

Cheddington Combined School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110215
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	288601
Inspection dates	25–26 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Alison Thomson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs R Stapledon
Headteacher	Mr D Jones
Date of previous school inspection	25 June 2002
School address	High Street Cheddington Leighton Buzzard LU7 0RG
Telephone number	01296 668324
Fax number	01296 663859

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Cheddington is a slightly smaller than average sized primary school. It is in an area that is relatively advantaged and currently no pupils have free school meals. The number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is well below the national average, but the number of pupils with a statement of special needs is average. The percentage of pupils from ethnic minority groups is well below the national average. Currently three classes are taught using job share arrangements. The school has experienced a relatively high staff turnover recently and has an acting deputy at present.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with outstanding features. Pupils and parents are proud of their school. When asked how the school could be improved, one pupil answered, 'It's perfect as it is'. One parent commented, 'I am extremely pleased with my child's progress at Cheddington - he wakes up every day and wants to go to school - what more can I ask for!' The personal development of the pupils is outstanding. Pupils really enjoy coming to school and this is evident in their excellent behavior and willingness to learn. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is excellent and they demonstrate an excellent understanding of how to lead healthy lives and how to keep themselves safe. Through the school council, they contribute extremely well to making the school a very happy and exciting place. The skills they learn help to prepare them very well for the future.

The school works well in partnership with parents and governors, as well as the local community. A good senior management team has been rebuilt recently and includes some new, efficient leaders. They work well together and have quickly gained an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. However, not all subject leaders have a clear view of their role. The school's documents that help plan future developments are not sharp enough and the implementation of school policies is inconsistent. The senior management team monitors and evaluates key areas of the school well and provides targeted support where needed. As a result, pupils make good progress by the end of the Foundation Stage and the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6, standards overall are well above national averages. Governors have been highly supportive and have been very effective in helping to raise standards.

The school had been particularly effective in raising standards in information and communication technology (ICT) since the time of the last inspection. It is now one of the school's many strengths and it is used well across the curriculum. The overall quality of teaching and learning in the school is good. The school is aware of where teaching is less effective and has put in place strategies which are already helping to bring about improvements. Following a review of procedures for meeting the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, these pupils now progress as well as their peers. The school has a good curriculum in place with English a significant strength.

The school provides pupils with a good level of care, guidance and support. While the pastoral aspect of this is very good, the academic side is not as strong. This is because there are inconsistencies in the use of assessment procedures and as a result, some pupils do not know how they can improve their work.

When children enter the school in Reception they are welcomed into a caring and colorful environment. They settle quickly, make good progress and enjoy their learning. By the end of the summer term most of these children are able to speak confidently to each other as well as to adults; they share equipment and cooperate happily both in class and in the outdoor play area.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. The curriculum is well planned and creative with a good balance of indoor and outdoor play to support the children's learning. Consequently, the

children make a confident and positive start to school life. Most children join the school with standards that are generally above that expected for their age. They achieve well and make good progress, and most reach levels expected for their age. The quality of teaching is good. Good planning, preparation and assessment procedures ensure that activities meet the needs of the children successfully. There is a good professional dialogue between the on-site pre-school group, home and school, which includes weekly visits before admission. These and very good relationships, help children settle quickly into school routines.

What the school should do to improve further

- Embed the use of assessment strategies so that all pupils know what they need to do to improve their work.
- Ensure all subject leaders have a clear view of their role.
- Ensure development planning is more incisive and school policies are implemented more consistently.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement at Cheddington is good. Attainment on entry is usually above that found in most schools, although with some variation from year to year. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage and by the time they leave the Reception year standards are securely above average in all areas of learning. Their good progress continues in Years 1 and 2, and standards in reading, writing and mathematics are all well above those seen nationally at the end of Year 2. Standards in writing have particularly improved following carefully implemented strategies. Progress continues to be good in Years 3 to 6 and pupils achieve well. By the end of Year 6 they reach standards overall that are well above those achieved nationally. Standards of boys in English are particularly high. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve equally as well as their peers throughout school because of the very good teaching support provided for them and the very close analysis of their progress. During the inspection the progress of pupils in lessons was judged to be good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

A secure and happy environment has been established which enables pupils to feel valued and positive about their achievements. Attendance is above the national average and pupils enjoy coming to school. Behaviour is excellent and pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They have a clear understanding of how their actions affect others and respect class and whole school rules. Relationships are excellent. Pupils have an excellent understanding of both what makes a healthy lifestyle and how to keep safe. They participate enthusiastically in the wide range of activities outside school, including residential visits, which develops their physical development and confidence well. Older pupils support younger ones well as 'buddies' and playground monitors. The school council are very involved in charity fund-raising, and is proud of its part in developing the school playground. These, and the standards pupils attain, prepare them extremely well for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers' excellent relationships with pupils create a very good atmosphere for learning. One pupil said 'you understand well in lessons, teachers are really fun, we're really lucky here'. Most lessons have good pace and the effective use of whiteboard technology promotes good learning. There are good opportunities for sharing ideas and pupils do so with lively confidence. In most lessons teaching is well planned with interesting activities so that pupils enjoy learning and work with enthusiasm. However, in some lessons the activities are not tuned finely enough and some pupils find them too easy and some find them too hard. In the best lessons, the teachers continually check the extent to which all pupils meet their learning objectives. These teachers use skilful questioning to help pupils think, recall and build on previous learning. However, sometimes these lesson aims are not made clear enough to pupils so checking their individual progress is difficult. Learning support assistants work effectively in partnership with class teachers, ensuring that pupils with learning difficulties make good progress. Marking is carried out regularly, but does not always inform pupils clearly enough how to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum has improved well since the previous inspection. As a result of recent initiatives, there are now more planned links between subjects. There is a good range of well attended after school clubs and many day and residential visits extend and enrich the curriculum well. ICT is now used well to support work in other subjects and contributes well to pupils' learning and their enjoyment of school. Well organised intervention strategies ensure that the needs of those pupils with learning difficulties are met well. The curriculum promotes pupils personal, social and emotional development very well and successfully supports healthy living and staying safe. Outside specialists successfully enhance provision in music, creative arts, and sport.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are cared for well and there are very good procedures to ensure they are safe. Parents trust the school to take care of their children and pupils say an adult is always available if they have any problems or concerns. Systems for supporting pupils who have learning difficulties have improved since the last inspection and are now good, well managed and inclusive. This enables these pupils to make good progress towards achieving their targets. Although academic guidance is good overall, there are inconsistencies in the use of assessment strategies resulting in pupils not always knowing how to improve their work. At these times progress in pupils' learning slows. All staff pay careful attention to health and safety including regular risk assessments. Child protection arrangements are robust and the school works very well with other agencies to support pupils. There are effective partnerships with other local schools to ensure smooth transition of pupils when they join and leave the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has managed recent instabilities in staffing well and, along with his senior management team, has put in place strategies that have brought a rise in the standards pupils achieve. Tracking systems to check pupils' progress and the evaluation of teaching and learning have improved achievement in many areas. New members of staff have been supported particularly well. As some subject leaders do not have a clear view of their role, development planning is not incisive enough and the implementation and monitoring of some school policies is inconsistent. The school works extremely well in partnership with outside agencies to promote the learners' achievement and well-being. The school enjoys the support of the vast majority of parents. One parent commented, 'We think Cheddington is a very good school with a very committed headmaster'. Governors are highly supportive, offer constructive criticism and challenge the school appropriately and effectively. Finances have been well managed and the school no longer has a deficit budget. The school has improved well since the last inspection and recognises where further improvements can be made. The positive impact of the many initiatives indicates good capacity for improvement.

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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	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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

3 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cheddington Combined School, Leighton Buzzard, LU7 0RG

Thank you very much for welcoming us into your school. We enjoyed talking to you and seeing all the interesting work that you do. You said that your school is a good school and we agree with you.

Here are some of the things that we liked best.

- You enjoy school and your behaviour is excellent.
- You are developing good academic and personal skills that will enable you to have a successful adult life.
- You know how to stay healthy by eating the right food, drinking water regularly and by taking plenty of exercise.
- Adults in school ensure that you are safe and well cared for.
- Your school provides you with interesting and varied opportunities to learn, such as school visits.
- Your headteacher and staff have improved the school and are always trying to make it better.

Here are some of the things that we think could be better.

- You need to work more closely with your teachers to find out what you should do to improve your work.
- Your teachers who are subject leaders should all have a clear idea of their role.
- The school should make its plans for the future clearer and make sure that these plans are carried out by everyone.

We enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you once again.

Best wishes for the future,

Alison Thomson

Lead inspector