

Chalvey Early Years Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109765
Local Authority	Slough
Inspection number	310090
Inspection date	30 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Vanessa Ward

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3-5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	107
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Kevin Redman-Brown
Headteacher	Mrs Kate Makinson
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2002
School address	The Green Chalvey Slough SL1 2SP
Telephone number	01753 536293
Fax number	01753 694611

Age group	3-5
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school, and investigated:

- how successfully the school is improving standards and achievement in mathematical development
- how the apparent strengths in the care, guidance and support that the school provides, including how successfully children are encouraged to understand how well they are doing
- how effectively the school evaluates its progress and plans for improvement.

The inspector gathered evidence from the school's records, planning and policies, and by observing teaching and learning. She also held discussions with staff, governors and children and scrutinised parents' questionnaires. The inspector did not investigate other aspects of the school's work in detail, but found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These assessments have been included in the report.

Description of the school

Children are admitted to the school at the start of the term after their third birthday. They attend the school for between three and five terms. Most of the children attend either every morning or afternoon, with a few children attending full-time. Nearly all of the children are from minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest group being of Pakistani heritage. The proportion of children who are learning English as an additional language is above average. More pupils than usual have learning difficulties and disabilities. These include children with communication, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school has a resource unit that has ten places for children with speech, language and communication difficulties, including autism. The school provides extended hours in the Nursery classes and is involved in family work, adult education and a holiday play scheme.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Chalvey Early Years Centre is a good school. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school, describing it as 'a lovely place for children to learn', where the staff are 'very friendly' and there is 'a lovely atmosphere'. Parents are welcomed into school and this provides valuable opportunities for them to speak to the staff. Good leadership and management, a strong sense of teamwork and commitment to improvement among staff and governors, are key factors in the school's success. The school has made significant improvements since its previous inspection. This record of well considered and effective improvement indicate that it has good capacity to improve further.

When children are first admitted, their skills are often well below those generally found in three-year-olds. In addition, a high proportion of children are at the early stages of learning English. Nevertheless, good teaching and a stimulating curriculum enable children of all abilities to achieve well and make good progress. This, combined with a strong focus on developing children's independence, prepares them well for the next stage in their education. However, by the time they move to their next school few children achieve the goals expected, particularly in mathematical development. The school is already using a range of strategies to improve all areas of mathematical development, focusing on counting and understanding mathematical language in particular. Whilst these are having some success, the school recognises that it is necessary to continue to give high status to mathematical development in classroom displays, and to take every opportunity to reinforce and extend children's understanding of mathematics through play activities.

The school has worked hard and successfully since its previous inspection to raise achievement in communication, language and literacy. This has included a significant focus on promoting a love of books and reading in the children. The staff provide many opportunities for the children to enjoy stories, to develop early reading and writing skills and to understand the different purposes of writing. A letter sent to the children from a bear, complaining that he had no home, prompted the children to build one for him. The sharing of books helps the children to develop positive attitudes to reading. They are particularly excited by The Bear Hunt story and enjoy acting it out in class, and especially in the 'jungle' outside in the garden. All of the staff make learning interesting and exciting, and this is reflected in the children's obvious enjoyment.

A good level of care, guidance and support is apparent throughout the school. This contributes significantly to the children's good personal, social and emotional development. The school rightly focuses on this area when children are first admitted. This means that they soon become familiar with school routines and most behave well. Children new to the school settle quickly and happily as a result of the good care and individual attention they receive. Additional support is provided for children who are at the early stages of learning English, and this helps them to feel secure and ready to learn. The school is developing its support for gifted and talented children. Procedures to keep children safe are well established and effective. The school involves children satisfactorily in understanding how well they are doing by sharing samples of their work that are kept in special books. Links with other schools and outside agencies, such as speech therapists, are successful in promoting the children's well-being. The extended school services enable the staff to get to know parents and their children before they are admitted. Children in the resource unit are supported very well in school and through links with other agencies, and this helps them to make good progress from their starting points.

Leadership and management are good. The school's process for self-evaluation is comprehensive. All staff and governors are suitably involved in the process and the views of parents are valued and taken into account. Teachers take responsibility for school priorities and contribute to school development effectively. A new system is being developed for recording children's achievement. It is improving the way the school tracks children's progress and intervenes to provide extra support where needed. Governors carry out their responsibilities conscientiously. They are developing their roles well, and are supportive of the headteacher in bringing about school improvement. They are currently increasing their monitoring roles.

The wide range of activities available to the children, both indoors and outside, does much to stimulate their interest and to provide opportunities for exercise. Children eat healthily in school and know that their hearts will beat faster when they exercise. Frequent educational visits, such as a visit to Windsor that took place during the inspection, further enhance their learning. The garden area is very well designed and provides opportunities for all areas of learning to take place outside. The staff place resources so that children can get them out and put them away easily, which helps them gain independence and take on responsibility. Relationships between staff and children are very positive and this helps to boost the children's self-esteem and ensures that they feel safe. All of the staff show that they respect the children and listen carefully to, and value, their comments. This helps the children to foster positive attitudes to learning and enhances their spiritual development. The school makes good use of its diverse cultural make-up by celebrating a range of cultural events. The need to improve attendance continues to be given high priority and the school is working closely with parents to promote this.

Children enjoy their time in the school and achieve well, in both their academic and personal development. One parent summed up the views of many, saying, 'our child is making good progress. His behaviour and confidence have improved and he wants to go to school every day'.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

As a nursery school, the Foundation Stage is covered fully by the Overall Effectiveness section of the report.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the opportunities provided to raise achievement in mathematical development, particularly in the areas of mathematical language and counting.

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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?	2
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	2

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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?	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?	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.

Annex A

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	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

11 July 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Chalvey Early Years Centre, Slough, SL1 2SP

Thank you for welcoming me into your school. I really enjoyed my day with you. It was good to see how much fun you were having riding around your track in the garden, washing the bikes and splashing in the water. I like your bear hunt, but I think I am too tall to go through the jungle.

Your parents think that you go to a good school, and I agree with them.

What I like most about Chalvey Early Years Centre is that:

- the grown-ups teach you well and this helps you to learn many things
- everybody looks after you very well and makes sure that you are safe and happy
- you get lots of exercise when you play outside and you eat fruit in school, which helps to keep you healthy
- there are lots of interesting things for you to do inside and outside
- all of the grown-ups work really well together, such as when they helped you to feel happy when you first started.

Everyone wants to make your school even better, and I have asked your headteacher to think about how the grown-ups can help you even more as you learn to count and understand numbers.

I hope you carry on enjoying school and learning lots of interesting things.

Yours sincerely

Vanessa Ward

Lead Inspector