

# Chatsworth Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	101439
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bexley
<b>Inspection number</b>	286058
<b>Inspection date</b>	21 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Susan Gregory HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	215
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr P Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs R Owen
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 April 2001
<b>School address</b>	Burnt Oak Lane Sidcup DA15 9DD
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8300 9295
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8308 9339

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<b>Age group</b>	3-7
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## Introduction

This was a reduced tariff inspection carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspector spoke to pupils, parents, staff and governors, observed lessons and looked at pupils' work. She also examined the school's data, records and other documents. Just over 85 parents responded to the questionnaire distributed before the inspection. Parents value the high standard of education offered by the school.

## Description of the school

Almost all of the pupils represent White British backgrounds and less than ten percent are of a minority ethnic heritage. Very few pupils are learning to speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average, and the number of pupils who arrive or leave the school at other than the expected times is low. The majority of children enter the nursery at broadly the expected levels. Their capabilities and starting points vary considerably but a minority of children exceed expectations when they join. Almost all transfer to the school's reception classes. About 9% of the school's pupils have learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) and no children are looked after by the local authority. The headteacher was appointed to her post a year ago. She was previously the deputy headteacher.

The school has gained a number of national awards. These include Investors in People (awarded 3 times), Charter Mark status (awarded twice), the Healthy Schools Award (awarded 4 times), Activemark Gold Award, Artsmark Gold Award (awarded twice), Basic Skills Quality Mark (awarded 3 times), and an ICT (BECTA) Award. Chatsworth is also an Eco School Green Flag holder (awarded 3 times).

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

For the last few years, the pupils at Chatsworth Infant School have reached very high standards at the end of Year 2, the majority having started in the nursery at more or less the expected levels. The inspector wanted to find out how the school had maintained its performance and whether pupils' progress is good, or exceptional. She also wanted to know whether the school had been accurate in judging that the Foundation Stage and teaching are good overall, but that the curriculum, levels of care and the leadership and management are excellent. What then, did she find?

The inspector found that the staff, governors and parents are right in believing that Chatsworth is an outstanding school which provides an excellent quality of education. Children in the Foundation Stage settle quickly. They become independent learners and almost all make good progress. Furthermore, the test results and school data show that by the end of Year 2, the older pupils have built very well on their good start in the nursery and reception classes. By the time they leave, almost all have accelerated their learning, met challenging targets and achieved exceptionally well.

That is not all that the school should be proud about. As parents told the inspector, across the school, pupils' behaviour is 'ace' and they are helped to develop exemplary attitudes to learning from the youngest age. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their lessons because they are fun and interesting. They love coming to Chatsworth and as a result their attendance is above the national average. They make an excellent contribution to the well-being of others and have a well-heard voice through the School Council. For example, pupils have had a clear impact on developments to the wildlife area and bird hide and know why theirs is an 'Eco School' and what this means. Excellent teaching promotes this high level of understanding.

What factors help pupils to make such good progress, each year, in every respect? One important factor is that Chatsworth has strived to improve its provision over the past few years by working towards accreditation for national awards. In preparing for accreditation, the staff have looked carefully at what they are doing and how they can improve things. This has helped the school to achieve a great deal since the last inspection, not only in maintaining pupils' very high academic standards but also by developing the environment, improving staff expertise and teaching and by enriching the curriculum. It is a real achievement for the staff to have successfully met the rigorous requirements for awards like the Chartermark and Investors in People.

Another factor is that the headteacher provides an excellent role model. She has an impressive level of knowledge about the children's needs and the community and leads an able body of staff and governors from the front, ensuring that nothing is left to chance. The impact of the leadership and management is clear. The school has highly developed self-evaluation processes which are underpinned by robust monitoring procedures, careful attention to detail and very well-targeted interventions to help individual children. It is thanks to the strong teaching, an outstanding curriculum and high levels of care and guidance, that pupils are extremely well prepared to go on to the junior stage of their education.

Other elements too, contribute to Chatsworth's successes. Teamwork is very strong and staff are strongly motivated to succeed. Staff and governors have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and they work closely with parents and local agencies to ensure that the children are well supported in their learning both at school and at home. The inspector has no doubt

that the pace of sustained improvements and the high standards reached by pupils, reflect the school's outstanding value for money and capacity to improve.

### Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

#### Grade 2

Parents' comments mirror the school's judgement about the quality of the Foundation Stage and the inspector's findings. The provision for the youngest children is good because it is well led and managed. Parents told the inspector that they are kept very well informed. Their children are extremely well cared for, staff are friendly and approachable and nothing is too much trouble.

The children's introduction to the nursery is carefully planned and delivered, and from the youngest age children feel safe and happy. Chatsworth's three to five year olds receive consistently good teaching and support from dedicated teachers and teaching assistants. Their personal development is given a strong and successful emphasis, especially for the children who experience difficulties. Adults have high expectations, provide clear routines and enable children to build strong, positive relationships. Equally, children's language development and early literacy and numeracy skills are promoted well. As a result, the majority of children make good gains and exceed the goals expected of them by the time they transfer into Year 1.

The indoor areas are interesting and provide a relevant and appropriate focus on personal development and basic skills, as well as the wider curriculum. Whilst secure, the outside areas do not provide quite the same levels of challenge or stimulation, especially for the more capable children. The school is well aware that this is an aspect needing further development, and the staff have taken robust action. They are working towards an 'Effective Early Learning' accreditation to ensure that the children's 'outdoor classroom' is as enriched as the activities they encounter inside.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the outside learning environment in the Foundation Stage is as challenging as the children's 'indoor' classrooms.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 1

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. Over the past five years, pupils' standards have been significantly above the national and local authority averages. Higher attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties do exceptionally well, and there is no difference in the achievement of the few pupils from minority ethnic groups. The school is successfully tackling the slight differences that appeared last year for the first time between boys' and girls' attainment, especially in mathematics and science. Even though there has been a drop in the number of pupils reaching the highest level in writing this year, the standard of writing remains extremely high and reflects the excellent improvement in handwriting and spelling since the last inspection.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

The pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Throughout the school, pupils develop their outstanding moral and social skills from the good example set by the staff and other adults. Their excellent spiritual development is carefully planned and underpinned

by rich opportunities to reflect and share their feelings, for example when they celebrate each other's successes in assemblies. Pupils' cultural development is already very strong and the staff are successfully developing the international dimension by working towards accreditation for an award. Pupils' growing ability to adopt healthy life styles is also outstanding. Staff have worked hard to achieve 'Activemark Gold' and the 'Healthy Schools Award', linking with two secondary schools and providing a wide range of physical activities.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Staff were modest in saying that their teaching is good; teaching and learning are outstanding. The school has created a positive learning culture in which relationships between pupils and adults flourish. Teachers and teaching assistants work extremely well together to create a safe and stimulating learning environment in which pupils are helped to make choices and become independent thinkers. The staff have high levels of subject knowledge and make very good use of interactive whiteboards and computers to 'stretch' and motivate their pupils. For example, a reception class teacher used a whiteboard very effectively when teaching children about the division of numbers up to 10. The regular, rigorous assessment and monitoring of pupils' work, means that the staff know their pupils really well. They use that knowledge very successfully to plan for the next steps in learning and to challenge and encourage their pupils to strive to reach their targets.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

It is clear that the school's work towards awards like the 'Artsmark Gold' has been very well geared towards extending pupils' curiosity and knowledge about the world. Consequently, the learning environment is inspiring and contributes in no small way to the outstanding curriculum. The curriculum is broad, innovative and caters extremely well for pupils' abilities, gender and differing tastes. Important skills in English, mathematics and science are promoted very effectively but not to the detriment of the wider curriculum, and pupils also benefit from a rich variety of regular and interesting activities and school clubs. The influence of work with local artists, story tellers, theatre companies, naturalists and gardeners is clearly evident through pupils' stunning work and photographs on display all around the school.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Academic guidance and support is consistent, well-targeted and highly effective. This is a real strength of the school's work and a significant factor contributing to pupils' high levels of achievement and the outstanding preparation they receive for their future lives.

The staff and governors take all reasonable steps to ensure that pupils are safe. Staff are regularly trained in child protection procedures and health and safety requirements are fully met. There have been no incidents of exclusion and the headteacher and her deputy scrutinise the behaviour and racist incidents books on a daily basis, taking swift action on the rare occasions that it is necessary. There are excellent links with partner agencies and other schools like Burnt Oak Junior School, the feeder school for most pupils when they leave Year 2.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher is ably supported by her deputy and senior managers in communicating a clear, unwavering view of what needs to be done to maintain high standards and set a clear direction for future developments. This is a school which makes a heavy investment in staff training and professional development and the staff regularly evaluate the quality of their practice and its impact on learning with the headteacher and senior staff. The effectiveness of this approach is evident from the current whole school objective to improve standards in mathematics. The school's action has been very successful; the 2007 test results for Year 2 show that current results are the highest ever.

Governors have improved their contribution to the school and their work is now outstanding. They rightly see themselves as being publicly accountable and have put very effective monitoring procedures in place in order to question whether they are adding sufficient value to the school's performance.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	1
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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**

29 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Chatsworth Infant School, Sidcup, DA15 9DD

I really enjoyed meeting you to talk about your work and what you like about your school. Thank you for making me so welcome.

I think Chatsworth Infant is an outstanding school which provides you with an excellent education.

What I like most about Chatsworth Infant:

- you do extremely well in reading, writing, mathematics and science
- you behave very well and look after each other carefully
- you love your lessons because they are interesting and fun
- you are very proud of all the awards your school has achieved
- your headteacher and teachers are very good at checking that you are getting on well and also, at telling your parents how well you are doing.

What I have asked your headteacher to think about:

- as you are an 'Eco School' you are developing some lovely outside areas with your pond, bird hide, new plants and murals. I have asked your headteacher and teachers to think about ways of making the outside area for the nursery and reception children even better than it already is.

I was very impressed by the work that the School Council is doing and am sure that you will continue to work hard and help your teachers and the pupils at your school.

Yours sincerely

Susan Gregory HMI (Lead inspector)