

# Cheriton Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118480
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	312956
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 May 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Kevin Hodge

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	348
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Illsley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Angela Maxted
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 June 2004
<b>School address</b>	Church Road Folkestone CT20 3EP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01303 276112
<b>Fax number</b>	01303 272305

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

In this bigger-than-average school, the proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is greater than found in many schools, partly because it has a unit for children with hearing impairment sited within the school. These pupils often have specialist support within the unit, and join their classes in the main school for some lessons. About 25% of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, mainly from Nepalese families posted to the local military barracks. As a result, the proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language is above average, as is the proportion of pupils who leave or join the school at times other than usual ones. Pupils' level of attainment when they join the school is broadly typical for their age.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Cheriton Primary is a satisfactory school. Since its last inspection it has steadily tackled those academic aspects that needed improving to match its success in fostering community links between children and families with contrasting backgrounds. All but a small minority of parents are happy about the school's improvements. Comments like, 'The school has gone from strength to strength' and 'There are changes for the better' were typical of many.

Children make a smooth start to school in the Reception classes and reach average levels when they move to the next year. In Years 1 to 6, pupils' achievement sometimes varies between year groups, as not all teaching challenges pupils to do their best. Despite these variations, pupils reach broadly average standards and achieve satisfactorily in most subjects by the time they leave in Year 6. In English, their written and spoken vocabulary is often narrow so their creative writing lacks sparkle and their verbal skills are not well developed. Pupils' achievement in mathematics and science reflects a steadily improving picture and, as with English, pupils are on track to meet their targets this year. Those pupils with severe hearing impairment achieve well and other pupils with learning difficulties keep up with classmates as they have well-targeted support.

Pupils generally play together happily, despite the view of a very small number of parents who feel this is not always the case. In lessons and around the school, most pupils behave well, say they feel safe and enjoy their work. This reflects the school's success in promoting pupils' social development, so that pupils relate well to each other whatever their background. Teachers are good at promoting these positive relationships among pupils, but not all are successful at stretching pupils' thinking or in developing their ability to solve problems, particularly in science. Staff are planning more exciting activities for lessons, although pupils sometimes say they have covered similar work before. This repetition hinders their progress and enjoyment. The academic guidance pupils receive, through the marking of their work or in setting simple targets, is regular but not always effective, as pupils remain unclear about what they need to do to improve their work.

The school has improved several areas since its last inspection, particularly in the many improvements to the building and improved academic results. The arrangements for staff to oversee some subjects are comparatively new and not fully effective. Governors are supportive and are keen to improve the school further. The school's realistic assessment of its effectiveness and track record of improvement reflect its satisfactory and developing capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Provision is satisfactory and improving. Children make satisfactory progress, reaching levels of skills that are average by the start of Year 1. Their progress in developing personal and social skills is particularly good. Better approaches in developing children's early writing skills are helping their confidence, although opportunities are sometimes missed to develop their speaking skills or in stretching their creative abilities when working independently. There is a good balance between activities directed by the teachers and those chosen by children. The outside area has a variety of resources to help stimulate pupils' interest, but a lack of space hinders more regular energetic activities and some development of their physical skills. There are

effective partnerships with parents and local pre-schools which enable children to get off to a good start.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Help pupils in Years 1 to 6 to use a wider vocabulary in their written work and speaking to enable them to express their ideas more confidently and creatively.
- Ensure that all teaching sets high expectations for pupils, particularly in developing their investigative skills, so that activities challenge pupils' learning fully.
- Ensure that pupils in Years 1 to 6 have a good understanding of how to improve their work through better use of simple target setting and marking of their work.

A small proportion of the 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 achieve satisfactorily and reach broadly average standards by the time they leave. The school has steadily improved its results since the last inspection, but it is taking longer to improve writing skills. Pupils' written vocabulary is often narrow and this means their writing lacks flair and creativity. Pupils' ability to speak confidently varies too much and opportunities to develop these skills are too infrequent. Pupils' current science work indicates they have good scientific knowledge, but not investigative skills. The school's checks on pupils' progress, including those who speak English as an additional language, indicate their achievement is improving at a steady rate and they are on track to meet their challenging targets again this year. Those pupils with learning difficulties keep pace with classmates and those with severe hearing impairment make good progress as a result of specialist help and close monitoring of their progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils enjoy the atmosphere in the school, and most take pride in belonging. The school's efforts to improve pupils' social and moral awareness are helping ensure their behaviour is good around the school. Pupils say any inappropriate behaviour is tackled quickly by staff. As relationships are good, pupils say they feel safe and well cared for and enjoy attending. They are attentive in lessons, although some become restless when work is too easy or has been covered before. Pupils' awareness of healthy lifestyles is good, although they are honest about the difficulties of eating healthily. As one said, 'It's really difficult.' Older pupils enjoy opportunities to contribute to school life through working on the school council or as mediators who help solve disputes. These responsibilities, along with their improving literacy and numeracy skills, help their readiness for the next stage of their education. Pupils contribute to the wider community appropriately through charity fundraising and regular links with events held at the local military base and in the local community.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teachers foster good relationships between pupils. This helps ensure they work together well and are willing to learn. In the Reception classes, there is a good balance between different types of activities. In Years 3 to 6, teachers sometimes spend too much time directing work and some activities are often too prescribed rather than open ended. This hinders pupils' ability to work independently or to develop the desire to investigate problems for themselves, for example, in science. Good planning within lessons ensures that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported effectively, often by well-briefed teaching assistants. This ensures they keep up with classmates. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are catered for sensitively and they enjoy the work set.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

There is an appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' basic skills, particularly in reading, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). In English, activities that motivate the desire to read have worked, but opportunities to widen pupils' written and spoken vocabulary are sometimes missed. Science work is sometimes over-directed. Good emphasis on promoting pupils' well-being helps pupils develop mature attitudes. Special activities that develop their emotional understanding result in them working together well. To help make lessons more fun and engaging, the school is beginning to combine subjects into topics. This is at an early stage and some tasks set are sometimes too easy or repeat work that has already been done in science. Events such as multicultural weeks and after-school clubs enrich class activities. Regular 'wow' days, where pupils experience something different, like seeing how lunch is prepared in a local Chinese restaurant before sitting down to eat it, really enthuse them.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

Pupils with severe disabilities are supported well, along with the school 'going the extra mile' to support those families from different backgrounds. Regular coffee mornings help reluctant parents come to school to seek help and advice. Children who join the school make a smooth start, as there are good links with their previous schools to aid their transfer. There are clear arrangements to help older pupils make a confident start to their secondary education. The school works closely with outside agencies to ensure that pupils make increasingly better progress, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. While most parents are pleased with the support their children receive, a small number would like more. The arrangements for safeguarding pupils are clear and effective and pupils are confident they can turn to any member of staff for help. Although teachers regularly set academic targets for pupils, these are not always given sufficient attention. Teachers assess pupils regularly, but not all marking helps pupils improve by referring to the pupils' success or otherwise in understanding the aims of the lesson. As a result, not all pupils really know exactly how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve their work.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The senior leaders are keen for further improvement, and recent changes introduced by the headteacher are bearing fruit, such as pupils' improved reading. However, the school recognises that aspects of teaching and the curriculum need further improvement. The school is successful in promoting community cohesion between pupils and families with different backgrounds and beliefs. Subject leaders check on teaching and pupils' work to help guide improvement but their observations are not always effective in pinpointing what will improve pupils' learning best. This reduces the effectiveness of the school's otherwise realistic self-evaluation. Governors have helped promote improvement, particularly in the quality of the building. Their routines to check on the school's work have recently changed so it is too early to gauge how effective it will be to help them assess the school's progress. However, the Chair meets regularly with the headteacher to provide support and the governors are keen for further improvement.

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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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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	3
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	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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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

15 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cheriton Primary School, Folkestone, Kent CT20 3EP

Thank you for making us feel welcome at your school when we visited it recently. Yours is a satisfactory school which is trying to be even better. It has some good things about it.

Here are some of the things we found out.

- You make satisfactory progress in your work and most of you reach the expected levels; your writing is not as good as it could be and your investigative work in science needs to be better.
- All the staff make sure that you feel safe; you said you like the way teachers deal with those who don't behave well.
- Teachers plan some activities well, but could give you more opportunities to work on your own.
- Those of you on the school council or who act as mediators enjoy your responsibilities and like helping the school to get better.
- You know about keeping fit and active but you say that eating sensibly is quite hard for you. How about helping to sell fruit at playtimes?
- You behave well at playtimes and you make friends easily, particularly with those who have different backgrounds or beliefs.
- The staff and governors are working hard to make sure that the school runs smoothly and the school now looks really nice.

We have asked the school to do three things.

- Give you more help with your writing and speaking skills so you are really confident to express your ideas.
- Make sure that you are all really challenged to do your best in lessons, particularly in the investigative work you do in science.
- Make sure you know your individual targets so they can really help you to learn even better.

You can help too by continuing to be well behaved and in giving the school more good ideas about improving further.

Best wishes,

Kevin Hodge Lead inspector