorough and that they use targets for pupils to help them to understand how well they are doing. A small minority of parents and carers feel that the school does not deal well enough with unacceptable behaviour but, during the inspection, pupils behaved well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cheddington Combined 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 92 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 193 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	43	47	47	51	5	5	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	41	45	44	48	9	10	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	13	14	44	48	18	20	9	10
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	16	61	66	10	11	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	14	15	57	62	10	11	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	14	53	58	18	20	3	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	40	42	46	11	12	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)	18	20	43	47	10	11	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	18	20	51	55	6	7	7	8
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	16	46	50	15	16	4	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	7	8	47	51	22	24	3	3
The school is led and managed effectively	21	23	44	48	13	14	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	27	29	48	52	11	12	1	1

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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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.



30 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cheddington Combined School, Leighton Buzzard LU7 0RG

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you all and listening to what you had to say about your school. When we visited your lessons, we noticed that you were expected to work hard and that you all get on very well together. Most of you enjoy school and many of you told us that your teachers help you with your work and that your targets help you to make good progress. ♦ Although many of you have some idea about how people in different parts of the world live, your understanding of their faiths, beliefs and cultures could be improved. We found that your school is good at keeping you safe but sometimes they don't always evaluate their policies routinely. Your school leaders have ambitious plans for the school but these are not set out over a long period of time. ♦ This means that they may not always be able to plan for long-term projects and make sure that they identify the resources they need to develop these plans.

This is what we have asked your school leaders to do:

- make sure you are given more opportunities to learn about the lives of people in different parts of the world in more depth
- set up systems to make sure that all school policies are regularly evaluated and monitored
- work with you and your parents and carers to establish a long-term plan showing how the school will develop over the next few years so that they can make your school even better.

I know that you will all continue to work hard and do your best to help your school leaders to continually improve the way they work and to provide you with a high quality of education. I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Joy Considine

Lead inspector

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