



Chaucer Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112709
LEA DERBYSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 279000
Inspection dates 3 May 2006 to 4 May 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. Martin Newell LI

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Cranmer Street
School category	Community		DE7 5JH
Age range of pupils	7 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01159324387
Number on roll	207	Fax number	01159443862
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Cllr.Kathleen Trueman
Date of previous inspection	1 November 1999	Headteacher	Mr. Mark Whyman

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Chaucer is an average sized junior school which serves the town of Ilkeston. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties are above the national average, although the percentage of pupils who have statements of special educational need is below average. Almost all pupils are White British and none of the pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are at an early stage of acquiring English. The current headteacher has been in post since the start of the academic year. Attainment on entry is above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

The overall effectiveness of this school is currently inadequate because standards are not high enough and, over time, pupils' progress has been too slow. The school views its effectiveness as satisfactory, and many aspects of its work are so, but in other areas the school's evaluations are a little generous. Although there are some strengths in teaching and some is outstanding, evidence indicates that weaknesses in teaching over time, and in assessment in particular have contributed to the fact that not enough pupils fulfil their potential. The headteacher is starting to bring about improvements because he leads and manages the school well. However, weaknesses in leadership, including that of governors, in monitoring the school's performance over time have contributed to pupils' lack of progress and to the fact that improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. Some issues identified then remain significant weaknesses. Nevertheless, led by the headteacher, there is a renewed determination and commitment to improve the school. Procedures to improve teaching, assessment, leadership and attendance are starting to pay dividends, although there is still much to be done. There is now good capacity for improvement. However, based on the school's performance over time, it does not provide value for money. The personal development of pupils, the curriculum and the care, guidance and support for pupils are satisfactory overall, with some strengths. Pupils' behaviour, attitudes and knowledge of keeping fit and healthy are all good. The range of enrichment opportunities brings another dimension to pupils' learning and the school provides good care for the pupils. Both pupils and parents speak well of the school. In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing less well than in all the circumstances it could be reasonably expected to perform. This school is therefore given a Notice to Improve.

What the school should do to improve further

In order to improve pupils' standards and achievement the school should: - improve the quality and consistency of teaching so that it more regularly matches that of the best practice - ensure that assessment is accurate, that pupils' progress is regularly checked and that the information is used to set challenging targets and to guide teaching - ensure that the senior management team, subject leaders and governors play an effective and rigorous role in monitoring pupil and school performance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Achievement and standards overall are inadequate. National and school data indicates that standards when pupils start at the school are generally above average. Standards when pupils leave school have been close to the national average over the last three years. The progress that pupils make in school over time has been unsatisfactory and not all pupils, particularly the higher-attainers, have achieved as well as they could.

This is confirmed by the value added data, which tracks pupils' progress from Year 2 to Year 6. It showed some cause for concern in 2004 and by 2005 was significantly lower than average. Underachievement has gone unchecked. On the basis of prior attainment the school has not always set challenging targets. The appointment of the present headteacher has coincided with early signs of improvement in pupil achievement because effective initiatives are leading to some improvements in teaching and assessment. However, there is still work to be done to ensure that all pupils make good and consistent progress as they move through the school. The school has set very challenging targets for 2006. If reached, pupils' attainment would be a little above the national average. Such standards are not always reflected in pupils' work, but the school has recently introduced a number of intervention strategies and revision procedures to help pupils attain better results in national tests. The achievement of pupils with learning difficulties is satisfactory because of good levels of support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. The school provides an environment in which pupils feel safe, happy and respected and this is confirmed by parental views. Pupils also have positive views about their education. The emphasis placed on moral and social aspects of their education leads to pupils' growing understanding of justice and self-respect and has had a considerable impact on their good attitudes and behaviour. The school is rightly increasing the opportunities for pupils to gain a greater awareness of cultures other than their own. Pupils' attendance has improved recently and is now in line with national average. Pupils develop a good sense of responsibility for themselves, others and their surroundings and respond well to opportunities to participate in the running of the school, for example by involvement in the school council. They develop a good awareness of the school and local community and they make contributions to both, for instance, by instigating and running a healthy school tuck shop. Pupils' know and follow safe practices well and have a good awareness of what is needed to keep fit and healthy. There is however room for further improvement in developing independent learning skills and enhancing basic skills to make a more telling contribution to pupils' personal development and their future economic well being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Although no inadequate teaching was observed during the inspection, it is clear that weaknesses in teaching have contributed to pupils' inadequate progress over time. Examination of pupils' books indicates a lack of challenge and expectation in some classes. Although improving under the leadership of the new headteacher, assessment, tracking and target setting have been poor. Although there is variability in teaching, there is good and outstanding teaching taking place. When teaching is at its best, for

example in some Year 6 classes, lessons bristle with pace, are packed with challenge and are made fun and exciting. In the better lessons, teachers make sure that work is well matched to the differing needs of pupils. Their enthusiasm and good subject knowledge help bring learning to life for the pupils. Teaching assistants contribute well to pupils' learning. Satisfactory lessons often lack a sense of urgency; too little is asked of pupils or lessons are dominated by teacher talk, with the result that pupils' interest wanes. The headteacher has recognised and is robustly addressing the significant weaknesses in assessment, but improvements are at an early stage. Procedures for assessing, tracking and setting challenging targets for pupils have not been good enough. These factors, together with inaccuracies in teacher assessments, have meant that underachievement has not always been recognised. Although some marking of pupils' work is good, it is variable and does not always make clear what pupils need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It effectively meets the learning needs of pupils. It is broad, balanced and is enhanced by a good range of after school activities, including music, sports, and various clubs such as The Harry Potter Fan Club and the Newspaper Club. Curriculum planning to develop pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy is improving in most classes, although at times there remains a lack of challenge for the more able pupils. The provision made for pupils with learning difficulties is good. The use of pupils' information and communication technology skills (ICT) in different subjects continues to develop well. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of educational visits, including residential visits, which add to pupils' social and health education (PSHE). The school promotes the importance of healthy living well. Personal, social and emotional development is taught as a discrete subject, and together with 'Circle Time,' satisfactorily meets the requirements for the provision of drug and alcohol awareness and relationships education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides satisfactory care, support and guidance for all its pupils. Pupils feel safe and know that there are adults to turn to if they need help. They feel that they have a voice and that their views are listened to. If pupils are hurt or upset, their needs are swiftly and sensitively met. Child protection requirements and health and safety procedures are thorough. Risk assessments are carried out effectively. Pupils with learning difficulties benefit from good support. However, the system for monitoring and tracking pupils' academic and personal progress is unsatisfactory. Although there have been recent improvements, it is still a weak basis for good quality academic guidance. New links with the infant feeder school assist a more smooth transition and visits to the secondary school complement pupils' academic and social preparation for the next stage of their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

Leadership and management are inadequate overall because staff have not effectively tackled underachievement or moved the school on at a fast enough pace since the time of the last inspection. However, the appointment of the current headteacher suggests a far more positive outlook. He leads and manages the school well and is developing a new sense of urgency and energy in the school. He has very quickly and astutely assessed the school's weaknesses and, importantly, has put in place effective initiatives that have started to see improvements in teaching, assessment, planning and attendance. He is establishing clearer and more defined roles for members of the senior management team and for subject leaders so that they play a more effective role in raising standards and pupil achievement. There is now a determination and enthusiasm in subjects such as English and ICT to make a difference. The school's track record on improvement overall is inadequate; some key issues from the last inspection remain and have only recently been addressed with any rigour. However the shoots of improvement are now starting to emerge and if recently introduced strategies and initiatives are continued, supported and implemented by all staff, the capacity for continued improvement is good. The governing body is supportive of the school and the chair of governors has a good awareness of the school's weaknesses and is deeply committed to making the school a better place. However, governors have not challenged the school's leaders sufficiently or held the school to account for its performance. The school's self-evaluation is honest and frank, although on occasions a little generous. The headteacher is already instigating better procedures to take on the views of staff, parents, pupils and governors to include in its self-evaluation. There has not been a concerted effort over time to improving the accommodation and some teaching areas are not best suited to effective learning. However, the headteacher is now addressing this issue well and plans are in hand to make the school a more attractive and fit-for-purpose place for learning.

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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?	4	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	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	No	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	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	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4	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?	3	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?	4	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	4	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4	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	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
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

You may remember that we recently visited your school and this letter is to tell you about what we found. I would like to thank all of you for making us so welcome and being so polite and helpful. We had the chance to talk to many of you and it was really pleasing to hear about how much you enjoy school, that bullying is not an issue and that there is always someone to talk to if you have any concerns. We found that the school offers a good range of after school clubs and visits out of school that you really enjoy. The school works hard at making sure that you are cared for and looked after well and that your voices are listened to through the school council. A particular strength of the school though is you... the pupils! Your good behaviour, your positive attitudes to learning and the way in which you want to do well, all shone through. Mr Whyman is very keen to make the school a better place for you to learn and he leads the school well. I have spoken to Mr Whyman and staff about what is needed to make your school a more exciting place to be. There are times when not all children in school do as well as they are capable of and so we have asked the school to make sure that: - teaching always helps you to make good progress; - how well you are doing is carefully and regularly checked up on; - teachers and governors ensure that the standards you reach are high enough. Mr Whyman, the staff and the governors want the school to continue to improve. Having met you I am sure you will want to play your part as well. I wish you all every success in the future. It was a pleasure and privilege to meet you.