

Chiddingly Primary School

Muddles Green, Chiddingly, East Sussex BN8 6HN

Inspection dates 4–5 November 2015

Overall effectiveness **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- After a turbulent period following the previous inspection, Chiddingly has improved strongly.
- Leaders know the school well. They use this knowledge effectively to make sure that the school is moving in the right direction and that teaching is improving.
- Across the school, pupils' outcomes are at least good and sometimes better. The standards they reach are rising.
- Disadvantaged pupils, pupils with special educational needs and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils do similarly well. They often catch up with other pupils when their starting points are lower.
- Teaching is good. Pupils remember the things that they learn well and adults question them carefully to check that their understanding is secure.
- The excellent early years provision wastes no time in making sure children make rapid strides in their learning. This is because adults understand each child's needs exceptionally well.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. They recognise that their school is getting better and feel safe and proud to be Chiddingly pupils.
- The school promotes pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in many different ways.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching is not consistently high enough to secure the best-quality outcomes.
- The standard of education in subjects other than English and mathematics is not as strong.
- Leadership arrangements for the new federation have not been in place long enough to have made a big enough difference.
- Although staff at all levels recognise how much the school has improved, some support staff do not feel well supported.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Secure a greater consistency of high quality teaching and outcomes by:
 - helping teachers to adapt during lessons according to how well different pupils are doing
 - always giving pupils enough time to practice and consolidate their mathematical skills
 - improving the quality of pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar.

- Bring the standard of education in all subjects up to the level of English and mathematics.

- Check regularly that the new systems and structures for shared leadership across the federation are making enough difference and refine them as necessary, including making sure that all support staff feel well supported to do the best possible job.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Through the former partnership, recently formalised as a federation with East Hoathly Church of England Primary School, Chiddingly Primary School has rapidly improved.
- The acting executive headteacher, previously working in partnership as head of school with the former executive headteacher, has acted decisively and with determination to drive improvements and secure a good quality of education for pupils.
- Having identified that the school was floundering following the previous inspection, the local authority was instrumental in securing strong leadership for the school. The acting executive headteacher has valued the support and challenge provided by the school's local authority improvement partner. Advice from a local authority mathematics advisor has contributed well to clear improvements in the quality and content of mathematics teaching and learning.
- Current leaders and governors have a detailed knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and remaining weaknesses and the journey that the school is on in their shared ambition to be outstanding.
- The high-quality written plans produced by leaders help to shape and drive the school's improvement. The clear measures and regular checkpoints within this plan help leaders to make sure that they keep on track.
- Leaders that are responsible for particular subjects or areas (middle leaders) are overwhelmingly passionate and enthusiastic about the opportunities that working across both schools provides. The new federation has enabled a strengthening of previous partnership arrangements. For example, systems are now in place to hold middle leaders to account for the standards in their subjects across the federation. However, it is too soon to see the impact of these in securing a greater consistency of strong practice between subjects other than English and mathematics.
- The culture of high expectation, aspiration and professionalism is clear. Investment in training for middle leaders is contributing well to their strengthening capacity. Teachers that are new to the school or profession are encouraged to be reflective about and discuss their practice, quickly enabling them to meet the expectations of teaching at Chiddingly. Teaching assistants also have opportunities to work with others across the federation. However, some support staff used the staff questionnaire responses to express the view that they are not always well supported to feel that they are doing the best job possible.
- The taught content of English and mathematics meets the raised expectations of the new national curriculum well. Pupils have regular opportunities to use their mathematics skills in different contexts rather than just working out straightforward calculations. Over the previous academic year, leaders prioritised raising standards in English and mathematics, with success. Plans for the current year place an increased emphasis on improving the quality of other subjects to bring these to a similar standard.
- Outdoor learning and a range of visits and clubs enrich pupils' experiences. Additional sports funding has been used well, including providing specialist sports teaching from which pupils and teachers alike can learn. The school is measuring how pupils' fitness levels are changing over time to check the longer-term impact.
- Leaders focus strongly on how the school is promoting British values, taking care to relate this to pupils' daily lives. Leaders have identified ways they can do even more to promote pupils' spiritual and cultural development. Work is under way, for example through the tuneful and uplifting singing of 'Let It Be' and the school song in assembly, the federation choir, Bollywood dancing and the African drumming workshop due the day after the inspection. Links with other schools nationally and internationally have been made to give pupils more experience of those from cultures and backgrounds different from their own, but these are at an early stage of development.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors know the school well. This knowledge and understanding comes from a wealth of information provided by the acting executive headteacher alongside focused visits made by governors to evaluate the school's work for themselves.
 - Although supportive, the governing body asks challenging questions of leaders, bringing together both their shared aspiration for the school and experience beyond education.
 - The governing body has a secure grasp of the difference made by how the school has used additional government funding, including pupil premium targeted at disadvantaged pupils. They know that the biggest difference has been made by extra individual and small group tuition. Governors use assessment information effectively to track how well these pupils are catching up with others in school

and nationally.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders implement robust systems and ensure that staff are well trained to use them. Leaders and governors check these carefully, responding quickly to any areas they find that can be refined further. School record keeping shows that staff are vigilant and follow through any concerns diligently.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The pitch of lessons reflects the higher expectations across the school. Teachers expect pupils to do well relative to expectations for their age. Effective support from teachers and teaching assistants helps pupils that are behind in any areas catch up with the peers, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs.
- Adults use their well-developed questioning skills to draw out key learning points. Teachers listen attentively to what pupils say and encourage them to explain or extend their answers. Pupils are used to not being able to provide short or one-word answers and routinely explain their thinking without prompting.
- A keen focus on spoken language helps to develop pupils' literacy skills well. Across the school, adults and pupils use technical vocabulary accurately, demonstrating secure subject knowledge. The sharing of subject leaders across the federation gives greater access to subject specialists than would usually be possible in a small staff team.
- In all Key Stage 1 and 2 classes, teachers use agreed feedback approaches and marking stickers consistently. Pupils receive helpful guidance about what they have done well and how they can improve. Teachers make sure that pupils have the time to look at what they have written and respond, or do what is necessary to improve their work.
- Teachers think carefully about how to challenge different pupils to do well at their own level. 'Mild, hot, spicy and extra spicy' challenges are routinely provided and pupils are guided in the choices that they make. However, teachers are not always skilful enough at adjusting the lesson they have planned according to how well particular pupils are doing to secure the best achievement.
- Mostly, teachers make good use of time in lessons, getting the balance right between reinforcing prior learning and building on this. In mathematics books, the quality of pupils' learning and progress is sometimes less clear because they have not always had long enough to consolidate and practice their skills.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupil's personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident, welcoming and say that they enjoy school. As one parent put it: 'The children are now proud of Chiddingly School.'
- Pupils feel safe in school and learn well how to keep themselves safe. Older pupils have an extremely good understanding of how to keep themselves safe online.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what bullying is and report that this does not happen. The large majority of parents agree. School records show that concerns are rare and that staff take seriously, investigate and take action to resolve any issues.
- Wide-ranging opportunities for pupils to help run the school, including as school councillors or peer mediators, contribute strongly to their social and moral development. A few pupils talk about rough play in the playground, although most think that this was a problem in the past. Levels of supervision are good and there is plenty for pupils to do, including table tennis, games using the playground markings or with hoops, balls and other equipment.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are keen to do well and most work hard during lessons. Pupils take care with their written work and speak enthusiastically about their learning.
- Pupils have confidence in the behaviour system, tracked visually using the sun, sky, stars and various rain

clouds, and like it because it recognises both positive and negative conduct. They are keen to move in the right direction through the different stages, and understand and respect the clear consequences and rewards.

- Attendance levels are rising and overall are much closer to the national averages than they have been in the past.
- Staff speak about a 'massive change in attitudes of children', saying that they are 'improving every term'. School records and the mostly positive views of parents support this view. Pupils report that behaviour is good most of the time, but say that sometimes they are still distracted by talking or calling out in lessons. During the inspection, occasional chatting and off-task behaviour was seen when the level of challenge in the lesson was not quite right, meaning that a few pupils lost interest.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- Overall, from their individual starting points, pupils achieve well, especially in reading, writing and mathematics. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education by the time that they leave.
- Younger pupils learn the sounds that letters make (phonics) quickly and securely. Pupils of all abilities use these skills confidently to tackle new words. They enjoy reading and talk enthusiastically about the books that they have read. Standards in reading are above average at the end of all key stages.
- As they move through the school, pupils write with developing flair and imagination, making effective use of their often increasingly rich vocabulary. Regular opportunities to write for different purposes in different subjects support this well. Pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar skills often lag behind the creativity and content of their writing and, rightly, leaders and teachers have identified this as a priority focus this year.
- Pupils respond extremely positively when they are required to think for themselves to decide how to find an answer in mathematics, particularly when working with others. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 enjoyed working out together how they could use percentages of a number that they already knew to work out others that they did not. These opportunities, alongside frequent problem-solving tasks, stretch the most able and mean that current pupils are making much better progress than has been the case in the past.
- The proportions of most-able pupils reaching above age-related expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 have shown a rising trend in reading, writing and mathematics. For the most recent Year 6 leavers, they rose markedly in reading and writing. Across the school the number already exceeding age-related expectations is rising, including in mathematics.
- Pupils from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller backgrounds make good progress and engage enthusiastically with their learning.
- Those that are working behind others in key areas, including disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, often do especially well to start to catch up with and sometimes overtake their peers. This means that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, including when moving to secondary school.
- Pupils enjoy learning across different subjects and can recall what they have learned, for example from doing science experiments. However, the quality of learning and progress evident in pupils' recorded work in other subjects does not match that seen in English and mathematics.

Early years provision is outstanding

- Highly effective teaching, excellent quality of the learning environment, and very good use of space, especially outdoors, mean that children make gains in their learning very quickly. Their rapid progress across all areas of learning prepares them exceptionally well for Year 1.
- Overall, the range of what children already know and can do when they start Reception Year is broadly typical of what might be expected for their ages. Teachers quickly identify those that are behind their peers and target the next steps that each child needs to take up to catch up precisely and effectively. Consequently, most children reach at least the level expected by the end of Reception Year and many exceed this.
- Children remember what they are learning very well because adults make sure activities are interesting, varied and fun. The wide range of opportunities helps to reinforce key learning in different ways, as seen

when two boys, unprompted, used the language of 'more than' when fishing in the water tray. One girl explained excitedly how the impressive 'castle' role play area had recently transformed from the 'cottage' that it was before.

- Adults use their detailed knowledge of each child highly effectively to challenge them when they are choosing their own activities from the rich selection. Children are already getting into very good habits during more 'formal' teaching sessions where they all learn as a group. They listen attentively and enjoy the frequent opportunities to join in.
- Children rapidly acquire phonics (letters and the sounds they make) skills because these are very well taught and constantly reinforced in the environment and by adults throughout the day. They also make considerable progress with their writing skills across the year, so that some are able to write several recognisable sentences by the time that they enter Year 1.
- Plentiful opportunities to play and explore number and shape support children's developing mathematical skills. A strong link with creative development saw children create Indian patterns (rangoli) during the inspection. Notably, these were increasingly complex, with the most able challenged to describe and explain the repeating patterns they had created.
- Very few children in each early years cohort are disadvantaged or have special educational needs. However, because the needs of each individual are met so well, these children usually do at least as well as others and often make even better progress. Where necessary, the school makes links with other professionals to support children, for example with speech and language difficulties. Even where their low starting points mean that they cannot catch up completely with other children in one year, they finish closer than they started.
- Parents are very pleased with what the early years provision offers their children. As one parent put it, their child, 'actively looks forward to each morning, running into the classroom to start the day.' Links with parents are good, and parents value the contact with the staff and the information they receive about how well their children are doing.

School details

Unique reference number	114391
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10005735

This inspection 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	Mandy Watson
Headteacher	James Procter (Acting Executive Headteacher)
Telephone number	01825 872307
Website	www.chiddingly.e-sussex.sch.uk
Email address	office@chiddingly.e-sussex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6–7 November 2013

Information about this school

- This school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school, although the number on roll is steadily rising.
- The school has experienced a very turbulent period since the previous inspection. There have been numerous changes of staff, including to the school's leadership.
- In April 2014, the school entered into a partnership arrangement with East Hoathly Church of England Primary School and St John's Meads Church of England Primary School. A Local Leader of Education (as executive headteacher of all three schools) and a head of school of East Hoathly and Chiddingly oversaw this partnership. This arrangement ended at the end of the previous academic year. From September 2015, Chiddingly continued to work in partnership with East Hoathly under the leadership of the former head of school, who is acting as executive headteacher of both schools.
- From 1 November 2015, Chiddingly entered into a federation with East Hoathly Church of England Primary School. At the time of the inspection, elections were under way for the single governing body for both schools.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage, although nearly one-fifth of pupils are from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils that attract pupil premium funding is above average. This is additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils looked after by the local authority. However, the actual number of these pupils in each year group is typically very low, often below five.
- There are not usually enough pupils in each cohort to publish whether the school meets the government's current floor standards that set minimum expectations of pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited all four classes with the acting executive headteacher to gather a wide range of evidence about what teaching and learning is typically like. This included watching parts of lessons happening during the inspection, talking with pupils about their learning over time and looking at a range of their previous work in books and on display.
- He also visited an assembly and observed and spoke informally with pupils during playtime and lunchtime. He met a group of pupils for more detailed discussions and listened to some pupils read.
- The inspector took account of 28 responses to Parent View, including additional comments made by a number of parents, as well as a handful of letters and emails from parents. He spoke informally with parents as they dropped their children off for school.
- The inspector held discussions with the acting executive headteacher and deputy headteacher, middle leaders from across the federation, teachers, teaching assistants, lunchtime staff, governors, the local authority and the previous executive headteacher. He also considered the feedback from 12 questionnaires returned by staff.
- He sampled and reviewed a wide range of the school's documentation.
- This inspection was part of a 'focused inspection event' to inform the inspection of the local authority's arrangements for school improvement.

Inspection team

Clive Dunn, lead inspector

Ofsted inspector

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