

Little Chalfont Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110271
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	288614
Inspection dates	27–28 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Mary Sinclair

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	233
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Kathy Nussbaum
Headteacher	Mrs Tracey Dowsing
Date of previous school inspection	8 May 2001
School address	Oakington Avenue Little Chalfont Amersham HP6 6SX
Telephone number	01494 762109
Fax number	01494 765210

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This popular, oversubscribed school serves a relatively advantaged area. None of its pupils receives free school meals. Three quarters of pupils are of White British heritage. Other pupils are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Three pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. Two have statements of special educational needs. Four teachers have joined the school in the last 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

This is a good school with many outstanding features. The headteacher provides strong leadership to promote an ethos where all children are included in activities, whatever their needs or abilities. High levels of care and support contribute to pupils' outstanding personal development. Pupils behave well and feel safe in a supportive atmosphere. The accommodation and grounds have been developed imaginatively to provide a rich and stimulating learning environment. Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy everything it has to offer, which helps them to achieve well. As one child said, 'You learn lots and have lots to take part in.'

Pupils' achievement is good. Attainment on entry varies from year to year but is generally above average. Children are helped to settle quickly and make good progress in all aspects of their learning because of good provision for their needs. Pupils of all abilities continue to make good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2. Their enjoyment is fostered through an outstanding curriculum which includes an excellent range of sport and arts activities. These help pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles and to contribute to their school and local community through music and drama productions. Effective use is made of specialist teachers to broaden the curriculum. Parents provide considerable support, enhancing the curriculum and supporting learning at home. This helps pupils to achieve high standards by the end of Key Stage 2 and is an excellent preparation for secondary education and the world beyond.

The drive for improvement has promoted very good curriculum development but has not focused as strongly on the impact that teaching has on pupils' progress. The quality of teaching is good overall, but it is not consistent in all classes.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop more robust systems for monitoring teaching to achieve greater consistency in all classes.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. Standards are exceptionally high and progress is good. When they join the Reception class, many children have standards above that expected for their age. By the time pupils leave school at the age of eleven, standards are exceptionally high. High overall standards in Years 2 and 6 were maintained consistently over five years until 2006. Progress at Key Stage 2 was outstanding in 2006, with pupils making significant gains in English and science.

Inspection evidence shows that standards for eleven year olds remain exceptionally high. However, data, including 2007 provisional national test results for Key Stage 1 and teacher assessments for Key Stage 2, show that progress has slowed and is now good throughout the school. These results reflect variations in the quality of teaching in the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and those from different ethnic backgrounds achieve at similar rates to other pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and is well supported through assemblies, special events and a rich

and stimulating curriculum. Pupils enjoy school enormously and develop positive attitudes. This contributes to very good attendance rates and high take-up of extra-curricular activities. Pupils benefit from the increasing responsibility given to them as they move through the school and they know how to stay safe. Pupils are actively involved in their local community, campaigning to prevent closure of their local library and raising money for local charities. The school places strong emphasis upon developing healthy lifestyles. This is borne out by the large numbers of pupils who take part in the excellent sporting activities on offer.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good overall. The quality of lessons observed ranged from satisfactory to outstanding. Four of the seven class teachers joined the school in the last two years and consistent approaches have not yet been developed throughout the school. This is evident in the extent to which pupils are challenged and enabled to develop the skills of independent learning to further their progress. In the Foundation Stage, open-ended questions engage pupils in thinking, helping them to make choices and take decisions for themselves. In a Key Stage 1 lesson, pupils were required to undertake a similar activity to one they had previously done. They had already demonstrated sufficient understanding and therefore did not make enough further progress. In Key Stage 2 the oldest pupils are motivated and challenged by effective modelling of new concepts and quality questioning to elicit and extend their knowledge.

Planning is thorough and meets the needs of most learners. However, there are occasions when the level of challenge is not well matched to the highest and lowest attaining pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

An outstanding curriculum has been developed to turn the school's mission statement, 'Bringing out the best in us all' into reality. The Foundation Stage curriculum promotes independent learning through appropriate classroom learning areas and easy access to resources. Many opportunities are created for older pupils to be taught in small groups to address their individual needs. In mathematics, for example, groups are set up to extend the more able and to help less able pupils to catch up. Specialist teachers are employed to generate enthusiasm for music, sport, French and design and technology. Parents invest their time to offer additional activities such as sewing and cookery. Initiatives such as a Year 6 Young Enterprise project promote financial awareness and teamwork, contributing to pupils' future economic well-being. The school has established links with local secondary schools to extend the range of extra-curricular sporting activities. Residential and day visits to places of interest promote pupils' personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support is good. Pupils learn in a safe and stimulating environment which is constantly being developed to meet their needs. Health and safety and child protection procedures are robust. Attendance is well monitored and a close check is kept on pupils who are potentially vulnerable. There is good additional provision to support pupils with special educational needs and learning difficulties and disabilities. Strong links with parents

and outside agencies support this work. Teachers provide academic guidance through marking, although the quality varies across the year groups. Most teachers provide pupils with some written comments to confirm what they have achieved. Assessment systems enable teachers to identify which pupils should be given additional support. However, the use of the information in planning appropriate challenge for all pupils is not consistent between teachers.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall and secure a good quality of education which results in outstanding personal development and good achievement. The headteacher's drive and determination to achieve excellence through developing a broad, balanced and inclusive curriculum has galvanised a strong senior management team, developed a common sense of purpose amongst staff and promoted effective links with outside agencies. This shows good use of school self-evaluation. The curriculum is being strengthened further by developing the role of co-ordinators, increasing their accountability for specific areas of the curriculum.

Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities and take an active role in the life of the school.

The school has not developed a rigorous system for monitoring and recording the quality of teaching and learning to identify inconsistencies.

Whilst the school enjoys a fruitful partnership with the majority of parents, a minority raised a range of issues when responding to the parents' questionnaire. The school has rightly identified the need to improve communication with parents in its school improvement plan.

The school's good capacity for improvement is evident in its curriculum development and the extent to which issues raised in the last inspection have been addressed.

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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	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 behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	1
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?	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 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

11 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Little Chalfont Primary School, Amersham, HP6 6SX

Thank you for the very friendly way you welcomed us to your school. It was very useful to look at your work and to hear your comments. I am writing to tell you what we found out.

Many of you told us that you enjoy school and that you think you are getting on well. We agree with you. Your school is a good school. We enjoyed visiting your classrooms and were very pleased to see how hard you work with your teachers and other adults. Your work is of a very high standard. There are many reasons why this is so. You take your work very seriously and are keen to learn. Your headteacher and teachers work hard to make learning interesting. They take good care of you and make sure that you feel safe at school.

Even though your school is a good school, your headteacher, staff and governors want to make it even better. I have asked them to make sure that your lessons are as good as they possibly can be. This is important so that your school becomes even better and I know that you will do everything to help them.

I hope that you will carry on enjoying school and working hard.

Yours sincerely

Mary Sinclair Lead Inspector