

Chestnuts Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134680
Local Authority	Haringey
Inspection number	381715
Inspection dates	19–20 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Sarah McDermott

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	399
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vanessa Cooke
Headteacher	Cal Shaw
Date of previous school inspection	28–29 April 2009
School address	Black Boy Lane Tottenham London N15 3AS
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The team observed 21 lessons taught by 15 teachers. The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They scrutinised pupils' work and looked at the data the school had collected on pupils' academic progress and attendance. They looked also at the school development plan, investigated procedures for keeping pupils safe and analysed the responses to questionnaires from pupils, staff and 158 parents and carers.

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

- The extent to which pupils make sufficient progress in mathematics.
- The extent to which teaching and the curriculum enable pupils, particularly boys, to progress at the same rate as other pupils.
- The effectiveness of all leaders and managers in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and raising pupils' performance successfully.

Information about the school

Chestnuts Primary is larger than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. Most pupils are from minority ethnic groups, predominantly of other White backgrounds or of Black African or Caribbean origin. Over half of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Their needs relate mostly to difficulties with speech and language or behaviour.

The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises two Reception classes. The school manages its own breakfast club and after-school club, which are included in this inspection. The school holds the silver Food for Life award and the International Schools award.

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

Chestnuts Primary is a satisfactory school where pupils are looked after extremely well. One parent reflected the views of many, stating 'The school is safe and hugely supportive of all children.' Others commented justifiably on the wide range of clubs and experiences provided: 'There is a wealth of activities – both in school and out – which ensures that the school is at the heart of the community.'

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils, including those who have English as an additional language, make satisfactory academic progress through the rest of the school and leave in Year 6 with broadly average standards. Last year, attainment in mathematics for Year 6 pupils was low and these particular pupils did not make enough progress. Boys make similarly satisfactory progress to girls. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good and sometimes outstanding progress as a result of well-targeted support and good use of outside expertise. However, for many pupils the quality of teaching is not consistently good enough. In some classes, pupils make at least good progress because teaching is well organised, lively and engages all pupils well. However, in too many lessons, pupils make no more than satisfactory progress because work is not matched closely enough to the pupils' needs or teachers do not check that pupils understand entirely clearly. On occasion, lower-attaining pupils and those who speak little English cannot read instructions confidently, whereas more-able pupils complete exercises quickly without further challenge being provided. Senior leaders make good use of assessment data to check how different groups of pupils are progressing, providing effective extra tuition out of class where necessary. The headteacher has a thorough schedule of monitoring lessons and knows where teachers need extra support. Already, she is identifying more ways to thread mathematics into other subjects. However, other members of the senior leadership team do not all spend enough time observing lessons formally. They are not yet sufficiently confident in assessing the quality of teaching and learning rigorously to be able to identify successful ways of speeding up pupils' progress. Teachers with the best practice are not being used effectively enough as role models to improve the teaching quality of others.

The headteacher is held in high esteem by parents, carers, pupils and staff alike. She has been instrumental in developing the many excellent aspects of the pupils' personal attributes. Of particular note is the concerted and very successful work in raising attendance to high levels, with hardly any persistent absenteeism. Pupils are happy and behave well in lessons, assemblies and at play. They have an excellent community spirit, taking on a wide range of responsibilities around the school, such

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as staffing the tuck shop and acting as peer mediators. Pupils are well involved in neighbourhood events, including local festivals, and are proud ambassadors for their school. The school provides an excellent range of activities to promote the pupils' health and well-being. Swimming lessons and active clubs are well attended and many pupils walk to school. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is good.

Leaders, managers and the governing body are accurate in their evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for development. The school has maintained many strong aspects of personal development from the last inspection and improved attendance greatly. Performance in mathematics has declined, but the school now has clear strategies to tackle any underperformance and all senior managers are starting to play a bigger role in raising performance. Consequently, the school demonstrates 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?

- Raise attainment and achievement in mathematics so at least 90% of pupils make expected progress or better from Year 2 to Year 6 by summer 2013, by:
 - ensuring teachers set work that matches the abilities of the different pupils in the class
 - giving pupils more chances to apply mathematical skills and knowledge across the curriculum.
- Improve the quality of teaching to consistently good levels by:
 - ensuring teachers check frequently that pupils clearly understand what they are doing
 - giving teachers more opportunities to observe the good practice of their colleagues.
- Build the confidence of the senior leadership team in its accountability for attainment in their subject or phase by:
 - monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in lessons regularly
 - improving identification of precisely what needs to be improved in teaching practice.

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

Attendance is high because pupils enjoy coming to school to play with their friends, meet their teachers and get involved in exciting activities. Pupils from a wide range of different ethnic and religious backgrounds get on very well, often helping each

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other when they feel sad or have fallen over. They are interested in each other’s religions and appreciate visits to different places of worship. Behaviour is nearly always good in lessons and out at play. Consequently, it is not surprising that the vast majority of pupils, confirmed by their parents and carers, feel exceptionally safe in the school’s care. They know who to turn to if at all worried and have a well-developed understanding of how to keep out of danger. Pupils possess an excellent knowledge of how to lead healthy lives, as evidenced by the Food for Life award. They relish the well-balanced school dinners, enjoy looking after the chickens and tend the allotments keenly. Pupils know how important it is to be an active member of the community. They take on many jobs and chores around the school and older pupils keep a close eye on the younger pupils. The school council is well valued, participating maturely in school working parties and contributing to staff appointments. Although basic skills in literacy and numeracy are average, the pupils’ excellent attendance, good behaviour and community awareness mean they are well prepared for moving on to secondary school and eventually the world of work.

Pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning from their starting points. Those who are given extra support, invariably, make good progress, but progress in lessons is more variable because of the differences in the quality of teaching. In the national tests of 2011, pupils attained broadly average levels in reading and writing, but mathematics attainment dipped for the second year running because the school did not move urgently enough to improve the teaching of mathematics. Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds make equally satisfactory progress. Some, such as Eastern European pupils, make good progress because of positive support between school and home. The school is already tackling the potential underachievement of a few other groups, such as pupils from the Turkish and Somali communities, by organising additional help.

Pupils know the routines in lessons and settle down quickly. Many make the most of ‘talking partners’ to bounce ideas off each other, although on occasion a few are left out of discussions. Pupils respond very well to lively teaching. For example, in a Year 2 mathematics lesson, pupils enjoyed thoroughly investigating numbers on a 100 square, with one boy exclaiming ‘I’ve seen a lovely pattern!’ Sometimes, pupils lack sparkle in their learning when teachers over-direct rather than letting them explore and have a go themselves. They appreciate the colourful ‘So Special’ rainbow display, proudly charting how they are moving on with their learning targets.

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

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

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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	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers organise lessons well, making sure resources are to hand and the interactive whiteboards set up. They have good relationships with their pupils, so pupils feel comfortable and at ease in their learning. Role play is used well to involve a wide range of pupils. In a good Year 3 literacy lesson, pupils with learning needs made very good progress because they were delighted to be included in a game acting out verbs and adverbs. In a few lessons, teachers do not make enough use of tracking data or assessments from previous lessons to ensure activities are matched well to individual needs. Consequently, more-able pupils find the work easy and do not gain enough new knowledge. Most teachers ensure learning moves along at a good pace with an interesting variety of activities. On occasion, teachers do not keep a close enough eye on whether all pupils have understood what they are learning, meaning some continue with misconceptions for too long. Teaching assistants are deployed to provide valuable support, particularly to the less-able. Most teachers mark exercise books regularly, but do not all give a clear message as to how the work could be even better.

Several aspects of the curriculum are strong, particularly in providing experiences that many of the pupils might not otherwise enjoy. Much of that is down to the commitment of the staff. One parent commented 'Everyone goes the extra mile and not just in school time, organising gardening on Saturdays and bike rides in the park after school.' During the inspection, pupils returned from a variety of trips full of excitement at what they had seen and done. The provision for personal, social and health education is reaping rewards in the good and outstanding features of personal development. The school is undertaking a thorough review of the curriculum to ensure it is effective in improving pupils' numeracy skills.

Care, guidance and support are strengths of the school. A very warm welcome is given to pupils who arrive mid-term lacking English language skills; they are soon valuable and confident members of the Chestnuts community. The school works very closely with families to ensure staff know the precise needs of each pupil. Potentially vulnerable pupils are supported particularly well. Pupils transfer confidently to

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secondary school because they are well prepared on what to expect. The breakfast and after-school clubs look after pupils extremely well, providing safe surroundings with interesting, educational activities and well-balanced, healthy meals.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher leads a dedicated team of staff, committed to the welfare and happiness of the pupils. She ensures parents and carers receive good-quality information about what their children are learning, so that they feel more confident in supporting their children’s education. Parents, carers, staff and pupils all feel valuable members of the school community because of their important contributions to strategic planning. Senior managers, including the new leaders of the Early Years Foundation Stage and English, know what needs to be improved. They have a broadly accurate view of the quality of teaching in their subjects and phases, but are not pooling this information to introduce strategies to improve the overall quality of teaching and the resulting performance of pupils. The governing body has been instrumental in ensuring finances are monitored tightly and pupils are safe and secure. It is working very effectively to build on the strong links with the local community. The governing body realises it did not move quickly enough to question the downturn in mathematics performance and is now honing its skills in challenging any academic underachievement.

Good partnerships with other schools provide specialist sports coaches and inter-schools competitions. Extra expertise is sourced carefully from outside agencies to support pupils with special educational needs. Very good links with museums, art galleries and parks stimulate and enliven the curriculum. Safeguarding procedures meet all legal requirements, including required child protection training and close attention to the assessment of potential risks. The promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory and results in all pupils making equally satisfactory progress in their learning. The school ensures all pupils have the opportunity to take part in clubs, outings or residential trips, providing financial assistance where necessary. It promotes community cohesion well. The school itself is a very close-knit community where genuinely pupils appreciate each other’s religions and backgrounds. It is working hard to ensure different ethnic groups achieve as well as each other. Pupils benefit from well-established international links, recognised by the International Schools award, and raising good amounts of money for global disasters. They are now building up their knowledge of ways of life of different citizens within the United

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Kingdom.

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	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Early Years Foundation Stage staff take great care in settling new children into the routines of school life. One parent remarked ‘The reception staff have been really welcoming and informative about what my child is learning.’ Children are looked after well and turn confidently to adults if they are worried. They are learning about making healthily choices, eating fruit independently, drinking milk and making the most of activities out in the fresh air. Children behave very well. They are sociable and readily help to clear up at the end of the day.

Children make good progress in all areas of learning, including communication, language, literacy and number. Early years staff are very successful in linking different areas of learning in interesting and engaging ways. For example, children not only performed a little play based on ‘Owl Babies’, but also used their number skills to pay for their tickets with coins and find their seat with the matching number. Following reflection, children could articulate what they had enjoyed and what had scared them in the performance. Not surprisingly, a parent commented ‘In the short time my son has been at school his interest in letters, words and numbers has massively increased – the teachers have captured his interest and run with it.’ Adults organise a wide range of activities inside and out to develop early learning skills. However, on occasion too many enthusiastic children crowd around one activity or boys dominate the tricycles and trucks without sufficient adult supervision to guide learning. Staff keep good records on children’s progress, enabling special support to be given where needed. Teachers and assistants work very well together, discussing and planning the next steps in the learning of the children. The leader of the Early

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Years Foundation Stage also oversees Year 1, giving her a good overview of the transition of children into mainstream education. Already, she is reviewing how the curriculum in Year 1 is matched best to the needs of children of all abilities moving up from the Reception Year.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The level of response to the questionnaire was average for primary schools, although more parents and carers than usual added extra written comments. The vast majority of parents and carers is content with all aspects of their children’s schooling. In particular, they believe their children are happy, safe and learn to live healthy lives. The inspectors agree with these sentiments. A few parents and carers expressed concerns about the help the school gives them to support their children’s learning and a few felt the school did not listen well enough to their suggestions and concerns. The inspection team judges that the school communicates well with parents and carers and keeps them thoroughly up to date on how they can help their children learn.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Chestnuts 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 158 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 399 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	121	77	33	21	3	2	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	112	71	41	26	2	1	1	1
The school informs me about my child’s progress	91	58	61	38	6	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	89	56	58	37	9	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	87	55	62	39	3	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	84	53	59	37	10	6	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	86	54	65	41	5	3	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)	73	46	57	36	8	5	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	71	45	69	44	8	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	95	60	49	31	9	6	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	86	54	54	34	14	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	110	70	43	27	2	1	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	114	72	36	23	1	1	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 are 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.



21 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Chestnuts Primary School, Tottenham N15 3AS

Thank you very much for welcoming us to your school. Chestnuts Primary is a satisfactory school. You make satisfactory progress and leave school with average attainment in English, but below average attainment in mathematics. Teaching is satisfactory because most teachers plan interesting activities and move learning along at a good pace. We think the school provides you with an exciting range of trips, visitors and clubs. The headteacher and her team of senior teachers lead the school satisfactorily. They work well together and know what needs improving.

Your behaviour is good and you get on very well with each other. You know how to look after each other (and the chickens) and are especially good at keeping yourselves safe. We like particularly the way you keep yourselves healthy by eating the tasty lunches, enjoying sport, swimming regularly and walking to school. Well done in improving your attendance!

To make your school even better, we have asked it to do the following:

- improve your progress in mathematics, so you all attain expected or higher levels
- make sure teachers set work that is not too easy, not too hard, but just the right challenge for you to make good progress in your lessons and check frequently that you understand what you are doing
- arrange for senior teachers to visit lessons more often so they can check how you are learning and find ways to improve the quality of teaching so it is always good or better.

We enjoyed our visit to your school. We know that your teachers and their assistants make your school a special place for you. All of you can help by striving to do your best always.

Yours sincerely

Sarah McDermott
Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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