

Chigwell Row Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114825
Local Authority	ESSEX LA
Inspection number	311721
Inspection dates	21–22 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Ruth Frith

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	46
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Pat Brooks
Headteacher	Mrs Steph Tedora
Date of previous school inspection	20 October 2003
School address	Lambourne Road Chigwell Essex IG7 6EZ
Telephone number	0208 500 3355
Fax number	0208 501 2672

Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a very small, three-class school which mainly serves families who live nearby. These families come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds and the percentage receiving free school meals is below average. Children enter the school with attainment that is typical of children nationally. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is currently below average but in recent years, it has been higher. Most pupils are White British with a significant minority coming from a range of other ethnic backgrounds. A few speak English as an additional language.

Following the recent resignation of the substantive headteacher, an acting headteacher has taken over leadership and management of the school. There have been considerable staffing changes and the longest serving teacher has been in the school for just over a year.

The school has gained the Activemark in recognition of its work.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The inspection agrees with the school's accurate evaluation that it provides a satisfactory standard of education. The new acting headteacher has brought a sense of urgency to improving teaching and learning, and to raising standards. She has already made a difference. Parents are generally supportive of the school and how staff help their children as indicated in the following comment, 'Since my son has joined the school he has flourished and his work has continued to improve.' However, several parents have been concerned about frequent changes in staffing and inconsistencies in leadership and management. High expectations and clear guidance from the acting headteacher, together with effective support from the local authority and teachers from a nearby school are already bringing about improvements. These recent developments, and satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, suggest that the school has satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Pupils progress satisfactorily overall, but make a good start in Reception where provision and teaching are good. In Year 2, pupils are working at broadly average levels and have particular strengths in writing. Although teaching is only satisfactory because of inconsistencies in the pace of learning and teachers' expectations, there are several good features. Staff are aware of the need for more rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure that recent initiatives are working and teaching is consistently good or better. Although systems to track pupils' progress are in place, these are not always used effectively to develop challenging targets and thereby ensure the best possible progress. The curriculum is satisfactory and recent improvements have strengthened pupils' interest in writing.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Most pupils enjoy effectively what they do at school, particularly if activities are practical. Behaviour is satisfactory which reflects changes in staff when pupils were not clear about how they should behave. Recent improvements reflect more stable staffing and high expectations. The personal, social and health education programme (PSHE) is effective in encouraging pupils to live healthy lives and stay safe. Pupils' care, guidance and support are satisfactory and they are appropriately prepared for the next stage of education. However, pupils are not always clear about how to improve their work or what to aim for as weaknesses remain in target setting and teachers' marking.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Staff and governors share the acting headteacher's clear vision for the school. Although governors have been fully supportive of the school they have not always been skilled in asking questions or looking at information to ensure the school is doing as well as it could.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's learning and development are good so that by the time they enter Year 1 nearly all are working at levels expected for their age and some are working above. Children settle quickly because expectations are clear and routines helpful. Staff work well as a team and have a good understanding of how young children learn. Good planning and organisation result in a range of interesting activities that stimulate children's interests and encourage them to enjoy their learning both in the classroom and outside. Recent improvements to the way children are taught letters and the sounds that they make are already helping to improve progress and raise standards in reading and writing. Staff gain a good understanding of what children know and

achieve through regular observations and assessments but this information needs to be used more effectively.

What the school should do to improve further

- Simplify the collection and use of data so that staff can more easily track pupils' progress from entry through to Year 2 and use the information gained from this to set appropriately challenging targets.
- Rigorously monitor teaching so that clear strengths and areas for improvement are identified and this information is used to ensure that teaching is consistently good or better.
- Develop the use of target setting and teachers' marking so that pupils are clear about how they can improve their work.
- Improve governors' skills in monitoring the work of the school to enable them to hold the school to account for its performance.

A small proportion of 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

Pupils of all abilities, including those who find learning difficult, achieve satisfactorily. However, because of recent improvements to teaching and learning their rate of progress is beginning to increase. This is seen particularly in pupils' writing where standards are improving throughout the school. Currently, pupils in Year 2 are working at broadly average levels in reading and mathematics and slightly above average levels in writing. The 2007 Year 2 national assessments indicate that pupils made satisfactory progress but reached below average standards, particularly in writing where no pupils gained the higher Level 3. These results reflect that particular year group where 50% of pupils were identified as having difficulties with their learning in English and/or mathematics. The school did not reach its targets last year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Most pupils respond well to the high expectations of staff and behave well but a significant minority rely on staff to remind them how to behave and show respect for others. Nearly all pupils enjoy school and make friends. Pupils have a clear understanding of what constitutes unacceptable behaviour and what they should do about it if it occurs. Pupils know how to live healthy lives and this affects what they do. They are willing to try unfamiliar food and understand what constitutes a healthy diet. They also use playtimes well to gain regular exercise and raise their fitness levels. They work together well, for example, when skipping and organising other games. Activities such as these and pupils' satisfactory progress make a sound contribution to their future economic well-being. Currently, the school council is not operating so opportunities for pupils to contribute to the community remain satisfactory rather than good. Attendance is satisfactory. Despite encouragement and guidance from the school, attendance for a few is below average due in part to parents continuing to take holidays in term time and not getting their children to school on time.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Though satisfactory, teaching and learning have improved and there are elements of good practice throughout the school. However, some of the recently introduced initiatives are not yet applied consistently thereby failing to ensure that the overall quality of teaching rises from satisfactory to consistently good. Where teaching is more successful, planning is good and takes into account the varying needs in the class and the pupils' next steps in learning. Teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn and share this with them so pupils know what is expected of them and are confident in their learning. Expectations are high; the pace of learning brisk and the challenge provided ensures they can succeed. In the lessons that are satisfactory, these elements are not so well established so pupils' progress is slower. Teaching is sometimes over ambitious with too many activities and complicated organisation. Now and again, information from assessing pupils' work and progress is not used effectively to plan work that matches their abilities. Consequently, learning is not as good as it could be. In addition, the marking of pupils' work is not fully effective, as pupils do not always understand the comments. A successful feature of all teaching is the good relationships staff have with pupils and this, in turn, supports the good management of behaviour and supportive atmosphere in lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Recent good developments in the way learning is planned and the renewed focus on writing and mathematics are helping to raise standards. Most pupils enjoy learning as the curriculum is developing to ensure that they receive creative and enjoyable experiences and gain knowledge, skills and understanding through studying a specific topic. However, staff recognise that more needs to be done. Pupils enjoy the range of visits that help them to understand through first hand experience and observation. They say that the choir and sporting activities are good but additional clubs and activities are rather limited. The PSHE programme is satisfactory but pupils do not have an effective understanding of Britain as a diverse society and their place within it. Staff are using interactive whiteboards effectively to stimulate pupils' interest and develop learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Good relationships between adults and pupils, and initiatives such as the 'worry box' encourage pupils to share their concerns and this helps them to feel safe. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress because their needs are recognised and effective support provided. Good links are made with a range of outside agencies to gain expert advice. Safeguarding pupils, child protection and health and safety procedures are securely in place. Academic guidance through, for example, target setting and enabling pupils to evaluate and improve their own work, is not yet effectively embedded in everyday practice. Consequently, pupils are not always clear about how to improve their work or what to aim for.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Key areas of strength and weakness have been identified through the acting headteacher's rigorous and insightful self-evaluation of the school's work. Clear priorities together with appropriate strategies have been highlighted so the school is on a clear path of improvement. In the past, staff, governors, parents and pupils had not been sufficiently involved in the process of self-review. Consequently, governors have been slow to take action. They now satisfactorily support the school through their work in committee and visits. They have recently recognised the need to play a more active role in monitoring and evaluation to enable them to gain a clear understanding of the school's effectiveness. Occasionally, information about how well pupils are doing is not used successfully to track their progress from entry to Year 2.

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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	3
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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

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

23 February 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Chigwell Row Infant School, Chigwell IG7 6EZ

You may remember that I recently visited your school to talk to you about what you do and what you learn. Thank you for making me feel so welcome. I enjoyed my visit. If you read on further you will see some of the things I found out.

- You are trying hard and your writing is improving.
- Because teaching is improving you are beginning to make better progress.
- You enjoy school and your behaviour is improving.
- Although most of you attend school regularly, a few of you miss lessons because you are late or go on holiday. What a shame!
- You get on well with each other and make friends.
- You enjoy the choir, sporting activities, visits and using the computers.
- You have a good understanding of how to live healthy lives.
- Staff look after you so you feel safe. I was pleased to hear that you would go to a member of staff if you had any problems.

Mrs Tedora manages the school well and staff and governors agree with what she is trying to do. They all want to make the school even better and are going to focus on a few important things. They will be using the information they have on how you are doing to make sure that you all achieve as well as you can. They will also be checking teaching and learning so that they can find ways to make them even better, particularly the way they mark your work and set targets so that you understand what you need to do to improve. The governors are also going to make sure that they always understand how well the school is doing. I know you will respond well to their efforts and try hard.

I left your school confident that it will continue to improve and wish you all well.

Yours sincerely

Ruth Frith

Lead inspector