

The Chalet School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126554
Local Authority	Swindon
Inspection number	360107
Inspection dates	23–24 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Dave Smith

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	36
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Trudi Willis
Headteacher	Katharine Bryan
Date of previous school inspection	6 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by an additional inspector. Four teachers were observed and five lessons were visited. Meetings were held with senior leaders, teachers, pupils and members of the governing body. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at safeguarding documents and a range of other documentation as well as pupils' work and teachers' records. He scrutinised questionnaire returns from pupils, staff and 28 parents and carers.

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

- Does the curriculum meet the full range of the pupils' learning needs?
- How effective is leadership at all levels in driving improvements?
- Is assessment used effectively to ensure that all pupils are challenged fully to make good progress?

Information about the school

The Chalet School is a small school for pupils with complex learning difficulties. Most of the pupils have autistic spectrum disorders. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Seven of the pupils on roll are girls and eight children are in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. A large majority of the pupils are of White British heritage with the remainder being from a wide variety of minority ethnic backgrounds. The Chalet School has extended school status and offers after-school clubs and holiday activities. The school has attained Autism Accreditation from the National Autistic Society.

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

The Chalet School is a good school. Accurate self-evaluation ensures that senior leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and this has helped the school to make good progress since its previous inspection. The staff team works together well, for example to help the school attain Autism Accreditation, which reflects the school's expertise in its provision for pupils with autism. The promotion of equality of opportunity is excellent, for instance the curriculum is tailored precisely to meet the pupils' individual needs. The governing body makes a good contribution to school improvement, but does not provide sufficiently high levels of professional challenge to senior leaders. The school council makes a valuable contribution to the school community, such as by participating in the selection of new staff. The views of parents and carers have a positive impact on school improvement. Taking all of this into account, the school has a good capacity to sustain improvement.

The children get off to an outstanding start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and this is built upon as the pupils move through the school. The staff are enthusiastic and skilled in meeting the pupils' complex individual needs and, as a result, the pupils make good progress. Teachers use assessment well to ensure that pupils are set challenging tasks at each stage of their education. However, there is variation in the level of challenge for pupils' learning provided by the teaching assistants, which is a factor in pupils making good, rather than outstanding, progress in class. The outstanding curriculum meets the pupils' learning needs very well and both the enrichment and extension of activities are excellent. The school is an attractive and stimulating learning environment which helps to promote a sense of pride in their surroundings for staff and pupils.

Care, guidance and support are of the highest quality with an excellent focus on the safety and well-being of the pupils. The pupils enjoy their time in school thoroughly and this contributes to their good attendance. Relationships are excellent and the pupils' behaviour is good, which contributes to the cohesive and harmonious school community. The assembly at the end of each week is used as an excellent opportunity for the school community to celebrate the children's and pupils' achievements. The pupils take a full and very active part in the assembly, which highlights the excellent relationships across the school. Partnerships are good and are improving following the development of more formal links with a nearby primary school. The work with families is excellent and central to the school's extremely caring ethos.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the contribution of the governing body to school improvement by developing its capacity to provide high levels of professional challenge to senior leaders.

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

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- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and learning by ensuring that the teaching assistants consistently provide high levels of challenge to help boost the pupils' progress in their learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The pupils make good progress in their learning and their achievement is good. The pupils' targets are ambitious and matched precisely to their individual needs. Although the progress of individual pupils varies according to the nature of their special educational needs and/or disabilities, progress from their starting points is good overall. There is no variation in progress linked to gender, ethnicity or for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. The pupils make very good progress in their speaking and listening skills. They make particularly good progress in mathematics, the practical aspects of science, and information and communication technology (ICT). Their progress in reading and writing is slower, but remains good, when compared to pupils with similar learning needs. In a personal development lesson, a class of younger pupils made good progress in their understanding of the need to keep safe. Progress in their communications skills was excellent and most of the pupils made a good contribution to the singing and drama activities. The pupils made good progress in their understanding of the conditions required for plant growth. In a history lesson, the pupils learnt to differentiate and sort new and old objects, while a class group of older pupils showed that they understand the different roles of people in the school and their community. A majority of the pupils expressed clear and appropriate views about their response to people that are strangers to them.

The pupils' attitudes to work are very positive and they behave well. The pupils display great respect for the staff and each other. Pupils are very confident that they feel safe in the school, have staff that will listen to them, and make friends. Attendance is good, as the pupils attend whenever they can. Pupils enjoy playing in pairs and groups during their breaks and are often joined by pupils from the nearby primary school. Relationships are excellent and this helps the pupils to take increasing responsibility for their own actions. Pupils are very proud of their jobs in school, which helps to develop their contribution to the community. There is a wide range of activities that promote healthy lifestyles, including an extensive range of physical activities. One parent commented that 'I think the school do exceedingly well to support healthy eating and behavioural issues against a background of autism and complex needs.' Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, although it is limited by the challenges of social development linked to the pupils' autistic spectrum disorders. The pupils' views are taken seriously and help to shape developments in the school.

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

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	
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	1
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	2

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

* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is confident and enthusiastic, which leads to brisk and purposeful learning. An excellent range of strategies and resources is used to engage the pupils in their learning. The staff use the school grounds and locality particularly well to engage the pupils and sustain good progress. The teaching assistants contribute fully to the excellent care provided by the school, but there is variation occasionally in the level of challenge that they provide for learning, which limits progress to being good rather than outstanding. An extensive range of data about pupils' progress are collected and recorded very thoroughly. The information helps to inform the pupils' challenging targets and their individual education plans, which is a good improvement since the previous inspection.

The outstanding curriculum is planned very effectively to meet the complex needs of individuals and groups of pupils. There is an excellent focus on developing the pupils' communication skills, which extends their access to learning. There is an outstanding balance of structured activities and memorable experiences for the pupils, which help to sustain their good progress. The pupils enjoy the extensive range of visits and visitors to the school thoroughly. A group of pupils are keen horse riders while others are developing their cycling skills. Pupils have the opportunity to learn alongside their peers in mainstream schools and a few are integrated back full time into a mainstream school.

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

A wide range of professionals make a valuable contribution to the excellent care, guidance and support provided by the school. Staff work hard to ensure that pupils have every opportunity to take responsibility for their own actions. Great care is taken when using the school's extensive range of resources and facilities. Thorough risk assessments are completed when preparing for visits in the locality and wider destinations. Staff are consistent in the promotion of positive behaviour and ensure that pupils are aware of the consequences of challenging behaviour. Support is provided to pupils with autistic spectrum disorders in mainstream schools.

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	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides a very high level of ambition and expertise across the school and is supported well by the assistant headteacher. There is a shared vision and the staff team are constantly exploring innovative ways to improve in their drive to transform the pupils' learning and well-being. The subject leaders are now involved in the monitoring of their subjects across the school, which is a good improvement since the previous inspection. The staff accesses an extensive range of professional training, which ensures that they have the knowledge and skills to meet the pupils' learning needs fully. The governing body is effective and very supportive of the school, but does not provide sufficiently high levels of professional challenge to senior leaders. Keeping pupils safe is at the heart of the school's work and safeguarding procedures are excellent. The outstanding promotion of equality of opportunity for pupils is central to the school's vision and ensures that all groups of pupils play a full part in the day-to-day life of the school and make good progress in their learning. Discrimination is not tolerated in any form. The promotion of community cohesion is good, but links with schools abroad are not sufficiently developed to promote the international dimension of this aspect. The school's work with families is a major strength and leads to comments from parents and carers such as 'The Chalet School is a magical place where you and your family are welcomed in and supported.' The school provides good value for money.

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

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	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

All aspects of the provision are excellent and, as a result, outcomes are excellent. An attractive and stimulating environment motivates the children. The very well-organised educational programmes reflect the rich, varied and imaginative experiences that meet the needs of the children fully. That ensures that they make significant gains in their learning and in the development of skills that will help them in the future. During the inspection, the class enjoyed a drumming session thoroughly, provided by a visiting musician. Children are beginning to show excellent levels of independence, curiosity and concentration. Assessment is rigorous and the information collected is used exceptionally well to guide planning. Outstanding teaching is rooted in expert knowledge and a full understanding of how young children learn and develop. Staff are highly skilled and sensitive in the management of children and their behaviour. Relationships are excellent and children show they feel safe through the confidence they have in the staff, all of whom provide outstanding care, guidance and support. The highly effective partnerships between the school, parents and carers, and other agencies ensure the children's individual needs are met and that safeguarding procedures are outstanding. The coordinator and staff team are committed highly to improvement and demonstrate a strong commitment to equality and to the celebration of diversity.

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

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

A particularly high percentage of parents and carers returned questionnaires. An overwhelming majority of the responses was positive. All agreed that the school keeps them well informed about their children's progress and helps to promote healthy lifestyles for the pupils. A parent commented that 'I think The Chalet School is a fantastic school that offers extraordinary support and activities that benefit my child.' Almost all agreed that their children enjoy school and their children are kept safe in school. The same number also felt that their children are making enough progress in school. The inspector found that the pupils make good progress and achieve well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Chalet 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 inspector received 28 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 36 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	79	5	18	1	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	24	86	3	11	0	0	1	4
My school informs me about my child's progress	21	75	7	25	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	75	6	21	1	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	24	86	3	11	0	0	1	4
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	79	5	18	0	0	1	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	86	4	14	0	0	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)	22	79	5	18	0	0	1	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	82	4	14	0	0	1	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	24	86	3	11	0	0	1	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	71	7	25	0	0	1	4
The school is led and managed effectively	26	93	1	4	0	0	1	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	25	89	2	7	0	0	1	4

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



27 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Chalet School, Swindon SN3 6EX

I enjoyed my visit to your school thoroughly and spending time looking at your work. Thank you for the time spent with me discussing your activities and views about the school. I was very pleased that I was awarded my 'safer stranger sticker' on the second day of my visit. I was impressed with the way that you played together during your breaks and it is clear that you make good friends in school. Your classrooms and school grounds are very attractive and it is good that you have links with the nearby primary school.

I decided that the school is good. It is clear that you enjoy attending school and I was pleased with your positive behaviour. Teaching and learning are good and, as a result, your achievement is good. You are provided with an outstanding range of activities, which is enhanced by the after-school clubs and activities in the holidays. The staff team is well led and they ensure that you are provided with excellent care.

I have asked the headteacher, senior management team, staff and governing body to work together to:

- continue to provide the excellent care in class but make sure that all of the staff ensure that you make great progress in your learning
- ensure that the members of the governing body are fully aware of how well you are doing in all aspects of your school life.

All of you can help by ensuring that you attend school whenever possible, work hard and carry on making good friends in school.

Yours sincerely

David Smith

Lead inspector

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