

Chalfont St Peter Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110269
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	325123
Inspection date	6 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Alison Grainger

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	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	150
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	52
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr A Pennington
Headteacher	Ms J Cornes
Date of previous school inspection	14 September 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Level End Chalfont St Peter Gerrards Cross SL9 9PB
Telephone number	01753 884279
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Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school draws its pupils not only from the village of Chalfont St Peter but also from further afield. Most pupils are white British. A few from other ethnic backgrounds are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly below average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is low.

The majority of children enter the school's Early Years Foundation Stage provision, which comprises two Reception classes, having attended the privately run on-site Lovel End Nursery. Children start part time in Reception, when they are four, and normally begin to attend full time half way through the autumn term.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. Parents are very pleased with it. The two features that parents value above all are the outstanding quality of the care provided for their children and the exceptional enrichment of the curriculum. These aspects of provision contribute hugely to pupils' good personal development and well-being and, in particular, to their good enjoyment of school. 'I am happy with the school and I have two happy children who would tell you the same' is typical of parents' comments. Parents rightly praise the commitment and hard work of staff. The school is well led and managed. Staff and governors have worked with determination and considerable success to improve the school since its last inspection. As a result, it is not only more effective now but it also has good capacity to become even better.

Pupils' achievement is good. From starting points in the Reception Year that cover a broad range, but are collectively slightly above average, pupils reach standards that are significantly above average at the end of Year 2. Not only do the vast majority of pupils reach at least the level expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics, but a significant proportion exceed this level. Even so, there is a big gap in the overall standards reached by boys and girls in reading and writing. This is evident when children start school and, although boys progress as well as girls, the gap is not closed. The school is rightly exploring means of rectifying this but recognises that there is still much to be done to get boys' standards to match those of girls.

Pupils make good progress because teaching is good. In the most effective teaching, there is a sharp focus on pupils' individual learning needs. However, not all teaching is as good as this. A small amount of teaching is satisfactory and not closely enough matched to all pupils' needs or sharply enough focused on what different ability groups should learn next. Where teaching is satisfactory, rather than good, pupils' progress slows.

The curriculum contributes well to pupils' good achievement, is stimulating and captures pupils' interest and enthusiasm. Significant improvements have been made since the last inspection in the tracking of pupils' attainment and progress. The information gained is used well to identify pupils in need of extra support and to provide all pupils with clear guidance on how to improve their work. The result of the combined influence of good teaching, a good curriculum and excellent care is that pupils are well prepared for their future lives. They develop good personal attributes and have an exceptional awareness of how to stay fit, healthy and safe. They also make an excellent contribution to the school and wider community. Not only are their personal qualities developed well but also, as one parent observed, pupils leave this school 'with their learning lights switched on full beam'.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Exceptional attention to children's welfare begins even before they start in Reception through very close liaison with the on-site independent Nursery. Parents are fulsome in their praise for how well the school helps their children to settle in. Personal and social skills are promoted well so that children quickly become happy and confident in the extremely welcoming and supportive environment.

Children make good progress as a result of good teaching and an exciting curriculum. Standards are above the level expected in all areas of learning by the end of the school year. Teaching is

well matched to children's different needs as a result of effective ongoing assessment. Particularly good is the way in which the same activity is provided for different groups but with the adult support varied according to what each group needs to learn next. This was evident during the inspection when the teacher asked questions at different levels when working with a variety of ability groups on a story. A good balance is achieved in the range of adult-led activities and those that children select for themselves both indoors and outside.

Reception Year provision is well led and managed. The school is currently undertaking a review to make it even more effective. While most children enter from the on-site Nursery, the range of other pre-school settings from which they are transferring is increasing. The school recognises that links with these other settings require development if learning is to be promoted as seamlessly for all children as for those who attend Level End Nursery.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the standards attained by boys in reading and writing to match those of girls.
- Ensure that teaching is always closely matched to all pupils' needs and sharply focused on what different ability groups should learn next.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. In 2008, the school had its best end of Year 2 assessment results yet, showing that the attainment of this particular year group was exceptionally high in reading, writing and mathematics. Present standards are well above average and higher than at the last inspection. Standards have risen as a result of improvements in teaching, the curriculum and the use of assessment data. Strengths in the support for pupils with learning difficulties have been maintained and these pupils continue to make good progress. While both boys and girls move on at a good rate and reach higher standards than boys and girls nationally, the gap between boys' and girls' standards within the school is significant in reading and writing. Girls are attaining much higher standards than boys in these two subjects.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school as the above average attendance rate shows. They feel very safe at school and have an extremely good understanding of how to stay safe, for example, at the swimming pool and when near traffic. They know a tremendous amount about how to keep fit and healthy through diet and exercise. Behaviour is good although, on occasions, pupils lose involvement in lessons when their learning needs are not met fully.

Pupils make an excellent contribution to the community, for example, through their links with a home for senior citizens, and by participating in community events. They contribute much to the school through the school council and by diligently undertaking a wide range of responsibilities as monitors. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good although pupils' awareness of the diversity of modern multiethnic Britain is not as well developed as other aspects. Pupils' personal attributes, together with their good academic progress, prepare them well for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching has a good influence on pupils' progress. All lessons are characterised by warm and caring relationships that create an atmosphere supportive of learning. The teaching of phonic skills has improved considerably since the last inspection. It is now focused, accurate, and well paced. The use of ability groups for phonics teaching at the start of each day in Years 1 and 2 helps to ensure that pupils' learning needs in this area are met well.

In most teaching, expectations of the standards all pupils are capable of attaining are high and there is a sharp focus on what groups and individuals need to learn next. On occasions, when teaching is less effective although satisfactory, the overall learning objective for the lesson is set at the same level for all pupils. Not enough attention is given to what individuals and the different groups of pupils should learn next during whole-class sessions or when pupils work on group activities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

There are outstanding features to the good curriculum. In particular, the range of activities additional to daily lessons is exceptional. One parent of a pupil in Year 2 commented that, already this school year, pupils have 'had so many lovely days; owls visiting, Mexican food tasting day, all bringing learning to life'. Pupils have extensive opportunities to take part in music and drama activities. Those in Year 2 go away on a two-day residential visit. The strengths in the curriculum are recognised in the awards the school has gained, including Artsmark Gold for the second time and Activemark. They also do much to broaden pupils' experiences and support their good personal development.

The curriculum contributes well to pupils' progress. The school is starting to increase connections between subjects to make learning more meaningful for pupils on a daily basis. Currently, links between subjects to provide opportunities for boys to develop their writing skills are not well enough developed to raise boys' standards up to those of girls. The school is also exploring how links might develop, for example, with the senior school, to provide boys with good male role models for reading.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

As numerous parents point out, the school provides 'a caring and nurturing environment'. Not only is excellent support given to children transferring from the onsite Nursery into Reception, but also a tremendous amount is done to ease pupils' transition to junior school. Health and safety are given a high priority. Very effective guidance helps pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles and stay safe, reflecting the school's Healthy School status. Many parents speak of the staff 'going the extra mile' to meet their children's needs and to work with them. The school works exceptionally well with outside agencies to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, the few at an early stage of learning English, and those who may be vulnerable.

Systems for checking on pupils' progress are very good. As a result, those in need of extra help or a 'little extra push' are identified quickly and targeted for extra support. Feedback to pupils

through marking is much improved since the last inspection and there is now good use of targets to tell pupils how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management have led to significant improvement since the last inspection. The headteacher has continued to work with determination to implement local and national initiatives that will benefit pupils. Subject leaders are now well involved in monitoring pupils' progress and in leading developments. The profile of governors has risen, with governors properly checking the school's effectiveness as well as giving support. Community cohesion is promoted well as seen in the extent to which pupils are involved in the local community.

Having moved on well, the school is determined to become even better. The momentum of improvement is being maintained as a result of good self-evaluation. The headteacher has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in provision in each class. However, subject leaders are not used to the full to ensure that good practice is shared to develop the quality of teaching further. The school recognises that there is also scope for governors to be more involved in checking that the school provides best value in monitoring the budget and actively investigating the impact of spending decisions on pupils' progress.

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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?	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

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?	2
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

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

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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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

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	2
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	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**

19 November 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Chalfont St Peter Infant School, Gerrards Cross, SL9 9PB

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school. We enjoyed watching your lessons, looking at your work and talking with you. We found out that your school is a good school.

You have an incredible number of activities to enjoy and which make learning fun. We really liked hearing about the owls that visited you. Your Mexican food-tasting day must have been very good. You are so lucky that the adults put on so many extra activities.

The adults at your school look after you exceptionally well. They help you to settle quickly in the Reception classes. Lots of your parents told us how pleased they are that you enjoy school from the moment you start in Reception.

You behave well in lessons and around the school. You are very polite and friendly. You know a huge amount about how to stay fit and healthy. You also know a lot about how to stay safe. You carry out your responsibilities as monitors very well. You are considerate to other people as well.

You make good progress because teaching is good. You are also given helpful advice when teachers mark your work. Your targets help you as well.

To make your school even better, we have asked the adults to do two things.

- Help both boys and girls reach the highest possible standards in reading and writing.
- Make sure that teaching is always at exactly the right level for each of you.

Thank you once again for your help. You can help by always doing your best. Please keep on being such pleasant and helpful young people.

Yours sincerely

Alison Grainger

Lead Inspector