

Chesterton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124169
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	314829
Inspection dates	24–25 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Barbara Crane

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	167
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Cooper
Headteacher	Jonathan Jones
Date of previous school inspection	19 January 2004
School address	Brittain Avenue Chesterton Newcastle ST5 7NT
Telephone number	01782 561255
Fax number	01782 565713

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This smaller than average primary school serves an area of social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is high, as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The overwhelming majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds with a very small number from different minority ethnic groups. Children's attainment when they start school is well below expectations.

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. Pupils enjoy learning in a caring and friendly environment and are soundly prepared for the future. They make a good contribution to the school and the wider community. The overwhelming majority of parents are happy with what the school provides for their children.

Children start with skills that are well below expectations and make good progress in the Foundation Stage. This means that their standards are below average by the time they start in Year 1. From then on, progress is satisfactory and standards remain below average when pupils leave Year 6. Teaching is satisfactory but information about pupils' progress from assessments is not always used effectively to adapt work for different abilities, including for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The level of challenge for more able pupils is sometimes too low. Standards in English are lower than in mathematics and science. This is because pupils' writing is not as well developed as it should be. Pupils are not always sure what to do to reach their targets in writing because teachers' marking and feedback does not always give them sufficient guidance.

The good quality care by the staff has a positive impact on pupils' good personal development. Advice and support from outside agencies are quickly sought and well used to support vulnerable pupils. Pupils behave well and have a good sense of justice. One Year 6 pupil said that the most important thing learned in the school is to 'do what you know is right in your heart'. Pupils know how to lead healthy lifestyles and keep themselves and others safe. The good range of visits, clubs and links with other schools in sport support a satisfactory curriculum.

Satisfactory leadership and management ensure that the school is improving and is on track to meet its suitably challenging targets. The headteacher's clear sense of direction for the school is shared by the staff and so standards have risen in mathematics and science. There is satisfactory capacity to improve. Managers who are new to their roles are steadily building skills in monitoring through a good programme of professional development. Their scrutiny of initiatives to boost pupils' progress is not yet sufficiently developed and hence the school's ability to check its drive to raise standards and pupils' achievement is not fully effective.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children receive a good start in the Foundation Stage. From beginnings that are well below expectations, children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes. When children start Year 1 standards are below average. Good teaching leads to particularly rapid gains in children's language and personal, social and emotional development. Adults' warm and supportive manner ensures that children approach tasks confidently. The curriculum achieves a good balance of indoor and outdoor activities. Good leadership and management ensure that the right areas for improvement are being worked on, for example through providing more opportunities for children to independently access resources in the outdoor area to boost their knowledge and understanding of the world.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English and ensure that pupils know how to reach their targets in writing.

- Make better use of assessments to ensure that pupils of different abilities have suitably challenging work.
- Improve managers' skills in checking pupils' progress and whether initiatives are working or not.

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

Children in the Foundation Stage make particularly good progress in language and in their personal, social and emotional development. This gives children a solid platform for the future that is not built on securely in subsequent years. There are signs of improved progress in Years 1 to 6 in mathematics and reading owing to the school's initiatives to improve teaching in these areas. The standards reached by Year 6 pupils in 2007 showed an upturn but English results were behind those in mathematics and science. While pupils' achievement is satisfactory from Years 1 to 6, the lack of challenge for more able pupils and their low skills in writing restrict their progress. Standards remain below average in English and are broadly average in mathematics and science. Pupils' progress in mathematics is often more rapid because of more consistent adaptation of work to suit pupils' different abilities. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. It is prevented from being better because teaching does not always take account of pupils' needs in class, particularly in writing. Consequently, these pupils do not maintain the good rate of progress they make when they are supported through specific programmes outside of class lessons.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are happy at school, right from the start, and enjoy being with the adults and their friends. They feel positively about themselves because adults create an atmosphere in which pupils grow in confidence. Everyone knows what is expected and pupils' behaviour is good. They develop qualities such as politeness and respect for others that help to generate the good relationships seen everywhere. Pupils say 'The best things are the teachers and the help you get.' They enjoy lessons and work together happily in small groups. The school council is planning to improve playground equipment after canvassing pupils' views, and enterprise-related activities are greatly enjoyed by pupils. There is good participation in wider community events, for example the choir performed at the Young Voices event at the National Indoor Arena. Pupils who took part said that this experience was unforgettable. Older pupils act as play leaders and help younger ones to learn playground games. Pupils trained as peer mediators enjoy taking the responsibility for sorting out others' problems. Around half of the pupils take part in extra sporting activities that help boost their good levels of fitness. Pupils choose to eat and drink healthily at break and lunchtimes. They act responsibly around school and know how to keep themselves and others safe. They are well prepared for the future in developing positive attitudes to learning and good social skills but are less well prepared in terms of their progress in developing basic skills. Attendance is broadly average and has improved through the school's good efforts.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

In all parts of the school, teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and build trusting relationships with them. Consequently, there is a good climate for learning and pupils are open to new ideas. Adults are firm but fair and so pupils stick to the rules. Teachers use information and communication technology confidently to gain pupils' interest in learning. There is some skilled support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who follow specific programmes that focus precisely on pupils' needs and enable them to learn well. When these pupils are taught with their class group, the work is sometimes not pitched at just the right level for them and so their progress is limited. The lack of consistency in expectations for more able pupils is another limiting factor in pupils' learning. Pupils have targets for writing but are not sufficiently helped through teachers' marking about the small steps that they need to take to reach them.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Pupils' good social and emotional development is supported through a well-planned programme that is woven into the school's daily life. Their awareness of how to cope with the pressures of making the right choices about lifestyle and relationships springs from the school's good planning for health and social education. The local Community Learning Partnership enables pupils to gain a wider experience in learning and there is a high take up of extra activities in the performing arts and sport. Links with the local specialist sports college mean that pupils access a broad range of sports. Pupils' pleasure in making music was evident in a session with Year 2 pupils who were practising African drumming. The curriculum is not as successful in ensuring that it builds consistently on pupils' prior attainment in writing and for more able pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils say they feel secure in school because of the good level of care provided by the staff. They confidently approach adults if they need help because they are sure of a quick response. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are robust. There is effective support for vulnerable children to overcome personal difficulties. The school has worked effectively to develop more precise systems for tracking pupils' progress. These are not yet used as fully as they should be to pinpoint slower progress. All pupils have targets for literacy and numeracy. The guidance given to help them achieve these is not yet fully effective in writing. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory but the targets set for them are sometimes too vague to guide teaching. Advice is speedily sought from outside agencies and well used to further the progress of pupils with complex needs.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school's accurate self-evaluation means that it has the right priorities. The headteacher has worked diligently with the staff to ensure that the school is in a sound position to eradicate

weaknesses and build on its strengths. The staff are good at promoting pupils' emotional and social development because of wise investment in staff training to support a consistent approach. Resources are directed appropriately to those most in need. Good use is being made of advice and support from the local authority to improve teaching and speed up pupils' progress in their work. This has led to some marked improvements in pupils' progress in mathematics and reading. Presently, the skills in monitoring and evaluation among some managers are not sufficiently developed to fully support the school's clear view of which initiatives are working well and which are not. This means that the school is not fully aware where to focus teachers' next. The staff and governors promote good community involvement and relationships through the Community Learning Project. The school hosts, for example, family learning programmes. Governors fulfil all of their statutory duties and are active in the school's daily life. They keep a close check on how effectively the school's initiatives to improve attendance are working. Their capacity to ask pertinent questions about the pupils' performance is limited because they lack full information to do so.

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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?	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	3
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

28 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Chesterton Primary School, Newcastle, ST5 7NT

We really enjoyed visiting your school, because you were all so welcoming. Thank you for talking to us and showing us your work. We are glad that you enjoy school and that the staff look after you well. You are getting a sound education. This is what else we found out about your school.

- Children get off to a good start in Nursery and Reception.
- You make satisfactory progress in your work and standards are improving because of sound teaching.
- You all help to make your school a happy place. This is because you behave well and are kind and help each other. You told us how much you enjoy being with the staff and your friends.
- You make the right choices over how to stay healthy and safe. It is good that you feel part of the community because you get so involved in things.
- You have a satisfactory curriculum and many of you take part in the many extra activities that you find exciting.
- The people who run the school know what they have to do to make it better. They find out which things most need improving.

We have asked the school to do a few things to help it improve further.

- Make sure that you do better with your writing and know how to reach your targets.
- Provide work that is just at the right level for everyone.
- Ensure that leaders and managers know exactly how well things are working to help you to do your best.

You can help your school to become even better by always trying your hardest. We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Barbara Crane Lead inspector

28 April 2008

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Barbara Crane
Lead inspector