

Chester Park Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108921
Local Authority	Bristol, City of
Inspection number	288225
Inspection dates	20–21 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Linda McGill HMI

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janice Green
Headteacher	Susan Tyte
Date of previous school inspection	2 December 2002
School address	Lodge Causeway Fishponds Bristol BS16 3QG
Telephone number	0117 3773047
Fax number	0117 3773047

Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Chester Park Infant School is smaller than average. It is a popular school and draws its pupils from a wide area across Bristol. The number known to be eligible for free school meals is average. The school caters for several pupils who have a statement of special educational need and the number with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average. About a third of the pupils are from minority ethnic heritages, the largest group being of Pakistani origin, and some are in the early stages of learning English. The school admits many pupils throughout the course of the academic year. On entry, standards are generally below what is expected of four-year-olds, particularly in their language skills and their personal development.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Chester Park Infant School is a good school and much of its work is excellent. Parents greatly appreciate what the school does for their children both in their learning and their personal development. One parent aptly commented: 'It's a good school, well led, that gets good results from a mixture of children'. The school gains these good results for a number of reasons. First, the headteacher and senior staff, together with the governing body, give a clear lead. They have high expectations and know exactly what they want to achieve for every child. Second, there is a strong drive to promote the five areas of the 'Every Child Matters' agenda, which permeates all aspects of the school's work. Finally, the school is a happy, vibrant place, which has a deservedly good reputation for welcoming and nurturing children, particularly those who have learning difficulties or disabilities.

The pupils thoroughly enjoy their time at school. Their behaviour is excellent and they are keen and enthusiastic learners. Their disposition to learn, together with good teaching and an outstanding curriculum, ensures that their achievement is good by the end of Year 2. The curriculum and teaching in the Foundation Stage have improved and are good. This leads to pupils making good progress in their personal development and increasingly good progress in other areas of learning. The proportion reaching the goals expected for their age is close to the national figure. The activities planned for the pupils, although stimulating and exciting, are not yet consistently matched to what they need to learn next. The pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and close the gap still further. By Year 2, the proportion reaching the level expected for their age is in line with the national figure in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities make particularly good progress because of the excellent support they receive, which is tailored to their needs. However, few pupils reach higher levels, especially in mathematics, and the school knows that this is a priority for future work.

The pupils' personal development is outstanding. From the Foundation Stage onwards, the school works hard, and successfully, to help pupils develop the personal qualities that they need to succeed as learners and in later life. Exciting projects encourage the pupils to take initiative and be enterprising. There are many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility within the school community and they do so with great seriousness. The pupils also take very seriously their commitment to healthy living, and speak with good knowledge and appropriate understanding about nutrition and the need for exercise; pupils attending the after-school 'Movers and Shakers' club certainly put these thoughts into action. Both parents and pupils feel that the school looks after every child and keeps them safe, and the pupils themselves look after one another thoughtfully in lessons and at break times. Pastoral support for the pupils is excellent because of the close attention paid to meeting the needs of every child. The progress of individual pupils is meticulously tracked so that the next steps in their learning can be identified and provided for.

The school is well led and efficiently managed. Staff, governors, parents and pupils all say that Chester Park Infants is 'special'. Certainly, its ethos engenders a high degree of commitment from everyone who works there. Many staff and governors are long-serving, and the drive to keep improving and provide the very best for the pupils is strong. The school has successfully tackled weaker aspects that were identified at the last inspection and has a good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure that more pupils reach higher levels, particularly in mathematics.
- In the Foundation Stage, make sure that activities take account of pupils' different starting points so that they make increasingly good progress in all areas of learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

In the Foundation Stage, the pupils get off to a secure start. They make good progress in their personal development and increasingly good progress in other areas of learning. By the end of the Reception year many of the pupils have reached the expected goals in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. However, when they start Year 1 there is still some catching up to do. The pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1, and the proportion reaching the level expected at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics is comparable to that attained nationally. Pupils' achievement is good. Those who have learning difficulties or disabilities make particularly good progress, reaching higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics than similar pupils across the country. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language also make good progress in line with their classmates.

The school is well aware that more pupils should be reaching the higher levels, particularly in mathematics. Nevertheless, the steps that have been taken to improve pupils' attainment in mathematics are showing signs of success. The provisional results of recent assessments in mathematics show that the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels is greater than last year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. The school's strong emphasis on fostering positive attitudes and self-belief is well justified, because the pupils are happy, confident, enthusiastic learners who really enjoy coming to school.

The pupils relate exceptionally well to adults and to each other. They feel safe at school and trust the adults who work with them. Their behaviour is excellent and they play together sensibly in the small playground. They have many opportunities to contribute to the school community, acting as playground guardians, for example, and they raise funds to help those less fortunate than themselves in the local area and beyond. The pupils say that bullying is a rare event but, if it does happen, it is quickly dealt with. Parents agree with this and have confidence that their children are safe. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. There is a high degree of racial harmony.

The pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles is excellent. They talk with authority about the importance of eating fresh fruit and vegetables as well as taking regular exercise. Pupils work very effectively together in pairs and in groups, acquiring skills which will prepare them exceptionally well for their future. Pupils in Year 2 were proud of the success of their business plan and the profit of £101 that they made by designing, decorating and planting pots, which they then sold to their parents and carers.

Pupils' attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. The school takes rigorous steps to promote good attendance and works extremely well with the education welfare officer to make sure that parents fully understand the benefits of regular schooling.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teaching in the Foundation Stage has improved since the school was last inspected and is generally good. Staff provide many exciting and stimulating experiences both indoors and out. They have done remarkably well to turn the small outdoor play space into an inviting area, which fosters learning in many ways. The children are making increasingly better progress because of this improvement and the emphasis that is placed on developing confidence and positive attitudes to learning. However, progress is not consistently good because activities are sometimes planned on the assumption that all children begin at the same point and are, therefore, not tailored precisely enough to the needs of individuals or groups.

There is much good teaching in Key Stage 1, and some is outstanding. As in the Foundation Stage, teaching is characterised by warm and supportive relationships between adults and pupils. This creates a climate in which the pupils are confident, willing to try and not afraid of making mistakes. The teachers ensure that lessons contain an element of challenge, so that those who grasp new ideas quickly can move on to something harder. An interesting example was seen in a practical mathematics lesson, where those pupils who were able to share six bananas between four people were challenged to divide seven by four. They did so successfully by applying what they had learned to the new problem and were delighted by what they achieved. Teachers are skilled at asking the right questions at the right time, encouraging the pupils to think deeply, explain their reasoning and use technical vocabulary accurately.

Learning support assistants work well with groups of pupils and make a significant impact on their progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum has improved a great deal since the school was last inspected and is outstanding. As well as fulfilling statutory requirements, it gives pupils an extremely wide range of interesting and exciting experiences, which very successfully encourage both their personal development and their academic progress.

In the Foundation Stage, stimulating and imaginative activities help children to build their skills and there is a good emphasis on learning outdoors. Across the school, pupils benefit from the chance to explore topics in depth and good links are made between different subjects. For example, pupils making models from wooden blocks recorded what they had done on digital cameras.

Visits to places of interest and visitors to the school add considerably to the pupils' enjoyment. The pupils say they thoroughly enjoyed visiting the Westonbirt Arboretum and the SS Great Britain. The pupils are also enthusiastic participants in activities after school. These activities help foster the pupils' social development, but also help them learn new skills; for example, those who attended the information and communication technology (ICT) club were working on making animated sequences at a level usually expected of pupils quite a few years older than themselves.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides an outstanding level of care, guidance and support for all its pupils. The headteacher and staff understand the complex needs of the community and the pupils extremely well and work tirelessly to meet them. Pupils, therefore, feel safe and secure and this allows them to focus on their learning. The high level of care provided underpins pupils' good achievement.

There are rigorous systems to ensure that all staff are properly checked and appropriately qualified. Robust procedures make sure that pupils are safeguarded and protected. Extremely effective links with external agencies ensure that pupils receive the support they need.

The school gathers a great deal of information about pupils' attainment and progress. Every single pupil's progress is discussed every six weeks to make sure that appropriate steps are taken and no-one falls behind. Pupils in Key Stage 1 talk about their targets and know what they are trying to do next. Parents appreciate the efforts the school makes on their children's behalf. One wrote, 'My daughter goes to school every day willingly and with great enjoyment. She is progressing well and is safe and secure'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall and, in some aspects, are outstanding. The headteacher and deputy headteacher give a strong lead and have a clear vision of what to do next in order to continue to improve. The pupils' excellent personal development and the rich and exciting curriculum are testament to outstanding leadership at the top and show how much has been achieved since the school was last inspected. Systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's effectiveness are thorough and give an accurate view of strengths and aspects for further development. The school's good plan for improvement contains appropriate priorities and actions, but the criteria for measuring success are not always specific enough for staff and governors to be sure that the desired outcomes have been achieved.

Leadership at middle management level is developing well. Responsibilities are being devolved and staff encouraged to work in teams to tackle important issues and develop subjects. This is already having a positive effect in enabling staff to use their strengths to good effect and to develop expertise in areas with which they are less familiar.

Governance is good. Governors are assiduous in making links between the priorities in the improvement plan and the school's budget; financial management is secure. Governors are very supportive, but balance this with close scrutiny of the school's results and holding the school to account for its performance.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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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?	2
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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
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

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?	1
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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

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

22 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Chester Park Infant School, Bristol, BS16 3QG

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. We really enjoyed meeting you and the adults who teach and look after you, and seeing you at work and play. I am writing to tell you what we thought about your school.

Many of you and your parents told us that Chester Park Infant School is special. We agree with you; it is special in lots of ways and a good school. We saw that you have lots of good and exciting things to do in lessons and in clubs after school. We saw that your behaviour is excellent and that you are enthusiastic and keen to learn new things. You look after each other very well and you are a credit to your school and your parents. You also do well in your learning. The adults all take really good care of you and want you to do your very best. We were very impressed by how much you know about healthy living and also by how much money the Year 2 classes made when selling their flower pots.

Miss Tyte and the other teachers, assistants and governors are always working to make things even better. Even though you do well in reading, writing and mathematics, we have asked them to make sure that every one of you does as well as you possibly can, and reaches higher levels, especially in mathematics. We also want them to help all the children in the Reception classes to make even quicker progress in reading, writing and mathematics so that they get off to a flying start.

I wish you all good luck for the future and hope that you all continue to do well.

With very best wishes,

Linda McGill Her Majesty's Inspector