

Cheswardine Primary School

Glebe Close, Cheswardine, Market Drayton, TF9 2RU

Inspection dates

14–15 March 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Although the school is improving and the 2012 Key Stage 2 results were the best the school has ever had, but pupils' progress is not as good in Key Stage 1.
- Pupils' achievement requires improvement in writing, because progress in writing is lower than in other subject areas.
- Teaching requires improvement. Pupils are not always clear about what they have to do at every stage in lessons, and they are rarely given the opportunity to respond to teachers' comments in their books.
- Teachers do not set writing tasks in a wide enough variety of interesting, real-life situations to fire pupils' imagination.
- Pupils are not routinely encouraged to develop their independent learning skills by working without direct help from adults.
- Leadership and management require improvement. Leaders do not always judge the school's performance as accurately as they should. They have not responded quickly to information that shows weaknesses in pupils' work, particularly in Key Stage 1.
- The governors do not have a good enough idea of the school's strengths and weaknesses to hold its leaders effectively to account.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils read widely and regularly due to good teaching of letters and sounds (phonics), and talk enthusiastically about the books they enjoy.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe. They have very positive attitudes to learning and good relationships with their teachers.
- Pupils gain a good awareness of the wider world through strong teaching of arts subjects, links with a school in London and exceptional opportunities for most to travel in Europe.
- All pupils benefit from outdoor activities such as the 'forest school' each week.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven lessons, all of which were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector looked at pupils' work in their books and listened to them read.
- He held meetings with groups of pupils, subject leaders, the headteacher, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the 13 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the results of a parent questionnaire carried out by the school. The six responses to a staff questionnaire were also considered.
- The inspector examined the school's own data on pupils' current progress; planning and monitoring documentation; records relating to behaviour and attendance; and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Richard Boswell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Cheswardine is smaller than the average primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported the pupil premium, which is additional government funding for certain groups of pupils, is below the national average. In this school it only applies to pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported through school action is below average, but the proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school does not have enough pupils in Year 6 to make a valid judgement regarding whether or not the school meets the government's current floor standards (the minimal expectations for pupils' attainment and progress).
- There is a nursery on the school site. It is managed by the governing body, but was not included in this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that more lessons are good or outstanding by making sure that:
 - all groups of pupils have clearly understood what they need to do before moving on in each lesson
 - pupils have plenty of opportunities to develop their independent learning and research skills by working on their own
 - pupils respond to the marking and comments teachers make in their books, and have time to do this in class.
- Improve pupils' achievement in writing by:
 - seeking and making good use of examples of successful approaches to writing in other schools
 - giving pupils more interesting writing tasks.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - using information about pupils' progress, particularly in Key Stage 1, to identify any problems early on and take swift action to deal with them
 - sharpening leaders' evaluation of their own and the school's performance, so they can set clear targets for its development
 - making sure governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' achievement so they can hold the school fully to account.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement is not good because their progress varies too much between year groups and different subject areas, and their key skills in writing are a particular weakness.
- Over the last three years many pupils have not made as much progress in writing as in their other subjects. This is particularly the case at Key Stage 1. The school has recognised that this is a key area for improvement and has started to tackle it with various strategies such as one-to-one teaching and extended writing activities. A focus on the presentation of pupils' work has led to increasing pride in what they write.
- The headteacher has led this improving school to achieve better results at Key Stage 2 and results for pupils at the end of Year 6 are the best for six years. With the exception of writing, results are in line with that expected.
- Pupils read widely and often and they talk enthusiastically about the books they enjoy. All pupils are making the expected progress in reading at Key Stage 2 and over half of them are doing even better than this. Pupils' achievement in mathematics has improved since the last inspection, largely because of better teaching of problem-solving and calculation skills.
- The teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) is good and levels of skill in Year 1 are above average in reading. Progress is also good for pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly in their literacy. This is because teachers use games and storytelling to engage the pupils' interest.
- The small number of pupils who have special educational needs make the same as and sometimes better progress than other pupils.
- Pupils who are eligible for free school meals make the same progress as other pupils in both English and mathematics. No judgement is made about the attainment of these pupils in Year 6 in 2012 because the very small number of pupils would mean individuals could be identified. The school uses pupil premium money to subsidise school trips and swimming lessons and to fund additional staff for one to one support. As a result of this support, these pupils have made good progress in their reading.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because pupils in Years 1 and 2 are not making as much progress as they could in English and mathematics, given the gains they make in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Teachers do not consistently set writing tasks in a wide enough variety of real-life situations, for example by asking pupils to become a character in a specific time and place or with a particular point of view. As a result pupils do not always understand the purpose of a piece of written work or the audience for whom they are writing.
- Pupils are not always clear about what they have to do at every stage in their lessons. This means that too often teachers use valuable time repeating instructions and sometimes pupils can become confused.

- The marking of pupils' work is thorough and consistent, but pupils are not often given the opportunity to respond to the very helpful comments teachers write in their books. They do not routinely have time set aside to read the comments, show their understanding and practise their writing by replying to them.
- In the best lessons, teachers take advantage of the benefits of having more than one year group in a class by reviewing what pupils have learnt previously and by encouraging older pupils to assist the younger ones.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are good and there is a relaxed but purposeful working atmosphere in the classroom. Pupils know how to improve their work and are clear about their targets.
- Teachers often ask pupils searching questions to develop their thinking skills. For example, in a Reception science class the teacher skilfully encouraged the children to use increasingly sophisticated language to predict how materials might change when heated.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well around the school. They respect each other and are courteous to adults and visitors. Pupils also demonstrate a great pride in their school and are confident in talking about their own achievements. This self-confidence is encouraged and supported by the school system of rewarding pupils with house points and using a golden book to record achievements. Parents are sent texts and postcards to celebrate their successes in their work and behaviour.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour in lessons is good. Teachers do not always recognise this, and pupils do not get the opportunity to work independently as often as they could.
- Pupils understand well how to stay safe and are particularly aware of the potential dangers of using the internet.
- Attendance is broadly average. The importance of coming to school regularly is a focus of assemblies and class rewards, and so pupils are keen to be at school. There have been no exclusions in recent years.
- As pupils progress through this small school so each one is encouraged to take on some responsibilities. This includes the school council, house captains and vice captains, and classroom monitors. Pupils support national charity days such as Red Nose Day and Children in Need, organising their own fundraising activities.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because school leaders do not respond quickly enough to information about how well pupils are doing in their work, particularly in Key Stage 1. The local authority clearly and accurately analyses the school's strengths and weaknesses, but the school does not always judge its own performance as accurately as it should.

- The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, largely as a result of improved leadership and management. The headteacher is very supportive of his staff, who share his vision for the development of the school.
 - The range of subjects offered to pupils is enhanced by strong teaching of the arts. A teacher from a local secondary school gives weekly French lessons to Year 6 pupils, and there are many examples around the school of pupils' high-quality two- and three-dimensional artwork. There is a good range of clubs and activities for pupils. The boys' dance club, led by the headteacher, is particularly popular and pupils have given performances in local theatres.
 - Pupils' horizons are broadened through strong links with a school in London and exceptional opportunities for most pupils to travel in Europe. In addition, all pupils learn about the natural world through their involvement in the 'forest school' every week, and the teachers in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good use of the outdoor area.
 - Pupils' imagination and creativity are stimulated in lessons and in other activities. They are given time for moments of reflection in assemblies and in class, and their religious education includes visits to the church and a gurdwara as well as visitors coming to the school. Pupils show a good understanding of right and wrong and work with their teachers to create their own rules for the classroom.
 - Parents are generally very positive about the school, and the progress and behaviour of the pupils. They are particularly impressed with the good communication they have with the teachers. This is very evident every morning, when all teachers and the headteacher come out into the playground and are available for parents to meet.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors are committed to the school and show considerable pride and loyalty towards it. However, they do not have enough experience or knowledge in all areas to offer strong support at present. Governors do not have a good enough idea of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and this limits their ability to hold the school leaders to account. They do not know enough about the quality of teaching, rewards given for good teaching or how the teachers' performance is managed. In other respects they monitor school finances closely and manage the school budget tightly to achieve value for money. This includes being aware of how pupil premium funds are spent, although they are less clear about the impact of this spending. The governing body provides good support for events that encourage pupils' strong community spirit, not only within the school but locally, nationally and internationally.
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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	123357
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	406156

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	86
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paula Healey
Headteacher	Stuart King
Date of previous school inspection	29 June 2011
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