

Chiddingly Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114391
Local Authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	311579
Inspection dates	3–4 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Juliet Ward HMI

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	80
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Brundle
Headteacher	Nicola Blake
Date of previous school inspection	2 June 2003
School address	Muddles Green Chiddingly Lewes BN8 6HN
Telephone number	01825 872307
Fax number	01825 872682

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small, mixed community school. A small proportion of pupils have free school meals. Fewer pupils than usual have learning difficulties; one pupil currently has a Statement of Special Educational Need. About eight per cent of the pupils have heritages other than White British; no pupils have English as an additional language. The school has achieved the 'Activemark' and silver and gold 'Healthy School' awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils' attitudes and behaviour are exemplary. The vast majority of parents agree with this and have rightly identified that the success of the school is very much down to the headteacher's drive, enthusiasm and commitment. The school has an accurate understanding of its strengths and areas for development and has made good improvement since the last inspection.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. They feel safe and know that their opinions and views are valued. Pupils maintain a healthy lifestyle and all achieve well in their academic studies. By Year 6, they have attained standards that are above average. These standards, coupled with their extremely strong commitment to the school community, mean that they are well prepared for the future. Pupils make good progress in most subjects throughout the school, although the school has identified that some groups of pupils in Key Stage 2 have not made the progress they could do, for example, in aspects of mathematics.

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. The curriculum is well planned to meet the needs of these young children. All pupils are provided with good care, support and guidance. The good quality of teaching and learning they receive is reflected in their enthusiastic approach to school. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum which meets the needs of all well. This is enhanced very well through a wealth of extra activities that promote pupils' independence and ability to co-operate with each other. The school provides a very good information and communication technology (ICT) curriculum and the pupils reach high standards of competence.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has an exceptionally clear vision for the school. She works well with the team of teachers and teaching assistants, who have a good understanding of what needs to be done in the future. Governors provide commitment and support the school's improvement well, although they are in the early stages of being fully involved in the strategic management of the school, including compiling the self-evaluation.

The strong partnership with other schools has been used effectively for the benefit of the pupils. For example, the school accesses several enrichment activities hosted by the local secondary school. The vast majority of parents felt that they were 'kept well informed on all matters relating to their children' and that 'all staff are very approachable and it is easy to raise minor concerns if needed'.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Attainment on entry varies year on year, but is generally average and children enter the Reception class with a broadly typical range of skills for their age. The exciting and stimulating curriculum ensures they make good progress towards meeting expectations in all areas of their learning. Children learn through practical and fun activities such as hunting for ducks in the school grounds. They learn quickly to choose from a range of activities and with sensitive guidance from the class teacher challenge themselves to do their best. Good records are kept of the children's progress and a flexible approach to drawing on additional support ensures that the learning needs of the more able and those with specific learning needs are well met. The planning of activities is well matched and modified to meet individual needs. The children's

outdoor experiences are limited by the lack of a covered area that would ensure more opportunities for creative activities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils make consistent progress throughout Key Stage 2, with particular attention to the progress they make in Years 3 and 4.
- Develop the role of the governors in the strategic management of the school, including greater involvement in self-evaluation and school improvement planning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' attainment when they start school is mainly as expected, although it varies with each group of pupils from year to year. Comparatively small numbers in each year group can lead to fluctuating results when compared with national figures. In last year's tests for seven-year-olds, attainment was above average at the end of Year 2 and this reflects good improvement for this group of pupils. Standards were above average at the end of Year 6 in 2007, with pupils making generally good progress throughout their time at the school. The school has rightly identified where progress has slowed or which subjects need further improvement, for example, in writing and mental mathematics, and have put in place appropriate systems to address these aspects. Standards in ICT are very good throughout the school. The standards of current work show that achievement is good throughout the school in most subjects and that all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those of higher ability, achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Parents overwhelmingly agree that, as one parent wrote, 'the whole child is developed regardless of their ability', and inspection findings endorse this view. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 know what to do to ensure a healthy lunch option; they also know how important exercise is and participate fully in the sporting activities. They adopt safe practices, particularly in the playground, where they play very sensibly. Attendance is good. Attitudes and behaviour are exceptional and school rules are fully understood. The very well-trained play leaders ensure that the playground is a happy place to be. There is a whole-school agreement about dealing with anti-social behaviour and pupils are clear about what to do if this happens. There is a developing school council, and pupils in Years 5 and 6 have the opportunity to go away together on a residential visit. The school is continually looking to further enhance pupils' independence.

Pupils take pride in representing their school and work successfully with local schools, including, for example, attending workshops at the secondary school. Pupils are knowledgeable about different customs and cultures and are familiar with different religious festivals and celebrations. They talk excitedly about their links with a school in India and they have a go at conversing in French. Their good quality basic skills and their wider knowledge of the world around them prepare them well for adulthood.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers and their assistants know the pupils well. They mostly use assessment effectively to challenge pupils and to ensure that they make good progress. Teachers work hard to stimulate the pupils' self-confidence, interest and enjoyment in learning. In the best lessons, role-play activities and skilful questioning are used successfully to develop the pupils' speaking and listening skills. Currently, for example, pupils are developing their writing skills with increased effectiveness. This is because the range of writing tasks is capturing their imagination and initiating an enthusiasm for writing, and the pupils are given well-structured guidance to help them plan their writing. Teachers adopt effective practical and investigative approaches in science. As a result, pupils participate fully and learn well. The end of the lesson is usually well planned to enable the pupils to evaluate the effectiveness of their writing, although this is an area to develop further with the younger Key Stage 2 pupils. Occasionally, not all pupils are fully engaged with their learning when the pace of the lesson slows.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well organised and motivates pupils. It effectively meets their needs. French, physical education activities, environmental studies and the cross-curricular learning projects have increased the breadth and relevance. Good use is made of the local science centre to increase pupils' learning experiences. The school works well with other local schools to pool funds to provide for specialist activity weeks. These not only serve to excite children's appetite for learning but also help further personal development.

There are some good opportunities now planned to ensure pupils become independent learners, but the topic work that is done at home does not serve their needs well enough because it lacks sufficient structure. The shared planning between Reception and the Year 1 and 2 class ensures a relevant curriculum for children in this transition stage. A wide range of activities outside lessons contributes well to pupils' enjoyment and achievement, involving clubs, residential activities and childcare schemes.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Procedures to ensure that pupils are kept safe and secure, including those relating to child protection, are well established and staff are very familiar with them. Personal development is monitored very closely and pupils are confident that adults look after them very well. The school gives sensitive support to individuals and supports families experiencing difficulties. The youngest children and those new to the school settle very quickly into the school community because they are given good support from staff and older pupils. Good personal support and guidance is provided for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, particularly as a result of the school working closely with outside agencies to receive the best help possible.

Pupils' progress is assessed and evaluated well. Teachers pose pertinent questions at the start of each lesson and pupils use this well to guide their learning. Literacy and numeracy targets are adjusted carefully to ensure that the pupils have a clear understanding of what they are aiming to achieve; this is particularly successful with the older groups of pupils. They are

supported in the next step of their learning by teachers using the school's own marking system to indicate strengths and areas for development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Parents rightly identify that the school has made significant progress under the very clear leadership and management of the headteacher. By encouraging teamwork, she has been the driving force in lifting pupils' academic and personal achievements. Governors and staff play their part in supporting and monitoring the school and promoting a strong partnership with parents. However, governors have not yet developed a strategic role in continuing to take the school forward. Procedures for tracking pupils' progress and setting challenging targets for improvement are effective. The information gathered is accurate and used well to ensure good self-evaluation. Consequently, since the last inspection, there has been good and continued improvement, particularly in pupils' achievements and the standards they attain. A strengthened, more relevant and interesting curriculum is already helping to quicken the pace of pupils' learning. These improvements show a school that is well placed to improve into the future.

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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	2
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	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	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

Dear Children

Inspection of Chiddingly Primary School, Muddles Green, East Sussex BN8 6HN

What a friendly place to come to visit! Thank you for making our time with you so pleasant. Mr Palk and I enjoyed talking to you and listening to how much you like coming to school. It was also good to see how much you enjoy learning. We were very impressed by the good work you do in lots of subjects, especially science and information and communication technology.

We thought your school was a good school with some excellent features and all the adults working with you care very much about you and want you to do well. Your headteacher leads and manages your school very well indeed. You make good progress during your time at Chiddingly and are ready to manage even harder work when you move to the Secondary School. Your teachers make lessons interesting and also organise special weeks, such as for science, which you said you enjoyed. You behave very well indeed, listen well in lessons and work hard. It was good to see how hard you have all worked to improve your writing. Your parents said how much they liked the school and lots of you told me how well you get on together and how helpful the teachers are. It was good to see how kind you are and how willingly you help each other.

I have asked the teachers to make parts of the school even better. I agree with your teachers that some of you can do even better when you move into Years 3 and 4. Your governors work hard to support your school and we would like them to be even more involved in planning for your futures.

Thank you again for helping to make our days interesting. I hope you will always be as happy at school.

Juliet Ward Her Majesty's Inspector



4 October 2007

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