

Chuckery Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132076
Local Authority	Walsall
Inspection number	319559
Inspection dates	7–8 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Ken Buxton HMI

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	459
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	62
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan McDevitt
Headteacher	Margaret Lever
Date of previous school inspection	27 June 2007
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Lincoln Road Walsall WS1 2DZ
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average school serving an ethnically diverse community in the Chuckery area of Walsall. About half the pupils have Asian backgrounds and a quarter White British. The proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language is rising and is now slightly more than half. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is higher than in most schools. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about average. The school has achieved a number of awards including Investor in People, Healthy School status and an Activemark.

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(5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Chuckery is a satisfactory school. There is a fresh sense of purpose and urgency running throughout the school. Changes introduced at the start of the autumn term are providing staff with a sense of optimism and strengthening morale. The newly appointed headteacher is already making a significant difference to the school by raising the staff's expectations of what pupils can achieve. The restructured leadership team is working together well and staff are accepting additional management responsibilities willingly. However, the role of the subject leaders in taking responsibility for raising standards in their subject area is less well developed. The changes taking place demonstrate the leadership's clear focus on improving standards and, despite showing only early signs of having a beneficial impact, they provide good evidence of the school's satisfactory capacity to improve.

The standards achieved by Year 6 pupils are broadly average. Pupils in most year groups make satisfactory progress. Pupils make good progress developing their language skills, but the increasing numbers of children starting at the school with very weak knowledge and understanding of language is providing an added challenge for the school. Pupils enjoy school and are keen to learn having developed positive attitudes towards education. There are good relationships across the school and they are helping teachers rise to the challenge of improving the satisfactory quality of teaching and learning. The school recognises that the pace of lessons is, at times, too slow and that the more able pupils need to be better challenged so that they can extend their capabilities and reach their full potential. Pupils' behaviour is good, as is their personal development. The curriculum is satisfactory but because insufficient links are made between subjects, its effectiveness is reduced.

Staff at the school take great care to ensure pupils are kept safe. Levels of supervision are appropriate and all procedures, including safeguarding arrangements, are completed with due care and attention.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Foundation Stage staff visit families at home, before children have started at school, which helps to establish good relationships and develop constructive links. The vast majority of children enter the Nursery with a level of skills well below those expected for their age. Many have a poor understanding of their own language and some speak little or no English. Within the unit's safe and nurturing environment, children settle quickly enabling staff to focus on supporting children's language development and promoting their personal development. This approach ensures that children make good progress in these two areas of learning throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Children enjoy learning and respond positively to opportunities to develop independence. Outdoor activities are planned as an integral part of the EYFS curriculum but, because there is no shelter from inclement weather, they do not always take place. There is an appropriate balance of adult led and child initiated activities but too few opportunities are provided to challenge the more able children. School data shows that most children are making satisfactory progress overall and that the majority finish the Reception Year with below average standards. Very recent changes in the leadership of the EYFS have

introduced a renewed sense of energy and purpose to increase the rate of progress children make. Assessment procedures have been reviewed and improvements are being introduced to strengthen the curriculum and enhance children's mathematical development. This fresh impetus is already starting to show signs of raising standards but, at the time of the inspection, there was no evidence to substantiate the impact of these changes.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the rate of pupils' progress by quickening the pace of lessons and providing greater challenge, especially for the more able pupils.
- Strengthen the links between subjects and pupils' everyday practical experiences and interests to make learning more coherent and relevant.
- Develop the role of subject leaders so that they can lead on raising standards in their area of responsibility.

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

Most children begin school with skills well below those expected for their age, especially in language and communication. Children's attainment on entry has fallen considerably over recent years, partly because the number of children with a limited understanding of the English language has increased, as has the number with a weak acquisition of their home language. With good levels of support and encouragement from the staff, children settle quickly and begin to learn. They make satisfactory progress overall through the EYFS and Key Stage 1 but good progress in developing language skills. As a result, they achieve standards that are lower than the national average at the end of both of these key stages. Pupils continue to make broadly satisfactory progress through Key Stage 2. The majority of Year 6 pupils in 2007 and 2008 achieved results close to the national average, although few reached the higher levels in mathematics and science. School data shows that in 2008 Year 6 girls achieved higher standards in English than boys, but achieved similar results in mathematics and science. Further analysis shows that Pakistani pupils do not do so well as White British pupils in English, mathematics and science, and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities reach standards comparable to similar pupils nationally and make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Most pupils like coming to school and enjoy their learning. Attendance is satisfactory overall despite the school's considerable efforts to discourage absence. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. The school's emphasis on promoting social and moral education is rewarded by pupils' good behaviour and the good relationships pupils have with adults and each other. Pupils relate well to the many different cultures within the school and strong links are made with families and the community. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and the need for good food and exercise. Many take advantage of the school's canteen at lunchtime, which provides an excellent range of healthy food. They feel safe in school and know they can talk to an adult if they have any problems. The school council knows their school well and has put forward many ideas for

improvements, such as how to make the playground safer. Older pupils have appropriate responsibilities, for example running a healthy school tuck shop, collecting recycling materials from classrooms, and, setting up the hall for assemblies. They are also involved in a number of fundraising events, particularly the popular Christmas and spring fairs. Many get involved in local community projects including visiting the nearby arboretum to plant bulbs and make flowerbeds and the choir's performance at local concerts. As Year 6 pupils transfer to secondary school they have achieved average standards in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, and this provides a satisfactory foundation for the next phase of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Although the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, there is some variation across the school. Relationships in classrooms are good and pupils display positive attitudes to learning. Lessons are usually organised well, but teachers do not always consider pupils' attention spans sufficiently and most do not plan in enough detail to challenge and stimulate the more able pupils, which leads to some losing interest. Teachers often make clear to pupils their expectations about the quality and quantity of work required, but this is not consistent across the entire school. Teachers' assessment of pupils' work is improving and this is helping to improve the overall planning of subsequent lessons. Pupils are taking more responsibility for assessing their own work. Teachers' marking is good as it tells pupils how well they have done and gives suggestions for improvement. Most teachers plan and manage the work of teaching assistants well to make best use of their time. As a result, teaching assistants generally contribute well to lessons, often supporting lower ability groups.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The activities planned across the curriculum often engage pupils' interests and encourage pupils to develop positive attitudes towards learning. Pupils' personal development is supported well which benefits the different groups of learners. A few teachers are using relevant themes to link together the learning in different subjects, but this skilful use of the curriculum is not yet evident across the school. This approach to strengthening the curriculum has not yet reached its full potential so lessons are more relevant and learning more coherent and enjoyable for the pupils. Pupils benefit from a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities, educational outings, and visitors that enrich the pupils' experiences. The recent appointment of a member of staff to coordinate and improve the opportunities for gifted and talented pupils is starting to show early signs of enhancing the overall quality of the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The pastoral care of pupils is good. Strong evidence of this in action was observed during the inspection when a child's individual needs were met with exceptional care and expertise. The arrangements to keep pupils safe and secure are robust as thorough checks are carried out on all adults working at the school. The school benefits greatly from the dedicated administrative staff ensuring that all aspects of this work are managed very efficiently. Pupils have a good

understanding of their curriculum targets and of how their work can be improved, as demonstrated by one pupil commenting, 'We have tips when teachers mark our work that help us to improve.' Pupils receive good support for their language development throughout the school. Many classroom assistants speak in the pupils' own language so helping pupils to learn English and support their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school's new leadership team is working closely with all parties to bring about much needed change and so raise pupils' life chances. As one parent commented, 'It seems to be like a breath of fresh air in the school.' The new headteacher has made remarkably rapid progress in a very short space of time to develop and transform the school's expectations of what can be achieved by the pupils. She is supported very well by an able leadership team and, together, they have developed a clear understanding of how well the school is performing and about what needs to happen next. This clear vision has enabled staff to implement initiatives that are starting to show signs of success. For example, the business manager has taken a strong lead in promoting and developing good links with all sectors of the local community engaged with the school. The leadership's sharp and renewed focus on improvement has led to teachers starting to be held to account for their pupils' progress with more challenging targets being set to monitor individual performance. As yet, subject leaders are not engaged in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning within their subjects and this reduces their ability to bring about higher standards. Governors are taking an increasing interest in how well the school is performing and recognise that they need to take a greater role in challenging the school's leadership and holding it to account.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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 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

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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

9 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Chuckery Primary School, Walsall WS1 2DZ

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited Chuckery Primary School. We really enjoyed speaking with you in lessons, at lunchtime, and around the school. Many of you told us how much you like your school and we can see why. This letter is to let you know what we wrote in the full report, which we have sent to the school.

We judged your school to be satisfactory but recognise that many changes have taken place recently. These have come about because of the headteacher's very focused leadership and desire that you achieve as well as you can. She is supported very well by all the school staff who work hard to help you learn.

These are the things that we found are best.

- The staff know you well and take good care of you.
- You enjoy your lessons.
- You have good attitudes to learning.
- You make good progress developing your language skills.
- Teachers mark your work well and help you understand how to improve.
- You behave well and you have good manners.
- You get on well together, learning from one another's different experiences.
- You know how to stay safe and lead a healthy life.

These are the things that we have asked the staff at the school to do.

- Increase the progress you make by quickening the pace of lessons and ensuring that the activities you do challenge and extend your learning.
- Strengthen the links between subjects so that lessons are more relevant to your everyday experiences and interests.

We have also asked the headteacher to develop the role of those teachers with subject responsibilities so that they can help in raising standards in their subjects.

Thank you once again and don't forget to do your best at all times.

Ken Buxton Her Majesty's Inspector