

Chiltern Gate School

Verney Avenue, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, HP12 3NE

Inspection dates

4–5 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- School leaders and governors have not ensured that all the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection have been tackled. Systems for checking the school's work, including the quality of teaching, are poor.
- Pupils' achievement is inadequate because teaching is not effective and the school does not check pupils' progress well enough to identify and support those who are not doing well.
- Teachers have not had enough training to improve their teaching.
- Work is sometimes too hard or too easy and pupils are not clear what they are expected to learn in lessons. They are not given enough guidance to help them to improve their work.
- Teaching assistants are not always used effectively to support learning.
- Teachers' marking does not help pupils to understand how well they are doing or what they have to do to improve.
- The extra money provided by the government to support particular pupils is not being used as it should.
- Plans to make sure that pupils are taught the skills they need are not good enough. For example, pupils have not been helped to develop reading skills in an ordered way.
- Governors have not been kept well informed and do not have a clear idea of all that has been going on in school.

The school has the following strengths

- Teachers' skills in communication, through signing and the use of symbols are good.
- The Chair of the Governing Body has acted quickly to raise concerns about the leadership of the school and ensured that the school receives support.
- The new deputy headteacher has done much to improve staff morale and is starting to bring about change. The school is a calm environment in which pupils feel safe and respond well to staff. Most pupils behave well in lessons.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed ten lessons or parts of lessons, most of which were observed jointly with the deputy headteacher. Inspectors also made short visits to classrooms and other parts of the school with the deputy headteacher and head of literacy. They listened to a sample of pupils read and talked to them about their work in literacy and numeracy.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, pupils and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took into account the five responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors looked at: the school's records on pupils' progress; the school's development plan; school records on behaviour, bullying and attendance; policies for safety and child protection; local authority reports of visits; and minutes of governing body meetings. They also looked at pupils' books and their folders of work.
- Responses to the Ofsted questionnaires from 33 staff were scrutinised.

Inspection team

Sarah Mascall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Robert Faulkner

Additional Inspector

Full Report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- Chiltern Gate caters for pupils with complex needs including moderate learning difficulties, communication and language disorders, and autistic spectrum disorder. All have statements of special educational needs.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. About a third of pupils are of Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage and for several, English is an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium (the extra money provided by the government to support those who are eligible for free school meals and children who are under the care of the local authority or have a parent or carer in the armed forces serving overseas) is higher than average.
- The school offers boarding during the week for a small number of pupils. This aspect of the school's provision was not inspected.
- There has been a high turnover of staff since the previous inspection and high staff absence.
- The Chair of the Governing Body took up post in February 2012.
- The deputy headteacher started in September 2012.
- The headteacher was not in school during the inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to good or better so that pupils make at least good progress by:
 - providing effective training for all staff
 - ensuring that teachers make clear to pupils what they will learn in each lesson so that they, and pupils, can see how well the pupils have achieved by the end of the lesson
 - ensuring that the work set in lessons matches the different needs and abilities of all pupils within each class and encouraging them, where possible, to learn to work with less support
 - providing teachers with the right learning resources
 - making sure that teaching assistants are clear about their roles and how they can support pupils' learning.
- Improve leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - establishing effective systems for checking how well the school is doing, including the quality of teaching, and pupils' progress and behaviour
 - ensuring that the outcomes of these checks are analysed, and strengths and areas for improvement identified and acted upon through effective planning for improvement
 - ensuring that governors are well informed about all aspects of the school's performance and check closely on the improvement the school is making.

- Improve assessment by:
 - ensuring that pupils know how well they are doing and what their next steps in learning should be
 - improving systems for recording the work of pupils, particularly those who are following the Early Years curriculum.
 - Ensure that the pupil premium is used effectively to support pupils' learning and that this is closely checked by governors.
 - Build upon the work started to improve the planning of what should be taught and when, and extend the opportunities for pupils to improve their reading skills.
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Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Achievement is inadequate because observations of pupils' learning in lessons and a study of their work from this term show they are not making enough progress. The school does not have sufficiently well-analysed data to provide evidence about pupils' progress in the longer term.
- The school's systems for checking pupils' progress are weak. As a result the school is very unclear about the progress of individuals. There has been no review of how well different groups within the school are doing, including those who speak English as an additional language.
- Pupils' books and folders show that they are not making enough progress because work does not always build on the skills they already have.
- Pupils struggle to work without an adult, often because the language on worksheets is too difficult for them to read. This was evident in a mathematics lesson, for example, when a pupil could not read the colour or the word of the shapes to be drawn and was reliant on the teaching assistant to help him complete the task.
- In Reception, those children with autistic spectrum disorders have developed a good understanding of learning at their special workstations, and they enjoy opportunities to express their preferences at snack time. However, in some classes for the youngest children, the range of activities is not well planned and children do not know what they are supposed to be doing. As a result they struggle to settle and focus on activities. In Reception and other classes following the Early Years Foundation Stage approach to learning, evidence of children's work and achievements is not recorded consistently.
- Pupils are developing their skills in linking letters to sounds (phonics) but most are at a very early stage. They are keen to share their reading books and enjoy the opportunity to read to adults. They are not confident when tackling unfamiliar words and do not sound out letters to make a word. More-able readers recognise words but do not always understand what they have read.
- Those pupils who are supported by the pupil premium are not benefiting from the extra funding and are not catching up. The money is not being used well enough to support pupils' learning. Those pupils who speak English as an additional language receive some support but there is no evidence that they make any better progress than their peers. Teaching assistants are not always clear about how they can support pupils' learning.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Too much teaching is inadequate, and as a result pupils' progress is too slow.
- The limited training and lack of opportunities to observe good practice in other schools have prevented staff from developing their skills more rapidly.
- Teachers do not always ensure that pupils understand what skills they will be learning. Where teachers refer to objectives for learning in lessons they are the same for the whole class despite the wide range of needs and abilities. As a result, teaching assistants as well as pupils are sometimes unclear about what pupils should be aiming for in the work they are doing and it is difficult for teachers to assess what pupils have learnt by the end of the lesson.
- On occasions, teachers are not provided with the right resources. This was evident in a lesson about 'big' and 'small' where staff worked with individuals but did not have the right materials to reinforce what big and small mean. As a result, not all pupils moved on in their understanding.
- Pupils are often set the same work regardless of their ability. Occasionally the work is unchallenging or, in some cases, too difficult for pupils to do without help. At times the pace of learning is slow and staff do not ensure that all pupils are involved in activities.
- Teachers work hard to improve their skills where they can and this is reflected in the consistently

good use of sign and symbol across the school.

- There are aspects of teaching which are good. Where this is the case, for example, for Reception children with autistic spectrum disorders, planning is clear so that all staff know their roles and work well with the children. This was very evident in a lesson where children were encouraged to choose their own activities. All staff interacted well with children, encouraging them to concentrate on their learning for quite long periods of time. The lesson was well structured and time used well so learning was purposeful. This, though, is not always the case; in another class the activities were not well organised and children did not make any progress in gaining skills.
- Work in pupils' books is marked and teachers often put stickers to show pupils that they have done well; pupils are rightly very proud of these. Often staff will record if pupils have had help completing a task although this does not always indicate how much help or the form the help took. There are rarely any indications to pupils about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work.
- Despite the good examples in one class, the folders of work for children in the Reception year and pupils in Years 1 to 4 are not being used effectively to record pupils' achievements and assess the progress they are making.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement require

- Behaviour requires improvement because pupils are not used to working without an adult, and there are occasions when they lose interest when work is too hard or too easy. The school does not have a clear overview of behaviour that would indicate if it is consistently good or not.
- A few staff raised concerns about behaviour, mostly in terms of how it was managed on the few occasions when there were outbursts. Pupils feel that behaviour is 'okay' in school and that, although there are occasions when bullying occurs, this is dealt with well. The very small number of parents and carers who responded to Parent View did not have worries about behaviour.
- Pupils are keen to settle to work and always show interest. They concentrate well when the tasks are interesting. For example, Year 5/6 pupils were keen to share their ideas when planning a journey and concentrated well when practising using finger spaces to help improve their writing. Pupils clearly like school and they enjoy activities such as the after-school clubs.
- During the inspection pupils were polite and friendly. Lunchtimes support pupils' personal and social skills well and pupils sit with staff and chat happily to each other and adults near them.
- Pupils have a good awareness of keeping safe and the new curriculum is well focused in promoting spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Attendance, although low overall, is good for many of the pupils. Where attendance is below average this is invariably because of the impact of pupils visiting Pakistan or Bangladesh for extended periods. These absences slow their progress and the school is working to improve these pupils' attendance.

The leadership and management

are inadequate

- Leadership has not been effective in moving the school forward and has failed to bring about improvements since the previous inspection. The outcomes of checks on teaching have not been analysed and where concerns have been raised there is no evidence that things have been improved.
- The information the school has about pupils' progress has not been analysed and, as a result, there is no clear overview of progress across the school. The recommendation from the previous inspection, to develop systems for gathering evidence for self-evaluation, has not been met.
- Systems have been introduced this term to help pupils make better progress. Teachers have set

challenging targets, based on national expectations, for each pupil. Checks on pupils' progress are now being made so that the school can have a better understanding of how well pupils are doing.

- Staff have not been well supported in improving their teaching. Performance management targets (which help leaders to decide if a teacher should have a pay rise) have not been closely linked to pupils' progress.
- Staff morale has been very low and many staff, in response to the Ofsted questionnaire, raised concerns about leadership. One result of low morale, until this term, has been poor staff attendance. Staff are very supportive of the deputy headteacher and many commented on the positive impact he has had this term. They say they feel valued and listened to and appreciate the fact that the school is running smoothly.
- The deputy headteacher has worked closely with staff to introduce a range of measures to improve the school. He quickly identified weaknesses in what is being taught and has established plans to show the order in which skills should be covered for this term. Staff have taken on the leadership of subjects, and written overviews and development plans for their areas of responsibility.
- Literacy and the teaching of reading have been an area of concern for staff. A new coordinator is now in place, phonics training has been provided for all staff and a reading programme for those pupils less suited to the learning of phonics is being used. However, as with other recent initiatives, it is too early to see any impact on pupils' progress.
- Arrangements for checking the suitability of staff to work with children are well established and safeguarding arrangements are generally secure. However, the school does not have effective systems for monitoring the pupils' behaviour or ensuring that incidents are recorded and logged effectively.
- The local authority has, of late, worked closely with the school providing support to governors and senior leaders in addressing the concerns regarding leadership.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are now led by an experienced and determined Chair of the Governing Body. He has been very thorough in addressing concerns about leadership and has ensured that the school benefits from the support of the local authority. Minutes of meetings show that governors are developing their role in challenging the school. Last term, for example, they challenged the amount being spent on supply staff and asked for a review of why staff absence was so high. They have however, received very little information about pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. Governors recognise that they need training to increase their knowledge and skills, as there is still a lot they are unclear about. This includes the funding for the pupil premium and the rigour of the targets set for teachers' performance management.
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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	110578
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	401131

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	85
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alex Eaden
Headteacher	John Headland
Date of previous school inspection	3–4 February 2010
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