

Chalcot School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100092
Local Authority	Camden
Inspection number	354799
Inspection dates	11–12 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Kay (Kathleen) Charlton

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	32
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tony Burgess
Headteacher	Peter Doyle (Interim)
Date of previous school inspection	4 July 2008
School address	Harmood Street London NW1 8DP
Telephone number	020 7485 2147
Fax number	020 7485 9297
Email address	admin@chalcot.camden.sch.uk

Age group	11–16
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Royal Exchange Buildings
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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by an additional inspector. Teaching and learning were observed in nine lessons with eight teachers seen. Meetings were held with students, members of the governing body, staff and representatives from the local authority. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at documentation including the school improvement plan, assessment information, policies and students' work. One questionnaire from parents and carers, 13 from staff and 11 from students were scrutinised.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The effectiveness of teaching in challenging all students, with a focus on those with the most complex needs.
- The success of the school in improving students' behaviour and attendance.
- The extent to which the school's leadership, in particular the interim leadership, is ensuring improvement.
- The effectiveness of the systems to assess attainment on entry, set challenging targets and track students' progress to ensure that all make the progress of which they are capable.

Information about the school

Chalcot School is a special school catering for students who have a statement of special educational needs related to behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. A minority have associated learning difficulties and/or complex needs involving mental health issues. Since the previous inspection the complexity of students' needs has increased. Students come from Camden and neighbouring local authorities and are from a range of ethnic backgrounds. About half are of White British heritage and about a quarter of Black Caribbean heritage. None is at the early stages of English language acquisition. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is very high. Most have experienced significant disruption to their education before joining Chalcot.

Following the resignation of the substantive headteacher in July 2010, an interim headteacher was appointed. In September 2011, the school is to become part of an across authority service for behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. A new headteacher has just been appointed to lead this service who will also be the substantive headteacher of Chalcot School from that date. The school has Healthy Schools status.

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

Chalcot School provides satisfactory education for its students. Since the appointment of the interim headteacher, it has improved rapidly and continues to do so. Following the previous inspection, the school experienced considerable difficulties linked to changes in the needs of the student population, the need for reductions in staffing and a lack of clarity about its future. As a result, its performance declined. A radical overhaul of the school's senior leadership, a thorough revision of staff responsibilities and a number of new, reviewed and rewritten policies, supported by a comprehensive training programme, have turned the school round. Now students make satisfactory progress in both their academic learning and in their personal development. They indicate that they feel safe as a result of the school's behaviour policy and safeguarding procedures. The school has put comprehensive systems in place for promoting attendance and encouraging punctuality which have ensured improvement. Many students now attend regularly but, even so, there are still a small number whose achievements are adversely affected by their very erratic patterns of attendance. Behaviour is satisfactory with many students making noticeable improvements in this area from first starting at Chalcot.

The curriculum is suitably balanced and gives a clear focus to the development of students' social and independent life skills. Students value the range of physical activities provided and comment favourably about the courses they have recently been able to access at a local college. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Staff establish positive relationships with students. They know each one well and they have improved the ways in which they use assessment information so that work is suitably matched to students' needs, including for those with the most complex needs. Lessons proceed in well-planned stages and students' behaviour is usually managed effectively. However, not all staff use a sufficiently wide range of teaching approaches to fully motivate and challenge every student in the class. This results in a slower pace of learning and sometimes inappropriate behaviour.

The interim headteacher provides a clear vision about how the provision should develop, taking good account of the proposed changes in the school's remit. In communicating this to staff, he is well supported by his senior leadership team. Based on accurate and honest self-evaluation they have mapped out a plan of improvement that is matched to the school's needs. They have developed effective teamwork and commitment from staff to the planned improvements. The systems to determine attainment on entry, set challenging targets and monitor students' progress are now being used much more effectively to guide improvement planning. The school recognises that the middle leadership role is not sufficiently well developed to support school improvement; consequently, training is being given in this area and it is starting to pay off. During the current academic year, the governing body has refined its procedures so that it can respond more quickly to changes in the school's circumstances. The school's strong links

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with a range of others are being used well in support of its drive for improvement. Improvements in students' achievements, their behaviour and attitudes to learning during a time of significant change show that its capacity for further sustained improvement is satisfactory.

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 attendance ensuring that all students, but particularly those with very erratic patterns of attendance, achieve all that they can.
- Ensure that in every lesson students are fully motivated and challenged through staff making use of a wide range of teaching and learning approaches.
- Develop the role of middle leaders by extending their contribution to monitoring and evaluation so that they can play a full and active part in school improvement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Students of different backgrounds and abilities, including those with complex needs that involve mental health issues, show an interest in their work and make satisfactory progress. On entry, students' attainment is very varied and is often below average. Many have gaps in their knowledge as a result of exclusions from their previous schools and Chalcot is effective in helping students to address these. The focus on improving students' literacy and numeracy by providing one-to-one support is particularly helpful in ensuring that they start to catch up. By the time they leave their attainment is still very varied overall, but often closer to average. At the age of 16, the range of GCSEs and other qualifications students gain helps to ensure that they are suitably prepared for the next stage of their education. In the lessons seen, very positive relationships that build students' self-confidence and an increased focus on students meeting both academic and behaviour targets form the foundation of improved learning in many subjects. In English, students' learning in Year 11 is of a very high standard because of extremely engaging and challenging teaching that involves students in practical activities such as drama, quiz games and hot-seat discussions to name but a few. However, there is only a very small amount of learning of this quality across the school and still not enough that is good.

As a result of the school's focus on moral and social education, students learn about their rights and responsibilities and to appreciate the effects of their actions on others. This helps them to make changes in their attitudes both in school and at home. They develop a suitable awareness of the need for a healthy lifestyle and this is recognised through the Healthy Schools status. Students explained that they learn to keep fit and enjoy the opportunities for physical education, especially football. Their behaviour is satisfactory overall and students are supportive of the school's reward system for behaviour and recognise how it helps them to make the right decisions. They also are aware that improvements can still be made in this area. Students say they are secure in school and any issues which worry them are dealt with by the staff.

The school's first-day absence procedures are operated with rigour and these, along with a range of other strategies, have enabled attendance rates for most to noticeably improve. However, students' overall attendance is still not as good as it might be. Students are

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encouraged to express their views, for example about school meals, and the school council is starting to play a more active role in decision-making. Students are proud of their new school uniform and make a positive contribution to the wider community, for example through fund raising activities. The literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology qualifications they gain, together with the gains in their personal skills, suitably prepare them for their future economic well-being.

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	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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	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 has improved in the last year as a result of the work of the senior leadership team and a planned programme of development which has involved educational consultants working alongside staff. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and they plan conscientiously, making use of assessment information so that work is generally pitched at the right level to match students' understanding. Support staff are deployed effectively in lessons and, along with teachers, have very positive relationships with students. In a number of lessons, however, teachers give too much focus to their teaching input rather than using a range of activities that fully motivate and challenge students to achieve all that they can.

A recent review of the curriculum has ensured that it is more clearly structured to meet the students' changing needs and aspirations. Links with a local college are now enabling students in Year 11 to get a taster of more vocationally focused programmes. Even so, the

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school recognises there is still not enough of a vocational focus overall and it is actively extending the opportunities for students to undertake work experience. Across all age groups there is a clear focus on the development of basic and personal skills. Further work planned to make the curriculum more engaging includes extending the opportunities for theme weeks, such as the recent one entitled 'Speak Week'.

The school's strong links with other professionals, including other schools, different agencies, such as the child and adolescent mental health service, and careers advisers, make sure that students, including those who arrive at different times, are well supported when moving to and from the school. Students are given impartial advice about their career opportunities. Support for the most vulnerable students is an established part of the provision and helps students overcome difficulties in their personal circumstances. The systems to promote attendance have a positive impact but the school recognises that it is still not as effective as it might be, particularly in its work with parents and carers, in improving students' attendance.

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	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The interim headteacher leads with determination and ensures that challenging targets are set. The skills of the senior leadership team complement each other well and between them they are ensuring that classroom practice is improved to meet students' changing needs. Effective procedures, including improved systems to track students' progress, have been developed to monitor and evaluate the different aspects of the provision. Staff at all levels are enthusiastic about future developments and say, 'We want improvements to take place because we want the best for our students.' They speak positively about the professional development they receive to support them through a time of change and about the ways in which links with other groups are being used to support identified priorities within the school improvement plan.

The governing body is well organised and ensures all statutory requirements are met. It has a programme of monitoring provision in classrooms and it is now more rigorous in challenging reports given by school leaders so that it can be sure the school's performance is as good as it should be. The school has a clear commitment to the promotion of equality of opportunity and is making improved use of its information systems to target individuals so that all make the progress of which they are capable.

The school's partnership with parents and carers is supportive of improvements in the school with regular exchange of information. Meetings in school and some home visits take place to help parents and carers support their child. Further work is planned to help

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parents and carers appreciate the importance of ensuring good attendance. Safeguarding and child protection fully meet national requirements and risk assessments are thorough. All staff are suitably trained so that they are quick to identify students most at risk. The school uses its range of links at a local level to promote community cohesion within the school and this generally has a positive impact. As yet, there are limited opportunities for students to learn about life for those who live further afield.

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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

Only one questionnaire was returned which is an extremely low response compared with the national average for special schools. Therefore, the school's own surveys were taken into consideration. These show that overall parents and carers are satisfied with the school and the provision it makes for their children. No concerns were raised by parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Chalcot 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 1 completed questionnaire by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 32 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	100
The school keeps my child safe	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	0	0	1	100	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)	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	0	0	1	100	0	0	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	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.



13 May 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Chalcot School, London, NW1 8DP

Thank you for your help when I inspected your school. I judged that Chalcot School provides you with a satisfactory education. One of you mentioned that you appreciate being able to go to staff if you have a problem and the fact that they will sort it out. I could see that the school helps you to feel secure. I could also see that you make satisfactory progress in your work and the qualifications you gain by Year 11 help to prepare you for life after school. It was good to hear that you enjoy physical education and that you take up out-of-school activities such as boxing. The older ones of you appreciate the college courses that have been set up and the fact that, next year, these are being extended.

The staff want to improve the school further and you can play a big part. First, I have asked them to make sure that your attendance improves and this means that all of you need to ensure you come to school every single day. Also, I have asked them to use a range of different teaching approaches so that, in all lessons, you are fully motivated and challenged to do your best. I have also asked teachers with whole-school responsibilities to play a bigger part in improving the school in the future.

Yours sincerely

Kay Charlton

Lead inspector

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