

Chesterton Primary School

Brittain Avenue, Chesterton, Newcastle, ST5 7NT

Inspection dates 11–12 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The majority of pupils achieve well, usually from low starting points, and learn successfully in many subjects.
- Children get a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Teaching and learning are good. This leads to pupils making good progress during their time at the school.
- Pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, enjoy lessons because a wide variety of activities ensure they are well motivated.
- The school provides a welcoming atmosphere and good quality care and support for all pupils.
- Pupils' behaviour is consistently good in lessons and around school. They have good attitudes to learning and get on well together.
- Bullying is rare, and consequently pupils feel safe in school. Attendance is below average although improving.
- Determined yet thoughtful leadership has produced an effective team that has improved the quality of teaching, though a few shortcomings remain.
- All leaders, including the governors, have focused successfully on raising the achievement of all pupils.
- Pupils' performance is closely tracked and the school has a clear picture of pupils' progress.
- Each child is highly valued and given an equal opportunity to succeed.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching and the use of assessment to inform planning, although good, have some inconsistencies that slows progress for some pupils.
- Some lessons do not maintain all pupils' interest when the pace of learning is not sufficiently brisk.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- Inspectors visited 19 lessons led by nine of the school's teachers.
- Meetings were held with staff as well as members of the governing body and pupils.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at development plans, records of pupils' progress, arrangements for safeguarding, and documentation on the monitoring of teachers' performance.
- Inspectors took account of the seven responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- They also scrutinised 29 questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Andrew Stafford, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Raymond Biglin

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than most primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have additional funding for their particular needs is above average.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and the vast majority speak English as their first language.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which set the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching, eradicating the remaining weaknesses, by:
 - ensuring that work is carefully matched to the needs of all pupils
 - using information gained from assessment to plan lessons that ensure that all pupils make at least good progress
 - consistently implementing a lesson structure that moves learning forward at a brisk pace.
- Focus further on professional development, through systematic performance management by senior leaders, to ensure that the quality of teaching becomes consistently good by July 2013.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- When children join the school most have skills that are well below those expected for their age, especially in their social development and their communication skills. Progress is good, although their skills are still below expected levels when they enter Year 1.
- Children's skills in linking letters and the sounds they make, and their skills in reading and writing, are much better than in the past. This is because the school has employed a very structured approach to teaching early literacy skills.
- Not only have literacy skills been well taught, but their development has been enhanced by all adults concentrating on the development of speaking and listening skills. For example, in one session boys were constructing a house for the little pigs. 'Measure it first then use our super-spades to dig,' said one, showing how motivated he was.
- Pupils' progress in both English and mathematics lessons is improving in Key Stage 1. Attainment has improved to broadly average in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 2. The structured approach has not yet had the same impact on writing.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 2, but it is not yet consistent for all pupils in each year group. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is average overall and rising. More pupils are reaching the higher Level 5, especially in writing.
- The inconsistencies in pupils' progress are because the work that teachers set is not always matched precisely enough to pupils' needs. For some it is too easy, for others, too hard. Also, information gained from assessing completed work is not used carefully enough in planning pupils' next steps in learning.
- The oldest pupils are very enthusiastic about their lessons because their learning is brisk as one activity follows another. When asked about why he was enjoying his work, one boy replied that the exciting books they read fired their imaginations and inspired their writing.
- Parents and carers rightly say that their children make good progress overall. Pupils who are known to be eligible for additional funding make better progress than equivalent national groups because their individual needs are met effectively and sensitively, for example through the dedicated 'nurture group'.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress and the school provides particularly well for pupils with very complex needs. These pupils often make especially good progress in their personal development because they are taught by skilled special support assistants, who encourage them well and provide effective individual teaching programmes.

The quality of teaching is good

- Lessons observation evidence confirmed that teaching is good overall, and is promoting good progress. Pupils are particularly positive about lessons where teachers use a good range of strategies, including activities that make learning fun.
- For example, in a lesson for Year 5 pupils, they learnt descriptive writing skills, and how to use adjectives from an author's text by discussing their ideas with a partner. They wrote them out on 'Big Jim', a paper cut-out figure, as preparation for extended writing on characters' feelings.

- Teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievements are usually high. However, the work set is occasionally not given enough consideration. Pupils are not always urged to make full use of the time available; the pace of learning in some lessons is not brisk enough.
- Resources, including information and communication technology, are used effectively to support learning in lessons. For example, patterns in multiplication were displayed on the interactive whiteboard, to help pupils arrive at the next number in the sequence.
- Pupils are given plentiful opportunities to work together; consequently levels of cooperation are high. Good relationships between staff and pupils encourage the development of confidence and the building of resilience.
- Teaching assistants are skilled and knowledgeable and most make a strong contribution to pupils' good achievement, including for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Most are good at questioning pupils to check their understanding and at reshaping the teacher's explanations for those pupils who find learning more difficult.
- Pupils enjoy the generous praise that is often given. Although teachers give guidance in lessons about how pupils can develop their skills, this practice is not fully embedded across the school. A few pupils are not clear about how to improve their work because marking and feedback are not consistently helpful.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Parents, carers, staff and pupils are all highly positive about standards of behaviour in the school, which are typically good. This is reflected in a calm atmosphere where pupils are consistently respectful of staff and thoughtful in the way they treat each other.
- In lessons, pupils have positive attitudes to learning. In a minority of lessons a small number of pupils find it difficult to concentrate in a whole-class situation but are able to focus far more effectively when they receive individual support.
- Pupils work together well and are often keen to help each other in lessons. Playground 'Best Buddies' add to the positive atmosphere in school and all ages mix well together.
- Bullying is rare and pupils are emphatic when they say that 'bullying has been stamped out in this school'. Pupils feel very safe and say that staff take their concerns and opinions seriously. Pupils are aware of different kinds of bullying, including cyber bullying, and know to keep themselves safe when using the internet.
- Attendance is currently below average, but it is improving and rates of persistent absenteeism are decreasing. This is because of the consistent approach of the headteacher and the family support worker in monitoring and promoting regular attendance.

The leadership and management are good

- Ambitious leadership by the headteacher and senior leaders is reflected at all levels of management. Planning documents illustrate well the drive to continually improve the school and to provide a high-quality education for pupils.
- Strong management of the performance of teaching and the well-developed programme for training have brought about improvement. The monitoring of the quality of teaching is sharply focused and highlights how teachers can improve their practice.

- Interesting activities are provided for all groups of pupils throughout the curriculum, especially by the study of story topics. Art and music have a high profile and make a very strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Extensive opportunities to read and write, especially in Key Stage 2, in a range of contexts ensure pupils make good progress. The development of opportunities to extend their skills in science is a priority that is being tackled robustly.
- Pupils use stories to generate skills in the humanities and are able to determine the direction of their own lines of enquiry. Subject leaders in English and mathematics consistently promote the development of these skills across the curriculum.
- Well-established systems for checking the progress of pupils, in particular disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, are used at frequent meetings to identify and tackle underperformance. Leaders and managers energetically promote equality and successfully deal with discrimination, and this is reflected in the good progress made by all pupils.
- The local authority provides effective support for the teaching of English and mathematics which has improved the quality of teaching in these subjects.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - accurate and well-focused self-evaluation is the result of regular meetings between senior leaders and members of the governing body, and this extends to robust monitoring and management of the performance of all members of staff.
 - comprehensive checks are carried out by the governing body to make sure that the school's arrangements to keep the pupils safe are robust, and safeguarding arrangements fully meet requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	124169
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	402234

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	184
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lillian Barker
Headteacher	Ruth Foster
Date of previous school inspection	29 September 2009
Telephone number	01782 561255
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