

Chester-le-Street CofE (Controlled) Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114213
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	311516
Inspection dates	18–19 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Joan Elton

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Kevin Dunne
Headteacher	Mrs Joan Twomey
Date of previous school inspection	1 April 2005
School address	Hilda Park Chester le Street County Durham DH2 2JT
Telephone number	0191 3882328
Fax number	0191 3892118

Age group	7–11
Inspection dates	18–19 June 2008
Inspection number	311516

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average size school, where the vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. No pupil has English as an additional language. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average. The school has achieved awards for National Healthy School Standards, Investors in People, Silver Artsmark, Activemark, Intermediate International work, Eco projects, Basic Skills Quality mark and the local authority's Anti-Bullying Accreditation.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. It is exceptionally well led, and an enthusiastic and highly committed team of staff and governors provide an excellent education for all pupils. The school is at the heart of the community and has a high reputation among pupils, parents, volunteers and visitors. Parents comment on 'the Christian ethos, and the atmosphere of encouragement, which enhances learning' and 'the outstanding headteacher and staff, who are totally committed to children's education'. The school is 'as good as it gets' writes one parent.

When pupils enter Year 3, the attainment of many is broadly in line with the national average. By the end of Year 6, pupils are performing well above the expected levels for their age, with large numbers achieving significantly high standards. This represents excellent progress and is the result of outstanding teaching and learning, a vibrant curriculum and very high standards of care. The school's main focus is to raise the achievement of all pupils, academically and personally, by constantly seeking improvement. It succeeds due to a highly motivated and skilled staff; efficient use of finances to enhance resources; and regular and effective ways of reviewing its own performance. Pupils feel happy, confident and safe, and there is very little bullying. They appreciate the excellent care given when problems occur and feel confident approaching staff for help. Pupils enjoy their lessons and appreciate the interesting and diverse range of experiences provided for them. They are keen to take on responsibility, work very well together and, as a result, their independence grows quickly. Pupils are taught how to assess their own work and how to improve it. They are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Teaching and learning have many outstanding features, including learning programmes for individual pupils and excellent pupil support. Good assessment procedures track pupils' progress and the school also monitors closely the quality of teaching. The school makes good use of outside agencies to provide additional resources, particularly for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The excellent curriculum is broad and balanced and develops basic skills through all the subjects. It is exciting, highly relevant and has sufficient variety to meet all the pupils' needs and interests. As a result, pupils show very positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour is excellent.

The headteacher's determined and highly supportive leadership style is particularly successful. Morale is high and all the staff work well together to raise achievement. Governance is outstanding. Governors know their school very well, monitor its work, contribute knowledgeably to the self-evaluation process and work very enthusiastically with the staff to secure the school's success. The school has made very good progress since the last inspection. It now provides outstanding value for money and has excellent capacity to make any necessary improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- There are no areas for improvement which the school has not already identified.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils enter Year 3 with broadly average standards. They make excellent progress throughout the key stage and by the time they leave Year 6 reach very high standards in English, mathematics, and science. This pattern of achievement has been reflected in the national test

results year on year since 2003. They have been significantly above average and often exceeded the local authority's challenging targets. In 2007, English and mathematics results were significantly above average with almost half the pupils achieving the higher levels. Results in science were exceptionally high with a very large proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels. These high standards come about because of very effective teaching and learning, an exciting curriculum which extends basic skills, and a very high level of individual support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, who also make excellent progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development is outstanding. Pupils are mature, articulate and self-assured. They develop very positive attitudes to their work, and form excellent relationships with each other and staff. There are high levels of attendance and behaviour is exemplary. The close links with both church and the community have contributed significantly towards outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils feel they are listened to and their ideas acted upon; for example, the school council's involvement in promoting an eco-friendly school, resulted in recycling boxes being placed in every room. Pupils know how to keep healthy and safe and are keen to take on responsibilities. They are especially proud of their role as mediators, which involves solving disagreements between other children, even if, as they recently complained, there is little to do! By the end of Year 6, they are confidently expressing opinions and independently managing their own learning and assessments. This is a school where every child matters as an individual. As a result, pupils achieve excellent levels of academic and personal development and are extremely well prepared for their future adult life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are of a consistently very high quality throughout the school. Teachers establish excellent relationships with their pupils and help them to develop very positive attitudes to learning. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge, explain tasks clearly and have very high expectations of their pupils. They make every effort to match their lessons to pupils' needs and learning styles so that all are challenged to make good or better progress. Resources are used well, particularly the interactive whiteboards. Teaching assistants are well trained and give very effective support to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Teachers show real enthusiasm in lessons and learning is brisk. As a result, pupils concentrate and enjoy their work. Lessons build effectively on previous learning and often incorporate challenging collaborative work between pupils; for example, through discussion or in role play. Marking is used very constructively to help pupils understand how to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. It is broad and balanced and contributes well to the pupils' excellent progress and outstanding personal development. It is particularly successful in meeting the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities by ensuring they take advantage of all the school has to offer. English, mathematics and thinking skills have been given priority and have been extended imaginatively across other subjects through topics. Excellent

programmes relating to health, responsibility, and multicultural education successfully promote pupils' understanding of citizenship. French is taught throughout the school and pupils learn to play the recorder from the beginning of Year 4. By Year 6, pupils have acquired excellent computer skills. The school's 'Techno Talk' project enables pupils to use information and communication technology creatively, combining subjects and setting up inter-school projects. The wide range of after-school activities extends pupils' confidence and expertise so they can develop new skills and interests for adulthood.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. A Christian family ethos is the centre of school life and has ensured care is of the highest standard. Staff are well trained in child protection and all safeguarding requirements are met. Excellent support has enabled pupils with physical, emotional and learning difficulties to be fully integrated into school life. The school successfully builds on the work of other professionals, such as speech therapists and physiotherapists, to ensure pupils make excellent progress. Parents are very positive about their involvement in the Family Learning Initiative and feel it has led to closer relationships between home and school and a better understanding of their child's academic and pastoral needs. The academic progress of pupils is very carefully monitored. Pupils are well aware of their targets and confidently take part in their own assessment to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

All aspects of leadership and management are outstanding. The school is led by a highly inspirational headteacher, and staff and governors have developed a clear vision for the school with the achievement of all pupils at its heart. The staff work exceptionally well together, identifying pupils' needs and ensuring that resources are used to good effect. There are effective programmes for staff training and development, accommodation is adapted to create appropriate learning environments, finances are used efficiently, and pupils' care, support and guidance remain paramount. The school is exceptionally well organised and every aspect of school life is regularly reviewed to ensure efficiency and effectiveness. A highly committed senior management team assists the headteacher in her drive to improve standards and pupils' personal development. It monitors pupils' progress regularly to identify pupils' needs and to provide appropriate in-class support or catch-up programmes. The team has worked very successfully to raise pupils' achievement and promote relationships between church, school and the community. Governors make an outstanding contribution to the school. They know the school well, monitor its work and take an active part in making decisions. The school has made very good progress since the last inspection and displays excellent capacity to improve.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
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	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	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	1
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

20 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Chester-le-Street CofE (Controlled) Junior School, Durham, DH2 2JT

Thank you for the welcome you gave us when we inspected your school. We appreciated all your help and also the comments made by your parents in their questionnaires. Please thank them on our behalf. Your behaviour in lessons, around the school and in the playground is excellent.

We were most impressed with your school. It is an outstanding school. Teaching and learning are excellent; you learn so many different things and your activities are so interesting and challenging. Your teachers care for you very well. No wonder you feel happy and safe! You appreciate your teachers because you say they make learning fun. We agree with you. We enjoyed looking at your books; you have made very good progress since the beginning of the year. We also noticed how well your teachers guide you when they mark your work. You know your targets and can describe how to improve your work. Your headteacher, staff and governors work very well as a team and your school is very well run. We enjoyed your assemblies, particularly the singing. We were rather surprised, however, to see a Viking in your school! Fortunately he seemed very friendly.

Your headteacher, staff and governors have been very successful in improving your school and so we have been unable to find any important things that still need to be done.

Congratulations on your performance in school and best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Joan Elton

Mrs Mary Sewell

Additional Inspectors