

Chickenley Community Junior Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130939
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	331434
Inspection dates	28–29 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Steve Isherwood HMI

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	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	311
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	Ms Julie Bowdidge
Headteacher	Miss Boronagh King
Date of previous school inspection	3 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Princess Road Chickenley Dewsbury West Yorkshire WF12 8QT

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	28–29 April 2009
Inspection number	331434

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Age group 3–11

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average school situated on the outskirts of Dewsbury. The area served by the school is socially and economically disadvantaged. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage with a small number from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average, as is the number of pupils eligible for free school meals. An above average number of pupils leave or join the school other than at the start of the academic year. When children start school many have skills that are below those expected for their age, particularly in language and communication. The school has gained several awards including Healthy Schools Standard and the physical education (PE) Activemark and is working towards the Artsmark Gold Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Since January 2008, under a new headteacher, the school has made rapid and sustained progress and according to many people is vastly different from how it was when its effectiveness was judged to be satisfactory and standards were exceptionally low at the previous inspection. Inspectors agree with the school's self-evaluation that it now provides a good and improving education for its pupils and has some outstanding features. Standards have risen and pupils are making better progress than previously. They behave well, are caring and considerate to each other and make good progress in their personal development. They feel safe and secure in school and are happy and enthusiastic learners. This is because of good provision and exceptionally high standards of care and support for each child. This is a school with a caring and nurturing ethos which owes much to the school community's dedication to the welfare and personal development of all pupils, whatever their circumstances. The school's commitment to equality of opportunity is outstanding. Every child is fully included in what is offered and known as an individual. As a result, pupils love their school. When asked to express their views they found it very difficult to think of any improvements they would like to see. There was strong praise for the wide range of activities on offer and the good relationships that exist. For example, pupils think one of the best things about school is the way that they all get along with each other.

Parents have picked up on the fact that the school is improving and are overwhelmingly supportive. They recognise the school's efforts to boost pupils' confidence and raise their self-esteem. As one parent commented, 'The teachers have done wonders with my child's confidence in maths. He has gone from literally crying when the numeracy books came out to actually sitting there and having a go.'

The school's promotion of community cohesion has improved and is now good. Opportunities that encourage insights into other religions and in pupils' awareness of other cultures in their own community and further afield are sensitively taught across the curriculum in ways that are meaningful through special themes, links with other schools and through the school's Connecting Classrooms project. There are outstanding partnerships with other schools and agencies in the local community.

Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, now make good progress from the moment they enter the school. By the time they leave in Year 6, pupils reach broadly average standards. This represents good achievement considering their starting points. A significant factor in this is that teaching is good overall with some outstanding features. Furthermore, the curriculum is well planned with excellent opportunities for enrichment and enjoyment. Pupils in most classes are now making faster progress across the school. This is because improvements in teaching and learning are increasing the progress pupils make in lessons. Systems for marking pupils' work have also improved. The best examples are from teachers who have a good understanding of how pupils learn effectively. However, the quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent in some classes.

The outstanding leadership of the headteacher spearheads the overall good quality of leadership at all levels. Her vision for improving the school is crystal clear and shared by staff. As a group they know the school well and actively seek out ways to improve further the current position. For example, senior leaders are well aware that progress in writing would accelerate further

with increased opportunities for pupils' to practise and hone their skills in other subjects across the curriculum.

Considering the advances made since its last inspection and along with its other strengths, the school has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's skills on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage are below and sometimes well below those typical for their age. They get off to a good start, settle quickly and achieve well. This is because of the warm and caring ethos that prevails, in which attitudes to work are good and where children are encouraged to grow in confidence and self-esteem. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers ask many searching questions and allow children time to think and refine their answers. Activities are well targeted on key learning goals that match well with children's stages of development so that children are able to work independently and in groups and play purposefully in a variety of settings both indoors and outside. For example, children were encouraged to develop their motor skills by using a range of real hand tools for gardening and woodwork activities. Staff have high expectations, work effectively as a team and have a clear understanding of how young children learn best. They continually assess how well children are achieving and use this information to plan further challenges. As a result, children become absorbed in their learning and have the confidence to initiate activities for themselves as well as follow clearly established routines. This means that by the start of Year 1, although standards are below the overall levels expected for this age, most children have made good progress from their starting points. Parents are kept well informed and are encouraged to become actively involved in their children's learning. An example of this is the 'Planning for your child's interest and needs' information sheet provided by the school, so parents are able to contribute to the planning for their children and comment on their current learning. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. The coordinator provides good leadership and gives clear guidance and help to support colleagues.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in different areas across the curriculum.
- Ensure greater consistency in the marking of pupils' work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' current work, as well as the test results for 2008, shows that while standards are broadly average, pupils' achievement is good.

When pupils start Year 1, standards are below average. Progress accelerates rapidly in Years 1 and 2 where the quality of teaching is very strong. In 2008 standards at age seven improved and were broadly in line with national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. A notable success was in writing, where the percentage of pupils achieving the expected National Curriculum Level 2 was above the national and local averages. Although below average numbers of pupils achieved the higher Level 3 in all core areas, increasing numbers did so in mathematics where the amount of pupils gaining a Level 3 rose to 17%, the school's highest figure over the last three years.

Work in lessons and in pupils' books shows that pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, continue to make good progress as they move through the school to Year 6. Progress in lower Key Stage 2 is satisfactory and some pupils lose some ground compared with the promise they showed in Key Stage 1. Progress picks up as the quality of teaching improves and by the end of Year 6 standards in all core subjects are broadly in line with national averages at the expected Level 4 in English, mathematics and science. While above average numbers of pupils made excellent progress to reach the higher Level 5 in mathematics, fewer did so in English and science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good and have a strong impact on their good progress. Pupils are confident, caring and supportive of each other. They behave well, have positive attitudes to their work and enjoy their learning as demonstrated by their enthusiasm for the wide range of activities that the school provides and their improving attendance. The school is diligent in putting in place strategies to encourage attendance, which is now satisfactory. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of the link between attendance and their achievement, and know it is important to come to school every day. Pupils say they feel safe and secure in school and speak highly of staff. They are confident that their voice will be heard and that any problems will be swiftly resolved. As one child said, 'The teachers never give up on you even if you have a wobble.' Pupils develop a strong social conscience and are eager to take on extra responsibilities such as acting as play leaders and befrienders or members of the active school council. Pupils recognise the needs of others through their regular charitable donations and by their strong commitment to participating in local events such as the Chickenley's Got Talent' competition.

Pupils have an excellent understanding of the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle through regular exercise and a balanced diet. Gaining the Activemark and the Healthy Schools Award confirms the school's strong commitment to pupils' health and well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning is good overall, with elements of outstanding practice and enables pupils to make good progress in their work. Teachers are enthusiastic, well organised and develop strong relationships in the classroom. Teaching assistants provide an effective layer of extra support, particularly for those pupils who find learning difficult. In the very best lessons teachers ensure that activities are fun and briskly paced with a variety of stimulating and exciting activities that challenge and spur pupils to make excellent progress. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and are skilled in developing pupils' thinking through effective questioning that keeps pupils on their toes. In these lessons pupils are encouraged to think for themselves with carefully crafted activities that promote high levels of discussion and independent learning. For example, in an outstanding literacy lesson in Year 1, pupils used drama to act out the role of different animals in a story to help them remember the sequence of events. The atmosphere buzzed with excitement as pupils moved and made animal sounds and then stood still to answer questions about what the character is thinking and feeling with excellent prompting and encouragement from the class teacher.

Where teaching is less strong pupils' work is sometimes over-directed, activities are not always matched appropriately to pupils' needs and some of the higher attaining pupils are not challenged enough.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good, overall, with outstanding elements of enrichment. It contributes significantly to pupils' enjoyment, achievement and their personal development. It is carefully planned and well balanced with a clear emphasis on the development of key skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). The teaching of these skills is made more meaningful to pupils through a good range of topics and themes which are enriched extremely well by a wide range of activities, including visiting speakers, visits to places of interest and enrichment days on health, reading and art, and through an extensive range of extra-curricular activities. Further enrichment is provided by the school's Roots and Wings project, which combines art with social and emotional development and gives pupils the opportunity to work with local artists. Consequently, pupils learn skills and acquire different experiences in a context that they can relate to. They are motivated to succeed and have a strong desire to learn.

Senior leaders are not complacent and realise that despite the recent improvements the development of creative opportunities for pupils could go further by increasing the range of provision for learners to use their writing skills in a variety of different ways across the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support for pupils is good, with some outstanding elements of pastoral care. The school takes exceptionally good care of its pupils, who confirm that they are well looked after and feel safe and secure. Parents' questionnaires overwhelmingly support this view. No stone is left unturned to ensure that all pupils, including the most vulnerable, are very well supported, particularly in their social and emotional development. Excellent communication with parents ensures that pupils settle quickly and are well supported. There are good procedures for introducing pupils to the school and for ensuring their smooth transition to other schools. All required systems and checks are in place to safeguard pupils' well-being. Safeguarding procedures meet current government requirements.

Systems for monitoring pupils' progress and for tracking their achievement are much improved and benefit from the outcomes of regular reviews. This means that intervention for those requiring extra support is well planned and staff have a good view of how well pupils are achieving and of any gaps in their learning.

In the main, pupils are aware of their targets and their progress towards them. There are some excellent examples in teachers' marking where pupils are given clear guidance of how to improve their work and reach the next level. However, the quality of marking is inconsistent across the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good and lie at the heart of its rapid improvement. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership, works with energy and commitment and is leading the school in the right direction. In doing so she has successfully ensured that the work of the school has been clearly focused on raising standards and in improving the quality of provision for all its pupils. Since her appointment, no time has been lost. The pace of change has accelerated, expectations have been raised, staff are accountable for their work and decisive action has been taken to eliminate inadequate performance. She is very well supported by an equally committed team of senior leaders who share her vision and sense of purpose. As a result, there have been significant improvements in pupils' achievement over the last year. Senior leaders closely monitor pupils' progress and the quality of teaching and learning. They know the school well and have built a shared understanding with staff about the priorities for improvement. This means that there is clear agreement on the strengths of the school and where further improvements are required. Plans for improvement thoroughly and consistently place priority on measures that will bring about improvements in pupils' welfare and achievements.

The governing body plays an effective role in shaping the school's direction and in holding it to account. Governors are extremely committed and are increasingly confident in challenging and supporting the school to improve further. They are well informed and are involved in planning for improvement and in evaluating the school's performance.

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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?	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	3
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	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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?	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	1
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**

Inspection of Chickenley Community Junior Infant and Nursery School, Dewsbury, WF12 8QT

Thank you for the friendly way in which you helped Mrs Demster, Mr Allen and myself when we inspected your school recently. We really enjoyed chatting to you in lessons, in the playground and in the interview with the school council. You told us that you enjoy coming to school and having spent the two days with you we can understand why. You expressed your views very clearly and they were very helpful to us. This is what we found out.

Firstly and most importantly, we would like to tell you that you go to a good and improving school. You make good progress in your work and are taught well. We were very pleased to see how the adults look after you really well in school, and your parents told us this too. We were very pleased to see how well you behave and how you help one another in class and around the school.

You told us that you enjoy your work and that your teachers help you to learn well by making your lessons interesting and often fun. We could see this with our own eyes when those of you in Year 1 were using drama to help with your story writing, when those of you in Year 2 were solving money problems by adding two numbers together and when those of you in Year 6 were finding the value of each interval on a scale in learning to measure more accurately.

Miss King and all the staff work very hard to make the school as good as it can be and we are confident that it will continue to improve. To help them, we have asked that more of your lessons give you opportunities to use your writing skills and that your teachers look more closely at how well you are learning when marking your work. You can help them by continuing to work hard and by having the confidence to practice your writing skills in lots of different subjects.

We wish you well for the future. We can see why your teachers enjoy working with you every day.