

Chilton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131865
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	315882
Inspection dates	22–23 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Kathryn Dodd

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	377
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Frank Forrest
Headteacher	Mr David Wallace
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2004
School address	Chilton Ferryhill County Durham DL17 0PT
Telephone number	01388 720255
Fax number	01388 721619

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Almost all the pupils attending this larger than average sized school are White British. The school serves an area of significant social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is well above average. In 2007, an associate headteacher and a deputy headteacher were appointed. In March 2008, the school became a designated Children's Centre. The school holds a number of national awards, including the Healthy Schools Award and the Artsmark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Chilton Primary is a satisfactory school. It has an accurate view of its effectiveness and provides satisfactory value for money. It is also an improving school with some good features, such as pupils' good personal development and the quality of care, guidance and support they receive. This is a happy, friendly, safe and welcoming place to learn. Pupils are well supported to develop good personal skills and guidance for their learning is satisfactory. Pupils behave well, have good attitudes to learning, and speak knowledgeably about how to keep healthy. Pupils are keen to contribute positively towards their school and local community. These personal qualities provide a positive platform upon which to improve their academic achievement, and prepare them to become responsible citizens of the future. Most parents are pleased with the quality of education their children receive. They appreciate the support offered to pupils with social and emotional needs, and the opportunities to learn how they can help their children at home, particularly in the Nursery and Reception classes.

As a result of satisfactory teaching and learning in Years 1 to 6, pupils now make steady progress. In some classes progress is good as a result of more challenging targets and improved tracking of pupils' learning. The rate of pupils' progress, however, has been too slow until this year. As a result, standards by Year 6 in recent years have declined. In 2007, they were well below average. School data and inspection evidence shows that current standards are higher; albeit still below average. This improving picture is a result of the rigorous and determined efforts of leaders to tackle weaknesses by setting more challenging learning targets and by keeping a closer eye on pupils' progress towards them. Standards in writing across the school remain well below average. Progress in writing continues to be held back by a lack of opportunities for practising writing as part of work in other subjects.

Teachers seize opportunities to broaden their skills and improve pupils' learning. As a result, there are examples of good lessons, notably in Years 5 and 6. However, because teaching is satisfactory overall, learning moves forward at a satisfactory rate rather than the good rate for which the school strives. The satisfactory curriculum is bolstered by a number of national awards which support pupils' healthy and active approach to life, their success in art and design and their satisfactory skills in information and communication technology.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The recently formed leadership team has signposted a clear turning point in the school's development. They have taken swift and decisive action to try to reverse the declining trend in standards. Other leaders, managers and governors are improving their skills, so that they can acquire a more accurate view of how well the school is performing. However, opportunities for them to do so are limited. Nevertheless, there is a sensible and realistic view of the way forward, and a shared determination to rise to the challenges ahead. Success is already evident in pupils' accelerating progress and in the higher standards by Year 6. There is a satisfactory capacity to continue to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good provision in the Foundation Stage enables children's learning to get off to a successful start. When children start in Nursery, their skills are mostly well below those typical for their age. Their communication, language and literacy and their personal, social and emotional skills are particularly low. Staff place high priority on improving children's skills in these areas. Adults

seek out every opportunity to help children to learn to get along well together, talk about their learning, behave well and develop independence. This, along with a wide range of lively activities and good teaching and learning, ensures that children settle quickly into school routines and discover that learning is fun. Staff keep a watchful eye on how well individual children are doing, so that daily activities take account of their varying needs. By the end of Reception, despite making good progress, especially in personal and social skills and language development, children's attainments are still well below what is typical. Leadership and management are good, and there are careful plans in place to improve provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide sufficient opportunities and time for pupils to practise their writing skills in a range of subjects, so that standards improve.
- Raise the quality and consistency of teaching and learning to ensure pupils make good progress.
- Provide more opportunities for senior leaders, managers and governors to find out how well the school is doing and to influence the way forward.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged as 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

Standards are average by Year 6 and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Standards by the end of Year 2 are well below average. Pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 1 from well below average starting points at the end of Reception. Fewer pupils than elsewhere in the school make good progress, because of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning. Standards at Year 6 have declined since the last inspection as a result of some staffing instability. In 2007, the performance of Year 6 pupils in national tests was well below average and the progress of a small proportion of pupils was inadequate from their starting points in Year 3. Pupils' progress is now improving as a result of careful tracking and the use of challenging targets for their learning. More pupils are now making good progress, especially in Years 5 and 6. As a result, standards in the current Year 6 have improved. Although the school is tightly focused on improving standards in writing, these remain well below average across the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive support that enables them to make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils feel happy, safe and secure. Attendance is broadly average and, because of efforts to promote better attendance with pupils and parents, it has recently improved. Pupils behave well, are clear about school rules and understand the consequences of their actions. The school is a harmonious, warm and caring community, in which pupils show courtesy and respect to one another and to adults. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and concentrate hard in lessons. They are delighted to receive rewards for their efforts, particularly in writing. Pupils enjoy school and talk knowledgeably and maturely about how they keep themselves healthy, happy and safe. They take on responsibilities, such as being monitors and

school councillors, with enthusiasm. Although they are well aware that they can help to make their local community a better place to live, their understanding of Britain as an ethnically diverse society is limited. Pupils' growing personal and social skills, along with satisfactory progress in basic literacy and numeracy, prepare them soundly for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Pupils' learning is satisfactory as a result of satisfactory teaching. Purposeful activities, good organisation, positive relationships, well-established routines, effective management of pupils' behaviour and encouragement from support staff are strong features of most lessons. Consequently, pupils are attentive and behave well. Teachers are responding well to changes aimed at accelerating pupils' progress, and are keen to apply new practices. This is why there are examples of good lessons. In these lessons, teachers have high expectations of pupils to respond continually to new challenges and to take some responsibility for their progress towards their learning targets. Teachers assess pupils regularly and use the knowledge increasingly well to plan work that matches pupils' differing learning needs. The best practices, however, are not yet used consistently in all classes. Pupils' learning, therefore, moves forward at a satisfactory, rather than a good rate.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The satisfactory curriculum enables pupils to make steady progress. The strong emphasis on pupils' personal development and well-being ensures that pupils benefit from their academic education. In Year 6, pupils' learning accelerates because they work in smaller groups and have more help from adults for literacy and numeracy. Weaknesses in pupils' communication skills are being successfully tackled by increased opportunities to discuss their learning together. In writing, more time is being given to developing pupils' skills in literacy lessons. Although this is slowly starting to pay dividends, standards in writing are well below average because pupils have too few opportunities to practise writing as part of work in other subjects. A good range of specialised support programmes helps to meet the needs of pupils with additional social and emotional difficulties. Improved arrangements to track pupils' achievement are helping to identify swiftly where their learning needs an extra boost. As a result, the range of support programmes is extending.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Making sure that every pupil is nurtured and cared for is at the very heart of the school. Staff know pupils and their families well, and this helps them to offer the right kind of care and support at the right time to meet the needs of all, including the high proportion of pupils with additional social and emotional needs. Consequently, pupils are confident that someone will always help them to overcome difficulties and help them feel safe. Appropriate procedures for safeguarding pupils are in place. Strong commitment to supporting pupils with social and emotional needs is seen in the very effective partnerships with parents, carers and external agencies. The learning mentor makes a strong contribution to pupils' progress. Academic guidance has improved significantly recently. In some, but not all classes, higher expectations

of what pupils can achieve, setting them more challenging targets and keeping a closer eye on their progress ensures that any underachievement is spotted earlier than previously and that suitable intervention takes place. Older pupils have a good understanding of how to improve, as a result of thorough marking of their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership, management and governance are satisfactory. The recently formed leadership team have put an extensive and carefully planned agenda for improvement in place, which is beginning to accelerate pupils' progress. Declining standards in recent years have now been halted. This change is grounded firmly in a rigorous and accurate evaluation of the school's effectiveness. Staff have responded positively to clear direction. Recently, they, along with governors, have been developing their skills, so that they can make a fuller contribution to evaluating the school's work. They are, however, at an early stage in this. Although the school continues to receive support from the local authority, there are clear signs that it has turned the corner and is improving. Greater stability, the steely determination of staff, along with pupils' good personal development, are helping to accelerate pupils' progress and raise standards.

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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?	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?	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

27 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Chilton Primary School, Durham, DL17 0PT

Thank you so much for the warm welcome you gave the inspectors when we visited your school. You were keen to talk to us and answered our questions thoughtfully, politely and sensibly. Your behaviour is good and you are well mannered. It was good to hear that you feel safe and happy in school. All the adults care about you a great deal. It was good to see how proud you are of the certificates you are given when you have done something well, especially in writing and to see how much you know about the importance of keeping healthy.

Your school is a satisfactory school. There are, however, many things that are changing quite quickly. It is clear that these changes mean that you are now doing better at school. Although you are starting to learn at a faster rate, the standards that you reach by Year 6 are lower than the average for 11-year-olds particularly in your writing. Your headteacher, staff and governors are working very hard to help you to reach higher standards. I have asked them to help you further by making sure that:

- you have more time to practise writing as part of your work in other subjects
- all teachers work in the same way when they make changes to how they teach and how they want you to learn
- all the adults who are responsible for checking how well the school is doing share the job of finding out where and how things might get even better for you.

You can help your school by always asking how well you are getting on and what you still have to do to reach your learning targets. Of course you should continue to try your best in everything that you do and in writing in particular.

I wish you all the very best for a successful future.

Yours sincerely

Kathryn Dodd

Lead inspector