

Chalfont St Peter CofE School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110456
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	325151
Inspection dates	9–10 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Emma Ing (HMI)

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	360
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jan Bartlett
Headteacher	Mr John Underwood
Date of previous school inspection	13 June 2006
School address	Penn Road Chalfont St Peter Gerrards Cross
Telephone number	SL9 9SS
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 part lessons and two assemblies and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the work of the school and looked at pupils' work, school plans and self-evaluation documents, governing body minutes and 178 questionnaires completed by parents.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the progress made by pupils in English, mathematics and science
- whether all pupils enjoy success at the school or whether some get left out
- the impact of the school's curriculum on pupils' attainment and personal development
- the part the school plays in developing community cohesion and supporting pupils to make a positive contribution to society.

Information about the school

This is a large junior school in the village of St Peter's. Children travel from a wide area to attend the school which has a very good reputation locally. Their prior attainment is generally above average. A few children have statements of special educational needs and around 30 are given extra support by the school, but the proportions are much lower than the national average. Most of these children experience specific learning difficulties, but several have behavioural, emotional, and social or communication difficulties.

The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below the national average. The largest minority ethnic groups represented are Asian (mostly Indian) and White not British.

The school recently achieved the International School Award. It was awarded Healthy School Status in December 2008 and has retained the Artsmark Gold since 2006. It also has the ICT Mark and Activemark. The school has been Gymnastic British Champion since 2005 and, more recently, national table tennis champion.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

1

Capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This outstanding school has significant strengths in many different areas. On entering the school, a visitor is immediately aware of two things:

- the hum of enjoyment and industry as pupils around the school learn together
- vibrant, creative displays which support learning and reflect the cultures of the world and the school's own links with other schools in Africa, India, Siberia, Australia, the United States of America, France and the United Kingdom.

No wonder parents are overwhelmingly satisfied with the education that their children are receiving, with many making comments such as 'This is a truly fantastic school', 'inspirational', 'a wonderful learning environment', 'my daughter loves going to the school' and 'I cannot praise this school enough – all schools should be like this.' Parents feel that their children are extremely well cared for, that they develop in confidence, flourish as individuals and make good progress.

Pupils do very well at this school. Their behaviour is exceptionally good; they take responsibility, organise themselves well and are caring of each other. They develop excellent speaking and listening skills. They make outstanding progress in their learning, and standards in English, mathematics and science are consistently high. Pupils also achieve high standards in art, drama and music. The school performs exceptionally well in sport and school teams are highly successful both at a local and, in some cases, at a national level. There is, however, a downside to such success which is keenly felt by a very small minority of parents, particularly in relation to sport. These parents express concern that some pupils are not able to participate in all the after-school sports clubs that they would like or to represent the school in sport because these opportunities are generally limited to the most able athletes.

The headteacher is passionate about the school and seeks excellence from himself, his team and the pupils. The governors play an important role in supporting the strategic development of the school. They take an active role in the life of the school and hold the headteacher to account very well. However, they rely too heavily on the headteacher for evidence about the performance of the school and have not fully developed systems for monitoring the breadth of the school's work. Nevertheless, the school has demonstrated by the improvements made over the last few years and by its consistently exceptional performance that it has excellent capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend the governing body's monitoring of the school's performance by putting in place robust systems to enable closer focus on all areas of its work.
- Address the concerns expressed by a very small minority of parents about pupils' opportunities to represent the school in sports teams and to join in extra-curricular sporting activities by:
 - clarifying the nature and range of these concerns through discussion with parents
 - developing and implementing a policy agreed by the whole school community about participation in extra-curricular sport and in teams.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Teaching at this school captures the imagination of pupils and enables them to be thrilled and excited by many areas of their learning. In lessons pupils behave exceptionally well: they concentrate hard, organise their work and their learning effectively, and support each other well. They sparkle with delight at some of the activities that they are given to do and try really hard. They have been taught to take responsibility for their own learning: most know what they have to do to improve their work and are able to make decisions about how best to achieve their targets.

The current attainment of pupils in Year 6 is very high and, throughout the school, pupils are making excellent progress in their work. In English and mathematics, across the school, pupils are organised in small groups. This enables teachers to work closely with individuals and match the tasks set to different pupils' needs. Even pupils who do not find school work easy are making exceptional progress, partly as a result of having work matched in this way, and partly because the school intervenes to give them extra support if they need it. Very high expectations and carefully planned, interesting work enables all to achieve particularly well in science. Physical education lessons are well organised and talented athletes are nurtured by the school. They develop exceptional skills and school teams are, as a consequence, highly competitive.

Pupils are poised and self-confident. Many are members of the school choir and all older pupils are involved in an annual school production. Pupils have a strong social conscience and good understanding of the wider world community, developed in part through the school's strong links with schools across the globe. In the local community, pupils are instrumental in hosting the Spring Fayre and the Summer Fete in school. They support the village community by performing country dances and gymnastics at the feast day celebrations, and also participate in environmental projects and musical events. In school some pupils take leadership roles, for example, as 'buddies' to younger pupils and as 'reporters' who file reports on school life on the school's extremely informative website.

With such strong outcomes for pupils, the team was concerned to establish whether

all children thrive at the school or whether some groups get left out. Our observations led us to conclude that all children are well supported. Pupils from different backgrounds and of all abilities do make great gains in their learning and are able to participate in a wide range of different activities. Competition for places in school teams and sports squads is fierce. Ability is the criterion by which members are selected and no particular group is favoured. Some pupils acknowledge that sometimes it is hard when they are not picked for a team or activity, but they recognise that the process is fair. They are unified in their pride in their achievements and in the school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	1
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	1
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	1
How well do pupils behave?	1
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	1
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	1
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	1

How effective is the provision?

Pupils are generally agreed that the best things in the school are the teachers and the curriculum. There are strong arguments to support this view. The teaching is outstanding. In part, this is because the school employs teachers with excellent subject knowledge, who lead their subjects with enthusiasm. Teachers plan very carefully to ensure smooth progress, to match activities to learners' needs and to enable pupils to use their preferred learning style. They use a range of resources and considerable imagination to bring their teaching alive. Challenge and praise are used to ensure that a good pace is maintained. Learning assistants support individual students well.

The curriculum is exciting. There is an appropriate focus on ensuring that pupils develop their literacy, numeracy and science skills but the overwhelming quality of the curriculum is that, as many pupils told us, 'It is fun!' There are excellent opportunities for pupils to learn different languages. Because they are interested and excited by the many different activities and areas of learning, pupils want to do well.

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

Whole-school projects, such as ones on 'Australia', 'The Sea', 'The Decades', enable pupils to develop their global and cultural awareness while themed weeks, such as Healthy Food Week, promote the development of very positive attitudes. Parents and pupils alike value the educational trips that are made and the range of sporting and cultural activities that take place during and after school. Because space and staffing for after-school activities are finite, sometimes access to these has to be limited, which, understandably, is a source of disappointment. Nevertheless, overall the provision is exceptional.

Pupils are known as individuals and well cared for by staff. The school makes good use of external agencies to ensure that their different needs are met well. Planning for individual needs is robust and progress carefully monitored. Many parents commented on how much they valued the way in which the school met their child's particular needs.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Staff are proud to be at this school and work with commitment and enthusiasm to ensure that they meet the high standards set. Leadership is exceptionally well distributed throughout the school. The headteacher encourages individuals to work to their strengths and, for example, spends a significant proportion of his time teaching and coaching physical education. Staff work together and feel motivated and empowered to develop and improve their areas of responsibility in creative ways. There is much that is very positive about the way the school supports parents to engage with their children's learning and informs them about progress and events in school.

Great efforts are made to promote equality. When a very few racist name-calling incidents occurred, the school countered these by positive teaching about different cultures and human rights, and by links with schools in foreign countries. There have been no racist incidents for some time. The progress made by individuals and groups is monitored, as is their participation in clubs and extra-curricular activities.

This school has strong arrangements for keeping pupils safe. Staff training is up to date and of good quality, and everyone knows how to ensure that pupils are properly protected. Teachers incorporate learning about safety into their lessons so that pupils are confident about this aspect of their lives.

The school has been extremely proactive in seeking to ensure that pupils work with, learn from and understand people from different religious, social and ethnic

communities both in England and abroad. One example is the work done by one group of pupils with elderly local residents as part of an initiative to help different generations get to know each other. As a result of this work, the pupils are mature global citizens and the school has a high profile in many different communities.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

Both through their responses to questions and through comments, the vast majority of parents express their delight with the school and their conviction that it provides a wonderful education. In particular, parents feel that their children both make good academic progress and develop in confidence and self-esteem. Thirty-five parents, however, raised concerns about access to extra-curricular sporting opportunities and/or opportunities to represent the school in sports teams. The inspection team investigated this and their judgements are outlined in the report above.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Chalfont St Peter CofE School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

The inspection team received 178 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 592 parents and carers registered at the school.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	136	38	4	0

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

- Attainment:** the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
- Progress:** the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
- Achievement:** the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.
- Capacity to improve:** the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
- Leadership and management:** the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



23 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Chalfont St Peter CofE School, Gerrards Cross, SS9 9SS

What a wonderful school you attend! You are rightly proud to be part of such a positive learning community where everyone is valued and everyone tries really hard.

Thank you all very much for welcoming us, talking to us and showing us your work when we visited your school to inspect it. We very much enjoyed our time with you.

We found many really outstanding things about your school.

- You all learn well, make excellent progress and enjoy your work.
- You help each other, and are responsible and caring.
- Your teachers make sure that learning is fun and that the work is just right for each one of you.
- Your sports teams are very successful, your art work is super and you do great things in music and drama.
- Many of you told us that extra-curricular clubs and school visits are really brilliant.
- You are actively engaged in the world outside your school, raising money for other schools around the world and meeting and working with other schoolchildren and adults

When we go to a school, we usually try to recommend some things that would help it improve. There are two things that would make your school even better.

- Your governors do a fine job, but they would be even more effective if they monitored the performance of the school more closely.
- A very few of your parents are concerned about how difficult it is for all of you to represent the school in sports teams and join after-school clubs. We have asked the school to address these concerns and seek to develop a policy that everyone can agree to in respect of these issues.

Yours faithfully

Emma Ing
Her Majesty's Inspector

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