



Chasetown Community School

Inspection Report - Amended

Unique Reference Number 132731
Local Authority Staffordshire
Inspection number 294013
Inspection date 12 September 2006
Reporting inspector Alan Dobbins

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Church Street
School category	Community		Chasetown
Age range of pupils	5-11		WS7 3QL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01543 686315
Number on roll (school)	42	Fax number	01543 675984
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	S Norman
		Headteacher	L James
Date of previous school inspection	10 March 2003		

Age group 5-11	Inspection date 12 September 2006	Inspection number 294013
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Amended Report Addendum

Report updated to resolve formatting inconsistency

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This school for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties provides specialist provision for the county of Staffordshire. Some of the pupils are from adjacent local authorities. All but two are boys and very few are from ethnic minorities. Twenty-nine pupils have a statement of special educational needs. There are ten places for pupils to be assessed for a statement and to judge their suitability for return to mainstream schools. These pupils spend up to two terms at the school and most return to their other schools. Increasingly, pupils are being admitted with additional and complex needs, such as those to do with autism. This is a relatively new school that opened in 2001. The first inspection recognised the school's good start. This is the second inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Chasetown Community School is a good school. It continues to develop well and has made good improvement since the last inspection. Outstanding leadership and management over many aspects of the school by the headteacher, senior managers and governors have helped create a school in which pupils feel 'safe, comfortable and happy.' The senior leaders know the school well enough and, since its opening, have used this knowledge well to bring about improvement. Nevertheless, the link between self-evaluation and further improvement is not always as effective as it should be. For example more could be done to evaluate the work of the subject leaders in helping to raise achievement. Pupils attend regularly and flourish. About half return successfully to mainstream schools. This is a high proportion and greater than is the case for most equivalent schools

All pupils, including those with additional and complex needs, develop their personal and social skills and improve their behaviour outstandingly well; and this helps them to pay better attention to their learning. This is a strength of the school. Pupils trust and respect staff and the relationships between them are very strong. They feel safe and secure, in part because they are able to go quickly to staff for help when they are troubled. Behaviour in lessons and throughout the school is good. The class for the small number of pupils with especially difficult behaviours is outstanding in nurturing them so that they more readily accept the routines and expectations of the school. The links with a number of relevant agencies and many of the county's primary schools are very strong. Specialist staff are frequent visitors to the school and are very effective in providing, for example, expert medical and psychological support for many pupils. After a short time at school even those pupils with the severest of difficulties are able to work hard at their learning.

Standards are below average because of the difficulties pupils have had with learning. They quickly improve as learners and with the good teaching they receive, achievement is good. It is particularly strong in personal, social and health education and also in mathematics and science. It is good in English but not always as good as it should be in other subjects. Teaching is good because, most of the time, lesson tasks match well with pupils' learning and their other needs. Pupils work hard. For the first time many enjoy learning and are thrilled with the good progress they make. They learn what is right for them as the curriculum provides many opportunities to help them deal with their difficulties, so that they can be better at learning. It meets all national requirements, is better than at the time of the last inspection and emphasises the advantages of healthy living.

Parents and carers have a very high regard for the school. They speak glowingly of how well the school helps their children deal with their difficulties. One said that even though she wants to return to her home county to live, she is not doing so because she would not find another school for her child that is as good as Chasetown.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the accuracy of the self-evaluation procedures in judging how effective the school is in its work, in recognising what needs to be better and, especially, how well the work of the subject leaders is helping raise achievement in their subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress from below-average levels of attainment. Achievement is good overall. They make the greatest progress when they are able to fully apply themselves to their learning. All do well against the learning targets set for them. They do especially well in personal, social and health education. They do well in mathematics and science, where the progress they make in a year is marginally better than that made by the typical mainstream pupil of the same age. They also do well in English, but achievement in other subjects is not always as good as it should be. Because of their experiences in their other schools, they (and their parents and carers) are pleased and often surprised by their good progress. Comments such as, 'I am doing brilliantly well compared with how I was doing at my other school,' are easily gained from pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

As pupils spend time at the school they gain in confidence and become more assured and better at learning. Their behaviour quickly improves because of the emphasis on social and moral values and the high expectations of all staff. Parents and carers see this, and most have the same feeling as the parent who said of her son, 'He has changed so much for the better since starting at school. He is behaving so well now that I take him out to cafes and this year we were able to take our first overseas holiday as a family.'

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness develop outstandingly well. The school is expert at transforming pupils who have had serious difficulties in meeting the expectations of schools. They become enthusiastic learners who enjoy school and who recognise the advantages of being safe and healthy, and physically active and happy, as important elements in the preparation for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils work hard in lessons and routinely do their best because most teaching is well planned and organised, taking good account of their learning and other needs. Class sizes are small. This means that teachers and their assistants know the pupils very well

and deal with them quickly when they need help in managing their behaviour or with their learning. Pupils respond well. They take pride in their achievements. One pupil reflected the feelings of many when he said, 'In most lessons we work hard, but have fun when we are learning.'

The space in classrooms is used especially well in ensuring that pupils who are easily distracted, for example, those with autism, are able to concentrate fully on their learning. Planning is particularly strong in personal, social and health education, mathematics and science, and is good in English. In other subjects it is sometimes weaker and as a result, achievement could be better. Information and communication technology (ICT) has been developed well, but a small number of teachers need further support in its use in promoting learning. The new library is used well in practising the skills of independent learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. The primary aim of preparing pupils to take a full part in their learning is met. The lessons in personal, social and health education are supported very well through, for example, circle time, the target-setting procedures and in the way that staff from other agencies provide specialist input. The curriculum for those in the nurture class is very effective in meeting their primary need to gain better control of their behaviour.

In the subjects, in organisation and content, the curriculum is equivalent to that seen in the county's primary schools. The links with these schools are outstanding. When pupils are about to move to a mainstream school, the staff there are given comprehensive information and much support. This is effective in helping ease pupil's difficulties during the move.

The curriculum is extended by a good range of activities that include the breakfast and computer clubs, visits to local places such as Cannock Chase and Shugborough Hall, to spiritual places and memorials, and for those being prepared for return to mainstream schools, by taking part in the extra-curricular activities of their other schools.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Risk procedures for medical care plans and health and safety are outstanding. Parents and carers say that staff take great care of the pupils and make sure that they are safe and secure. Pupils feel this also. One pupil who had not been to school for more than a year before beginning at Chasetown reported that he 'knows that staff understand him, and that they will stop doing what they are doing to help him when he is troubled.' The specialist support provided, for example, by paediatricians, speech and language therapists, the psychologist and those from agencies such as the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) is excellent and pupils especially, but their parents and carers also,

gain great benefit from this. The target-setting procedures for learning in the subjects make an important contribution to the good progress pupils make.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management overall are good. The headteacher, who has gained the considerable support of very competent and committed senior managers and a very strong team of governors, has been outstanding in making Chasetown a good school so quickly. Collectively they have the highest aspirations for the school and the impact of this is seen in both the day-to-day management and in the steady and continuous improvement since opening. Pupils and staff routinely do their best because conditions are maintained so that they are able to do so. For example, additional money gained from a number of sources has allowed the purchase of extra staff to reduce class sizes to make teaching and learning more effective. The many audits, and the discussions that follow, are used very well in ensuring that all staff feel empowered in identifying future directions for the school. Starting the nurturing class is a good example.

There is more to be done. For example, the senior leaders know that subject leaders need to provide better support for teachers without the relevant specialist training or experience in their subjects in order to raise achievement. They also know the self-evaluation procedures are better at identifying the learning and additional needs of pupils than they are at identifying the priorities for improvement or for judging the school's effectiveness. Difficult staffing issues have been substantially dealt with and staff morale is very high. For the first time since opening, with the recent appointment of the assistant headteacher with the specific remit of improving standards in the subjects, the senior management team is complete. The school is in a strong position to continue its development.

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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
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	3
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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
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	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 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?	1

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
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	1
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

I very much enjoyed my time with you and would like to thank you for talking with me and for helping me find out about your school. I was impressed with what I saw. I agree with your parents and carers that Chasetown Community School is a good school. This is because:

- You make outstanding gains in your personal development as you receive excellent support and advice in dealing with your difficulties. As you learn to deal with these you get better at learning and this shows in the good progress you make in the subjects.
- Your headteacher and the other senior leaders make sure that the school is calm and well organised so that you are able to do your best at all times.
- Teaching is good and you behave well in lessons and around the school. You are extremely polite in the way you deal with each other and with visitors to the school.

Your school could be even better if all subject leaders were able to recognise more accurately how well you do in your work and all leaders recognised what parts of the school should be made better. You could help, too, by continuing to work as hard as you can in all your lessons.