

Chorlton CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105487
Local Authority	Manchester
Inspection number	308866
Inspection date	17 June 2008
Reporting inspector	John Heap

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	246
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs J Read
Headteacher	Mrs P Charleston
Date of previous school inspection	21 June 2004
School address	Vicars Road Chorlton-cum-Hardy Manchester M21 9JA
Telephone number	0161 881 6798
Fax number	0161 861 8503

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: standards in mathematics and science, particularly for the highest attaining pupils; how well basic skills are used and developed across the curriculum; the opportunities for pupils to investigate and problem solve in mathematics and science; and the effectiveness of school improvement planning in addressing priorities that arise. Evidence was gathered from school documentation, national data, interviews with pupils, staff and governors, the observation of lessons and other activities and the analysis of parents' questionnaires and comments. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Although this average sized primary school serves in the main a White British population, it has an above average proportion of pupils from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The number of pupils learning English as an additional language is below average. The area has few signs of social and economic disadvantage and the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school has a range of awards, including Healthy School and Activemark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

'A super school that caters well for educational, social and other needs of a very wide range of children.' This comment is typical of the views of the majority of parents. Many write in supportive terms and are proud of having the school within their community. They are absolutely right to be proud, because this is an outstanding school that serves its community exceptionally well. A highly significant factor is the outstanding work of the headteacher in ensuring that high expectations are constant features in the school and that complacency has no place within it.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Exceptional and successful effort is put into providing a curriculum that promotes personal development and high quality care. Consequently, pupils thoroughly enjoy work and school; they feel safe and secure and they show respect for their peers, staff and visitors. Highly effective moral and social development leads to excellent behaviour, attendance and attitudes. The curriculum is packed with opportunities to enhance spiritual and cultural development, particularly in religious education and assemblies. Pupils thrive socially in the very supportive atmosphere and through the very wide range of activities on offer, such as residential visits. Pupils are expected to make an ever-widening contribution to school, local and more diverse communities. The work of the school council is extremely important in this, as are the very strong contributions from 'buddies' and 'PALS' around the school. The council is rightly proud of its contribution to pupils' excellent knowledge and understanding of what a healthy lifestyle means in practice. The council has been instrumental in improving the healthy profile of school meals, introducing daily exercise, and it leads the pupils' approach to raising money for needy causes.

Pupils' achievement is outstanding because of high expectations, challenging teaching and exemplary guidance and support. As a result, pupils are exceptionally well prepared for their future education. Children enter Nursery with skills and abilities that are typical for their age and by the end of Year 6, standards are well above average. Standards in English have consistently been the strongest and national data show that pupils have made exceptional progress, to the extent where the school is in the top 2% of schools nationally. Significant numbers of pupils have consistently reached the better than average Level 5 in English national tests. Outcomes in mathematics and science have not been as high, but current data show clearly that many more pupils are now reaching the higher levels of attainment in these subjects. The monitoring of pupils' progress shows that many pupils are making excellent progress in English, mathematics and science. A significant feature in the improvements in mathematics and science has been the highly successful development of a more rigorous approach to investigating and problem solving. Standards in English continue to rise because pupils have a wide range of opportunities to read and write in other subjects. The progress made by pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those from minority ethnic groups and those learning English as an additional language is monitored rigorously and pupils are very well supported. As a result, they make the same progress as their peers.

Overall, the school provides an excellent education for the pupils. Pupils take full advantage of the high quality opportunities on offer and parents are actively encouraged to take part. For example, a Year 5 pupil produced an informative 'Blue Peter' video as part of an extra programme devised for higher-attaining pupils. In classrooms, very strong relationships and management lead to confident learners who very rarely have their learning interrupted. Excellent

target-setting and marking ensure that challenge is high and this has played a major part in pupils consistently reaching well above average standards. Teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of subjects and this enables them to provide activities and challenge that inspire their pupils.

Current requirements are met in relation to the curriculum and care procedures, such as safeguarding pupils and child protection. Adults know their pupils very well and, as a result, are able to adapt the curriculum and also the excellent care and guidance procedures to meet their needs closely.

Leadership and management are excellent. The experienced headteacher challenges staff and pupils to do their best and ongoing review and reassessment of performance inform future planning very effectively indeed. Consequently, there has been outstanding improvement since the previous inspection and the school is exceptionally well placed to improve further. Key staff provide very strong support and they share a challenging, common vision for development. This shows itself in the wide-ranging school improvement plan that has, as its main focus, the raising of academic standards. Governance is good. The governing body is highly supportive and provides good leadership in the policy making it undertakes, such as the arrangements for extra-curricular activities that effectively emphasise the enlightened approach to equal opportunities. However, the governors' approach to evaluation is too dependent on information from management, rather than formally gathering their own information.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children get a good start to their education in the Nursery and Reception classes because the Foundation Stage is led and managed well. Induction arrangements are effective and the children settle quickly to classroom routines. Attainment on entry is typical for children of this age and progress is good. By the time children leave the Reception class, most have achieved the nationally recognised early learning goals and some have gone beyond this level. Children's skills and abilities are particularly strong in personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy. Staff cater well for the wide range of ability in the classes, which include children with additional learning needs to children who are working at the level of a seven-year-old. To maintain the interest of the children, there is a good balance between activities directed by adults and those which are chosen by the children. This enables children to practise key skills and develop social skills effectively. The curriculum meets the children's needs appropriately and the good outdoor area adjacent to the Nursery is used well to extend learning. However, the Foundation Stage is on a split site and the outdoor area adjacent to the Reception class does not provide the same facilities. Reception children use the main outdoor area but they do not have the fullest opportunities to use it continuously. Care and support for children are very strong and adults show a good understanding of individual needs.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all Foundation Stage children have maximum opportunity to access the outdoor areas for learning.

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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?	1
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of Chorlton C of E Primary School, Manchester, M21 9JA

Thank you very much for the help, courtesy and kindness that you showed me when I came to look at the work of your school. I enjoyed visiting your classrooms and talking to you about your work and about all the exciting activities that you do at school. I found lots of good and excellent things going on in your outstanding school - far too many to write about in a short letter!

Here are some of the things that I judged to be particularly good:

- in the Nursery and Reception classes, you get a good start to your learning
- you make exceptional progress in your work and many of you achieve standards that are well above average levels in English, mathematics and science
- your personal development is outstanding, with high standards of behaviour, attendance and attitudes to school and work
- the school council represents you very well and has made an exceptional contribution to the way the school supports your knowledge and understanding of leading a healthy lifestyle
- you solve problems by thinking things through and working together and this often leads to some very fine work and exciting presentations, such as videos
- your excellent teachers plan lots of interesting ways to help you to learn and this means that you thoroughly enjoy school
- your headteacher and staff are always striving for ways to make improvements so that school can be an even better place for you.

So that your school can be even better, I have asked the staff to make sure that the children in the Nursery and Reception have every opportunity to use the outdoor play and work areas.

It was a real pleasure to visit your school. Keep on working hard at your learning and, most importantly, keep on enjoying it.