

# Chenies School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 110216          |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Buckinghamshire |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 288602          |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 6 June 2007     |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Mike Thompson   |

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>                     | Primary                             |
| <b>School category</b>                    | Community                           |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 4–11                                |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed                               |
| <b>Number on roll</b>                     |                                     |
| School                                    | 107                                 |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body                  |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Mr Jeremy Ryman                     |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Mr Edward Richings                  |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 28 January 2002                     |
| <b>School address</b>                     | Chenies<br>Rickmansworth<br>WD3 6ER |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 01923 282546                        |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 01923 282546                        |

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Chenies is small rural school located between Amersham and Rickmansworth. Most pupils are of White British heritage, and are generally from advantaged home circumstances. All class teachers, including the headteacher, and most of the governors have been appointed within the past two years.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Chenies is a good and rapidly improving school with a number of outstanding features. These include the personal development and well-being of the pupils and the quality of care, guidance and support given to pupils. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. The impact of his work is beginning to be seen in the increasingly rapid rates of progress made by pupils in all year groups.

The parents hold their school in high regard. Despite the fact that two of the year groups were away on a week-long residential trip at the time of the inspection, a very good proportion of the parents returned the inspection questionnaires. These included parents of pupils on the trip, some of whom had posted their responses to the school to ensure that their views were known. The questionnaires returned were extremely positive in almost all areas surveyed. Many parents wrote positive comments. One of these sums up the essence of the school when noting, 'I feel that Chenies School is very focused on instilling confidence in the pupils, and this enables them to make progress and continue to achieve to their full potential. It also teaches the importance of responsibility and respect, and gives the children a sense of their place within the school and the wider community.'

Children in the Foundation Stage are given a good start to their education. When children start school as four-year-olds their attainment is above what is normally expected at this age. The school successfully builds on this good start and ensures that pupils achieve well and make good progress in all year groups. This is because they are taught well. By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6 their attainment is high when compared with the national average in English, mathematics and science.

A key factor in the school's success is the excellent climate for learning in all classes. This stems from the outstanding personal development of the pupils. They behave well in lessons, show a real desire to learn, and work well together. Underpinning this is the 'Chenies Creed', which pupils know well and recite in assemblies. The qualities of respect, honesty and consideration for others promoted through the creed are an everyday feature of school life.

The curriculum is good, and provides pupils with a very wide range of interesting and exciting activities. The development of a well balanced curriculum is one of the many achievements of the headteacher since his appointment. The key strength of the curriculum lies in the very clear structure for planning and assessing English, mathematics and science. The headteacher recognises that the model developed in these subjects now needs to be extended to other areas of the curriculum.

Chenies School is exceptionally good at promoting a sense of 'family' in which all individuals are well known, valued, and fully included in all activities. The school's excellent provision for the care, guidance and support of its pupils ensures that they feel secure. The school provides excellent academic guidance for its pupils because the teachers know them well. The development of clear system for checking on pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics is another achievement of the headteacher. This information is used very effectively to identify those pupils who need extra help with their work.

Overall, the leadership and management of the school are good. Much of the direction is provided by the headteacher and his deputy since the governors are not effective enough in evaluating the work of the school and helping to guide its development. The school has made

good progress since its last inspection. However, given the current shortcomings in governance, the school has a good, rather than outstanding capacity for further improvement.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Extend the good quality systems for curriculum planning and assessment in English, mathematics and science to other subjects.
- Ensure that governors develop the skills needed to play a fuller part in guiding the development of the school.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

At the end of the Reception year, standards are well in advance of the national average in children's personal, social and emotional development, communication language and literacy and mathematical development. They are above those expected in knowledge and understanding of the world, and appropriate for the age of the children in creative and physical development. Children make good progress because they are taught well. They also benefit from the good staffing levels, which mean that sometimes separate provision is made for each of the two separate intakes of children in September and January.

Standards are high throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. The school's performance in the annual assessments in Years 2 and 6 is consistently well above the national average. Throughout the school, pupils make good progress in maintaining high levels of attainment. This level of performance stems from the culture for learning and the good teaching that are features in all classes.

Boys and girls achieve equally well. The pupils identified by the school as having learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress. The size of this group fluctuates significantly. The school's thorough systems for monitoring pupils' progress identify those who need a specific, short-term boost of intensive individual help.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpins all aspects of school life. Particularly noteworthy is the excellent social development of pupils through, for example, their contributions as school councillors or house captains. Pupils' excellent spiritual development is evident in their empathy with the plight of others, and their concern and compassion. This was evident in an assembly as they watched video footage of children in Honduras who need to live and work on rubbish tips. This assembly gave pupils an update on the work of 'Street Kids Direct' which is one of the charities supported by the school.

Pupils are bright and articulate, and extremely proud of the school. Relationships are excellent, and pupils are mostly well behaved. In closely controlled situations, such as when coming in to or going out of assembly, pupils' behaviour is impeccable. One pupil commented, 'I really like it here, people usually play happily and get on well together.' The pupils also feel happy that the rare instances of anti-social behaviour, such as bullying, are quickly and sensitively dealt with.

Attendance rates are consistently above the national average and illustrate pupils' exceptionally positive attitudes towards their school. Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next phase

of their education and for a future as life-long learners because they are confident in working independently as well as in collaboration with others, and have excellent levels of basic skills. They have a good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles and a good awareness of how to keep safe.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teachers relate well to their pupils, give clear explanations and instructions, and organise their classes effectively. A particularly noteworthy feature is the way in which pupils are involved in assessing how well they have coped with the work provided for them. Teachers' evaluations of this feedback from pupils help them to pitch work at suitably challenging levels. Teaching is further strengthened by the work of skilled learning support assistants, who liaise closely with teachers and provide good quality help for individuals or groups of pupils during the course of lessons. On the rare occasions, when introductions to lessons are too long, pupils become restless, lose interest, and the pace of learning drops. A further consequence is that pupils do not have enough time to complete the tasks planned for them. Pupils' books are marked well, and teachers' comments give pupils clear guidance on what needs to be done to improve their work.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum in the Foundation Stage class provides regular opportunities for children to explore all areas of learning. In Key Stages 1 and 2 the curriculum is enriched by a wide variety of out-of-class activities, most of which are of a sporting nature. These are popular with pupils, and about three quarters take part in at least one of the activities on offer. In addition, the school makes good use of the talents of visitors, the experiences provided through educational visits, and themed weeks to help enhance pupils' learning. The provision of French teaching is a further good feature. A strong emphasis is placed on enabling all children to achieve their best and to develop good personal and social skills. The well planned curriculum in English, mathematics and science, together with a clear system for assessing pupils' progress in acquiring basic skills, is a key factor in the good progress made by pupils. The school has identified the need to refine its planning and improve assessment in other subjects along similar lines. Those pupils identified as having specific learning difficulties are given clear educational direction through their individual education plans, although the targets set out for them to achieve sometimes lack precision.

A further good feature of the curriculum is the emphasis placed on enrichment through music, and many pupils receive tuition in a wide range of instruments. The skills learned by these pupils are celebrated through 'Music Concert' assemblies.

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

#### **Grade: 1**

The school is vigilant about health and safety and child-protection matters and keeps good records of the checks made on the background of the staff and other adults who have contact with the pupils. In all key stages, pupils are treated as extended family members and their individual needs are well known to staff.

Day-to-day assessment is used exceptionally well to check on how pupils are progressing in lessons. The newly developed system for tracking the progress made by pupils is providing senior managers with a good overview of how well pupils are getting on in each class. This enables those who are not making enough progress to be identified quickly and supported effectively. All pupils have clear targets to achieve in English and mathematics, and these are listed in their books. Teachers' thorough marking of pupils' work then identifies the targets attained.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The impact of leadership and management is seen in the good progress made by the pupils and the way in which high standards in English, mathematics and science have been maintained despite the changes in teaching personnel. To a very large extent this is due to the efforts of the headteacher and his staff, who work well together as a team. Together they have created an orderly and calm environment for learning. Another successful aspect of leadership has been the development of excellent partnerships with outside organisations which help promote pupils' well-being.

Governors do not contribute enough to the leadership of the school. Governance is satisfactory in that it successfully ensures that the school is meeting legal requirements. However, governors do not monitor the effectiveness of the school effectively and are too reliant on the headteacher for guidance. This situation has been caused by the changes in the composition of the governing body, together with the time needed for newcomers to develop the necessary skills.

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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> | <b>School Overall</b> |
|--|-----------------------|

### 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> | 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

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>How well do learners achieve?</b>   | 2 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <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   | 2 |
| The attendance of learners  | 2 |
| How well learners enjoy their education   | 1 |
| 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                                    | 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>          | 2 |
| <b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b> | 2 |
| <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>                                       | 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                     | 1   |
| 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  | 3   |
| 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

14 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Chenies School, Rickmansworth, WD3 6ER

Thank you for helping me so much when I came to inspect your school to find out how well you are getting on. I particularly enjoyed looking at your work and talking to some of you. I am sorry that I could not meet those of you in Class 1 because you were away on your trip. I hope that you really enjoyed the activities that you experienced during your visit.

I agree with your parents that you go to a good school. There is so much I like about your school that I can't mention everything, so here is a list of what I think are the most important things.

- You do well in your work, and when you leave school at the end of Year 6 your results are always much better than those of most other schools. You should be very proud of this.
- Everyone in your school is friendly and welcoming. Your behaviour is usually good and you get on really well with each other. I think that the Chenies Creed is a good idea, and that you try hard to follow it.
- You learn a lot in lessons because the teaching you are given is good.
- Your teachers are good at planning lots of interesting things for you to do.
- All of the adults in your school make sure that you are really well looked after.
- Your headteacher does a really good job in making sure that you get a good education.

I would also like to let you know that I really enjoyed finding out about the children you have been helping in Guatemala and Honduras when I came to your assembly, and I thought that you did really well learning to sing in Spanish. Can you still remember the words?

Even in a good school like yours there is always something that could be even better. I agree with your headteacher that some work needs to be done to improve the school's plans and the way in which it checks on your progress in subjects such as art, geography and history. This will help the teachers to see exactly how well you are getting on in each subject. I would also like your governors to do more to help your headteacher run the school.

I am sure that you will continue to have great success in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Mike Thompson, Lead Inspector