

# Chestnuts Primary School

Buckingham Road, Bletchley , Milton Keynes, MK3 5EN

## Inspection dates

3–4 December 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Senior leaders, managers and governors have worked well since the last inspection to raise achievement and improve the quality of teaching.
- The effectiveness of the governing body has developed considerably in this time. Governors have an in-depth understanding of the school's work and contribute strongly to leaders' work to bring about improvement.
- Senior leaders analyse information about pupils' attainment and progress very thoroughly. They use the resulting information exceptionally well to drive improvement.
- Children in the early years make good progress, and their achievement is outstanding in personal, social and emotional development.
- Pupils in the rest of the school achieve well. Progress is good in Years 1 and 2, and pupils who have spent most of their time at this school make good progress in Years 3 to 6.
- The quality of teaching is good, with some that is outstanding, particularly in the early years.
- The curriculum is matched effectively to pupils' interests and needs. It promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- The school provides exceptionally good support to pupils and their families, and works very closely with other agencies. This is a key factor in pupils' outstanding behaviour and appreciation of the school. They feel very safe and relationships are excellent throughout the school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some pupils in Years 3 to 6 have not always made as much progress in reading as they have in other subjects.
- Teachers do not all identify the needs of less able pupils well enough in mathematics, which sometimes slows their progress.
- The writing of some pupils is held back by the difficulties they experience forming their letters.
- The school is developing links with pre-school settings but these are not yet as well established as they could be.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed teaching in all classes, including those for deaf pupils in the specially resourced provision. In combination with looking closely at pupils' books and talking to them about their work, this provided a balance of evidence on teaching and learning.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher (who is also the early years leader), key stage leaders, the English and mathematics leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and the specialist teacher of the deaf. Informal discussions took place with a number of other staff. Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and with three other governors, and a telephone discussion took place with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspection team considered the 63 responses to the online survey, Parent View, and to the school's own parental survey, and the spoken and written views of a small number of individual parents. Inspectors also considered the 39 completed staff questionnaires.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation. This included the school's self-evaluation and development plan; records of pupils' attainment, progress, behaviour and attendance; and evidence of systems for protecting and safeguarding pupils.

## Inspection team

Margaret Goodchild, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Peter Thrussell	Additional inspector
Carol Worthington	Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than most primary schools and has increased in size considerably since the last inspection.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is over a third. This is higher than found nationally.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is 15%. This is average.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for deaf pupils. This is a nine-place provision with seven pupils on roll at present. Most of the pupils use British Sign Language. Three pupils have additional learning difficulties. The pupils are integrated into mainstream classes for most of the time, supported by trained communicators. They also have specialist sessions with a deaf learning mentor and a teacher of the deaf, and speech and language therapy.
- A high proportion of pupils join and leave the school other than at the usual times, and the school's high mobility has increased as the number on roll has grown bigger. Since the beginning of this term, 13 pupils have joined Year 2 and 10 have joined Year 3; slightly lower numbers have joined other year groups.
- Children attend the early years full time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Several teachers have left and been replaced since the last inspection. The current early years team has been in place only since September this year following staff changes.
- Little Chestnuts Nursery, on the school site, is run by Kids Play Ltd, the company that also runs the after-school care. As this provision is not managed by the school's governing body, it is subject to separate inspection.
- The school runs a free breakfast club every morning.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement and build on existing strengths in teaching by:
  - placing particular emphasis on checking the teaching of reading and measuring the impact of the newly introduced methods for raising achievement in reading
  - sharpening the way the needs of less able pupils are identified in mathematics and making sure that these pupils always receive the right type of support
  - putting in place additional help for pupils who have difficulty forming their letters, including those who join the school in Years 3 to 6
  - strengthening liaison with pre-school settings in order to share best practice and increase children's readiness for school.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders and governors are ambitious for the school and they have been successful in bringing about continuous improvement. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work very well together and communicate high expectations for teaching and behaviour. Pupils' outstanding behaviour enables teaching to proceed without being hindered in any way. Teamwork among the staff is strong and the school is well placed to improve further.
- The school makes excellent use of data to check the progress of individuals and different groups of pupils, to identify where improvements could be made and to make sure all pupils have equal opportunities. It also keeps a close check to make sure there is no discrimination and promotes positive relationships exceptionally well.
- The school has already introduced a system for assessment without National Curriculum levels in English, mathematics and science. It has very thorough systems in place for involving pupils and their parents in regular reviews of pupils' progress, and for setting targets for individual pupils.
- The leadership of teaching is strong. Establishing a 'monitoring teacher', who spends a day every week checking teachers' planning, looking at pupils' books and visiting classes, is proving very effective. It provides teachers with a great deal of practical advice which is helping to improve teaching
- The management of teachers' performance by senior leaders is rigorous and the school has been successful in bringing about improvements in teaching since the last inspection. Staff with key management responsibilities, for instance key stage and subject leaders, have clear roles and make a good contribution to improvement.
- Leadership of the specially resourced base for deaf pupils is good. These pupils are fully included for most of their time alongside mainstream pupils and they have regular specialist support.
- The school works closely in partnership with parents and other agencies. Parents who expressed their views about the school are nearly all highly appreciative of its work. They praise the way teachers are 'so approachable and welcoming' and the way the school has enabled their children to flourish.
- The school spends its pupil premium funding effectively. As well as providing support for individuals and small groups in reading, writing and mathematics, it has used the money to fund a learning mentor, for speech and language therapy and for play therapy. It has provided a welfare assistant who assists in supporting the families of disadvantaged children.
- The school makes highly effective use of its primary physical education and sport premium. It employs coaches to develop pupils' skills and to extend the range of sporting activities open to pupils. As a result, they have experienced hula hooping, ice skating, golf, gymnastics and free running. Pupils act as sports ambassadors and all pupils' participation is closely tracked. Funding contributes significantly to pupils' health, well-being and physical skills.
- The curriculum reflects pupils' needs and interests well. Whole-school themes and trips linked to these provide a coherent learning experience for pupils, alongside a strong focus on teaching literacy and numeracy skills. The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. In a very uplifting assembly during the inspection, pupils joined in enthusiastically singing and signing a Christmas song.
- The school makes sure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern British society. Pupils have visited the Houses of Parliament and when making model cities out of cardboard, they thought about what communities need in order to function effectively. The school celebrates the festivals of different faiths and pupils visit different places of worship.
- The school has, rightly, identified the need to keep close checks on the teaching of reading. It has separated the leadership of reading from that of writing to provide a greater focus on each area than it has done in the past.
- The local authority has provided good support for the school since the last inspection and has an accurate view of its effectiveness through jointly observing teaching and looking closely at data. The authority has supported senior leaders well and provided opportunities for teachers to compare their assessment with that by teachers in other schools.
- The school has thorough systems for safeguarding and pays excellent attention to protecting children. It works in close partnership with other agencies to identify any pupils who might be at risk.

### ■ The governance of the school:

- There have been a number of changes in the governing body since the last inspection and governors' effectiveness has increased considerably in this time. Governors are very well trained and members provide a range of valuable skills. They have a thorough knowledge of the school's work and regularly challenge senior leaders. They have a detailed understanding of what data reveals, including the impact of pupil premium spending, and know about the quality of teaching. Governors have a good awareness of the arrangements for managing teachers' performance. They make sure that the most effective teachers are suitably rewarded and were involved in the past in tackling the underperformance of staff who are no longer working in the school.
- Governors have visited schools that have been judged outstanding to give them an insight into what could be improved at this school. They carry out focused visits to collect information for themselves and are clear that nothing less than good is acceptable. They are ambitious for the school to become as effective as possible and are contributing significantly to this process.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are thoughtful and courteous around the school, and show respect for each other and for the staff. Parents consider that behaviour is good.
- Pupils' behaviour shows an outstanding improvement during their time at the school. Even where pupils join with a history of challenging behaviour, they quickly respond to the high expectations. This is partly because established pupils quickly let them know the importance of behaving appropriately.
- The way pupils apply themselves in lessons makes a significant contribution to their good progress. Pupils get down to work quickly, concentrate very well and often show a real thirst for knowledge, which enables them to work with minimum supervision. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning; they are polite and well mannered, and are proud of their school.
- In the playground, pupils are active and enjoy 'letting off steam' but they show consideration and readily help younger pupils and those who are newly arrived. They fall silent at the bell and line up promptly to go back to class. In the dining hall, pupils behave well and there is a friendly, family atmosphere as pupils talk with one another.
- Teachers are very skilled in managing behaviour and make their expectations clear to pupils. Leaders keep very close checks on behaviour: every little misdemeanour is recorded and scrutinised. Any patterns in behaviour are soon identified.
- Pupils readily express their appreciation and gratitude for everything the school does for them. A boy in Year 6 spontaneously said, 'I love this school because you can rely on the teachers to really help you.'
- The attendance rate has improved since the last inspection and is now above average. The school's rigorous approach to targeting and rewarding good attendance, and its work with families, have been very effective. Providing a free breakfast for all-comers each morning, funded by renting the school hall, encourages pupils to arrive at school early.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils feel very safe in school and know how to keep themselves safe. They are well supervised in the playground and move around the school in a safe and orderly way.
- The school has a 'zero-tolerance' approach to bullying and pupils say that there is 'no bullying' because 'everyone gets on well'. Records confirm that bullying is rare and staff deal quickly with any concerns pupils have. Pupils are well informed about cyber bullying and about how to stay safe when using computers.

## The quality of teaching is good

- The school's own checks on teachers' work, work in pupils' books and inspection findings show that the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. It is now good, with some that is outstanding.
- Teachers provide clear directions and have high expectations. They create a very positive atmosphere for learning in their classrooms and are skilled in the way they question pupils. Tasks in lessons and those set for homework are nearly always well matched to the next steps in pupils' learning to provide the right

amount of challenge.

- Teachers make good use of information and communication technology in their teaching to motivate pupils. Information and communication technology skills are taught well and pupils have good opportunities to use computers to find out information and to present their work. During the inspection, pupils in Key Stage 2 listened on their electronic tablets to the poems they had written and recorded.
- The school has rigorous systems for checking what pupils can already do when they join other than at the usual time of starting school. On their first day in school, pupils are tested in reading, writing and mathematics so that work can be set appropriate to their learning needs.
- The school has made the most of opportunities to check the accuracy of its assessment through looking at examples of pupils' work alongside teachers from other schools. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and generally make clear to them how they could improve. Pupils know how well they are achieving in subjects, what their targets are and what they need to do to meet them.
- The teaching of pupils in the specially resourced base for deaf pupils is good. The specialist teacher for the deaf, the deaf mentor and teaching assistants who work as communicators all make good use of sign language. Staff are also trained to work with pupils who have cochlear implants, and regular input by the speech and language therapist supports those pupils who have some spoken language. The teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs in the rest of the school is good. Staff provide a good balance of support and challenge to pupils.
- The teaching of skills in reading, writing and mathematics is usually good. The school has changed the focus of its reading lessons and is providing training for teachers in aspects of reading and especially to increase the skills of teaching assistants.
- Pupils have good opportunities to develop their writing skills across a range of subjects, and teachers make good use of examples to inspire pupils. For instance in a lesson in Year 2, teachers showed pupils a piece of writing by a Year 4 pupil to give them ideas and set expectations high. Teachers provide pupils with helpful guidance in how to structure their writing.
- In mathematics lessons, pupils have plenty of opportunity to apply their mathematics skills to practical, problem-solving tasks. However, just occasionally, teachers do not identify the needs of less able pupils well enough. When this happens, pupils who need a particular type of help or a more practical approach do not always receive it quickly, and this slows their progress

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school in the early years with skill levels below those typical for their age in reading, writing, understanding of the world and expressive art and design. Progress is good and over the last two years, attainment when children moved up to Year 1 was broadly in line with that found nationally.
- The significant number of pupils who join Chestnuts Primary during Key Stages 1 and 2 means that the school's published results at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are not an accurate reflection of pupils' achievement. This is because the attainment of most pupils who join during this time is below national expectations in reading and mathematics, and in many cases also below in writing. Some pupils have attended several different schools before joining Chestnuts.
- Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and standards at the end of Year 2 rose to broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics in 2014. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2, especially in mathematics and writing. At the end of Year 6 in 2014, the attainment of pupils who spent most of their time at this school was average in reading, and above average in writing and mathematics. The school's own data show that pupils who joined the school during the key stage made good progress but they generally reached lower standards than the rest of the year group.
- The most-able pupils make good progress and there was an increase, particularly in Year 2 last year, in the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels. In a mathematics lesson in Year 2, the most able were successful in calculating what number was a quarter of 84. In an English lesson in Year 2, they used some good descriptive language, for example, writing, 'The emerald grass was viciously long.' By Year 5, pupils were using some adventurous vocabulary such as 'claustrophobic' and 'entrepreneur'. By Year 6, the reading of the most able pupils is fluent, expressive and accurate. They read between the lines in texts and show excellent understanding.
- Disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding make good progress. In 2014, those who had been in the school for most of the key stage reached higher standards than the rest of their class in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. As a result of the support they received, disadvantaged pupils were marginally ahead of their classmates in reading and writing at the end of Year 6, and a term ahead in mathematics. They performed well compared with pupils nationally

who were not eligible for the pupil premium. They were half a term ahead of them in reading and writing, and a two terms ahead in mathematics.

- Deaf pupils in the specially resourced base make good progress in subjects and in developing their communication skills. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs in the rest of the school make good progress overall.
- Pupils who reached the end of Year 6 in 2014 made better progress in mathematics and writing than in reading, though pupils who made less-than-expected progress in reading were nearly all new arrivals during Key Stage 2. All groups who are currently in the school have made good progress in reading. This term, the school has introduced a number of new methods aimed at raising achievement in reading, especially at Key Stage 2, but it is too soon for these and other changes to have had a clear impact on standards.
- The school has introduced support to improve the handwriting of those who struggle, but this is not yet enough to tackle the difficulties that some pupils face. The handwriting and letter formation of a number of the pupils who join the school during Years 3 to 6 are not as well developed as they should be for their age. Some less able pupils also take time to grasp mathematical language when it is first introduced and have difficulty when tasks are not presented in a practical enough way for them.

### The early years provision

is good

- The school has very thorough systems for checking what children are able to do when they join the early years and for recording their development. Children make good progress overall, and outstanding progress in their personal, social and emotional development. When they join the school, boys' attainment is significantly below that of girls but the school has been very successful in narrowing the gap. In 2014, a similar proportion of girls and boys reached a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year. They are well prepared for Year 1.
- Teaching is good, with some that is outstanding. The staff provide the right level of challenge for all the children, including the most able, disabled children and those who have special educational needs. Classroom displays promote number recognition well and the teaching of letters and sounds is closely matched to the next stage of children's development.
- Teachers provide stimulating and varied activities indoors and out, and very detailed questioning of individual children by teachers develops their thinking and communication skills. Prompts on display beside activities inform all adults about what sort of questions to ask.
- When children join the school, their attainment in writing is below what is typical. There are good opportunities for them to develop the muscles in their hands in order to hold a pencil correctly and to write for a purpose, for instance, filling in 'valet booking forms' for the 'car wash'.
- Children's behaviour is outstanding and they concentrate exceptionally well on activities. They become readily absorbed because the activities are so carefully chosen. They play and work together very harmoniously. In activities that are led by a teacher, the children listen in rapt attention and are keen to learn.
- The early years provision is led and managed well, and the staff work closely in partnership with parents. Leaders are in the process of developing links with the pre-school settings that some children attend before they join Chestnuts Primary. These links are not yet as well established as they could be in order to increase children's readiness for school and spread best practice. The recent promotion of the early years leader to a leadership role in the local authority, though still based in the school, is a positive move in this direction.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	132733
<b>Local authority</b>	Milton Keynes
<b>Inspection number</b>	449047

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	347
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Brian Stocker
<b>Headteacher</b>	Allison Collis
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 December 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01908 373748
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