

The Chiltern College

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	870/6009
Unique Reference Number	110177
Inspection number	322039
Inspection dates	8–9 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Mark Lindfield HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Chiltern College School is an independent primary school for pupils aged between four and eleven years of age. The school is part of the larger organisation, 'The Chiltern College' which is a training college for nursery nurses and a nursery for approximately 200 children. The school draws pupils from Caversham and the surrounding area. The school supports pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports those who speak English as an additional language.

The school was last inspected in December 2004.

Evaluation of the school

The quality of education and care provided at Chiltern College School is outstanding. Pupils make excellent progress across the school and achieve well in all subjects. Since the last inspection the school has improved the quality of teaching and assessment and has established an effective system to monitor pupils' performance. It meets all of the educational and almost all of the organisational regulations.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good; planning is thorough and ensures that pupils make progress whilst avoiding repetition of topics. The school is developing linking subjects to enable pupils to practise their skills in different areas of the curriculum. The school leaders review the curriculum and make suitable changes to enhance the quality of education. For example, the recent introduction of an early reading phonic programme is having a positive impact and pupils are making increased progress as a result. A good quality personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme ensures outstanding development in these areas and contributes to greater cultural and religious understanding. Individual subject leaders monitor planning of their subject and produce annual improvement plans. In addition to good basic skills, pupils acquire outstanding teamwork and communication skills that prepare them well for adult life.

Pupils enjoy and value the range of extra-curricular activities and events. Residential visits are thoughtfully planned to maximise learning with pupils discovering at first hand the physical geography of erosion and coastal features. Pupils have developed

their skills in information and communications technology but opportunities to develop the use of these across other subjects and enhance their learning are restricted by limited access to computers.

The quality of teaching and assessment is outstanding overall. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and have rightly encouraged speaking and listening skills and the use of technical vocabulary where appropriate. They successfully and confidently use a range of strategies in their teaching and this adds to pupils' enjoyment and encourages an extremely positive attitude to their work. Assessment strategies are used very well across the school to identify individual needs and plan accordingly. The leadership of the school has collated class assessments to provide individual records of progress and these are used to target support well. Teaching assistants provide good support to these targeted pupils and as a result they make good progress, especially in their reading. Work is well matched to the needs of different abilities so that higher attaining pupils make suitably good progress. Learning objectives are clear and pupils are helped further by the identification of success criteria. The school is intent on involving pupils further in self assessing their progress against these criteria. Overall, pupils make outstanding progress in their learning.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and successfully promoted through excellent relationships with staff and others. There are many opportunities daily to promote self-confidence, self-knowledge and self-esteem of pupils. Praise is continuously offered to encourage pupils to build on their successes and this engenders a calm atmosphere evident in most lessons. Pupils develop knowledge of spirituality through religious studies and a wide range of opportunities for enrichment. This is further enhanced in lessons by their pleasure in learning new things. Their self-knowledge is developed through discussions, when they are encouraged to consider their actions and their impact on others. Pupils growing self-esteem and confidence are supported through opportunities to participate in such activities as impressively well-acted drama productions and school concerts.

Pupils' moral development is outstanding. There are opportunities to enable them to take greater responsibility for their own school as 'buddies', monitors and house captains. Concern for others in the wider community is demonstrated through support for a range of charities. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding. Teachers provide very good role models in developing courtesy, manners and care of others. Pupils treat each other with respect and kindness, evident in the way the older pupils were seen looking after the new Reception children visiting the school. Children were welcomed warmly and made to feel at home. The development of cultural awareness is strong. Pupils learn about people around the world in geography topics. Pupils acquire a good general knowledge and appreciation of institutions and services in England through the range of school visits

and lessons in religious education. They show a good understanding of other cultures represented in Britain. Regular visits from members of the wider community give pupils a broad knowledge of public services.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school provides an outstanding level of support and takes all reasonable steps to minimise risks to pupil's welfare health and safety. All essential policies and records are in place. There are robust procedures for recruiting staff and safeguarding children which comply with the latest guidance. A single central record of checks on the suitability of staff is in place with all the necessary checks completed. The school has close links with outside agencies and there is a very good awareness of child protection issues.

Staff are particularly vigilant about pupils' health and safety and complete daily a comprehensive checklist. Training in severe allergic reaction is completed by all staff and appropriate numbers have attended First Aid training. Fire drills are carried out regularly and appropriate fire risk assessments completed annually. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and in particular of a nutritious diet. The school regularly reviews school meals with advice from a nutritionist. Staff eat from the same menu alongside pupils and the school also provides milk and fruit to all ages.

The school has very good awareness of disability and fulfils all its obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school meets all of the regulations and effective safeguards are rigorously applied in checking the suitability of staff appointments. A single register is in place and Criminal Record checks completed for all staff who have access to the College and school site.

School's premises and accommodation

Classrooms are of a good size and provide a suitable environment for learning and are kept meticulously clean. Classroom displays throughout the school are bright and are a source of pride for many pupils. The outdoor areas are well resourced and boast a school garden cultivated by pupils. The school makes use of the College Hall for drama rehearsals. This small school has no separate medical room for pupils who are ill, although they are at pains to ensure that unwell pupils are well looked after whilst they wait to be collected.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides good information to parents through a variety of means. The annually revised parent handbook provides comprehensive information about the school's policies and procedures. Parents are aware of the additional information they may request on staff qualifications and details of the complaints procedures. Prospective parents are well informed and given several opportunities to get to know their child's new school and to visit with their children. The majority of parents are wholly supportive of the school and recognise its special qualities. The school provides a detailed annual school report and holds termly meetings. The school is aware that a minority of parents would appreciate more frequent progress reports.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a complaints policy and a clear set of procedures which are included in the annual handbook for parents. There have been four formal complaints within the last academic year which have been satisfactorily resolved.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of the one listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill, in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(l)).

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- Ensure the use of success criteria, suitable for all pupils, is embedded across the school and that pupils are encouraged to take greater ownership of their learning by self assessing against these criteria.
- Increase the access to computers in order that learning can be enhanced in other subjects.

School details

Name of school	The Chiltern College		
DCSF number	870/6009		
Unique reference number	110177		
Type of school	Day school - Primary		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	September 1993		
Age range of pupils	4–11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 25	Girls: 33	Total: 58
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 5,925.00		
Address of school	16 Peppard Road Caversham Reading Berkshire RG4 8JZ		
Telephone number	0118 9471847		
Fax number	0118 9463218		
Email address	Chilternschoolsec@chilterncollegeschool.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs Judy Halliday		
Proprietor	Chiltern College		
Reporting inspector	Mark Lindfield HMI		
Dates of inspection	8–9 July 2008		