

Chenies School

Chenies, Rickmansworth, WD3 6ER

Inspection dates

18–19 October 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 headteacher, supported by governors and staff, has succeeded in improving the school since the last inspection. School leaders are committed to raising pupils' achievement further and check regularly to see if they are doing so.
- Pupils are confident in their English and mathematics work so by Year 6 they reach better than average standards. Pupils enjoy reading for learning and for pleasure.
- Teaching is good across the school. Teachers plan interesting lessons and they get on very well with pupils. Teachers know their classes very well so they can tailor their help and support very effectively.
- Pupils feel safe in school, and feel they are well cared for and looked after. According to pupils, and records kept by the school, bullying and racism are very rare.
- The school has excellent relationships with parents and carers, who are very supportive of the school and its leaders.
- Pupils behave well and enjoy attending school. They are proud of their school, and are keen to do well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The progress made by children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is occasionally inconsistent. Children do not always benefit from a wide range of activities which they can choose, and some areas are not always attractive or exciting to speed up their learning even further.
- Some pupils in Key Stage 2 make less progress in mathematics than in English. This is because not all activities are closely matched to pupils' abilities and their knowledge of mathematics, particularly for those who are capable of doing harder work and organising their own learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons, of which four were joint observations carried out with the headteacher. All teachers were observed. The inspector also made a number of shorter visits to lessons to see pupils at work. The inspector attended a school assembly, and looked at teachers' lesson plans and at pupils' work.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, two members of the governing body, with a representative of the local authority, and with school staff, including with senior leaders.
- The inspector analysed 71 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View) and looked at results of a recent survey of parents and carers conducted by the school. The inspector also talked to a small number of parents and carers.
- The inspector looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' current progress, school improvement plans, monitoring documents and at school policies. The inspector also looked at school records on pupils' behaviour and attendance, and at documents concerning the health and safety of pupils.

Inspection team

Mike Phipps, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average sized primary school. It has an Early Years Foundation Stage class of reception-aged children.
- The current headteacher was appointed after the previous inspection.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for extra funding, known as the 'pupil premium', is well below that found in most other schools.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage, with the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups being slightly below the national picture. A very small proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those with special educational needs supported through school action is slightly below that found nationally. The proportion of those supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is a lot lower than is normally found.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that children's progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is consistently good or better by:
 - making sure that the recent improvements in the quality of teaching carry on and are improved upon where possible
 - providing children with a wider range of activities that they can choose from to boost their learning further
 - continuing to improve the classroom and other learning areas to prompt children's curiosity, and to allow them to learn on their own when needed.
- Make sure that pupils' progress in mathematics is consistently good or better, particularly in Key Stage 2, by:
 - setting tasks throughout lessons that are closely matched to the wide range of pupils' abilities, experience and knowledge of mathematics
 - giving those pupils who are capable of doing harder work more difficult activities to stretch their learning, and opportunities to develop their own ideas and to organise their own learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school with skills that are at the level expected for their age. Recent improvements have raised the quality of teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage, although at times some activities do not fully stretch children's skills or imagination. However, children generally achieve well and as a result, they start Key Stage 1 with levels of skills and knowledge that are higher than expected.
- Good teaching in Key Stage 1 means that pupils build on this good start so that by the time they enter Year 3, they are reaching levels in their reading, writing and mathematics that are better than expected.
- As a result of good rates of progress which continue through Years 3 to 6, pupils reach above average levels in their work and achieve well by the time they leave. Some pupils, however, make better progress in English than in mathematics, as there are some minor weaknesses in teaching of the subject. Recent improvements mean that pupils in Years 1 to 4 have quickly made up lost ground in the subject, but some pupils in Years 5 and 6 lag behind in their mathematical understanding.
- The large majority of pupils achieve well, including those who benefit from extra funding through the 'pupil premium', such as disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Those who may speak English as an additional language or are from minority ethnic groups also achieve well. This is because of good teaching, teachers' knowledge of each pupil's needs, and an atmosphere where pupils are encouraged to do their best.
- Almost all pupils develop their literacy skills well, and use them in all subjects. While pupils are generally confident in their number work, those capable of doing harder work are not always fully stretched in their ability to apply their skills in everyday problem-solving. Pupils enjoy reading and can recall favourite stories and authors. By Year 6, most pupils are confident and fluent readers who enjoy reading for pleasure and for learning. Those who find reading more difficult are able to use their knowledge of the sounds that letters make to work out words.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching over time is good, so pupils generally achieve well. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very positive. Teachers plan interesting and enjoyable lessons with pupils playing an active part.
- Teachers encourage pupils to work independently and to stick at tasks, particularly in Years 1 to 6. For example in an outstanding Years 5/6 mathematics lesson, a group of more-able pupils were given an investigation task in which they worked together, with little support from the teacher, and used their mathematical skills successfully to solve a problem.
- In well-taught lessons teachers plan tasks that are very closely matched to each pupil's needs. In a Reception lesson, all children achieved well and made good progress in counting as a result of good adult guidance which suited individuals' needs and abilities. On occasions some activities planned do not always make the best use of the different areas of the classroom to enliven children's learning even more or help them learn independently.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported by teaching assistants. They contribute well to the learning of individuals and of small groups. For example, in a Years 3/4 history lesson, a small group of pupils were well supported by a teaching assistant in an adjoining room, enabling them to make good progress before they rejoined their classmates.
- Teachers know their subjects well, which means they mark pupils' work with skill and insight. They give clear advice to pupils on how to improve their work. Pupils have the chance to act on this advice to get better, and to assess how well they think they are doing.
- Good questioning by teachers helps to develop pupils' thinking. Pupils are often given the chance

to discuss their work with each other. This helps them to think things through clearly, as well as developing their speaking and listening skills.

- The school sets imaginative and motivating homework. Pupils choose a project from each subject every half term, and they organise their own time to complete the work. Parents and carers are advised how to support their children. As a result this is very popular with pupils and parents and carers.
- Sometimes teaching is less successful when teachers take too long to explain the work. This means that sometimes time is wasted and pupils lose concentration. In mathematics lessons, teachers sometimes plan work that does not fully take into account the full range of pupils' ability, and the varying experience of mathematics that pupils in the class have got. Sometimes pupils capable of doing harder work are not given work that is difficult enough, or the chance to apply their skills or to organise their own learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They get on very well together, and they are very polite towards adults. The school's 'Star Rules' and 'School Creed' are well known to pupils, and help them to support each other to sort out any differences that occur between them.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good, and they are keen to succeed. They enjoy attending school, reflected in above average levels of attendance.
- Parents and carers rightly feel that pupils' behaviour in school is good and that their children will be kept safe. One parent, speaking for many, said: 'It's a very happy school. My children are well looked after.' Staff questionnaires confirm the inspection evidence that pupils' behaviour is good over time, and that pupils' behaviour is well managed.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school, despite some of them feeling some concern about overcrowding on the playground. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. Racist incidents are very rare. No pupil has been excluded from school since the last inspection.
- Bullying is very rare, and pupils are confident that if it does take place, it will be effectively dealt with. Some pupils do not always have a clear idea of what bullying can mean, and they confuse it with minor disputes or one-off name-calling. Parents and carers agree that bullying is rare. Pupils take on positions of responsibility that help them to form friendships with pupils in different year groups.
- Teachers use the school's rewards system consistently and pupils value the way they can be rewarded for good behaviour. The school has appropriate sanctions to improve poor behaviour, though school records confirm that these are rarely needed.

The leadership and management are good

- The effective leadership and high expectations of the headteacher mean that staff, governors, pupils, parents and carers have succeeded in improving the school's effectiveness.
- School leaders carry out regular checks on teachers' planning and teaching to make sure that these are good or better. Swift action is taken if there is any weaker teaching and there are good systems in place to give staff help and advice.
- School leaders have put in place systems to check how well pupils are doing. They use this information well to make sure that staff understand that they are responsible for the progress of the pupils they teach.
- The school's view of its strengths and weaknesses is accurate. Plans to improve the school largely concentrate on the right things. The school takes action on all its areas of weakness, and plans are checked carefully to make sure actions are having a positive effect.
- School leaders, including governors, make sure that financial resources are used well. The small amount of additional funding from the pupil premium is used appropriately towards the cost of

pupils' meals, visits and various experiences to enhance their learning. The impact of this funding is evaluated well.

- The school's curriculum is broad, balanced and stimulating for pupils. It allows them to use and improve their literacy skills across a range of subjects. It promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. For example, in a Years 5/6 English lesson pupils used drama very well to think and talk about the thoughts and feelings of characters in a story from another culture. Senior leaders work hard to ensure all pupils are able to take a full part in areas of the school's work and that there is no discrimination.
 - A wide range of visits and special events in school enhances pupils' learning and helps them to understand people from different backgrounds and cultures.
 - The school works very well with parents and carers, who are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and its leadership. A very high proportion would recommend the school to other parents and carers. Comments such as, 'I wouldn't have my children anywhere else', reflect parents' and carers' very positive opinions.
 - The local authority has provided suitable and effective support and challenge to the school, particularly in supporting the headteacher when she was newly appointed.
 - Leaders and managers have acted decisively to improve the school's financial situation and to improve the school's overall effectiveness through improvements to teaching and resulting improvements in pupils' achievement.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a clear idea of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors keep a close eye on the school's plans for improvement, and hold school leaders to account should they fail to take action when it is needed.
 - Governors have a good understanding of what the school's checks on pupils' progress shows, and they do not hold back should they notice that there are any pupils who do not achieve as well as they should.
 - Governors carry out their legal duties well such as ensuring that health and safety routines are maintained to a good standard and that checks on teachers' performance are carried out regularly. Decisions about pay rates are based on the quality of teaching.
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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	110216
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	401108

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	93
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Stansbury
Headteacher	Hannah Burnett
Date of previous school inspection	5–6 July 2010
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