

Cheynes Infant School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 109556 |
| Local Authority | Luton |
| Inspection number | 324979 |
| Inspection date | 23 October 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | David Speakman |

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.

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| Type of school | Infant |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–7 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 246 |
| Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS | 0 |
| Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years | 88 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs Barbara Chambers |
| Headteacher | Mrs Linda Walsh |
| Date of previous school inspection | 12 October 2005 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Cranbrook Drive Sundon Park Luton Bedfordshire LU3 3EW |
| Telephone number | 01582 617800 |
| Fax number | 01582 617800 |

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|--------------------------|-----------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: pupils' personal development; arrangements for transition from Reception to Key Stage 1; tracking pupils' achievement and the quality of academic guidance. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report. Observations of lessons and pupils' work, discussions with the headteacher, governors and pupils, the parental questionnaires and school self-evaluation documents provided inspection evidence.

Description of the school

This large infant school is situated in Sundon Park, north of Luton. About a third of pupils come from out of the school's immediate area. The proportion of pupils claiming a free school meal is about the same as other schools. Children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in the September after their fourth birthday. Attainment on entry is below that normally expected for children of their age. The number of pupils identified with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average, as is the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need. Identified learning difficulties include speech and language, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and physical disabilities. The number of pupils coming from minority ethnic backgrounds is more than in most schools and an above average proportion is at the early stages of learning English.

There is a breakfast club, which one of the local pre-school settings organises. It provides for children between four and eleven.

The school has an Activemark for its exceptional delivery of the National Sports Strategy and has recently gained National Healthy School Status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well in this good school. It has outstanding features in pupils' personal development, the care it shows for pupils' welfare and in its success in serving the needs of its community. It provides good value for money.

Since her appointment, the headteacher, ably supported by her deputy, has helped make significant improvements to the school. There have been a number of changes in the teaching staff, many new to the profession, and she has been very successful in providing a high level of support for their induction. Under her excellent knowledge of primary education and secure guidance, they have quickly become a unified team who provide good quality education. The headteacher provides good opportunities for those with responsibilities to contribute to the overall monitoring and evaluation of the school's work. Self-evaluation helps the leadership to accurately set a clear direction for improvement, whilst recognising the school's strengths. As a result, the school has been successful in achieving its improvement targets. Improving pupils' writing, for example, has been a key priority. Initiatives have been successful, with a significant improvement seen in writing standards, which are now above average. Results at Year 2 have been at this level for the last three years and represent excellent achievement in writing. Achievement in reading is good; standards are generally above average, but broadly average this last year. Attainment in mathematics is broadly average. Although pupils have sound numeracy skills, their ability to solve problems is weaker. A new subject leader has recently taken on the responsibility for mathematics and the school intends to involve all staff in raising attainment. Lunchtime games under the guidance of supervisors, for example, will give pupils opportunities to solve problems based on counting and problem solving.

The school is recognised for its approach towards the inclusion of all pupils and for providing all with an equal opportunity to learn and make progress. Pupils who find learning more difficult are supported effectively by programmes, which monitor and provide support for their individual learning needs. Likewise, the growing numbers of pupils who are at the early stages of learning English are warmly welcomed into school. They receive effective support and quickly acquire enough English for them to take a full part in all learning opportunities.

The previous inspection report recognised the high level of care provided for pupils. Since then, there has been further improvement. The appointment of a family worker has enhanced this provision considerably. She works extremely effectively with the headteacher to provide highly valued support for pupils and their families, when needed. Together they have managed to create a very trusting relationship with parents, who speak highly of the care and support the school provides. 'Cheynes is such a wonderful and supportive school and my children love it,' writes one parent, a comment that reflects many parents' questionnaire responses. This area of the school's work serves the community extremely well, providing toddler groups where parents can meet others and make friends. There are classes for parents that enlighten them about educational issues and give them the skills to support their children's education. The school has established an excellent network of partnerships with external agencies to further support pupils and their families, including for example, professional support for mental health and child protection issues. Together with the closely monitored arrangements to ensure the health and safety of pupils at all times, the school provides an outstanding level of personal care.

The quality of teaching and learning is good; some teaching is outstanding. Teachers in year groups work very closely with each other and plan together so that all pupils in the three classes in each year receive similar learning opportunities. Most lessons are stimulating and engage pupils, making them enthusiastic about learning. Pupils' achievements are tracked carefully and regularly. Teachers use this information well to match work to pupils' capabilities, so pupils are confident about taking the next steps. Teachers keep pupils informed about what they are doing well and what they need to do to achieve their targets. The curriculum provides interest and makes learning meaningful. Subjects are linked into blocks or themes and there is a good emphasis on developing core literacy and numeracy skills. In addition, a range of other activities supports good provision in art and physical education, where standards are high. A wide variety of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities enrich learning.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. For such a young age, pupils show an extraordinarily high level of understanding that each and everyone is different. 'In this school it's OK to be different, that's how it is'. This statement underpins the inclusive ethos of the school, where an exceptionally high level of community cohesion is evident. This was clearly seen when two young boys from very different backgrounds negotiated how they would work together, and who would like to do which task. In the process, they both showed a high level of respect and consideration for each other's feelings and preferences. Pupils take great care to help each other and to make sure that they all feel safe and free from aggression. Behaviour is exceptional and because the school runs very smoothly as a socially cohesive unit, pupils enjoy school very much and attend regularly. Through the school council and other opportunities to take on responsibility, pupils make a good contribution to the school community. The school's achievement of Healthy School status and the Activemark confirms pupils' excellent knowledge, understanding and practice of how to eat healthily, stay physically fit and safe.

The leadership of the school sets challenging targets for its performance, which help pupils achieve well and give the staff goals for their own performance. Governors play a full role in monitoring and evaluating school performance. They have a good professional relationship with staff, through which they provide good levels of support and challenge. Bearing in mind the improvement since the previous inspection and the good quality of leadership and management, the school has a good capacity to continue to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children soon settle into this safe and stimulating environment and enjoy coming to school. They achieve well in their learning and typically reach the standards expected nationally. They develop a good range of skills, particularly in communication; their personal development is outstanding. Children concentrate extraordinarily well for their age; they have good attitudes and willingly share and take turns. Behaviour is very good, and pupils work well independently. There are close links with parents; the school supports and keeps parents well informed, so that they can help their children's learning. Staff are well-deployed, give good guidance to pupils, and work effectively with small groups of children. Staff use assessment information well in planning to meet the needs of all children, including those who find learning difficult or with English as an additional language, to move them on in their learning. The curriculum provides a good balance of opportunities for teacher-led and child-initiated activities. Children learn effectively through play opportunities and choose their activities well, which extend their

skills in all aspects of learning. The curriculum also enables them to enjoy a wide range of practical activities, well matched to their interests and abilities.

Adults support children's welfare, safety and health exceptionally well. The setting is well equipped. Excellent arrangements for transition from pre-school settings and from Reception to Year 1 are managed very carefully so children settle easily and happily. The staff ensure that through these periods of transition children continue to experience learning opportunities that are matched well to their stage of development and previous levels of attainment. There has been a lot of development since the previous inspection, particularly in improving the outdoor environment where work is still ongoing. Through good leadership, the leader of the EYFS has created a strong team, which focuses on children's welfare and achievement as well as the continuing development of the learning environment. She uses assessments and the results of her monitoring to make further improvements in provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure that all staff have the knowledge to improve pupils' problem solving skills, in order to raise standards in mathematics.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 2 |
| 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? | 1 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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|---|---|
| How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS? | 2 |
| How well do children in the EYFS achieve? | 2 |
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS? | 1 |
| How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop? | 2 |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted? | 1 |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed? | 2 |

Achievement and standards

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| How well do learners achieve? | 2 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 2 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 2 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress | 2 |

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

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|---|---|
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 1 |
| The extent to which learners enjoy their education | 1 |
| The attendance of learners | 2 |
| The behaviour of learners | 1 |
| 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 | 2 |

The quality of provision

| | |
|--|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs? | 2 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 2 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 1 |

Leadership and management

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| 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 | 2 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated | 1 |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion? | 1 |
| 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 | 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 |

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

24 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cheynes Infant School, Luton, LU3 3EW

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed very much the time we spent meeting you and your teachers, visiting lessons to watch you learn and speaking to you to find out your thoughts about the school and how you help to make it a success.

You go to a good school and those of you we spoke to speak highly of your time there. All the staff work well together to provide you with a good quality education. Teaching and the curriculum are good and the quality of care shown for you is excellent. You all make good progress in lessons and reach above average standards in reading and writing. Standards in mathematics are average.

You help a great deal by behaving exceptionally well and trying hard to do your best. We were impressed by how well you respond to your teachers and are willing to try hard all the time. We were most impressed by the sensible way in which you make friends with others and care about each other. You help to make others feel safe in school. Those of you we spoke to said how much you enjoy school and find it interesting. You are well prepared for the next stages of your education.

There are many good and excellent features about your school, but this does not mean that there is nothing left to do. We have asked staff and governors to look at ways of helping you to do as well in mathematics as you do in your reading and writing.

We wish you all the best in the future.

David Speakman

Lead inspector