



Chappel Church of England Controlled Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115073
Local Authority ESSEX
Inspection number 290120
Inspection dates 6–7 December 2006
Reporting inspector Ruth Frith

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	The Street
School category	Voluntary controlled		Chappel, Chappel
Age range of pupils	4–11		Colchester, Essex CO6 2DD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01787 222296
Number on roll (school)	65	Fax number	01787 224208
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Les Houghton
		Headteacher	Mrs Tracy McKenzie-Bell
Date of previous school inspection	25 June 2001		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 6–7 December 2006	Inspection number 290120
--------------------------	--	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is much smaller than average although the numbers of pupils have risen significantly over the last two years. There are three classes, each of which has children of different year groups. Most pupils live in the village and surrounding area. Pupils come from a wide range of social backgrounds and the number receiving free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below average and there are few pupils with a statement of special educational need. When children start school, their knowledge and skills are usually similar to those expected of four year olds although this varies from year to year. All pupils come from White British backgrounds. Currently, two of the classes are each being taught by a teacher on a supply contract. The third class is taught by the headteacher and one other permanent part-time teacher. A new assistant headteacher has been appointed to join the school at the beginning of the spring term.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education with particular strengths in the curriculum, pupils' personal development and their pastoral care. Staff are very successful in creating a friendly and supportive environment where pupils think learning is enjoyable. Care, guidance and support are good, helping pupils to feel safe and develop confidence as they progress through the school. The pupils' personal development is also good and is reflected in their exceptionally good behaviour, attitudes and relationships with staff and each other. They have a very good understanding of how to live healthy lives and understand how to stay safe. Strong links with the church help to provide good spiritual, moral and social development. Effective links with the community encourage pupils to widen their cultural awareness and to care for others.

Although the quality of teaching overall remains satisfactory, there are some good features, such as the way teachers make the lessons interesting and encourage pupils to learn. Teachers have high expectations and are now providing challenging tasks..

Due to frequent changes in teaching staff and past weaknesses in teaching and the curriculum, pupils have gaps in their learning. For example, although the content of pupils' writing is frequently good, poor grammar and spelling are sometimes evident. This reflects the lack of systematic development in the pupils' early reading and writing skills. Teaching in Years 5 and 6 has remained good as teachers have tried to address these weaknesses in learning, but they are faced with the legacy of previous underachievement.

Overall, pupils have made satisfactory progress over time and in the Year 6 2006 national assessments reached broadly average standards in mathematics and science and above average standards in English. Some weaknesses in the teaching of mathematics remain a barrier to higher achievement. Quality and standards in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory overall but staff are more successful in extending pupils' personal, social and emotional development.

The headteacher's good leadership and the way she has removed the barriers to learning through more consistent teaching have been instrumental in the recent development of the school. Due to the lack of permanent teachers, subject leadership and management have been restricted. However, there are effective monitoring and evaluation procedures give staff an accurate picture of its effectiveness. Actions are well targeted and are helping the school to improve. Consequently, the school has good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics across the school through better teaching of the subject.
- Develop a more structured approach to the teaching of reading and writing in Reception and Key Stage 1.

- Make sure that pupils make good progress throughout the school by ensuring that teaching is consistently good.
- With the appointment of permanent staff, create a more equitable management structure.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' progress and achievement are satisfactory overall but not consistent throughout their time in school. In Reception, pupils make good progress in their personal and social development and satisfactory progress with their basic literacy and numeracy. Consequently, by the time they enter Year 1 they are keen to learn and behave well but have not always reached the nationally expected goals in their reading, writing and mathematical development.

Pupils now make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 but, although test results were broadly average last year, higher attaining pupils did not do as well as they should have because of inconsistencies in teaching. Recent improvements in teaching and the curriculum are beginning to address this. Similarly, pupils in Key Stage 2 are making at least satisfactory progress overall. In Years 5 and 6, teaching and the curriculum continue to be good, so pupils' rate of learning increases and they generally achieve average standards. However, their progress is better in English and standards are frequently above average. Test results and assessments show that pupils do not do as well in mathematics as they do in English. The progress of pupils with learning difficulties is frequently good when they receive additional support but is satisfactory overall. There is evidence of high standards in other subjects such as music and the quality of pupils' singing is exceptional.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are very friendly and sociable and get on well with the staff and each other. Older pupils are keen to help younger ones, and pupils of different ages play together happily. They behave exceptionally well in lessons and around the school. Because pupils enjoy school so much, their attendance rate is usually above the national average and they arrive punctually, keen to start their lessons.

Pupils are well informed about how to live healthy lives. The high number of pupils who attend additional activities such as the football club, and who eat the healthy school lunches, indicates that what they learn is influencing what they do. The school council works very well to improve aspects of school life, for example, developing rules for using the adventure playground and pupils demonstrate a keen sense of responsibility. Pupils are very aware of the needs of others and raise money for a variety of charities. They also make a very positive contribution to the wider community

through, for example, recycling clothes and shoes, displaying their work in public places and inviting those living locally to the weekly community assembly.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is currently satisfactory but improving quickly due to greater stability in staffing. There are now good aspects evident throughout the school but these have not been in place long enough, or consistently enough, to have significantly raised the rate of pupils' progress across the whole school. Staff are right to be optimistic, however, as the increased pace of learning in lessons and teachers' high expectations are beginning to improve the quality of pupils' work. For example, in an outstanding Year 5/6 mathematics lesson, pupils were working as hard as they could to solve the problems set. The high level of challenge for all, rather than putting them off, encouraged them to try harder. Staff ensure that activities are stimulating and systematically build on previous learning, such as when the younger pupils achieved well when weighing Christmas presents. In both these lessons, tasks with differing challenge were provided which matched pupils' various abilities, thereby ensuring that all progressed well. Teachers are using technology to stimulate learning but pupils say they would like more opportunities to use computers themselves. There has been a lack of good systematic teaching of reading and writing and, although the staff are trying to compensate for this, more needs to be done to ensure that those in Key Stage 1 do as well as they can.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The major strength of the curriculum is shown in the way pupils find learning enjoyable. 'We always have fun ... it's exciting, brilliant ... it's entertaining ... 'You have fun work and learn at the same time,' are some of the comments expressed when pupils were asked about their work. This is, in some part, achieved through the good links between subjects, for example, when pupils in Years 3 and 4 produced some interesting writing about the plague.

The personal, social and health education programme is very effective in encouraging pupils to stay safe and lead healthy lives. Together with the strong school ethos, it also helps to develop exceptionally good social skills which prepare pupils well for their next stage of education and beyond. The curriculum is further enriched by strengths in music and physical education. Visits to places of interest add another dimension to the pupils' learning as they receive a more practical 'hands on' experience. There is a good range of popular clubs and activities that enhances pupils' physical and creative education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils feel safe in school because child protection and health and safety procedures are robust and very good pastoral care and support is provided. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and know who to ask for help. The additional specialist support provided for those who have learning difficulties is good because structured programmes are now in place and match pupils' needs well. Formal systems for supporting and guiding pupils' learning are in place and these are beginning to enhance pupils' progress. However, marking of pupils' work and the setting of targets to extend their learning in school is inconsistent. Currently, only the older children are really clear about what they must do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The overall judgement of satisfactory leadership and management conceals, to some extent, aspects of the recent good work by the headteacher, staff and governors during a period of unsettled staffing. There is a clear focus on raising standards through improving the quality of teaching and learning within the caring and supportive school ethos but pupils' progress remains satisfactory overall. It is too early to see the full impact of better teaching and recent school improvements but early signs are encouraging.

The headteacher gives clear direction to the school and the appointment of permanent staff brings the opportunity of greater stability and the chance to improve subject leadership and management. The governing body now has a much clearer understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development because it checks how the school is progressing towards meeting its aims. The school provides satisfactory value for money. The views of all members of the school community are taken into account. Many parents are positive about the school and what it offers their children but are concerned about staff changes.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	2
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

8 December 2006

Dear Children

Chappel Church of England Controlled Primary School, The Street, Chappel, Colchester, Essex.
CO6 2DD

Thank you for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school. I enjoyed talking to you and finding out about your work. I was pleased to hear that you enjoy school and find learning enjoyable. I have listed below some of the things that are good about Chappel School.

- You work hard and because the teaching is improving you are beginning to make better progress.
- You sing beautifully and I was pleased to find out that you are all learning to play the recorder.
- You behave exceptionally well look after each other, work and play together very well.
- All the staff work together well as a team and they enjoy teaching you.
- The school council works hard to make sure that any issues that are raised are treated seriously.
- You think school is fun because you do interesting things.
- Staff look after you well and you feel safe. You say that you would go to a member of staff if you had problems.

Mrs McKenzie-Bell manages the school well and we have agreed that, when the new teachers start, they will be given specific things to do which will help her. The school is going to try to make sure that teaching is consistently good in every class. We have agreed that teachers will improve the way they teach the younger children to read and write and also make sure that you all achieve as well as you can in mathematics.

I left the school feeling very confident that it would continue to improve and that you would continue to work hard and attend regularly.

I wish you well in the future.

Ms Ruth Frith

Lead inspector