

Charlesworth Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112877
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	325709
Inspection dates	12–13 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Ian Nelson

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	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	105
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	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Vivien Baker
Headteacher	Miss Susan Gate
Date of previous school inspection	19 January 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Long Lane Charlesworth Glossop Derbyshire SK13 5ET

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	12–13 January 2009
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This school is slightly less than half the size of the average primary school. It serves the village of Charlesworth and surrounding area with some children attending from nearby towns. Very few children are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of children from minority ethnic backgrounds is very low and all have English as their first language. While fewer children are identified as needing extra help with their learning or behaviour than in most schools the proportion with a statement of their special educational needs is much higher than average. The main areas in which children need extra help are speech, language and communication. Children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) with the skills and knowledge expected of their age although this varies from year to year because of small class sizes. The school is on two sites separated by a busy trunk road. At the time of the inspection, two teachers were on temporary contracts, one covering a member of staff on maternity leave.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Most of the parents think correctly that this is a good school and are pleased with the progress their children are making. One wrote that their child 'has made great progress during the past year', while another wrote, 'I have been extremely pleased with the progress both my children have made'. This good achievement is the result of effective teaching throughout the school, based on a broad and interesting range of learning activities that children enjoy. Because they are motivated by the tasks their teachers set them, children settle quickly and quietly to work and concentrate on their given tasks. While standards year on year vary because of the small numbers in each year group, they are currently above average with Year 6 children on track to gain particularly good results in the national tests.

The school has improved since the last inspection. Leadership and management are good. One parent wrote, 'Miss Gate is a very committed headteacher and has made massive improvements to the school in the last three years'. The school has tackled the weaknesses identified at Key Stage 2 and improved the roles and responsibilities of teachers in charge of subjects. The staff have also worked hard to improve the school sites but these still present significant barriers to learning, development and the promotion of community cohesion within school. For example, there is no space for an EYFS outside area so that, despite the good work done in Reception, the school cannot provide the full EYFS curriculum as required. The Year 6 class is taught in the junior hall, which is also the dining area and space for physical education. This means these children lose time in moving furniture for assemblies and physical education sessions, and have lessons surrounded by physical education equipment rather than in a proper classroom. The split site means that opportunities for older pupils to take responsibility for younger ones are limited and management time is lost as staff have to walk from one site to another. Governors are aware of these shortcomings and keen to do something about them but the cramped nature of both sites greatly impedes what they can do. Staff and governors are to be commended for running a good school in such difficult circumstances.

A particular strength identified by parents is the school's welcoming ethos and focus on each individual. One parent commented on the 'caring ethos and personal feel' of the school while another wrote, 'the teachers treat each child as an individual'. Others commented that, 'the headteacher and teachers are always available to discuss your child's welfare and progress', and, 'they are a very caring school and the head is excellent'. This good quality care results in children's good personal development.

While most parents hold the school in high regard around a tenth do not. This minority raised concerns on the parent questionnaires, several of which seem to show unreasonable expectations of the school. For example, there were concerns over the numbers, ages and abilities in classes; the need for job shares; children having the same teacher for more than one year and the school using professional sports coaches in physical education lessons instead of teachers taking them. Despite evidence that governors consult with parents through questionnaires there were concerns about the alleged lack of consultation. The inspection agrees with the majority of the parents and found no evidence to support the concerns of the minority. While the school has the support of most parents, it has some way to go to get others on board.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children in the EYFS make satisfactory progress overall. The teacher and the teaching assistant work very effectively to provide children with a wide range of appropriate activities. They balance adult-directed activities with child-chosen ones and place an appropriate emphasis on teaching early reading, writing and numeracy skills. They work hard to provide an appropriate EYFS environment but the lack of a suitable outdoor area and the restrictions of the building mean that children do not have the opportunity for a free flow between indoor and outdoor activities. Outdoor activities have to be planned and led by the adults. The children do not therefore have enough choice of activity and resources and this limits the opportunities they have to investigate, explore, have responsibility, be active, run, climb and pedal. This has a significant impact on the overall effectiveness of the EYFS. Despite these obvious drawbacks the staff do the best they can to provide outside activities for their children and take them out when they can but the lack of space seriously impedes what they can offer. Good leadership ensures that all the required safeguarding and welfare requirements are in place and that children leave the EYFS having achieved the goals expected of their ages in most areas of learning with some exceeding them.

What the school should do to improve further

- Seek ways to ensure that all parents understand and appreciate management decisions and feel that their views have been listened to and taken into account.
- Explore with the relevant agencies ways of removing the barriers to learning, development and community cohesion presented by inadequacies of the school site.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards at Year 2 and Year 6 are above average, currently representing good progress from these children's average starting points. There was a decline in standards and achievement at Key Stage 2 up to 2007 but the school has reversed that trend. The results of the 2008 national tests were average, which represents good achievement for these children from their below average starting points at Year 2. The school's comprehensive information on how well children are progressing shows that the current Year 6 are on track to reach well above average standards and are achieving well. Children make good progress through Key Stage 1 and usually reach above average standards. The school identified that achievement in mathematics was not as good as that in English and has taken successful steps to resolve this imbalance. Those who find learning hard are well supported and progress well. There is no significant difference in the achievement of different groups within school and challenging targets are helping to raise standards and improve progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Although one or two parents commented that there was some misbehaviour in school the inspection found no evidence of this and children assured the inspector that behaviour was good. They say there is no bullying. They have a clear understanding of the need to keep healthy and understand how to keep themselves safe. They are fully aware of the possible dangers in using the Internet and appreciate the 'firewalls' in use at school to prevent them

accessing inappropriate websites. Children say they feel well looked after by the staff and would happily take any worries or concerns to their teacher. They enjoy school as shown in their positive attitudes to learning and above average attendance. While children have very good opportunities to get involved with the local community through projects like well-dressing and the local carnival the split site means there are limited opportunities for them to take responsibility within school. For example, those in Key Stage 2 cannot support the younger children with reading or playtime games. The school council is active, however, and prides itself on getting improvements to the playground. Older children say that although they are all one school, transferring from Year 2 to Year 3 is 'as scary as going to secondary school' despite the good efforts of staff to ease transition through events like whole school days. Children are well prepared for the next stage of their education and later life though there are limited opportunities currently to appreciate at first hand the range of cultures that make up British society.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

While teaching and learning are consistently good across the school, the split site limits the opportunities for teachers from each site to mix and share good practice on a day-to-day basis. Lessons are well planned so that children know what they are going to learn and how they can judge how successful they have been. Good rapport between adults and children means that children feel confident in offering ideas and suggestions in class. One parent commented on 'the excellent relations between children, staff and parents'. Children say that teachers tell them how well they have done and how to make their work better. Children know their targets and what they need to do to achieve them. Regular checks on how well they are doing ensure that teachers can give extra help where it is needed. At times children all do the same activity at the same level but often tasks are geared for the needs of particular ability groups.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Children enjoy school because the staff give them interesting learning activities that cover all the requirements of the National Curriculum. There is an appropriate focus on literacy and numeracy but also time for other subjects. Increasingly links are made between subjects as when Year 6 wrote a report about Christianity linking literacy, religious education and information and communication technology. The lack of a school field limits the games and athletics the children can take part in but the school compensates for this by having the trim trail and organised games at lunchtimes. It makes effective use of the expertise of professional sports coaches. There is also a good programme of after school sport in response to demands from parents. The school provides a rich programme of visits to enhance learning, like those to the air raid shelters in a nearby town and the visit to the local police station which children thoroughly enjoyed.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Children and their parents appreciate the school's caring ethos and the way teachers treat each child as an individual' so that all have an equal opportunity to succeed. All the requirements

to ensure the safety and welfare of children are in place. The school has very good systems for identifying children who are in danger of underachieving and then providing appropriate support. This results in those who need extra help with their learning making good progress and reaching their targets. The school has a regular system of checks to ensure that all children are making the progress of which they are capable. Staff share this information with children and their parents. The school recognises that the transfer from the infant to the junior site is a concern for some children and staff go out of their way to ease this transition by bringing the whole school together periodically.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school has tackled the issues raised at the last inspection, reversed the downward trend in achievement at Key Stage 2 and maintained standards and achievement at Key Stage 1. This demonstrates that the school is well placed to improve further. Governors fully support the school but also hold staff to account for its performance and fulfil their roles diligently and effectively. Subject leaders now check how well their subjects are doing and offer advice and guidance to colleagues. Staff and governors have a clear awareness of how well the school is doing and what the priorities for improvement are. Despite the good leadership at all levels within the school the sites present significant barriers to learning. While the staff and governors do their best to minimise these barriers the split site does mean that it is very hard to promote community cohesion effectively within the school.

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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?	2
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?	3
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?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
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	3
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?	2

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?	3
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**

14 January 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Charlesworth VC Primary School, Charlesworth, Glossop SK14 5ET

Thank you for making me so welcome when I came to visit your school recently. I enjoyed talking with you over lunch and at playtimes and seeing how hard you work. This letter is to tell you what I found out about your school.

You told me that yours is a good school and I agree with you. Your teachers and other adults work hard to help you to learn so that you make good progress and do well in the national tests at Year 2 and Year 6. You also told me that behaviour is good and that is what I saw. The teachers plan interesting lessons for you and take you on trips to make learning more exciting. Most of your parents also think yours is a good school. Some made very nice comments about how well the headteacher and teachers look after you, although a small number said they were not so happy with the school. I have asked the staff and governors to see what they can do to help all parents appreciate the good work the school does.

Although yours is a good school the buildings are not really good enough. There is no space for the Reception children to have an outdoor area. Year 6 have lessons in the hall surrounded by physical education equipment and there is no school field. The two separate buildings with a busy road between them mean that children and staff cannot get together as easily as they could in a single building to share ideas. I think your teachers do a splendid job despite these difficulties. I have asked them to look at what else they might do to improve the buildings.

I think your school is well placed to get even better. You can play your part by continuing to behave as well as you do and by continuing to work hard at your lessons.

Yours sincerely

Ian Nelson

Lead inspector