



Chiltern Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134652
Local Authority Hampshire
Inspection number 282630
Inspection dates 14–15 November 2006
Reporting inspector Judith Dawson

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

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|---|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Type of school | Primary | School address | Chiltern Way |
| School category | Community | | Basingstoke |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 | | RG22 5BB |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01256473791 |
| Number on roll (school) | 226 | Fax number | 01256331850 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair | Mrs Jane Pratt |
| | | Headteacher | Mrs Sarah Hamill |
| Date of previous school inspection | Not previously inspected | | |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized primary school was formed by the amalgamation of an infant and junior school in September 2004. The disruption and instability in staffing and the move to the new buildings resulted in pupils underachieving in 2005 and the school became part of the Local Authority's Intensifying Support Programme. The number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is well above average. Many pupils come from socially disadvantaged households and more pupils than average receive free school meals. More pupils than average join or leave the school other than at the normal time. A pre-school class is based on the same site and the school has applied to become a Children's Centre in 2009.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Since the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools two years ago Chiltern Primary School has been through a period where pupils were underachieving. The headteacher had very clear plans for development based on an astute and accurate analysis of the school's effectiveness, but two periods of illness prevented her from implementing these. However, since her return she has swiftly taken action to address the underachievement, replacing staff and appointing an effective senior management team. Her enthusiasm and commitment, generating a similar commitment amongst the staff, have resulted in improvements in pupils' achievement and standards are beginning to rise. This is good leadership and illustrates the school's good capacity to improve and the good overall effectiveness of the school.

Standards overall are below average but have risen from the low levels in 2005. Taking account of pupils' well below average starting points, this represents a good level of achievement. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well although their skills are still below average by the time they join Year 1. Because of the good provision for pupils of different abilities and effective planning to meet pupils' needs most pupils achieve well in lessons and standards continue to rise throughout the school.

This is an inclusive school where every child matters. As a result, pupils enjoy school and enter into the many activities with enthusiasm. Pupils respect each other and the adults in school and behave well. A number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, many of whom have emotional or behavioural problems, sometimes find it hard to concentrate. All pupils carry out their many responsibilities conscientiously. Pupils receive outstanding pastoral care, guidance and support, enabling them to thrive in school. All pupils have targets to help them improve their work and have been taught how to evaluate their learning effectively. Most teachers' marking gives pupils very clear direction for improving their work. However, a minority of teachers' marking does little to extend pupils' learning.

Teaching and learning is good overall and the school provides children in the Foundation Stage with a good start to their school life. Parents are supported very well, enabling them to help their children at home. One parent said 'We are encouraged to take an active role in our child's learning. It helps me to help my child progress during the year.' The satisfactory curriculum is undergoing a period of change as schemes of work are being adapted to make learning more relevant. More needs to be done to increase some pupils' enthusiasm for learning basic literacy and numeracy skills, by teaching them through other subjects. Initiatives such as the management of the school council's budget by the pupils and the use of 'Chiltern School Currency' in Year 6 help prepare pupils for their future lives and information and communication technology is used well to support learning across the curriculum.

What the school should do to improve further

- Help pupils to achieve more by ensuring that all teachers' marking tells pupils what they do well and how they can improve their work

- Make pupils' learning more relevant by developing more opportunities to teach literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children start school with well below average levels of knowledge and skills, especially in communication, language and literacy and personal development. Standards by the end of Year 2, while remaining below average, improved in the 2006 national tasks. The school's excellent tracking of pupils' progress shows that the majority are now making good progress and more pupils are attaining the higher levels. The results in the 2006 national tests for Year 6 pupils improved on the 2005 results. Although they were well below average, pupils had made good progress from the low levels in Year 2. Pupils now in Year 6 are likely to attain higher levels than those the in the 2006 national tests although the recent improvements in pupils' achievements have not yet had time to raise standards to average levels. Most pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make good progress because of the accurate identification of their needs and the school's very effective arrangements to meet them. More able pupils are beginning to achieve well because of the additional challenge within focused groups.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good. Pupils enjoy coming to school because they are encouraged to take responsibility. For example, older pupils manage the school desk and answer telephone calls at lunchtime. Attendance is improving and the latest figures show that it is now close to the national average. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and on the playground is good. Although a small minority of parents feel it could be better, the pupils say incidents of poor behaviour or bullying are rare. Pupils are courteous and well-mannered to one another and adults. Children in the reception class develop their personal and social skills well but many still find it difficult to interact with their classmates. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and pupils are aware of how their actions affect other people. They are encouraged to make the right choices in their lives and know how to keep healthy and stay safe. Pupils have a good understanding of citizenship, clearly demonstrated in the assembly theme for the week throughout the school. The school council makes a valuable contribution to improving school life and gives pupils an active voice in shaping the school's direction.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. In the Foundation Stage adults have a good understanding of the needs of the children. Above all, the teacher makes learning fun. Good quality teaching is maintained throughout the rest of the school. Skilful teachers work with small groups of pupils, some with specific learning difficulties and others who have higher abilities. These pupils learn well. Strong relationships between pupils and their teachers provide secure platforms for learning. Teachers are imaginative in the strategies they use to promote learning. For example, 'Helping Hands', cardboard hands where fingers give strategies for reading, support pupils well. Praise is used generously and pupils are told why their work is good. This has a powerful impact on their self-esteem so that they glow with pride and make good progress. Assessment procedures, including marking, are good overall and the best gives pupils very clear guidance on how to improve their work. This is not consistent amongst all teachers and some marking does not help pupils to understand what is good about their work or how they can improve. The well-trained learning support assistants make significant contributions to the quality of learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The Foundation Stage curriculum is good and there are very good links with the pre-school that help to ensure smooth transition into the reception class. The curriculum is satisfactory throughout the rest of the school, where it is under review. There is a rigorous curriculum for English and mathematics which is raising pupils' achievements in literacy and numeracy and links are developing with other subjects. More needs to be done to enliven the curriculum by taking more opportunities to teach English and mathematics through other subjects. Care is taken to ensure that pupils are learning at their own levels by matching the curriculum to their needs as they transfer across the stages. In Year 1, for example, pupils who are not ready for the National Curriculum work towards the Foundation Stage's early learning goals. Friday night is 'club night' and very popular with pupils. Clubs cover a wide range of activities. Music features strongly in the curriculum and some classes have instrumental instruction. Good use is made of visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides outstanding care, support and guidance for its pupils. Pastoral care is very effective and this care embraces the whole family and the community. For example, the headteacher visits homes where there are problems such as poor attendance. Parents are supported through adult literacy and guidance on supporting their children. All pupils have targets for improvement for English and mathematics

and they know what they need to do to achieve well. Support offered to pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is outstanding because of the accurate response the excellent analysis of pupils' needs. The most able pupils also have additional support to provide them with the challenge they need. Links with a range of specialist providers enhance the school's work. Child protection procedures are thorough and support pupils' health, safety and well being. The school works closely with secondary schools to ensure smooth transfer arrangements.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The major changes that have affected the school over the last two years have had a significant impact on the staff and pupils. Good evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses has enabled the headteacher to respond rapidly and decisively to the needs of the school on her return. She has accurately identified weaknesses in teaching and, with the effective governors, has now established a team of predominantly good teachers who have halted the trend of underachievement. The issues the inspectors identified for improvement are already part of the school's strategic plans. Excellent tracking systems to measure pupils' progress to identify and respond to underachievement are raising standards and ensuring that most pupils are now making good progress. Imaginative structuring of the leadership team to support all teachers has generated a staff committed to school improvement and providing the best for the pupils. The school's strategic plan is relevant and clearly focused on raising standards. To this end, parents have become far more involved in their children's learning and the life of the school. Other teachers are taking responsibility for developing the curriculum and are developing their management roles well.

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Inspection judgements

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| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
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Overall effectiveness

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

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 2 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |
| The behaviour of learners | 2 |
| The attendance of learners | 3 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 2 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 |

The quality of provision

| | |
|---|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 2 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 3 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 1 |

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

Leadership and management

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 2 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 2 |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets | 2 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 2 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 2 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 2 |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements? | Yes |
| Does this school require special measures? | No |
| Does this school require a notice to improve? | No |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for all your help during our visit to your school. We really enjoyed talking to you all. A special thanks to those of you in Year 2 and Year 6 who left your lessons to talk to us. We were very impressed with your politeness and good behaviour and how hard you work.

You told us you are very happy in school and that you feel very safe and well cared for. We agree with you. The care, guidance and support you are given to help you grow into good citizens are outstanding. We were particularly impressed by the way many of your parents learn with you to help you at home. You are very lucky to be looked after so well. You are taught well and this is helping you to make good progress. Most teachers mark your work very well, helping you improve. We have asked the school to make sure all your teachers do this.

Most of you enjoy your lessons. We saw Year 2 and 3 thoroughly enjoying making their glove puppets using the instructions they had written. We noticed that some of you find it difficult to concentrate in your English and mathematics lessons. We have asked teachers to find more ways of teaching you the skills you need in other subjects like history, geography and science. This will make lessons more interesting.

Your headteacher leads your school well. Some of you were struggling to learn and she has made sure that you have good teachers who know exactly what you need to do to achieve well. If you are not making the progress you should be you are given extra help. Your teachers help each other so that your new teachers quickly learn how to do the best for you. You have a good school and you should be proud of it. You can make it even better by making the most of your opportunities to learn. Good luck in achieving your targets.

Best wishes

Judy Dawson

Lead Inspector