

Cheam Fields Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102964
Local Authority	Sutton
Inspection number	308176
Inspection dates	21–22 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Peter Thrusell

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	455
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Tony Kerslake
Headteacher	Mrs Catherine Lester
Date of previous school inspection	8 March 2004
School address	Stoughton Avenue Cheam Sutton SM3 8PW
Telephone number	020 8644 9055
Fax number	020 8641 9848

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Cheam Fields is a large, two-form entry school with its own nursery. In recent years, senior leadership has been disrupted through resignations, retirements and bereavements. Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much lower than average. A lower than average proportion has learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD). The school has Investors in People, Sustainable Travel, and Activemark awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Cheam Fields is a satisfactory school with some good features. Following disruption to leadership and management, the recently appointed headteacher supported by her deputy, has quickly gained the confidence of staff and perceptively identified areas in which the school needs to improve. Action taken, particularly to identify and support underachieving pupils, is beginning to meet with some success. One parent rightly refers to the 'thoughtful guidance of the new headteacher'. During this time of change the school has maintained a good level of pastoral care and continued to foster pupils' good personal development. It has been well supported in this through good links with parents, other schools and agencies.

Pupils enjoy school, particularly the whole-school productions and the wide range of well supported after school clubs. They say that 'learning is fun' and 'we have opportunities to learn new things'. Links with a neighbouring school add to the opportunities for pupils to take part in many sports and physical activities, with a determination to keep fit. This, along with a very good knowledge of diet and nutrition, contributes to pupils' excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles. Pupils' very good behaviour and positive attitudes to school contribute to their progress in learning. By the end of Year 6, standards in English and mathematics are well above average, and in science above average. Given their broadly average starting points in Year 3, this suggests that, over time, pupils achieve well. However, this masks the fact that there are some years where pupils are only making satisfactory progress, with some underachievement, and have ground to make up in their learning to reach the more challenging levels expected of them. The school is starting to address this underachievement with some success.

Following a good start in the Foundation Stage, progress in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall. Not all pupils make the progress expected of them. At the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly average, but have fluctuated in recent years. This weaker and variable progress continues in Years 3 and 4, before accelerating in Years 5 and 6, where teaching is generally more demanding of pupils, who have targets to aim for at the end of Year 6. A key factor in this variable progress has been the lack of analysis of the data held on pupils' progress to identify underachievement, and its availability to teachers. Consequently, teachers have not been able to plan work that more precisely matches the learning needs of all pupils, particularly those with learning difficulties and those who are more able. As a result, progress has slowed.

Teachers are now more accountable for pupils' progress as part of their performance management. They now have the assessment information about their pupils, which includes challenging end of year targets to work towards. The use of this information to improve teachers' planning, has yet to be fully monitored, both for its impact on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching and learning across all year groups. The school has also very recently started to use this information to reinstate the setting of individual targets to guide pupils in their learning. At present, pupils are not sufficiently aware of these targets nor their purpose in helping them to improve their work.

Subject leaders are developing their leadership skills, and are very keen to take on the greater responsibilities now expected of them, especially in monitoring progress and the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects. Despite the school's determination to raise levels of achievement, its capacity to improve is satisfactory. It is too soon for the improvements, now being implemented, to have had a marked and sustained impact on pupils' progress.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Pupils start the Foundation Stage with attainment that is broadly in line with what is normally expected of three year-olds. They make good progress and, at the end of Reception, most children are working well towards the learning goals expected at this age. A significant proportion meets or exceeds these goals. Children's learning and personal development are enhanced by their keen participation in the wide range of enjoyable activities on offer. Children demonstrate good behaviour and high levels of concentration and perseverance during tasks. They work well, both independently and in groups. Staff have warm relationships with children, ensuring that their safety and welfare are effectively promoted. Positive links with parents provide opportunities for them to play a full part in their children's learning. The capable leadership of the Foundation Stage ensures that all pupils have access to a rich and varied curriculum.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use assessment information to carefully plan what pupils need to learn next, and to share with them how well they are doing, so that all make the best progress possible.
- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning by developing the support and monitoring roles of subject leaders.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Progress throughout the school is variable. This is due to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning and the weak monitoring of pupils' progress. Careful checks are now being made on progress. Additional, well-focused support has been provided in Years 1 to 4 to ensure that any underachievement is addressed, enabling all pupils to reach the levels expected of them. This is already proving effective. Improvements have been made in writing in recent years. This is evident in the relatively better progress made in this subject throughout the school, resulting from a more structured approach to the development of writing skills, including a strong focus on phonics and spelling. Pupils with LDD make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school's well-planned provision for personal development successfully contributes to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Assemblies enhance pupils' acceptance of positive moral values. The friendly and caring school atmosphere facilitates pupil's enjoyment of school. Attendance is satisfactory and the school's robust strategies for improving attendance and punctuality are beginning to have a positive impact. Pupils feel safe and confidently approach staff with any concerns, knowing that these are quickly and fairly dealt with. They feel that their views are important and valued, although the school recognises that more could be done to take their voice into account, particularly in Key Stage 1. Pupils are pleased when their suggestions made through the school council are carried out, such as the installation of new playground equipment. Pupils have a good sense of community and have undertaken many

different charitable fundraising activities. Given their achievements in basic skills and this good level of personal development, pupils are well prepared for their future life and learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but with some good practice, especially in Years 5 and 6. Lessons are well prepared and managed. Good relationships mean that pupils are attentive and work hard, particularly when directly supervised by adults. Teachers are beginning to make a more effective use of assessment to identify starting points for learning and to plan a range of activities for different abilities. However, this practice has yet to consistently challenge and fully support all pupils in their learning. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together, although in some lessons assistants do not take an active enough role in supporting pupils. Questioning is often used well to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding, particularly when teachers expect and encourage all pupils to offer responses. Pupils' work is marked regularly, although very few points for improvement are given.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The range of learning experiences provided for pupils is satisfactory with some good aspects. Much work is being done, especially in English and mathematics, to ensure the planning of work is matched to pupils' prior learning. However, the school's overall plan to ensure that pupils build on their learning in subjects and across subjects is not yet systematic enough. Opportunities are missed for pupils to develop their key skills, including computer skills, in other subjects. The range of enrichment opportunities provided for pupils is good. Pupils have good opportunities to visit places linked with the curriculum they are studying. For example, pupils in Year 5 who are studying World War 2 say how much they enjoyed and learned from their visit to the Imperial War Museum. Occasional theme days, such as an arts day involving a visit from an author, illustrator or dance group, broaden pupils' experiences and contribute to their enjoyment of learning. In addition, residential visits for adventurous activities in Years 5 and 6 contribute greatly to pupils' personal and social development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The quality of care, guidance and support is satisfactory. Whilst there is good pastoral support and full attention paid to pupils' care and well-being, academic guidance, particularly through the marking of work and setting of individual targets, is not as strong. Safeguarding procedures are rigorous and comply with statutory guidelines. There are established procedures for checking all adults working in the school and undertaking risk assessments. The school maintains good links with external agencies in addressing the needs of vulnerable pupils. The support for pupils with LDD is not always fully effective, particularly when learning tasks and styles are not sufficiently matched to their individual needs.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management overall are satisfactory. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide good leadership and management. They have worked well with staff and governors to improve teamwork, start to address underachievement and raise expectations. Improvement planning is well focused on appropriate and important areas for development. Work has started on improving the use made of assessment information to improve lesson planning, and on developing teaching strategies, for example in the way teachers model work for pupils, and the use of 'talking partners' to encourage pupils to contribute in lessons. The role of subject leaders is underdeveloped. The governing body is very supportive of the work of the school. Because of the instability at senior management level in recent years, monitoring of the school's performance has been irregular and lacked rigour. During this period, governors had difficulty in holding the school to account for the progress of pupils. Nevertheless, they are very supportive of the school, visiting it regularly.

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Annex A

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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 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?	3

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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

31 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cheam Fields Primary School, Sutton, SM3 8PW

I am writing to let you know what we found when we visited your school. Thank you for taking part in the inspection. We spoke with many of you during our visit and you were always interesting to talk to, extremely polite and helpful. You spoke very enthusiastically about enjoying school and all of the things in which you take part. Cheam Fields is a satisfactory school that has some good features.

We liked these things the most.

- Children in the Nursery and Reception get a good start to their time in school.
- By the end of Year 6 you are doing really well in English, mathematics and science.
- The school makes sure that you are safe and well looked after.
- You behave well, enjoy school and are all very keen to keep fit and eat the right things.
- You go on lots of trips, and have many school clubs to choose from.
- Your headteacher and deputy do a good job.

We have asked the school to work on the following things now. Although you work particularly hard in some year groups, you have not been doing quite so well in others. The school must check carefully that you are given challenging work to do, which is just right for each one of you, so that you all make the best progress possible. You are now being given targets to work on and must take note of these and do your best to reach them. The teachers that are responsible for different subjects need to be able to check carefully that the subjects are all being taught really well throughout the school.

We did enjoy visiting your school and watching you learn.

Yours sincerely

Peter Thrussell

Lead Inspector