

Chiltern Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121924
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	292264
Inspection date	7 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Chris Kessell

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	203
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Hanni Hagemann
Headteacher	Mrs Penny Howell
Date of previous school inspection	11-13 March 2002
School address	Chiltern Way Duston Northampton NN5 6BW
Telephone number	01604 753830
Fax number	01604 588156

Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	7 June 2007
Inspection number	292264

© Crown copyright 2007

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 two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors investigated the following issues: current achievement and standards, pupils' personal development and well-being, teaching and learning, care, elements of the school's curriculum, personal support and academic guidance and aspects of leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation form (SEF), the school's assessment and tracking records, observations of the school at work, discussions with staff, the chair of governors and pupils, and the parent questionnaire responses. Other aspects of the school were not investigated in detail, but the inspection team found no evidence to suggest that the school's own grades, as provided in the SEF, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

Chiltern Primary is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school. It draws its pupils from the Northampton suburb of Duston. Most pupils are of White British background, although a number of other minority ethnic groups are represented. A few pupils are at the early stages of learning English. Children join the school from a number of local nurseries and their attainment on entry is generally at the level expected for their age. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. The school is currently undergoing a refurbishment which has resulted in extensive building work. This has caused considerable disruption to the school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Chiltern is a good school that is popular with a very large majority of its parents. 'The best school for our children' and 'A very happy community' are typical comments. Pupils believe that learning is fun and are proud of what they achieve. Winning the local swimming championship is the most recent example of this. The recent refurbishment has not had a detrimental effect on the pupils' education because, like many aspects of the school, it has been well managed and organised. Witnessing the calm and positive learning environment and listening to the pupils' upbeat views about the school, it is difficult to believe the disturbance the school has been through recently.

Chiltern Primary is effective as a result of good leadership and management. The headteacher, who has only been in post for just over a year, provides clear direction and is well supported by other senior staff. Development planning and self-evaluation are well established and senior staff and governors have an accurate understanding of what the school does well and what needs to improve. All staff work well together and are open-minded to new ideas that might benefit pupils' learning. Governors are actively involved in strategic development and most visit the school regularly. They have been particularly helpful and supportive to the school in managing the building work. Recent work in improving the communication with parents and developing the transition between Reception Year and Year 1 has been successful. The school demonstrates that it has good capacity to take these, and other improvements, even further in the future.

The headteacher and staff have worked hard to improve the school's procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' progress. Pupils' performance towards challenging but realistic academic targets is monitored thoroughly. However, leaders, managers and teachers are not always able to make best use of their time because current procedures are cumbersome and not easy to manage.

The pupils achieve well while they are at Chiltern Primary School because of good teaching throughout the school. From the children's fairly typical starting points, they make good progress to reach standards which are above average by the time they leave Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. Lessons are carefully planned so that pupils' individual needs are well catered for and teachers monitor the progress of their pupils regularly. The good provision in the Reception Year enables children to begin school confidently. In the words of one parent, 'The children get an absolutely fantastic start'.

The pupils are enthusiastic learners and enjoy their work and activities because the 'teachers are friendly'. The school's pastoral care is good and the learning mentor effectively supports individual pupils or groups of children who are experiencing difficulties. The pupils themselves feel safe and well cared for. 'The staff are very quick to act if we get hurt at break time', said one pupil. Playtimes and breaks are fun occasions and pupils of all ages get on well together. These occasions are almost completely free of bullying, harassment and anti-social behaviour. Although one or

two parents raised concerns about bullying and do not feel that it is being addressed, pupils spoken to said that, 'There are isolated bullying incidents that always get sorted out'.

The care, guidance and support offered to the pupils are good overall, with the care and support being the strongest features. Although the academic guidance offered to pupils has strong features, such as some aspects of teachers' marking, there are inconsistencies. When marking is good, pupils are provided with good information on how well they have done against the work set for them. They are also provided with good guidance on how to improve further. However, this is inconsistent across classes and different subjects. Pupils are occasionally confused about their own personal learning targets in English and mathematics. The quality of target setting with pupils varies across the school.

As a result of the school's good curriculum, pupils are provided with a good range of additional activities such as trips, visitors invited into school and extra-curricular activities. The Year 5 and 6 pupils spoke positively about their recent residential visit which had taken place just before the inspection. Opportunities to take part in team activities such as orienteering were thoroughly enjoyed, although everyone, staff and pupils, came back very tired! The curriculum and care that pupils are provided with contribute much to their good personal development and well-being. Pupils have a good understanding of what they need to do to lead healthy lifestyles. They accurately identify the school's impressive adventure playground and wide range of well-attended sporting activities as providing good opportunities for keeping fit. Although initially resistant to only eating healthy snacks at break time, the pupils now fully appreciate and understand why this is encouraged, alongside drinking water rather than fizzy drinks.

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and this is reflected in the pupils' good behaviour and community responsibility. The school's successful orchestra and choir and the significant number of pupils who play musical instruments are distinctive features of the school and important aspects of the pupils' cultural development. However, the school acknowledges that more could be done to develop the school's provision for multi-cultural education.

Pupils feel safe at school and have a good understanding of how to keep safe. They themselves identify the contribution that the visiting 'Life Bus' makes in helping them make sensible choices and decisions about potential dangers such as drugs and strangers. Relationships in classes are good. Year 5 pupils worked successfully in groups as they discussed their understanding of flowering plants in a science lesson. Conversations were mature and they listened to each other's ideas and views sensibly. The readiness to participate in these types of activities and the pupils' enthusiasm to carry out jobs such as the 'office messengers' indicate the pupils' good contribution to the school community. With their mature understanding of the importance of teamwork and working with others, and their good literacy and numeracy skills, the pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide all pupils with appropriate and updated individual learning targets in English and mathematics along with consistent and regular guidance on how to achieve them.
- Improve the management of data for assessment and tracking pupils' progress so that it is more effectively organised and less time consuming.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', 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?	2
The quality and standards in 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	2

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
How well learners enjoy their education	2
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	2
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 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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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

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.



8 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Chiltern Primary School, Duston, Northampton NN5 6BW

We enjoyed our recent visit to your school to see how you are getting on. Thanks to those of you who spoke to us in classrooms, at lunchtime and in the playground. The vast majority of you spoke very enthusiastically about Chiltern Primary, as did your parents. This is because you go to a good school. This letter is to let you know what we found out while we were in school.

You get off to a good start in the Reception class. Teaching is good and you enjoy your learning. Consequently, you make good progress as you move through the school. By the end of Year 6, you reach above-average standards in English, mathematics and science. The school ensures that you are provided with many exciting activities, including trips and extra clubs. It was good to hear that Years 5 and 6 enjoyed their residential visit, despite the many tired faces on the day of the inspection. All of these extra activities help you become sensible and responsible young people who know how to live healthy lifestyles. You are considerate to each other, behave well and are friendly and kind to visitors.

When we talked to you about your work, you all explained accurately and enthusiastically about what you were doing. However, not everyone was so confident and clear about their learning targets, so we have asked the school to make sure that everyone has up-to-date learning targets in English and mathematics and that you are given help to achieve them.

The staff take good care of you and keep a watchful eye on how well you are doing in your work. The records kept on your individual progress could be better organised to give your teachers more time to work on other things, so we have asked for this to be improved as well. The school is good because it is well managed by the headteacher, staff and governors. They work well together and all of the disruption caused by the building work has been managed well. When it is finally over, they shall then be looking to make the school even better.

Best wishes for the future, particularly those of you in Year 6 who will be joining new schools.

Yours sincerely

Chris Kessell
Lead Inspector