

Chaulden Infants' and Nursery

School Row, Chaulden, Hemel Hempstead, HP1 2JU

Inspection dates 26–27 June 2013

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 vast majority of pupils make good progress and achieve well from the time they join the school. They get off to a flying start in the Nursery.
- Pupils in the speech and language unit make good progress and most return successfully to mainstream because the specialist provision they receive meets their needs well.
- Teaching is good because teachers plan in detail what the pupils will learn.
- Teaching assistants boost pupils' achievement because they support individuals or guide the learning of small groups of pupils very well.
- The behaviour of pupils is good because they respond well to the high expectations of staff and work hard.
- Pupils say they enjoy school and feel safe and cared for well. Parents and carers agree.
- The headteacher leads the school well and is dedicated to removing any barriers pupils may have to learning.
- The school is improving at a fast rate. Improved teaching is having a good impact on pupils' achievement. Good progress had been made in dealing with issues from the last inspection.
- The governing body makes a good contribution to leadership. The expertise and teamwork developed over the last two years alongside the headteacher, and guided by the local authority, has meant that governors have made effective decisions.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- More-able pupils do not consistently make as much progress as they could do, particularly in mathematics.
- Pupils do not write enough longer pieces of work.
- Marking does not always specify clearly what the pupil should do to improve their work.
- Pupils are not always given the opportunity to respond to teachers' marking.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed parts of eight lessons. Two lessons were observed jointly, one with the headteacher and another with the senior teacher.
- The inspector listened to several pupils read, and examined in detail English and mathematics work from pupils in all year groups.
- The inspector considered the school's written view of its own performance, held discussions with school staff, and spoke with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body as well as a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector examined the school's procedures for safeguarding, and looked at the school development plan, records of lesson observations, targets set for teachers, and documents that track pupils' progress.
- The inspector spoke individually with a number of pupils and held a discussion with the school council.
- The inspector took account of 39 responses from the online questionnaire (Parent View), as well as 25 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Pauline Hilling-Smith, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than the average-sized infant and nursery school.
- The majority of pupils are White British. A minority of pupils are from a range of other minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average as a result of an on-site ten place specialist speech language and communication unit.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children looked after by the local authority.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good and more is outstanding in order to raise achievement even further by ensuring that:
 - more-able pupils are always given demanding enough work to do, particularly in mathematics
 - pupils have more opportunities to write longer pieces of work in all subjects
 - marking always specifies clearly what each pupil needs to do to improve
 - pupils always have the opportunity to respond to teacher's marking.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the school with a wide range of starting points. The knowledge and skills of the children who enter the Nursery are, in the main, well below those which are typical for their age, especially in literacy, mathematics, understanding the world and emotional development. Pupils with speech language and communication difficulties start in the Reception year with low starting points as a result of their special educational needs and disabilities.
- Children get off to an excellent start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and some children enter Key Stage 1 above national expectations in personal social and emotional development. For example, children in the Nursery have excellent attitudes to learning and are happy, settled and purposefully engaged for long periods of time. Although they make good progress from their starting points, a small number of children join the school in Key Stage 1 with attainment below national expectations.
- Almost all pupils make good progress, and reach broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1. In the Year 2 assessments over the last three years, standards have been broadly average. For the last two years, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in mathematics has been below the national average, but not significantly so.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. For the last three years, attainment of these groups of pupils has been above the national average.
- Pupils in the Speech and Language Unit make good progress because specialist provision and skilful support for their learning needs is very effective.
- The teaching of reading is effective because it is well organised and teachers are skilled in teaching pupils phonics (the sounds that letters make). All staff contribute to listening to pupils read which means that pupils receive the individual attention they need to learn well.
- Although pupils achieve well from their starting points in writing, they do not spend enough time using and developing their writing skills in different subjects, or in writing at length.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium make at least as much and sometimes more progress than their peers. For example, they have accelerated their progress by over a term during the last year in reading. This is because the school's leaders make sure that additional funds are spent on exactly the right activities that make the most impact on their achievement.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved since the last inspection and it is now consistently good. Some is outstanding. This is because leaders have focused well on raising pupils' achievement. Effective training for all staff has been provided which has improved their teaching skills well.
- Where teaching is outstanding, teachers' expectations are very high, and pupils are fully engaged in their learning throughout the lesson. At these times, the pace of learning is brisk and pupils are challenged to reach higher levels. This is shown in pupils' books where there are many

examples of impressive work.

- In less effective lessons pupils spend too much time in a big group, with the teacher directing learning. This limits the time they can spend finding things out for themselves or working on tasks at just the right level of challenge for them individually. This particularly limits the learning of more-able pupils in mathematics. Occasionally, pupils are not clear about what they need to do when they begin their work so time is lost as staff spend time explaining again what they should do.
- In the Nursery and Reception classes, there are many exciting opportunities provided for children to choose to become involved with. In these situations staff and volunteers observe and assess children expertly, and ask searching questions which deepen and widen children's learning. As a result, they learn well.
- In the Speech and Language Unit, pupils make good progress because the work they undertake is very individualised, clear and structured. For example, when carefully observing caterpillars before drawing them, the pupils developed their ability to express movement and position because they were questioned expertly by the teacher.
- In the best lessons, pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve as a result of teachers' comments and marking. However, pupils do not consistently receive good information or get the opportunity to make a response. On these occasions, pupil's achievement is not sufficiently well promoted.
- Sometimes, pupils are inspired. For example, in a music lesson pupils were enraptured as they developed their knowledge of pulse and rhythm and then went on to lead the others in keeping time.
- Teaching assistants support disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs very well. They also boost the teaching of reading by supporting pupils to learn in small groups under the guidance of the teacher.
- Occasionally, learning is less effective because teachers' plans for different ability groups describe what the pupil will do rather than what they will learn. This sometimes limits the expectations of what more-able pupils can achieve. On these occasions, more-able pupils are not given enough scope to be as independent as they could be in their learning and are therefore not sufficiently well challenged.
- Most parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) agree that their children are well taught.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The pupils say that the school is 'fantastic'. This is because it offers a caring, nurturing environment where all pupils behave well. Their good behaviour and attitudes help to sustain the school's welcoming, inclusive atmosphere. Pupils' relationships with one another and with staff are strong.
- Pupils have a good awareness of how to stay safe when, for example, they learn about how to tidy up areas that are full of litter. They know that they must not touch items but use the litter

picker sticks at all times.

- Pupils are clear about the different forms of bullying and reflect on the impact of their actions on themselves and others. School council members say they are actively involved in making sure that bullying does not take place. Pupils speak confidently about what teachers do to help if anyone has any worries.
- There are very few incidents of unacceptable behaviour because staff manage behaviour well, including using singing songs to signal required behaviour. Any incidents that do occur are recorded in detail and taken seriously by governors and staff. The school is highly inclusive.
- An overwhelming number of parents who responded to Parent View agreed that their children feel happy at school and agreed that behaviour is good.
- Attitudes to learning are usually good and contribute well to achievement. However, where teaching does not fully challenge or inspire pupils, or they are not involved in their own learning, pupils lose concentration or become passive.
- Attendance has improved well over the last year and is now broadly average as a result of the good work done by the school with parents and carers.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's clear leadership is one of dedication to everyone achieving the best they possibly can. She is ably supported by the senior teacher. The checking of the school's performance is accurate, detailed and clear about what needs to be improved. All the issues raised at the last inspection have been dealt with successfully.
- Leaders, governors and staff work well together as a team to serve the diverse population of school. This is reflected in the challenging targets they set and in the effective partnerships created with families and the local community. The school's partnership work with other agencies for the benefit of the pupils contributes strongly to the school's effectiveness.
- Leaders promote and check the equality of pupils' opportunities well. For example, the pupil premium is used very effectively to speed up the progress of eligible pupils. However, at times more-able pupils do not make the progress they are capable of, especially in mathematics, because they are not always given sufficiently demanding work.
- Topics and the wide range of activities capture pupils' enthusiasm and are well suited to the needs of pupils. Topics make sure that pupils build on their understanding of spiritual and cultural ideas as they move through school. However, activities do not always allow pupils to write at length about these.
- All parents and carers who responded would recommend the school to another parent and the vast majority agree that the school is well led and managed.
- The local authority has supported the school well since the last inspection by the allocation of an adviser who knows the school well and who has worked with leaders over a sustained period of time. She has contributed very well to driving school improvement including the quality of teaching.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has rapidly improved its effectiveness in holding the school to account since the last inspection. As a result, funding is used effectively and standards have been maintained and improved. Frequent visits to the school give governors an understanding of strengths and weaknesses and pupils' achievement. The governors support and challenge the school effectively. A good structure of committees ensures that governors' work is carried out efficiently. They have a clear picture of teaching quality, and understand how targets are set for teachers and how the school deals with any under-performance.
- Governors ensure that salary increases are linked to teaching quality and responsibilities. They have made good decisions over the spending of the pupil premium and this is having a very positive impact on those pupils' progress. Governors check the impact on pupils' progress carefully to ensure best use of this funding. The governing body makes sure that all statutory requirements, including those for safeguarding, are met.

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	117202
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	405693

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	147
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Howard Mason
Headteacher	Jacqueline Hood
Date of previous school inspection	3 Februry 2011
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