

Childer Thornton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111083
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	378230
Inspection dates	3–4 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Michael McLachlan

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	164
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Baldwin
Headteacher	Stephanie Raynor
Date of previous school inspection	5 May 2009
School address	New School Lane Childer Thornton Ellesmere Port CH66 1QY
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Fifteen lessons were observed and seven teachers seen. Meetings were held with parents and carers, groups of pupils, governors, staff and the School Improvement Partner. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school's self-evaluation document and the school development plan, the school's policies, including those covering safeguarding, the curriculum and lesson plans and the minutes of meetings of the governing body. Pupil and staff questionnaires were scrutinised alongside 85 parental questionnaires.

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 of pupils in each year group to test if the high attainment and outstanding progress seen over recent years is being sustained.
- The pupils' personal development outcomes to test the accuracy of the school's assertion that many of these are now outstanding.
- The quality of teaching to test the accuracy of the school's assertion that this has improved substantially since the last inspection.
- The leadership of the school at all levels to ascertain if the issues raised in the last inspection report, regarding the involvement of staff and governors in accurately evaluating the school's work, have been fully addressed.

Information about the school

The school has fewer pupils than average for a primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils from minority-ethnic groups is very low with none who speaks English as an additional language. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs are both well below average. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are both recent appointments to the school. The school is in the process of applying for the Healthy Schools and Family Partnerships awards and the Governing Body Quality Mark

There is a privately managed pre-school club on site which is inspected separately.

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

1

Main findings

Childer Thornton is a good school that is rapidly improving. Many aspects are outstanding, including the provision for the youngest children. Most significantly, the headteacher has, with the overwhelming support of her senior and middle leaders, staff, parents, carers and pupils, raised the level of challenge and ambition for all. Pupils' achievement and enjoyment are outstanding. The pupils delight in demonstrating what they have learned. They frequently have opportunities to take the lead so they develop excellent skills in learning independently. Consequently, attainment is high and learning and progress are outstanding for all, including the small numbers of pupils with special educational needs/and or disabilities. Outstanding care, guidance and support ensure that many personal as well as academic outcomes are outstanding. These include feeling safe in school, eating and acting healthily and developing the skills needed to successfully move to secondary school, such as attending regularly and having excellent literacy and numeracy skills. Behaviour is excellent and pupils show great consideration for each other in lessons and in the playground.

The school has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. It has already conducted an excellent review, using the recently redrafted Ofsted evaluation criteria, to ensure its plans for development are forward looking and at the highest level of challenge. The governing body has been fully involved in this review and brings a good and improving level of challenge as well as support for the school. Two key areas have arisen from this review. The school has rightly evaluated that while teaching is consistently good and often outstanding, particularly in relation to English and mathematics, there is still work to be done to ensure this outstanding practice is embedded across the school. Similarly, while the good curriculum has many strengths, the level of progression in skills and content across the foundation subjects lacks the rigour seen in English and mathematics. The school has very good plans in hand to address both issues.

All issues raised in the last inspection report have been thoroughly and successfully addressed. A robust response to establishing high expectations, an accurate evaluation of areas to be improved and the eradication of all that was judged as satisfactory in the last report, indicate the school has an excellent capacity to improve. Many aspects of leadership including embedding ambition in the whole school community, partnerships with parents and other agencies, promoting equal opportunities and value for money, are outstanding. Consequently, this is close to

being an outstanding school. However, the school has rightly assessed, and inspectors agree, that as many of the gains made are relatively recent, more time is needed to embed these changes thoroughly, particularly to ensure all aspects of provision are consistently outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

Within the next twelve months

- Ensure the existing plans to monitor, evaluate and spread the most effective practice seen in teaching and learning are rigorously implemented so that the vast majority of teaching and learning becomes consistently outstanding.
- Ensure the plans to develop a coherent and progressive programme of skills and content in the foundation subjects are completed thoroughly and implemented across the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Learning seen in lessons was frequently exciting, delightful and characterised by the pupils taking significant responsibility for assessing how well they and their friends were doing and using this evaluation to improve their work. A consistent approach to developing these skills in a very active way has been recently introduced and the impact on pupils' confidence and learning was impressive. Pupils take delight in independently researching, or doing work at home, in response to the learning in school. For example, a pupil produced a number of excellent haiku poems, illustrated on his computer at home because he, 'enjoyed the lesson so much he wanted to do some more'. The learning journals, completed at home, are a delight to read. Pupils spoke highly of their enjoyment in producing this work and particularly in deriving inspiration by looking at the high quality work produced by other pupils.

Attainment by the end of Year 6 has been consistently high and evidence seen during the inspection indicates that this is being maintained. Pupils make outstanding progress. A very high proportion of pupils reach the highest levels for their age in the national tests from broadly average overall attainment on entry to the school. Pupils' personal development is also outstanding in many respects. Pupils demonstrate a keen sense of keeping themselves and each other safe as evidenced by the excellent behaviour in lessons and in the playground. Pupils demonstrate high levels of confidence, growing maturity and independence at all ages and particularly by the time they are ready to move into secondary education. Pupils contribute very well in school; for example, the buddy systems support playground activities and reception children as they join the school. However, pupils' direct involvement in the local community is not as strong. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good rather than outstanding as there are insufficient opportunities for all pupils to have first-hand experiences of other cultures.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The recently introduced systems for ensuring all pupils are actively engaged in their learning, through testing their own and each other's ideas and understanding, have had a significant impact on raising the overall quality of teaching and learning across the school. Lessons are consistently well planned, learning objectives set and pupils' progress in all year groups tracked against national expectations. In the best lessons, the excitement for learning is palpable. High level, probing questioning ensures all pupils have to think hard to explain and not merely practise skills. For example, in a science lesson, pupils having decided that a number of substances were either solid or liquid and that a property of liquids was that they would pour, were challenged by the teacher to explain why the cup of 'solid' rice poured! A pupil quickly surmised that, 'as the rice was in very small bits they would slide over each other' - an insightful response given the age of the group. Assessment is consistently good with good feedback to pupils on what they need to do to improve.

The curriculum provides well organised, imaginative and effective opportunities for learning. Consistent approaches have been established across the school to ensure excellent progression in learning in English and mathematics. High quality themed work, such as the study of life in Victorian times, is used well to promote literacy development. Opportunities to extend learning, through out of school activities such as residential visits, after school clubs and visiting speakers, provide excellent additional learning experiences. The school has rightly recognised that planning for the foundation subjects does not as yet fully support the progressive development of knowledge and skills for all pupils.

Excellent attention is given to all aspects of care, guidance and support. The school strives to treat each pupil as an individual to ensure all pupils enjoy and achieve during their time in school. No stone is left unturned to ensure their individual needs are met. This is a very happy and harmonious community. Parents and carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities spoke very highly of the

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

efforts made by the school to support their children and the difference this had made to their children's confidence and enjoyment of school. Exceptionally good transition arrangements into school and on to secondary school ensure the children receive the best possible start at each stage. Parents and carers, in meetings and informal discussions in the playground at the end of the school day, were effusive about how the school supports their children. As one child excitedly ran up to her father, keen to tell him about her day in school, he said, 'Look at her. She always comes in happy – leaves happy. What more do you want?'

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior staff have quickly established a culture of high expectations. The governing body is now fully involved in challenging as well as supporting the school. The school's leadership has forensically and accurately analysed the strengths and weaknesses of the school and taken robust actions to eradicate weaknesses. Response to parental concerns, around split-age-group classes for example, has been effective with additional resources secured and a new class created. Support from parents, carers and other partners to the school is very high, as evidenced not only by their comments and their contributions to support the pupils' learning and well-being but also through the considerable funds raised to support the school's work. The needs of all pupils are exceptionally well met. Consequently, the school's effectiveness in promoting equal opportunity and tackling discrimination is outstanding. Safeguarding procedures are very effective and all regulations met and national guidance followed. The school works well to promote community cohesion. It rightly recognises that the opportunities for all pupils to have first-hand as well as classroom experiences of other cultures and communities are currently underdeveloped. Given the high academic and personal development outcomes achieved by the time pupils leave school, the school gives outstanding value for money.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2

The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1
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Early Years Foundation Stage

Outstanding leadership, teaching, and care, guidance and support arrangements ensure children make rapid gains in their learning and personal development. Children enter the Reception year with skills broadly in line with age-related expectations and make outstanding progress during the year, attaining highly across all six areas of learning and development. The children thoroughly enjoy an exciting and extremely well planned range of activities, which supports their development very effectively. Exceptional teamwork and planning closely linked to accurate assessment ensure learning is tailored to meet individual needs. Children often lead the learning themselves. For example, the children were fascinated by the experiences of a fellow pupil who had brought in her Diwali clothes to show and explain to the class. Children understand how to stay safe and are able to engage very well in collaborative play. Staff fully involve parents and carers in their children's learning and they speak very highly of their delight in the work done by the school. Consequently, parents and carers are very well informed about their children's progress and become very effective partners in supporting their children's learning. Outstanding induction, including the excellent buddy system with older pupils, started before the children join the school, ensures all quickly become confident, curious and independent learners.

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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers show very high levels of confidence in all that the school offers as evidenced by the high proportion who expressed strong agreement with many of the questions. Parents and carers say their children enjoy school, are kept safe and that they are happy with their children's experience at school. Support for the new senior leadership is very high. Parents and carers formally interviewed or met in the playground at the end of the school day spoke highly of how their children achieve and enjoy in this school. A very small number of parents and carers raised individual concerns, particularly around provision, which were explored with the school. The senior management and governors were aware of concerns and have robust plans in hand to improve and ensure the continuity of provision.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Childer Thornton Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received **85** completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 164 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	71	84	14	16	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	77	91	8	9	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	45	53	37	44	3	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	44	52	32	38	6	7	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	50	59	30	35	3	4	2	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	48	56	31	36	3	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	51	60	30	35	2	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	41	48	31	36	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	51	60	26	31	5	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	45	53	31	36	2	2	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	46	54	31	36	5	6	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	64	75	18	21	2	2	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	63	74	19	22	2	2	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 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.



7 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Childer Thornton Primary School, Ellesmere Port, CH66 1QY

Thank you for the delightful way you greeted and met with me and my team. We think you go to a good school which is well on the way to being outstanding. We were particularly impressed by how much you enjoy being in school and how well you do in the national tests in Year 6. You make excellent progress, not only in your subjects but also as young people. We thought you were very mature, particularly in the way you helped each other. We noted that you keep yourselves and each other safe and you understand how to keep active and healthy and try to do so. We also thought you were extremely well behaved and polite, that you attend very well and work very hard when you are in school.

You are well taught and you are often given opportunities to do really exciting work. We saw some very impressive examples, such as the literacy lesson in Year 4, where you collectively wrote an excellent poem about the sea. 'The sea is not the flood of tears from gods above, nor is it a big blue blanket...' The poem was brimming with imagination and was a very grown up response. Similarly, your learning journals, which you do in your own time, are excellent. They look great and are full of really interesting information – well done! We have suggested that the school should continue its work to ensure that all your learning and teaching are as challenging and exciting as the best we saw.

You told us that you really enjoy all your lessons and the wide range of extra activities the school provides, particularly the residential visits and clubs. We think your curriculum is good and could be even better and were pleased to see that your teachers are reviewing this at the moment. You all spoke very highly of how well your school is led, the excellent care and support you are given and how it is a really happy place in which to work and play. We thoroughly agree with you. Good luck for the future as you and your teachers work together to make your school even better.

Yours sincerely

Michael McLachlan
Lead inspector

