

Chilton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118530
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	317202
Inspection dates	28–29 November 2007
Reporting inspector	David Collard

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	402
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Judi Cro
Headteacher	German
Date of previous school inspection	10 December 2006
School address	Chilton Lane Ramsgate CT11 0LQ
Telephone number	01843 597695
Fax number	01843 852872

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Chilton is a larger than average primary school serving families from the outskirts of the town. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is broadly similar to the national average. Most years children start school with standards that are broadly similar to those expected for their age, although this year they were slightly below. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average.

When the school was inspected in December 2006, it was judged to require special measures because there were weaknesses in pupils' performance, teaching, leadership and management. An acting advisory headteacher was appointed who remained at the school for two terms. The present advisory headteacher was appointed in September 2007. The governing body is in the process of appointing a substantive headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. The school is providing a satisfactory quality of education and has come a long way in the last year. This is because the staff and pupils have worked successfully to bring about the changes that were needed and parents have recognised this. The success can be seen in the proportion of pupils who are now achieving at least as well as they should, and many who are doing better than this. There is also tangible external evidence of improvement in the 2007 data from national tests. For the first time for four years, these show that pupils made significantly high levels of progress between Years 2 and 6 in English and mathematics, even though they did not do as well in science.

The two advisory headteachers have provided good leadership for the school. They have devised good systems and procedures that have ensured that the expertise of the senior and middle managers is being better used. All of them, along with the governing body, have formed a secure and stable senior leadership team capable of questioning and continuing the momentum of improvement. The capacity to improve is good. Staff, including teaching assistants, have become accountable for the pupils' personal and academic achievement and, with the clear direction being provided by the strong forward planning, have the ability to act rapidly to identify and address any weaknesses.

Through the school, a key element of improvement has been a particularly thorough analysis of pupils who were underachieving. As a result, there are good levels of support. Teaching, whilst satisfactory overall, is more consistent and pupils are quickly making up on lost ground. There has been significant input from leading teachers and advisory staff. Whilst there is still some variability, particularly in Key Stage 1, there is also evidence of some outstanding teaching in both key stages. This best practice is being used very well to support others. Pupils are given interesting tasks and can see a purpose for what they do.

Pastoral support is good. Behaviour has been very significantly improved and pupils feel safe. Evidence of this can be seen in the clear reduction in the levels of exclusion, as well as the general behaviour. In discussion with some Year 6 pupils, it is clear that they understand what the school has been through and talked quite openly about 'special measures'. Equally, they know what has improved, have good attitudes to work, and want to play their part in making their school even better. As one pupil very maturely noted, 'I used to get annoyed because we kept repeating work but now everything has moved up and lessons are really fun.'

The concerted, and necessary, efforts to improve the basic skills in literacy and numeracy have meant that, until recently, other subjects have taken more of a back seat. This has changed since September with a completely revised curriculum. Whilst there is still more to do, pupils' books show that this is starting to address gaps from the past. For instance, there is more emphasis on practical and investigative work such as that seen in design and technology, art, geography and history. Nevertheless, this is not yet fully embedded across all subjects and will be the subject of a further review this term.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Those presently in the Reception classes started with standards that were below those expected in communication, language and literacy and in knowledge and understanding of the world.

However, the children are progressing well and are on line to at least achieve all the objectives of the nationally recognised early learning goals. This represents good achievement. Last year, the children also made good progress reaching standards above those expected both against national and local figures. The good leadership is ensuring that there is close liaison between all staff. The challenging activities are well planned and organised, providing a good balance between both teacher directed work and those chosen by the children as part of learning through play. Groups to teach sounds, letters and particularly writing meet children's needs well. This year, more effective emphasis is being placed on creative work as a result of an analysis of children's work from last year. The outside play areas need further improvement to raise the quality of physical development. Plans are being put in place to make this more accessible during wet weather.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in science, identifying where learning in the past has been missed and providing practical, investigative and experimental work to address this.
- Eliminate the inconsistencies in teaching, raising the quality of satisfactory teaching to that of the best.
- Raise pupils' general achievement, ensuring the whole curriculum makes relevant links between subjects.

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 are making satisfactory progress in reading, writing and mathematics overall. Analysis shows that, this half term, a significant proportion have made twice the expected progress, indicating how effective the recent improvement measures have been. It is also ensuring that previous underachievement is quickly being eliminated. In light of this, the school has increased its targets for English and mathematics for this year and next, and there is every chance that these will be met. Pupils say that they now find their work challenging and this is evident from the work seen in their books. All this is ensuring that pupils are adequately prepared for their future lives. Progress is particularly good in Years 2, 5 and 6, where the consistently stronger teaching is having the most effect. Achievement in other subjects, whilst satisfactory, is more variable because the school has been concentrating on making sure that the pupils' basic skills are securely embedded. However, there has been a noticeable improvement during this term in design and technology, geography and history. Nevertheless, there is still a need for more practical and investigative work.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are particularly enthusiastic in Years 5 and 6 and can give good reasons for this, referring to the improvements that have been made over the last few terms. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding of pupils is satisfactory. Attendance has improved and is now broadly average. Behaviour has dramatically improved. It is good in lessons, whilst being satisfactory at other times because a small proportion of pupils need high levels of support when left to their own devices. These needs are slowly, but effectively, being

provided for through individual behaviour programmes. Pupils have good relationships with each other and with adults. They say they 'look out for each other'. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding about keeping safe such as when handling tools or moving apparatus during physical education lessons. They show an appropriate awareness of healthy lifestyles through the increasing number of sports clubs and through their study of healthy foods in science. However, the school is planning more opportunities so that pupils can see how very important it is to stay safe and healthy. The school council gives pupils a voice in the decision making process and ensures that pupils gain a good understanding about citizenship. There are good opportunities to become involved in local and national community events which pupils relish taking part in.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The improvement in teaching has come about because of the better consistency of approach and all teachers understanding what their pupils are capable of achieving. Common strengths include the high quality planning, linked well to assessing what has gone before, and the methods and organisation of lessons. For instance, one teacher replanned her lesson in light of what she had found out from the previous day. This included devising new groups because some pupils picked up the concept more quickly than others. Teaching is very consistent throughout Key Stage 2, particularly in Years 5 and 6. It is more variable in Key Stage 1, where there is still more to do to raise all teachers' expertise to that of the best. Nevertheless, in both key stages, there are examples of outstanding lessons and these are helping raise everybody's game. Pupils and staff say they are enjoying the more cross-curricular approach which makes learning stimulating, exciting and less boring and has helped improve general behaviour. As one pupil mentioned, 'It is much fairer now because before only those who were naughty got the teacher's attention.'

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Curricular provision has, until this term, concentrated on ensuring standards rapidly improved in reading, writing and mathematics. Now there has been success in this area the school has recognised that this needs to be expanded to other subjects. Therefore, planning is combining specific subject skills, such as in science, art and geography, as well as providing pupils with the opportunity to see how they all interconnect. This is making learning much more relevant to the pupils' experiences and helping develop their personal and social education. There is also a higher emphasis on practical and investigative work, as in one class who were making different sized parachutes to see which worked best. The range of extra activities is good with an increasing number of clubs, visits and visitors.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

There are good procedures to identify, monitor and support all pupils, including those who might be vulnerable and particularly those with behaviour problems. There are good intervention strategies which have led to significant improvements in achievement and standards. However, it is still early days for these systems to have had a full impact. Nevertheless, there is evidence

of an effective start that can be seen in the better progress of pupils, much improved behaviour, many fewer exclusions and a whole school approach to rewards and sanctions. All safety procedures are securely in place and pupils say that they know who to turn to for help and advice. They commented that they 'like all the staff because they really understand us'. Academic guidance is good. Whole school assessment is strongly linked to pupils' targets. On a day to day basis these are used well in some classes, although not all. It is a contributory factor to where teaching is stronger, particularly for those with learning difficulties.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The consistently strong leadership over the last year is a major reason why the quality of educational provision has so radically improved, and continues to do so. Weak teaching has virtually been eliminated and all staff have developed a shared sense of purpose. Very good support has been provided from outside agencies in areas such as literacy and numeracy teaching, middle management roles, and how to best support vulnerable pupils. Soon after being categorised as needing special help, the first acting headteacher took stock of where the strengths and weaknesses lay and acted quickly to stem the downturn. This has been built upon by the second acting headteacher who has worked particularly well at ensuring that, in due course, the senior leadership team will be capable of continuing the improvements without the high levels of support from the local authority. Equally, the governing body now acts as a critical friend, something it was criticised for in the last inspection. The governors have undertaken training so that the resulting analysis and evaluations can give them the information they will need to make the right decisions about the imminent appointment of a substantive headteacher.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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	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?	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	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	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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
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	2
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

1 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Chilton Primary School, Ramsgate CT11 0LQ

Thank you for making us so welcome during our recent visit. We very much enjoyed hearing all about the improvements you feel have happened over the last year. As we promised some of you, I have included the main points of our report below. You will be pleased to know we agree with you that your school is much better. I have officially noted in my report that your school no longer requires special measures.

- You told us that 'so many things have improved'. The most important thing is that in your lessons you are now making the progress that you should be. The latest SATs results in English and mathematics were some of the highest ever, so you all have a lot to live up to and you need to do the same in science.
- Behaviour was another thing you all said had improved. We agree. You behave well in your lessons, although there are just a few of you who do not play well at playtime. We have said that you are also looked after well and are being given good support when you find things difficult.
- The two headteachers, along with the rest of the staff, have brought in a lot of changes. These have made a big difference. The headteacher and staff still have a lot of good ideas that they want to happen so 'watch this space'. Of course you will all now want to do as well in every subject and so we have asked for this to become one of the school's targets.
- Nearly all your lessons have lots of interesting activities, although we have said that some could be a bit more challenging for those who find the work too easy.
- We have said that we think you have good attitudes to your work. We could see that you really enjoyed school. We have said that we think you have also played your part in helping your school improve. Keep up the good work.

Finally, well done to all of you. On a personal note, I have enjoyed watching your school improve so quickly over the last two terms. It is now over to you to make your school even better so that it becomes one of the best. You can do this by making sure you continue to work hard, behave well, and make sensible suggestions when you think there are things to improve.

Best wishes. Yours sincerely

David Collard Lead inspector

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Best wishes.
Yours sincerely

David Collard
Lead inspector