



Chalfont St Peter Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110269
LEA Buckinghamshire LEA
Inspection number 278398
Inspection dates 14 September 2005 to 15 September 2005
Reporting inspector Bradley Simmons HMI

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Level End
School category	Community		Chalfont St Peter
Age range of pupils	4 to 7		Gerrards Cross SL9 9PB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01753884279
Number on roll	149	Fax number	01753883680
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Jill Poules
Date of previous inspection	31 January 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Jean Cornes

Age group 4 to 7	Inspection dates 14 September 2005 - 15 September 2005	Inspection number 278398
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

Chalfont St. Peter Infant School is situated in the socio-economically advantaged district of South Buckinghamshire, although the area closest to the school comprises mixed housing. Around ten per cent of its pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, a small number of whom speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is average. The published percentage of pupils entitled to a free school meal is low (0.6%) but this may not reflect the true figure; some parents choose not to apply for this concession as the local authority does not provide a hot meal. Attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year, but is generally slightly above average. There is a phased start to the reception year for pupils, and at the time of the inspection, only the autumn born and spring born reception pupils were in school. Pupils in the reception year attend school for mornings only in the autumn term and become full time in the spring term.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The senior management of this school see it as a good school; inspectors judge it to be satisfactory with some strong features. Provision for pupils' personal development and arrangements to ensure they receive good care, guidance and support are effective. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The wide range of extra curricular activities are appreciated by parents and enjoyed by their children. Parents are very supportive of the school, and generally believe their children are making good progress. Standards are above average overall, but variable assessment and feedback procedures do not enable pupils to make the progress of which they are capable, particularly in writing. The teaching of phonics lacks rigour. Higher ability pupils could be stretched further in all subjects. The quality of provision and standards in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. School improvement planning is not sufficiently focused on raising attainment and does not enable governors to hold the school to account. The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and demonstrates capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

* Strengthen and accelerate the teaching of phonics so pupils are able to use their phonetic knowledge with confidence when they write. * Improve marking and feedback to pupils to the level of the best found in the school so that pupils know what they have to do to improve their performance, particularly in writing. * Sharpen assessment and curricular target setting to ensure that higher ability pupils are challenged by tasks which match their capabilities. * Ensure that school improvement planning focuses on expected improvements in attainment for pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The school considers that achievement and standards are good, whereas evidence shows that overall performance by pupils is satisfactory. Pupils arrive at the school with attainment which is slightly above the national average. They make satisfactory progress and by the time they leave, attain standards which are above the national average in reading and mathematics. This is an improvement since the last inspection. However, this year too few able pupils attained the highest test level, particularly in writing, and to a lesser extent in reading and mathematics. Writing for all pupils remains an area of comparative weakness; pupils attain in line with the national average but they are capable of more. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) were a concern at the time of the last inspection; the great majority of pupils are now attaining in line with national expectations. Reliable data demonstrates that the attainment of the very small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is slightly higher than that of other pupils. Carefully considered individual education plans and good specialist teaching of pupils with SEN ensure that these pupils make very good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Pupils are friendly and confident. In their discussions with inspectors, they demonstrated a natural curiosity and the ability to hold sustained conversations regardless of their age. They work diligently and maintain high levels of concentration during most lessons. They enjoy school and their attendance is good. The school's extra curricular provision includes a residential trip to Shortenills Environmental Centre, and parents appreciate the opportunity this provides to promote pupils' self esteem and independence. Pupils demonstrate caring attitudes towards each other. They share learning resources and support one another when working and at play. In most lessons and around the school they are well-behaved. Pupils' cultural and moral development is supported through the religious education curriculum and regular celebrations of other cultures. Pupils have opportunities to contribute to life in the local community through fund raising activities and they are encouraged to develop healthy lifestyles through regular exercise and healthy diets. Assemblies, in which pupils are given opportunities to reflect, sing and pray make a positive contribution to their spiritual development.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The school judges that the quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers work hard and inspectors saw some good teaching but the impact of teaching on learning over time is satisfactory. During good lessons, teachers used questions effectively to assess and extend pupils' learning. They used resources well to engage and maintain pupils' interest. Pupils had useful opportunities to discuss their learning with each other and applied themselves to tasks with sustained levels of concentration. Where the quality of teaching was no better than satisfactory, activities did not always engage the interest of learners, and pupils, particularly the more able, were not stretched enough. The school recognises that the teaching of writing is a weakness and is taking steps to improve this but the impact has yet to be seen. The teaching of phonics is inconsistent and too slow. As a result pupils do not always use their phonetic knowledge with confidence when they write. This impedes progress. Handwriting is not effectively taught across the school despite the introduction of a new scheme last year. Teachers' marking of writing does not always help pupils to improve the organisation and content of their work. The school assesses and records pupils' progress but procedures are not sufficiently rigorous and are not implemented consistently across all classes. Marking is variable; in some classes it provides an accurate assessment record as well as giving pointers for improvements, but in the worst case, marking was perfunctory. Consequently some pupils, particularly high ability ones, are not sufficiently challenged or given appropriate guidance on how to improve their work. In discussions with inspectors, some pupils indicated that they find their work too easy.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school's curriculum provision is satisfactory with some good features. In recognition of weaknesses in provision for writing the school has increased the time allocation for this subject. All subjects are now given adequate time. Information and communication technology has become a strength and useful curricular links are made between information and communication technology other subjects. Inspectors observed some teachers using interactive whiteboards effectively to support teaching and learning across the curriculum. Provision for swimming is very good and most pupils become confident swimmers by the time they leave the school. Curriculum provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. However, teachers' plans do not focus sufficiently on challenging the more able, so some of the brightest pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable. Procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs are effective and the specialist support they receive enables them to make very good progress. The wide range of extra-curricular activities is noteworthy for an infant school; provision in this area is very good and includes sports and language clubs, a breakfast club and an after school club. In addition the school is involved in setting up a new integrated care service centre. The school recently received an Arts Mark Gold Award and is working towards achieving the Healthy Schools Award. These additional activities have had a positive impact on pupils' confidence and self esteem and greatly increased their enjoyment of school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school makes good provision for pupils' care, guidance and support and works hard at maintaining a positive relationship with parents. Pupils and the vast majority of parents feel that the school takes their welfare seriously. Arrangements for the induction of new pupils and for transition to and from the school are very effective. This is demonstrated in the reception class where new pupils, some of whom had only been in school for three days during the inspection week, were settled, happy and confident. Positive links with outside agencies enable the school to provide very good care and support to vulnerable pupils. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are appropriate and there are suitable child protection procedures. Pupils report that staff listen to their concerns and there is someone to talk to if they are troubled. They note that where bullying occurs, it is dealt with promptly and effectively by staff. The school surveys pupils' views and has established procedures to allow pupils to participate in decision making.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher is committed and hard working. She has been innovative in her approach to staffing and to managing the school's finances. She has embraced the national reforms to release teachers from

the burden of time consuming administrative tasks which divert attention from teaching, and has worked to very good effect to ensure staff have the requisite time for planning and preparation. School self evaluation is satisfactory, but the headteacher acknowledges that there has not been sufficient rigour in pursuing identified areas for improving the attainment of pupils, particularly in writing. The school improvement plan is not robust enough to allow governors to hold the school to account. It does not effectively link planned actions with the expected impact of those actions on the progress and attainment of different cohorts and groups of pupils. Neither does it specify costings and appropriate monitoring and evaluation procedures. The governing body was reconstituted just under a year ago. Since this time, it has rightly been occupied with supporting the headteacher to implement national reforms to staffing at a local level. Governors demonstrate a clear commitment to raising standards; at present, their role in school self-evaluation is at an early stage. However, training is planned in this area. Parents told inspectors repeatedly how greatly they value the warm ethos that the headteacher and staff have created. They feel welcome at the school and appreciate that the headteacher and staff are always prepared 'to go the extra mile'.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	NA
Learners are educated about sexual health	NA
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for all the help you gave us when we came to visit your school. We enjoyed our visit very much. I told some of you that I would write to you all to tell you what we found out about your school. These are the things we liked about your school.

* You told us that Mrs. Cornes and all the teachers work very hard, look after you very well, and that you trust them. We agree with you.* You are well behaved at school and told us that you feel safe there.* You are very friendly and you look after each other. You share with each other and don't leave children out when you play.* You always work and concentrate hard when you find lessons interesting.* You like all the clubs that Mrs. Cornes has organised for you.* Even the very youngest of you like coming to school very much.

We know that you will want to help your school become even better. Some of you told us that the work you do is too easy, and we agree with you, so we have asked your teachers to make sure you learn more quickly and have harder work to do. We have also asked your teachers to make sure they tell you how you can improve your work, so make sure you listen to them! We know you can do it! Thank you again for talking to us and answering our questions. Good luck in the future.