



**Office for Standards
in Education**

Inspection report

Chickenley Community Junior, Infant and Nursery School

Kirklees Education Authority

Dates of inspection: 28-29 January 2004

This inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996 and was deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act

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Basic information about the school

Name of school:	Chickenley Community Junior, Infant and Nursery School
Type of school:	Primary
Status:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Headteacher:	Mrs L Finnegan
Address of school:	Princess Road Chickenley Dewsbury West Yorkshire WF12 8QT
Telephone:	01924 325269
Name and address of appropriate authority:	The governing body, address as above
Chair of governors:	Mrs P Moorhouse
Local education authority area:	Kirklees
Unique reference number:	130939
Name of reporting inspector:	Mr R Hartley HMI
Dates of inspection:	28-29 January 2004

Introduction

1. Chickenley Community Junior, Infant and Nursery School is situated in the Chickenley district of Dewsbury. The area is one of considerable social and economic deprivation, reflected in the 49 per cent of the pupils who are eligible for free school meals. There are 371 pupils on roll, including 41 who attend part-time. There are 129 pupils who are identified as having special educational needs, including 14 who have a Statement of Special Educational Need. Only two pupils speak English as an additional language.
2. The school was inspected in November 2001. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and the school was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.
3. The governors drew up an action plan to address the key issues from the inspection of November 2001. The school was visited by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (HMI) on five occasions to monitor the progress being made.
4. In January 2004 two HMI inspected the school, assessing the standard of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of November 2001.

Main findings

5. In accordance with section 14 of the School Inspections Act 1996, I am of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures, since it is now providing an acceptable standard of education for its pupils. The main findings of the inspection are:
 - standards of attainment in the latest national tests at Key Stage 1 were very low in comparison with all schools nationally and well below the average for schools in similar circumstances. These results were disappointing for the school, despite half of the pupils having special educational needs. Standards in the national tests at Key Stage 2, although not reaching the average, have risen steadily over time both in comparison with all schools nationally and schools in similar circumstances. A significant number of pupils exceeded their targets in each subject;
 - many of the pupils enter the Foundation Stage unit with limited skills and low levels of attainment. They receive a good start to their education in the unit. The teaching is good, the work is well planned and resourced, and there is a good balance across the six required areas of learning. A correct emphasis is placed on developing the pupils' communication skills;
 - standards in the lessons at Key Stages 1 and 2 show steady improvement over time. They remain below national expectations in most lessons, but there is an increasing number where the standards are at or near the level expected for the pupils' ages;
 - the pupils' progress in learning was very good in two lessons, good in four, satisfactory in six and unsatisfactory in four. The pupils made good progress
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in the Foundation Stage, and in pockets in Years 2, 3 and 4; the unsatisfactory progress occurred in two classes, one in each key stage. Some specialist teaching takes place but its contribution towards raising standards in individual subjects and the impact on the specialist teacher's own class have not been assessed;

- the pupils who have special educational needs make good progress and the work they are set is matched accurately to their needs. They are supported well by the special needs co-ordinator and classroom assistants;
- the pupils' behaviour is at least satisfactory and often good. Their attitudes to work overall have shown rapid improvement, partly as a result of the broadening of the curriculum. The pupils are polite, interested in their work and relate well to each other and to adults;
- provision for the pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and reflects the local and wider communities in which they live;
- the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with examples of good and very good teaching, but also some teaching that has unsatisfactory features;
- assessment procedures are extensive, but clear and well structured. The information gained is well used to establish strengths and weaknesses in the learning, plan work, set learning targets and establish extra support groups;
- the curriculum is broad and balanced. A significant amount of time has been devoted to developing the creative and expressive elements of the curriculum, where the work is of good quality;
- the headteacher and deputy headteacher provide good leadership and management, ably supported by an increasingly effective senior team which takes a full part in managing teaching teams and monitoring the quality of teaching and learning;
- the governing body gives good support to the school, knows its strengths and weaknesses and plays a major role in developing positive relationships between the community, school and the pupils. It has made a significant contribution towards raising standards in the creative aspects of the curriculum and improving pupils' self-esteem.

Key issues

6. In order to improve the pupils' quality of education further, the governors, headteacher, senior managers and staff need to:

- continue to raise standards in all the subjects, particularly English and mathematics;
 - raise the proportion of good and very good teaching;
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- evaluate the effectiveness of the specialist teaching and take action accordingly.

Inspection findings

Standards achieved by the pupils

7. The school's results in the 2003 national tests were generally disappointing at Key Stage 1, although they showed improvement at Key Stage 2 when compared with the national picture. At Key Stage 1, the pupils' average points scores were very low in reading, writing and mathematics; when compared to the schools in similar circumstances, the results were below average in reading and very low in writing and mathematics. These results stemmed principally from weaknesses in some of the teaching, which until recently failed to build on the good start made in the Foundation Stage.

8. At Key Stage 2, the pupils' average points score were below average in English, mathematics and science. However, these figures represent an improvement on the previous year's performance when they were very low in all three subjects. Similar gains were made when compared with the results of schools in similar circumstances; the scores were below the average in English and mathematics, but broadly in line with the average in science. An encouraging number of the pupils exceeded their targets in each subject.

9. The pupils receive a good start to their education in the Foundation Stage unit. Many of the pupils enter the unit with a limited range of educational experiences and generally low levels of attainment; their communication skills are particularly weak. The work is well planned and imaginatively resourced and there is a wide range of activities which represent a good balance across the six required areas of learning. The teaching is good and adults are well organised and deployed. Pupils make good progress.

10. Standards in Key Stages 1 and 2 have shown steady improvement overtime. Even though they remain below national expectations in most lessons, there is an increasing number where they are at, or very near the level expected for the pupils' ages, especially in mathematics and science.

11. Standards in English are unsatisfactory overall. Speaking skills are weak, particularly in the early stages where the majority of the pupils enter the Foundation Stage with a limited range of communication skills. Many of the pupils initially find difficulty in making their feelings known, although they make good progress, with many opportunities to talk with adults and each other in their play, structured activities and social occasions such as snack time and registration. The pupils continue to make progress throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, but at a more uneven pace. There are weaknesses when the pupils try to explain their thinking about why things happen or how they reached a particular conclusion, for example the steps taken to make a mathematical calculation. Nevertheless, there are encouraging signs of improvement with teachers providing an increasing number of opportunities for the pupils to practise and refine their speaking skills by offering ideas and opinions. There were some good examples of oral work in science when practical tasks required the pupils to explain what they were doing; the pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, for instance, had to report how they tested the strength of kitchen rolls.

12. The pupils listen well to each other and to adults. Improvements in behaviour, particularly at Key Stage 2, have created a good context for listening, and most of the pupils are alert to instructions and show interest in what others have to say.

13. Standards in reading are beginning to rise after revisions were made to the teaching methods. Guided reading sessions allow for direct teaching on a regular basis to all the pupils, and opportunities for them to practise and use their skills through a range of activities including retrieving information, spelling, comprehension and matching simple sentences to pictures. Nevertheless, by the end of Key Stage 2, too few pupils display good levels of understanding of the text, read fluently and with expression, or search out information with ease.

14. The improvement of pupils' writing has been a focus for teachers' professional development during the last term and the literacy co-ordinator has introduced a carefully ordered set of writing processes to help steer the systematic teaching of writing. These initiatives are at an early stage and are only just beginning to influence the quality of the writing.

15. At the end of Key Stage 1 only the higher attaining pupils write routinely in sentences using accurate spelling and some basic conventions such as capital letters and full stops. Other pupils can explain their ideas, but become confused with the technical skills required. However, by the end of Key Stage 2 the pupils are writing for a broader range of purposes and apply some basic writing skills in other curriculum areas, for example, in science and history. However weak spelling reduces the quality of their writing.

16. Standards in mathematics have shown steady improvement over time. Specific weaknesses, such as a lack of opportunity to apply number skills in practical contexts and expectations of the pupils' previous knowledge being too high, have been addressed systematically by the introduction of a well-structured scheme and skilful leadership by the co-ordinator. Mathematics lessons are well planned and incorporate different elements of the National Numeracy Strategy to good effect. Mental and oral sessions are structured to test the pupils' understanding of recently taught aspects of number, or as a prelude to the main teaching element in the lesson: for example, Key Stage 1 pupils practised counting on and back from a given number before selecting a strategy to calculate amounts of money in different contexts.

17. In the best lessons the main teaching activity drew on previous knowledge and presented challenges in interesting ways, such as the use in a younger Key Stage 2 lesson of a treasure map to plot points from coordinates and employ eight points of the compass. Overall, the teachers have made up some ground in plugging gaps in previous learning, particularly in the pupils' fragile grasp of how to tackle practical problems. Tangible progress has been made, but there is still some way to go.

18. Standards in science are unsatisfactory, but the pupils are making good progress overall, especially in understanding how to conduct a fair test. The pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 know that some solids can be changed into liquids; can predict outcomes; describe changes in materials due to heat; and make simple charts to record their findings. At the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils can explain the effects of variables and know the sequence of steps to take when setting up an experiment. However, standards are still low due to the gaps in learning in previous years.

19. Standards in other subjects show variation, reflecting either the level of attention given to them by the whole school, or the expertise and enthusiasm of individual teachers. There are some examples of good work in geography, history, music and physical education, but also lessons where achievement and standards are uneven. However, a growing strength in the school is the quality of the art work, particularly in Key Stage 2; it is directly linked to a major school and community initiative called 'Creative Kids', which has brought artists into the school to develop the pupils' technical and creative skills in clay, acrylic paint, modelling with different materials and weaving. A feature of the work has been the links made with other subjects such as English and physical education through the use of poetry and dance. The pupils are producing work of high quality and talk knowledgeably about their ideas and choices of media.

20. The pupils who have special educational needs make good progress and the work they are set is matched accurately to their needs. They are supported well by the special needs co-ordinator, classroom assistants and specialist consultants, who are deployed efficiently in the classrooms. The co-ordinator spends a good proportion of time monitoring the effectiveness of the pupils' individual educational plans.

21. The pupils' progress in learning is reflected in the improving standards and also the varying skills of the teachers: progress was very good in five lessons, good in four, satisfactory in six and unsatisfactory in four. It was consistently good in the Foundation Stage and in pockets in Years 2, 3 and 4. The unsatisfactory progress occurred in two of the 12 classes.

22. The school has decided to introduce some specialist teaching aimed at improving progress and raising standards. The arrangements are of varying complexity and affect most year groups. They are intended to use the teachers' particular skills to improve the quality of how subjects are taught and the pupils' progress in learning, principally, but not exclusively, in some foundation subjects such as physical education. Although the arrangement has only just begun, it is not clear whether class teachers will benefit by observing the specialist in action so that eventually they will feel more confident to teach their own class in the subject. Neither has there been detailed consideration of the effects of such arrangements on the pupils in the specialist's own class; for example, when the physical education specialist's class is taught by another teacher for literacy and numeracy.

The pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

23. The school makes good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The headteacher, who joined the school just six months after the November 2002 inspection, quickly involved all segments of the school and community in developing a challenging vision for the school, and promoting an ethos which has at its core the promotion of good attitudes to learning and high standards of behaviour. There are two main aims: to enable all pupils to fulfil their potential and develop self-esteem and independence, and to provide a challenging and stimulating curriculum which enhances the pupils' learning and achievement.

24. The school has achieved a good measure of success. The pupils have opportunities to take part in a wide range of extracurricular cultural and sporting activities, while the Creative Kids project has had a very positive impact in improving the pupils' creative skills and their desire to succeed. The school has broadened the pupils' experiences through visits

to theatres and places of interest and visitors to the school. A strong feature is the link between aspects of the curriculum and the wider community. For example, Key Stage 2 pupils drew on their developing writing skills to produce and edit a local community newsletter, while Year 6 pupils visited the Tate Gallery in Liverpool to stimulate their art work and to mount an art exhibition which was well attended by the local community.

25. The pupils are developing good attitudes overall to their learning. The work to broaden the curriculum has aided the teachers' confidence in planning work and adopting a range of teaching techniques. The pupils' attitudes to learning have shown rapid improvement; they are attentive, usually interested in the work and keen to take part. The pupils were well behaved in lessons and around the school. There were few signs of the variability in attitudes and behaviour that were apparent following the inspection in 2001.

The quality of education

26. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with some examples of good and very good teaching, but also some teaching that has unsatisfactory features: the teaching was very good in three lessons, good in four, satisfactory in seven and unsatisfactory in two. This overall picture is much better than at the time of the November 2001 inspection when teaching was unsatisfactory overall in both Key Stages 1 and 2.

27. The headteacher has had to contend with continuing problems over recruiting and retaining staff. Only since September 2003 has the school experienced stability. Nevertheless, there is a good sense of cohesion and teamwork among the staff. The teachers plan in teams, share ideas, and adjust the lesson content according to the pupils' different levels of attainment. Lesson plans are detailed and the learning objectives are clear. The objectives are almost always shared with the pupils at the start of a lesson, although less frequently at the end for the teacher to check how well the pupils understand what has been taught or as a prelude to the content of the next lesson. The objectives and activities are generally closely related and the work is almost always well matched to the pupils' needs. However, on occasion the tasks are too difficult for the least able or too easy for the most able, as a result of the teacher's uncertainty about previous gaps in the pupils' learning. Nevertheless, the teachers are beginning to use schemes of work selectively and to better effect; they do not always stick rigidly to the work prescribed for a particular age group but dip into that for older or younger pupils according to need.

28. The weaknesses in the two unsatisfactory lessons resulted either from unfamiliarity with the pupils' different levels of attainment, or teaching that dominated the lesson and gave too few chances for the pupils to show what they could do.

29. There are a number of teaching assistants and voluntary helpers who support each class. Generally, they are soundly deployed, know the pupils well and are briefed appropriately for each lesson. They are most effective when working with small groups of pupils, but less so during whole-class sessions.

30. A major element in the pupils' improved rate of progress is the assessment information available to the teacher. Assessment procedures are extensive, but clear and well structured. The headteacher has devised a year's assessment plan which provides a series of checks and balances, undertaken by senior managers, to ensure that the methods for individual assessment are applied with rigour and accuracy. The information gained is well

used to establish strengths and weaknesses in the learning, plan work, set learning targets and establish extra support groups.

31. The curriculum is broad and balanced. The school's curriculum is based on national guidance and gives due emphasis to improving the pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy. Significant steps have been taken to raise the status of some of the foundation subjects of the National Curriculum subjects, most notably that of music, art, design and technology and the creative elements of physical education. The work in these areas, which is of good quality, has benefited from the expertise of artists, poets, story-tellers, dancers and potters.

32. The partnership between the school and parents and links with the community were at a very low ebb after the November 2001 inspection. Since then the school has worked hard to involve the parents in the life of the school and in the progress made by their children. Parents are kept well informed of events through: monthly newsletters from the headteacher; Foundation Stage and key stage newsletters which give topical curriculum information; invitations to special events such as exhibitions, concerts and special assemblies; and opportunities to come into school to help in the classes or to learn more about how and what the pupils are taught. There are consultation evenings, family learning afternoons, reading workshops and family social events. The response from the parents has been mixed, although there is an upward trend in attendance at these events.

Leadership and management

33. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide good leadership and management, ably supported by an increasingly effective senior team which take a full part in managing teaching teams and monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. All the senior managers understand their roles, whether they are leading a team of teachers or overseeing the development of a curriculum area.

34. The headteacher was appointed at a time when the leadership of the school was in some disarray, despite the good work done by the deputy headteacher to achieve stability at all levels. The headteacher quickly identified the strengths and weaknesses in the school and set out an agenda for improvement. A priority for the headteacher and deputy headteacher was to rekindle trust between the school's leadership and all those involved in the teaching and learning in order to achieve a positive climate for change. Common systems and structures have been achieved through, for example, reviewing the role of senior managers, establishing lesson planning teams, monitoring the pupils' work, analysing test data and setting up training to meet the needs of the school and individual teachers.

35. The monitoring of teaching and learning is thorough and regular. Most lesson observations are carried out by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and local education authority (LEA) officers, but training has been provided for the principal co-ordinators to observe the work in literacy and numeracy. The outcomes of the observations are shared with the individual teachers and areas for development are identified and agreed. The system works well and the comments are evaluative, detailed and constructive.

36. The headteacher has been well supported by a governing body that knows the strengths and weaknesses of the school and is committed to playing a major role in developing positive relationships between the community, school and the pupils. Although not all the governors are able to visit the school on a regular basis due to work commitments, there are a number who attend events, support pupils regularly with their reading, and discuss

the school's progress with the senior managers. A significant initiative on the part of the governors and the headteacher has been the successful funding of the Creative Kids project. The governors have worked extremely hard to ensure the projects' success and have taken on much of the administrative responsibility.

37. The LEA has given a great deal of help to the school and this has proved effective in supporting its recovery. The linked inspector makes frequent visits to the school and has been instrumental in providing training, monitoring and visits to observe successful practice elsewhere.

Implementation of the action plan

38. The inspection report of 2001 required the school to address four key issues. These principally related to: improving relationships between all the adults involved with the school; raising standards; achieving consistently good teaching and learning; and developing the partnership between parents and the school. Reasonable and often good progress has been made and most tasks have been completed.

39. A number of effective measures have been taken to allow adults to express their views and opinions, including a forum for all the different groups involved in the school to discuss issues openly with senior managers, governors and the LEA. The governing body takes an increasingly active role in the school's work and has been involved in developing its improvement plan.

40. The pupils' standards of attainment have shown steady improvement in the lessons. The measures taken to improve the rate of the pupils' progress and raise standards are having a positive effect in the lessons but they are only just beginning to influence results in the national tests, particularly at Key Stage 2.

41. The school has made good use of its teaching expertise to promote good practice and to provide additional teaching for groups of pupils in literacy and numeracy. Staff training is targeted accurately at the school's needs and planning procedures are applied consistently. There is a rigorous programme for monitoring classroom practice and checking the pupils' progress.

42. A number of events have taken place, both social and educational, to promote parents' involvement in school. Communications with parents are extensive, including newsletters, questionnaires and invitations to school events. A major boost to the partnership has been the project focusing on the development of the creative arts in school.

Appendix – Information about the inspection

The school was inspected under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 by a Registered Inspector and a team of inspectors in November 2001. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and, in accordance with that Act, the school was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.

The school was visited by HMI in April and September 2002, and in January, May and September 2003 to assess the progress it was making to implement its action plan and address the key issues in the inspection report of November 2001.

In January 2004, two HMI returned to inspect the school for two days. The inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996, which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act.

Sixteen lessons or parts of lessons, one assembly and two registration sessions were inspected. The pupils were observed at break and lunch times and samples of their work were inspected. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior staff and representatives from the governing body and LEA, and informal discussions were held with other staff and pupils. A wide range of the school's documentation was scrutinised. Account was also taken of the evidence from previous monitoring inspections.

The inspection assessed the quality of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of November 2001 and the action plan prepared by the governing body to address those key issues.

Notes

