



Chartfield School

Independent School

Inspection report

**Better
education
and care**

DfES Registration Number 886/6035
Unique Reference Number 118977
Inspection number 296793
Inspection dates 8-9 March 2007
Reporting inspector Mr John Messer AI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

Age group 4-11	Published 2 April 2007	Reference no. 296793
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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Chartfield School was founded in Kent in 1928 and occupies a detached house that has been converted to provide education. It admits pupils aged 3 to 11 years. It is situated on the edge of Westgate-on-Sea opposite a park. Funded nursery education is provided for children over three years and under five and is registered with Ofsted's Early Years Directorate. This provision was inspected by a childcare inspector during this inspection and a separate report is available. This is the school's first full inspection. The school's aims are to *'develop and maintain the individual child's lively and enquiring mind, to allow each child to develop to his or her fullest potential and to give self confidence to each pupil and encourage them to acquire knowledge and skills.'*

Evaluation of the school

Chartfield School provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils. Within this overall picture there are considerable strengths as well as some important shortcomings. Personal development is a strength and pupils are self-assured, confident learners. The school lacks the necessary documentation to guide its work in some important areas, such as safeguarding procedures, which means that care arrangements are inadequate. There are a number of regulations that the school does not meet.

Quality of education

The curriculum is broadly satisfactory but there are deficiencies. A new curriculum policy is being implemented. The school is developing a teaching programme, based on the National Curriculum, and is preparing documentation to support the teaching. Curricular plans to guide teachers' knowledge of exactly what should be taught to pupils of different ages are at a very early stage of development. There is a strong emphasis on teaching English and mathematics. The school has not yet developed a fully balanced curriculum that gives pupils sufficient experiences of learning in technological or aesthetic areas.

The Foundation Stage curriculum is broadly satisfactory. However, assessment is not used sufficiently to develop activities which are closely focused on the needs of individual pupils.

For older pupils, English and mathematics receive a high proportion of curriculum time and there is some imbalance in the focus given to the remaining subjects. For example, pupils say that little emphasis is given to information and communication technology at present and there is limited evidence of music and design and technology activities within curriculum time. There is no formal programme for personal, social and health education, although some elements of this are delivered on an ad hoc basis. French is taught within the curriculum and some pupils attend an after-school Spanish club. There is a strong emphasis on physical education (PE) and sport. The school compensates for the limited space on site by the use of other local facilities to extend pupils' opportunities in PE. Pupils with learning difficulties are identified and provided with effective support.

Teaching is satisfactory and some is good. Many of the teachers are new to the school and in the absence of assessment records several are still at the stage of assessing the level that pupils have reached in their learning. Due to major staff changes the school is in the process of making a fresh start. There is a renewed vigour and impetus in the school as all staff share the new headteacher's determination and commitment to improve provision. The satisfactory teaching results in satisfactory learning and progress across the school. Teachers are good at motivating pupils and pupils respond well to the teachers' praise and encouragement. Older pupils were intrigued, for example, by punishments served on sailors in Tudor times and were keen to find out more. They empathised with the sailors' harsh conditions and showed sensitivity towards their plight. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and friendly. Teachers plan and prepare lessons carefully but there is no overall curricular framework to support and guide them in determining the content of lessons. Assessment is inadequate and so staff have no clear information about the stages that pupils have reached in their learning. As there are no detailed records of what pupils have learnt, a significant amount of time is spent in some lessons on assessing pupils' attainment. This means that progress, although satisfactory, is not always as rapid as it could be.

The school has identified the need to develop information about how well pupils are doing in relation to National Curriculum levels so that their progress can be measured and any areas for improvement identified. Parents are positive about the school and particularly appreciate the way that their children become confident learners.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is good. Their social development is excellent. Their behaviour is also outstanding. Pupils of all ages enjoy coming to school and attendance is good. They are courteous and considerate. Pupils reflect sensibly on major issues, such as global warming. They are acutely aware of the need to preserve this precious planet. The relationships in class between pupils and staff are good and pupils are confident in putting forward ideas and views. They are articulate and express their opinions clearly. Pupils are self-assured learners and this helps to prepare them well for the future. They are developing a sound range of skills to support their future economic well-being. Teachers use good questioning skills to gather pupils' views, respecting all contributions. This helps to develop pupils' self-esteem. Pupils are sensitive to the needs of others and work well together. Pupils thrive and develop great self-confidence because class sizes are small and they receive much individual attention. There are no formal structures for gathering pupils' views and pupils reported that they would like a school council, tasked with helping to improve facilities. They have confidence in the adults and are clear about who they would approach with any personal concerns or problems with their learning. They contribute to the wider community through fund-raising and charitable events, such as supporting a local hospice.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

This aspect of the school's provision is inadequate because regulations relating to keeping pupils safe are not met. Staff are caring and have pupils' welfare at heart but much of the necessary paper work is not in place. Risk assessments are undertaken, for example, when pupils go on visits, but these are not always recorded. There is great emphasis on providing pastoral support and guidance and producing well-rounded individuals and the school is successful in encouraging pupils to be aware of safe practices. However, there are too many shortcomings in requirements relating to welfare, child protection and health and safety generally. Staff have had little recent training in child protection and health issues have not had a high enough priority. The school has made a good start at preparing the required policies but still has some distance to go to ensure that they are fully understood and implemented by staff. There is no three-year plan to improve accessibility to premises, curriculum and information as required by the Disability and Discrimination Act 2002.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The systems and procedures for appointing staff are inadequate because the school does not have full records of checks for any criminal records, checks on the backgrounds and identity of staff, previous employment, and medical history.

School's premises and accommodation

The premises are satisfactory. The accommodation is broadly suitable. The classrooms are cramped and there is little spare space. However, there is enough room for pupils and teachers to move around freely and the pupils' excellent behaviour adds to the feeling of safety and orderliness as pupils take care to be aware of others on the stairs and when moving from room to room. Facilities for storing lunch boxes are poor and there is little space for storing equipment and personal belongings. The office cum staff room is untidy and therefore potentially hazardous. Issues from the last inspection regarding the provision of more toilets have not been resolved. However, there are plans to install new toilets in the summer. Heating and ventilation are adequate. The standard of decoration is acceptable. Attractive displays of pupils' work enhance the learning environment. When weather permits the school uses the park opposite the school for games and PE. The local sports centre and swimming pool also extend pupils' learning opportunities well. There is a public library close to the school and this is used effectively to supplement provision.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides parents with regular and informative newsletters. The prospectus, however, is deficient because it does not include information, or make parents aware that they can request information, about such things as what the curriculum includes, details of staffing or complaints procedures, for example.

Procedures for handling complaints

Procedures are inadequate. The school does not currently have robust systems for handling complaints. A draft policy is under discussion at present, but does not provide parents with the opportunity for any unresolved complaints to be reviewed by an outside panel. A significant number of parents indicate that they are not aware of how to make a complaint.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the curriculum (standard 1) and must:

- ensure that there is a whole school curriculum policy set out in writing, which is supported by plans and schemes of work in all subjects, and that these are implemented effectively (paragraph 1(2))
- ensure that a programme of personal, social and health education which reflects the school's aims and ethos is implemented (paragraph 1(2)(f))
- ensure that teachers show a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainment of pupils, and ensure that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons (paragraph 1(3)(d))
- prepare a framework to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from such assessment in planning (paragraph 1(3)(g)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- prepare and implement a written policy to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in compliance with the latest DfES guidance, particularly ensuring that staff responsible for child protection have up-to-date training (paragraph 3(2)(b))
- ensure that the school has regard to the latest DfES guidance on health and safety and ensure that all such procedures are defined, implemented and monitored (paragraph 3(4))
- prepare an admission register in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 3(9)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- ensure that prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff, checks have been carried out with the Criminal Records Bureau at an enhanced level to confirm their suitability to work with children, and that appropriate checks are carried out with regard to volunteers who help in the school (paragraph 4(b))

- ensure that, prior to the appointment of all staff, checks are made on staff's identity, medical fitness, previous employment history, character references and, where appropriate, their qualifications and professional references and that such information is taken into account in determining whether their appointment will be confirmed (paragraph 4(c)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- provide sufficient washrooms for pupils which take account of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(k))
- provide appropriate facilities for those who are ill, in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(l))
- ensure that all parts of the school are maintained in a tidy state, especially the school office and staff room (paragraph 5(n))

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- ensure that parents are aware that they can request particulars of the curriculum offered by the school (paragraph 6(2)(g))
- ensure that parents are aware that they may request particulars of policies relating to bullying, child protection, health and safety, the promotion of good behaviour, and sanctions adopted in the event of pupils misbehaving (paragraph 6(2)(h))
- ensure that parents are aware they can request particulars of the complaints procedure adopted by the school (paragraph 6(2)(j))
- ensure that parents are aware they can request particulars of the number of staff employed at the school, including temporary staff, and a summary of their qualifications (paragraph 6(2)(k)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of procedures for handling complaints (standard 7) and must:

- ensure that the complaints procedure is available on request to parents of pupils and prospective pupils (paragraph 7(b))
- ensure that if the parents are not satisfied with the response to a written complaint there is provision for the establishment of a hearing before a

panel appointed by the proprietor of at least three people who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint (paragraph 7(f))

- ensure that where there is a panel hearing of a complaint that there is provision for one person on the panel to be independent of the management and running of the school (paragraph 7(g))
- ensure that the complaints procedure allows for parents to attend the panel hearing, and, if they wish, to be accompanied (paragraph 7(h))
- ensure that the complaints procedure provides for the panel to make findings and recommendations and that the procedure stipulates that the complainant, proprietors and headteacher, and, where relevant, the person complained about, should be given a copy of any findings and recommendations (paragraph 7(i))
- ensure that the complaints procedure provides for written records to be kept of all complaints indicating whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage, or whether they proceeded to a panel hearing (paragraph 7(j))
- ensure that the complaints procedures include provision that correspondence, statements and records of complaints are to be kept confidential (paragraph 7(k)).

In order to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002 the school should devise a three-year accessibility plan.

School details

Name of school	Chartfield School		
DfES number	886/6035		
Unique reference number	118977		
Type of school	Primary school		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1928		
Age range of pupils	3-11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 41	Girls: 35	Total: 76
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,700-£3,000		
Address of school	45 Minster Road Westgate-on-Sea Kent CT8 8DA		
Telephone number	01843 831716		
Fax number	01843 831716		
Headteacher	Ms Louise Shipley		
Proprietor	Ms Louise Shipley		
Reporting inspector	Mr John Messer AI		
Dates of inspection	8-9 March 2007		