

Chaulden Infants' and Nursery

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117202
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	358107
Inspection dates	3–4 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Mike Thompson

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	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	127
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Howard Mason
Headteacher	Jackie Hood
Date of previous school inspection	28 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors, one of whom visited the school for half a day specifically to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures. The lead inspector observed seven teachers when visiting eight lessons, and also observed the learning of some of the most potentially vulnerable pupils. The inspectors held meetings with some of the teaching staff, the Chair of the Governing Body, and pupils, and looked at a range of information, including data showing the progress made by pupils and samples of their work. Questionnaires returned by 73 parents and carers and 30 members of staff were analysed

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

- To what extent is the school able to demonstrate that all groups of pupils, particularly vulnerable pupils, make at least satisfactory progress?
- How effective has the school been in responding to the previous inspection findings by ensuring that teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve, assess pupils' attainment accurately and provide work that matches their needs?
- How much progress has been made by the recently appointed middle-level leaders in monitoring and evaluating their areas of responsibility and what is their impact on pupils' achievement?

Information about the school

This infant and nursery school is much smaller than most primary schools. It is located on the western outskirts of Hemel Hempstead and shares a site with Chaulden Junior School. Most of the pupils are White British. Incorporated within the school is a ten-place speech and language unit for Key Stage 1 pupils, within the local authority, who have statements of special educational need because of communication difficulties. As a result, the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in the school is much higher than normally found. Most of these pupils have general learning difficulties, including a significant number with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school has a nurture group to help meet the needs of these pupils. The amount of time pupils spend in the nurture group each day varies according to their individual needs. They follow the same curriculum as their peers. Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a Nursery, which children attend on a part-time basis, and a Reception class. The school has Healthy School status. For reasons beyond the control of the school, there has been a very high turnover of teaching staff since the last inspection. The changes have affected all classes except the speech and language unit. The teachers responsible for mathematics and the Early Years Foundation Stage took up their posts last term. The recruitment and retention of governors is an on-going challenge. At the time of the inspection there were four vacancies on the governing body.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Its most significant strengths are the quality of care, guidance and support provided for pupils and the provision for pupils in the speech and language unit. Parents and carers are greatly appreciative of the work of the school and the particularly welcoming, safe and supportive environment provided for their children. Typical of many positive comments appended to the inspection questionnaires is: 'Chaulden is a lovely warm and caring school. Our children are very happy and so are we!'

The school invests a great deal of time and resources in ensuring that pupils make good progress in developing their personal and social skills, thus providing a climate within which learning can take place. Behaviour is good and in very closely supervised situations it is often impeccable. Pupils say they are well cared for and feel secure in the knowledge that adults will always help them if needed. Pupils have a good awareness of how to keep safe and healthy.

When children join the Nursery, their starting points are typically below those normally expected for three year-olds, including many instances in which children have poor social skills and limited ability in communicating. By the time pupils move to the next phase of their education at the end of Year 2, their attainment is broadly average. However, standards in Year 2 fluctuate from year to year because of the impact of the lower attainment in English of pupils in the speech and language unit. While pupils generally make satisfactory gains in learning in lessons, progress is good for pupils with severe learning difficulties, including those from the speech and language unit. Typically, pupils do best in mathematics, while the consistently weakest area of their performance is writing. Although pupils are competent in using their knowledge of letter sounds as an aid to reading, their lack of vocabulary and fluency in spoken English adversely affect the quality of their written work.

Despite the many good features of teaching, pupils' learning is too often satisfactory. Teachers are good at placing a strong emphasis on the practical experiences that most pupils need. They relate well to their pupils and hold their attention well. However, the pace of learning drops when teachers do not ensure that pupils know clearly what they have to achieve or when the tasks set lack sufficient challenge.

The school understands fully the needs of its own community and is successfully integrating those families in challenging circumstances. It recognises that it now needs to promote community cohesion further by broadening pupils' awareness of the range of cultural traditions within British society.

The headteacher is a good leader. Much of the improvement currently taking place stems largely from her strategic view. She has provided good management during a period of

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significant changes in staffing. One of the consequences of these changes is that some of the recently appointed managers do not have the necessary skills in monitoring and evaluating their areas of responsibility. The governing body is supportive, but acknowledges that its monitoring of the school's effectiveness is adversely affected by the shortage of governors. The school's procedures for evaluating its effectiveness are sound and provide the basis for a clear plan of action. These features and the actions taken to secure improvement mean that the school has a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that:
 - teachers set targets for improvement, particularly in writing, that are clearly understood by pupils
 - teachers make better use of their assessments of pupils' previous learning and consistently provide challenging tasks for pupils of all levels of ability
 - all adults focus on improving pupils' vocabulary, comprehension and understanding of the rules of grammar and sentence structure by consistently modelling correct usage of English.
- Ensure that pupils have a good understanding of the richness and diversity of British society by exploring the day-to-day lives of children in other schools.
- Develop the skills of middle leaders so that they clearly focus their monitoring on the quality of pupils' learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Almost all of the parents or carers who returned the inspection questionnaires felt that their children enjoy school. This is because the school clearly understands the social and emotional needs of the families it serves and meets these exceptionally well. For example, it helps compensate for gaps in the life experiences of pupils and ensures that pupils who have little or no opportunity to practise their reading at home have additional individual support at school. The good progress made by pupils in developing skills in working collaboratively and independently and their willingness to learn help ensure that they play a full part in lessons. In addition, the good progress made since the last inspection in improving provision in information and communication technology (ICT) enhances pupils' enjoyment of their learning. This was evident when a group of pupils in Year 2 responded well to mathematical challenges about coordinates by successfully programming the movements of an electronic toy around a grid. The teacher then added a further layer of challenge by ensuring that pupils made good use of laptops to help consolidate their learning.

Pupils' demonstrate their clear understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle through their enthusiasm for physical activities, such as the daily 'Busy Bodies' sessions of exercise to music. They say that they feel very safe in school because adults look after them well. Pupils' social development is good. They work and play together amicably,

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respect the feelings and ideas of others and have a well-developed sense of fair play. There is a strong moral code within the school and pupils, clearly, know right from wrong. Instances of unacceptable behaviour are generally caused by a few pupils with identified emotional and behavioural difficulties. Pupils say that adults deal with these instances quickly and effectively. Pupils have a reasonable understanding of the day-to-day lives of children in other countries. This learning is sometimes linked to fundraising activities, such as the support for victims of the earthquake in Haiti. However, pupils' awareness of the range of cultural traditions within British society is limited.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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?

Teachers display many good technical skills. These include the effective management of lessons through well-established routines. Teachers are also good at developing pupils' confidence as learners by giving clear explanations and opportunities to practise the skills taught. Unfortunately, the impact of teaching on pupils' learning is not always as good as it should be. In Key Stage 1, this occurs whenever teachers fail to set clear targets for their pupils to meet in lessons. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, it happens when adults are not always clear enough about the skills to be developed and focus instead on the content of activities provided. Occasionally, teachers misjudge their pupils' starting points and consequently the work set for some pupils lacks consistently good levels of challenge. In other respects, teachers use assessment well to identify pupils who need

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extra help to tackle specific difficulties in their learning. In all lessons, teaching assistants work well in partnership with teachers and provide effective support for these pupils.

Opportunities to develop pupils' language skills are frequently missed because adults, keen to involve pupils in discussions, accept pupils' responses readily while overlooking poor speech patterns and incorrect grammar or sentence structure.

Pupils in the speech and language unit make good gains in their learning because of skilled teaching and support. The correct modelling of speech is an integral part of their learning and provides a model of good practice for other teachers to adopt.

The curriculum meets the academic needs of pupils satisfactorily. Its main strength is the promotion of pupils' personal development through regular opportunities to explore social and moral issues. For example, teaching in the nurture group helped pupils develop their listening skills and guided them in reflecting on the impact of their actions on other people. Pupils' learning is enriched by the physical and practical activities provided, including a better range of extra-curricular opportunities than is usually found for pupils of this age. For instance, the response of Year 1 pupils, including members of the speech and language unit, during a 'street dance' class was one of intense concentration and evident enjoyment of their new learning.

The school is a caring community in which pupils' welfare is given a high priority. The needs of each individual are very well understood and pupils feel valued members of the school 'family'. Good quality support is given to the potentially vulnerable. There are clear, well-established arrangements to induct pupils into school and to ensure a smooth transition as they move on to the next phase of their education. In this respect, provision in the speech and language unit is particularly good.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The clear direction provided for the school is strongly driven by the headteacher's ambitious vision for the future. This is based on regular and rigorous checks on pupils' progress and a clear evaluation of strengths and weaknesses. As a result, the targets set for pupils' performance are both realistic and challenging. At the heart of all these initiatives is a determination to improve teaching and learning. The high turnover of staff has undermined the impact of previous in-service training to develop expertise, both in teaching and in leadership and management skills. Some of the new teachers recruited have been relatively inexperienced while others have been away from teaching for a while. The newly appointed middle leaders are keen to make a difference and are developing

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plans of action. However, they lack the full range of management skills needed in order to become independent in their roles. The governing body knows the school and its community well and takes a close interest in the well-being of pupils. Owing to the difficulty experienced in recruiting and retaining governors, their impact on the work of the school is only satisfactory because there is not enough first-hand monitoring of the school's effectiveness. The professional skills of some governors help ensure the good safeguarding of pupils and contribute towards the careful monitoring of performance and financial data.

Safeguarding procedures have a high profile, fully meet requirements, and are rigorously applied as a result of well-developed systems for quality assurance and risk assessment. The school's clear commitment to promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination is implicit in all its actions. It monitors and evaluates the performance of all groups of pupils carefully and there has been some improvement in areas where it has targeted its actions. The good partnership with the adjacent junior school and the wide range of effective links with local schools and specialist support agencies helps underpin the good quality of care, guidance and support available to all pupils. For example, the school nurse attends new-intake meetings to promote health screening and provide advice for parents and carers on health-related issues. Work is in progress to improve the promotion of community cohesion. The school recognises that not enough is done to broaden pupils' horizons in relation to the richness and diversity within British society.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children in the Nursery and Reception classes have ready access to a good range of interesting and enjoyable activities which encourage independence and initiative both indoors and out. Adults are generally good at developing learning through constant

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dialogue with children about the activities being tackled. However, they are less adept at seizing opportunities to develop children's learning further by modelling grammatically correct responses for them to repeat. Children's progress is carefully monitored so that provision can be adjusted in response to what is learned. The impact of this monitoring is adversely affected by the quality of the recorded assessments. These are largely descriptive and contain little information about how well children tackle the tasks provided for them. This weakness stems from adults placing too much emphasis on the content of the tasks provided rather than the intended learning. High priority is placed on ensuring good quality care.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The number of questionnaires returned was greater than is normally found for a school of this size. The large majority of parents and carers were overwhelmingly positive in the views of the school expressed though the questionnaires. There is no common theme within the very few negative responses.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Chaulden Infants' and Nursery 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 73 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 127 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	59	81	12	16	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	56	77	16	22	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	41	56	26	36	3	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	45	62	26	36	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	53	73	19	26	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	55	75	15	21	3	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	49	67	23	32	1	1	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)	45	62	21	29	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	51	70	21	29	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	49	67	20	27	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	43	59	26	36	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	53	73	18	25	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	58	79	13	18	2	3	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.



7 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Chaulden Infants' and Nursery, Hemel Hempstead, HP1 2JU

I would like to thank all of you for being so welcoming and helpful when I visited your school. I think that your school provides you with a satisfactory education. This means that there are a lot of things that the school is doing right and some things that need to be better. All the adults who help to run your school want it to improve. For this to happen, you need to make better progress in your work.

Here are some of the things that are best about your school:

You feel safe because the staff take good care of you.

You behave well and get on well with each other.

You know a lot about how to keep healthy.

Those of you who find learning very difficult are making good progress because you are taught well and also because you try hard. Well done!

Here are the things that need to be done to improve your school:

I would like your teachers to give you clear targets to aim for in your work and to make sure that the work they give you in lessons really makes you think hard. Your teachers and the other people who work with you in class need to help you to become better at speaking and writing.

You already know something about how children live in other parts of the world. Now it would be really useful for you to learn about children in other parts of this country. I think that you will be surprised and interested by what you learn.

Some of your teachers are fairly new and so I want them to find out a bit more about the best ways of checking on how well you are getting on.

I would like you to play your part in helping the school to become even better. The best way for you to do this is by listening carefully to what your teachers have to say, trying your best to speak well and working hard to reach the targets that your teachers set for you. I am sure that you are ready for these challenges! I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mike Thompson

Lead inspector

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