

Cheswardine Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123357
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	314572
Inspection date	25 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Hemmings

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	83
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Howse
Headteacher	Stuart King
Date of previous school inspection	26 April 2004
School address	Glebe Close Cheswardine Market Drayton TF9 2RU
Telephone number	01630 661233
Fax number	01630 661233

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small school in which pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Most pupils are from White British Backgrounds. The headteacher has been in post for four terms.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. It is improving. It provides pupils with a safe and friendly setting in which to learn. The overwhelming majority of parents are supportive of the school and are particularly pleased with the way staff care for their children. One parental comment is typical of many: 'Cheswardine School encourages the children to do their best and has strong links to the community. It has a family feel to it and the children all look out for each other.'

The headteacher has been the driving force behind the improvements brought about over the last year. These include the introduction of a more precise system for checking the progress that individual pupils make so that work can be better tailored to their needs. Improved links with parents mean they are more involved in their children's learning both at home and in school. Performance management has been improved to link more effectively the professional development needs of staff to whole-school priorities. Other developments include a wider range of enrichment activities to extend the curriculum and improved resources for English and mathematics. Most of these improvements have not had time to impact fully on pupils' progress but the early signs are encouraging. Out of necessity, the headteacher has taken on most of the responsibility for overseeing these changes, as other leaders were relatively inexperienced at the time of his appointment. More responsibility is now being delegated to them but they are not yet fully involved in monitoring and evaluating the school's performance. The way the school is improving and the strong teamwork evident between all involved with the school show that the capability to make any necessary changes is good.

Children make satisfactory progress in the Reception class and enter Year 1 with average skill levels across all areas of learning. They maintain this satisfactory progress throughout the rest of the school. As a result, they attain broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2, and in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. This represents satisfactory achievement from their starting point on entering school. Pupils perform less well in mathematics and science than in English. This stems from them not having enough opportunities to develop and refine their problem-solving skills in mathematics and their investigational skills in science.

Pupils behave well and enjoy coming to school, which is reflected in their above average attendance. They have positive attitudes to learning and good relationships with other pupils and adults. This leads to classrooms being calm and friendly places in which to learn. Teachers give pupils interesting activities and use praise well to encourage them to try their best. However, they do not always plan work that effectively challenges all pupils. This is particularly the case for pupils who are more able. This is the main reason that progress is satisfactory rather than at least good. A wide range of enrichment activities effectively extends the satisfactory curriculum. These include extra-curricular activities and educational visits. Parents and pupils appreciate the time given by staff to provide these extra learning experiences. Pastoral care is strong and underpins pupils' good personal development. Staff are committed to the care and safety of all pupils and there are good links with other providers, such as health services, to promote pupils' well-being.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children start school with skill levels in line with those expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress in the Reception class and, on entry to Year 1, are working securely within the goals for all areas of learning. Children behave well and enjoy their activities. Staff encourage them to work collaboratively in pairs and small groups and this makes a positive contribution to their personal development. Staff provide children with interesting activities that are practical and fun. At times, these activities are too adult-directed and restrict children in making choices for themselves. Staff take good care of children and they feel happy and safe. Leadership and management are satisfactory and leaders have correctly identified the need to develop the use of the outside area to better support children's learning throughout the day. Parents are involved effectively in their children's learning, such as in the 'stay and play' sessions in which they work alongside them in class. Induction arrangements are good and enable children to settle quickly into everyday routines when they first start in Reception.

What the school should do to improve further

- Sharpen lesson planning so pupils are always challenged effectively, especially the more able.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their problem-solving skills in mathematics and their investigational skills in science.
- Fully involve all leaders in monitoring and evaluating the school's 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

Though standards have fluctuated in recent years, the trend is one of gradual improvement. The lack of sufficient challenge at times hinders pupils' progress and achievement, especially for the more able. Boys have not performed as well as girls in English, mathematics and science. Over the last year, a number of initiatives have been introduced to better engage boys in their learning. These include the provision of books that are more boy-orientated and the offer of more practical activities. These are proving successful and evidence indicates that the gap in the performance of boys and girls is narrowing. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enter school with standards that are below average, due to their additional needs. The extra help they receive, particularly from teaching assistants, enables them to make the same satisfactory progress as other pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are polite and courteous and show respect for the ideas and opinions of others. They are keen to take on responsibilities, such as being one of the house captains who consider the views of pupils and relate them to the school's leaders. This helps pupils make a positive contribution to the life of the school and have a voice in how it develops. Pupils make a good contribution to village life, by raising funds for charity and taking part in events in the local church. They adopt healthy lifestyles well and talk enthusiastically about the need to take regular physical exercise and for a balanced diet.

Pupils know how to stay safe, which is reflected in the responsible way they move in and around school. They develop literacy and numeracy skills in a satisfactory way and are prepared soundly for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Pupils enjoy their activities in lessons and have positive attitudes to their learning. They maintain their concentration for lengthy periods and work well with others to complete tasks. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and so are able to ask relevant questions to find out what pupils know and to develop their understanding further. They use praise well to develop pupils' confidence and raise their self-esteem. Teachers take into consideration the different age ranges in their classes when planning work. However, they are not always successful in providing activities that are sufficiently challenging and this is particularly the case for pupils who are more able. Marking sometimes lacks sufficient detail to guide pupils effectively in how they might improve their performance. Pupils are developing their skills in evaluating for themselves how well they are doing and how to improve, but this is at an early stage. Teaching assistants provide valuable support for pupils, especially for children in the Reception class and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The good links with other providers extend pupils' experiences successfully and add further interest to the curriculum. These include working with professional sports coaches and musicians to develop skills in physical education and music. Visits to places of educational interest, such as Cosford Air Museum, add to pupils' understanding of the wider world. The good programme for personal development, including a residential stay for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6, has a beneficial effect on pupils' personal and social development. Curriculum planning is not always focused enough to stretch pupils to achieve to their full capability. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop their problem-solving skills in mathematics and their investigational skills in science. The opportunities for them to explore the implications of advertising, costs and profit and the moral responsibilities of consumers make a good contribution towards preparing pupils for the world of work.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The arrangements for safeguarding pupils are good, and include robust child protection procedures and rigorous risk assessments in and around school and on visits. All staff know the pupils well and are able to provide strong pastoral support to meet their individual needs. Good links with external providers, such as learning support services, ensure the provision of extra help for individual pupils when required. Pupils say they feel safe and secure in school and know they can talk to a member of staff if they have any worries and concerns. Academic guidance is satisfactory, with an improved system for tracking the progress that pupils make having recently been introduced. However, the information gathered is not always used effectively to plan work that challenges pupils, especially the more able. The guidance for pupils

to evaluate for themselves how well they are doing and how they might improve is at an early stage of development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

All who lead the school share a common commitment to school improvement. They work well together and carry out their responsibilities with diligence and enthusiasm. Over the last year, the headteacher has carried out most of the monitoring and evaluating of the school's performance. Other leaders are now being given more responsibility but they are not yet fully involved in promoting school improvement. Self-evaluation is accurate and enables the school to identify and prioritise areas for development. These include raising the achievement of more able pupils and better promoting problem-solving skills in mathematics and investigational skills in science. Staff and resources are deployed well, as is seen in the extra support provided by teaching assistants for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Governors are supportive of the school and keen to further their expertise in asking relevant questions of leaders about the school's performance.

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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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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?	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	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	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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cheswardine Primary School, Market Drayton TF9 2RU

Thank you for the really friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing the things you do. Yours is a satisfactory school that is improving. It helps you make satisfactory progress and reach standards in English, mathematics and science that are average by the end of Year 6.

What we found about your school:

- It is a very friendly and happy place in which to work and play.
- You behave well and are keen to learn.
- The curriculum is made interesting by the after-school clubs and a wide range of visits and visitors.
- You enjoy coming to school and are kind and considerate to others.
- Adults look after you well and make sure you are safe in and around school and on visits.
- You lead healthy lifestyles and show a good awareness of how to stay safe.
- You make a good contribution to the school community, such as by being a house captain, and to the life of the village.
- The people who lead the school are working hard to keep it improving and help you do better.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- Improve lesson planning so you are always challenged effectively, especially those who find work easy.
- Provide more opportunities for you to develop your problem-solving skills in mathematics and your investigational skills in science.
- Make sure all those who lead the school are fully involved in checking how well it is doing.

All of you can help the school to keep on improving by always trying your best in everything you do.

All my best wishes for the future.

Melvyn Hemmings

Lead inspector