



Chattenden Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 118324
Local Authority Medway
Inspection number 298249
Inspection dates 6–7 March 2007
Reporting inspector Sheena Macdonald HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Chattenden Lane
School category	Community		Chattenden
Age range of pupils	4–11		Rochester ME3 8LF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01634 250861
Number on roll (school)	185	Fax number	01634 256770
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Anthony Osborne
		Headteacher	Heather Walding
Date of previous school inspection	29 November 1999		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4–11	6–7 March 2007	298249

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Chattenden is a one-form entry primary school serving an area of higher than average social deprivation on the edge of Rochester. A high proportion of the pupils are eligible for free school meals and higher than average numbers of pupils join the school after the start of the Foundation Stage. Higher than average numbers of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with some important strengths. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and many of their comments echoed the views of the pupils who told us that Chattenden is a 'friendly school where everyone cares for us'. A high priority is placed on ensuring that all pupils feel safe, well cared for and valued. As a result, relationships are good and pupils respond by behaving well both in lessons and in the playground. Pupils are confident that their concerns will be dealt with quickly and parents appreciate the care and personal attention their children receive.

Although standards are generally below national average, this represents satisfactory achievement because of the low starting point of most pupils. Children's communication, language and literacy skills are particularly low when they enter school and this weakness continues to affect the progress pupils make throughout the school. Children get off to a good start in the Reception class and make good progress. Standards in Key Stage 1 are rising, particularly in mathematics. In Key Stage 2, standards are below average but evidence from lessons and pupils' books confirms that although there was a drop in 2006 national assessment test results, they are on course to be higher this year and nearer to national averages. The school makes good use of its extensive assessment and monitoring information to identify groups of pupils in danger of falling behind and puts into place good support and catch-up opportunities. Less emphasis has been placed on the importance of developing the speaking, listening and communication skills of all pupils.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with some good teaching across the school. Staff work hard to provide well-structured lessons with clear objectives. Lessons are usually pitched at the right level for most pupils but there are not enough opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively or to develop their speaking and listening skills. The curriculum is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory overall. Good provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education results in the positive outcomes in pupils' personal development. There is a very good range of after-school clubs which add to the pupils' enjoyment and their involvement in the life of the school.

The headteacher provides strong and determined leadership and there is a shared commitment across the leadership team, staff and governors to strive for improvement. The school has addressed all the issues, particularly those relating to weaknesses in leadership and management, identified at the last inspection. It has implemented rigorous systems to ensure that it has a good understanding of its own strengths and weaknesses. Whilst this means that it clearly has satisfactory capacity to improve further, these extensive systems of monitoring, analysis and assessment have identified many areas for improvement. This has resulted in staff working very hard across many issues without sharply focusing on those aspects where improvement would lead to most rapid progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- increase the planned opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills
- reduce the number of improvement priorities and focus on those which will have the most impact on raising standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement overall is satisfactory. When children enter the Foundation Stage, their attainment is low compared with national expectations and particularly low in social skills, communication and language. They make good progress in mathematics and in personal, social and physical development. On entering Key Stage 1, attainment is still below expectations but children are beginning to catch up. Standards in Key Stage 1 are steadily rising. They are below average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. In Key Stage 2, results in the 2006 national tests suffered a sharp drop due to exceptionally high mobility and high numbers of pupils with additional needs. This drop went against a steady trend of pupils achieving standards at just below the national average in English, mathematics and science. Very effective tracking and analysis of assessment information is linked with focused support for pupils with learning difficulties and those in danger of falling behind. The work in pupils' books and the information from the school's detailed assessment, tracking and target setting system confirm that in most lessons, pupils are working at or just below national expectations and the school is on track to meet its challenging targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' moral and social development is good and their spiritual and cultural development satisfactory. They are friendly and polite, and clearly know the importance of getting on well together and doing the right thing. They show respect for each other and this was clearly demonstrated by the way the whole school and many parents listened with interest and celebrated the achievements of the Year 3 class who performed an assembly during the inspection. Pupils feel safe and secure in school as a result of good levels of care from all staff. They appreciate the opportunities to discuss any worries or concerns in regular 'circle time' sessions. Pupils enjoy school and behaviour is good in and out of lessons. As a result, there have been no exclusions for several years. Attendance is satisfactory and the school implements good strategies to encourage attendance and punctuality, although there are still a few regular latecomers.

Pupils show a good understanding of what is needed to keep fit and healthy; they enjoy the healthy snacks and take part in the many popular sporting activities offered by the school. They make a strong contribution to the school community by enthusiastically and sensibly taking on responsibilities from a young age, for example as class helpers, buddies for new pupils and managing the Healthy Tuck shop. They

are an important part of the local community and take part in a wide range of local events. The school council are proud of their achievements in initiating fundraising activities and their major contribution to the design of the new outdoor play equipment.

Satisfactory progress in developing the key skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology gives pupils a sound preparation for the next stage of their education. However, a lack of opportunities for pupils to improve their communication and team-working skills limits their ability to develop as independent learners.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with some good practice across the school. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is a strength, with a wide range of stimulating and lively learning opportunities provided for the children. Classroom organisation and preparation across the school are thorough and good relationships with pupils encourage them to try hard. Classes are very well managed so pupils settle to work quickly and without fuss. Lessons are well planned, with clear objectives for learning which teachers make sure pupils understand. Classroom assistants are well deployed and provide effective support, particularly for pupils with learning difficulties.

Teachers use a good range of questioning skills but there are too few opportunities for pupils, particularly those who are less articulate, to contribute to discussions, take an active part in some large parts of lessons or rehearse answers with partners. As communication skills are a weakness across the school, this slows the rate of progress in all subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good, with a range of exciting learning opportunities across all the areas of learning. The curriculum for Years 1–6 is satisfactory, with good emphasis given to pupils' personal, social and health education. The time given for some subjects has been squeezed as a result of the school's emphasis on developing essential skills in literacy and numeracy.

Opportunities are missed to learn other subjects during English and mathematics lessons and there are too few planned opportunities for speaking and listening, and independent and collaborative learning. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of visits, visitors and special focus weeks such as the Design Technology week. Children told us how much they enjoyed these events. There is a good range of very popular out-of-school clubs and activities which enhance pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Parents confidently describe Chattenden as 'a very caring school'. Pupils are well looked after and there are good systems for safeguarding pupils, child protection and health and safety across the school. Staff are well trained and parents appreciate the efforts the school makes to ensure pupils with particular learning and medical needs are supported. There are good systems for informing and involving parents and the school has developed valuable partnerships with outside agencies, including counselling, to support the most vulnerable pupils. The close working relationship with the pre-school playgroup results in good induction arrangements for new pupils. The high number of pupils who start at the school later in their school life are also well supported and told us how welcome they felt when they first arrived. As a result of the careful tracking of pupils' progress, all staff know how well their pupils are doing in English, mathematics and science. Pupils know their individual and group learning targets and are beginning to be more involved in assessing their own achievements and progress. Marking of work is thorough and encouraging but rarely helps pupils to know what they could do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory, with some key strengths. The headteacher and her senior team are determined to raise standards and ensure good personal development for each child. They have achieved a situation where that commitment is shared by everyone. There is a strong emphasis on making sure the school is a safe, harmonious community. Partnerships with parents are good and parents express overwhelming confidence in the leadership team. There are very effective links with relevant partners such as the pre-school play group.

Exceptionally rigorous monitoring systems are in place involving lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work, regular assessment and detailed analysis. Pupils are regularly involved and provide feedback on their enjoyment of lessons and their personal development. As a result, the school has a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and has taken action leading to particular improvement in personal development, the quality of the learning environment, and some aspects of teaching, learning and the curriculum. However, the extensiveness of the monitoring has resulted in an improvement plan which is so detailed and weighty that everyone is working very hard indeed, trying to move forward on too many fronts at once. As a result, the school has not focused as sharply as it needs to on key whole-school issues relating to pupils' progress, such as raising standards by improving the communication skills of all learners.

The governing body has improved since the last inspection and is now well informed, has an effective committee structure, and is involved in monitoring. The various skills

of the governors are used well to give good support to the school. The involvement of governors in the school self-evaluation processes is less well developed.

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?	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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
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	2
The attendance of learners	3
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	3

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?	3
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	3
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

As you know, I visited your school recently with another inspector to find out how well you were doing. Thank you for being so helpful to us, particularly those of you who talked to us during lessons and lunchtime. I particularly enjoyed Year 3's assembly on Special Books. You told us your school is a friendly place and we agree with you.

At the moment, the school is satisfactory. This means that it is good at some things but could be better at others. Here are some of the things we liked about your school.

- You enjoy coming to school, you behave well, are polite and friendly. Well done!
- Your teachers and the other adults care for you very well and you told us that if things go wrong you are confident they will be sorted out quickly.
- You get off to a good start in Reception and you are making satisfactory progress in the rest of the school. Your work is improving, particularly in the younger classes, so that by the time you leave Year 6, you reach standards which are just below average.
- Your teachers and other adults plan lessons carefully; they try to make sure you know exactly what you are learning in each lesson and give you help if you need it.
- Your school has lots of clubs and other activities before and after school. We know you appreciate this because so many of you take part.
- Your teachers keep a good track of how well you are doing and make sure those of you who are not making enough progress in your work get extra help.
- The headteacher and other leaders do all sorts of monitoring to find out what is going well in lessons and what needs to be improved.

We think your school is satisfactory but it could be even better and we know that your headteacher and the other adults want the school to keep on improving. Here are some things we've asked them to do.

- Make sure that you have a lot more opportunities for speaking and listening in lessons.
- Stop trying to improve too many things at once and concentrate on one or two improvements which will help you make faster progress. You can help by letting them know what sort of lessons help you learn fastest.