

Chesham Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105293
Local Authority	Bury
Inspection number	336469
Inspection dates	14–15 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Kathleen McArthur

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	310
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Steven Treadgold
Headteacher	Mr P Hudson
Date of previous school inspection	2 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books and work, policies, minutes of governors' meetings, assessment data and records and safeguarding documentation. Inspectors also analysed 112 parental questionnaires and considered comments and responses in these and in the pupil and staff questionnaires.

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

- how well teaching challenges different pupil groups, particularly those who speak English as an additional language, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are gifted and talented
- the quality, accuracy and use of assessment systems
- provision for learning outdoors in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- school actions to promote community cohesion.

Information about the school

The school is larger than most and draws pupils from a variety of social and economic backgrounds. Although most pupils are of White British heritage, an increasing variety of home languages is represented in school, including Urdu and Punjabi, and a small number of pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. Free school meal entitlement is just below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average but the number with a statement of their particular educational needs is well above average. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises two Reception classes. The school offers before and after school care. The school holds an Activemark Gold and the Healthy Schools Award.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school: a happy, vibrant and harmonious community that equips pupils with firm foundations for their future education and life beyond. All pupils are valued equally and provided with outstanding levels of care so they feel extremely safe and secure; their behaviour is excellent and they are proud of their school. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive because their children are happy and progressing well.

The Early Years Foundation Stage gives children a good start. Pupils achieve well as they move through the school and attain above average standards by the time they leave. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with statements of their particular needs, and those learning to speak English as an additional language, progress well because work and extra support is suitably matched to their particular needs. Additional activities for gifted and talented pupils challenge them and extend their skills and interests.

Good teaching inspires a real enjoyment of learning. Pupils know what they will learn in each lesson and say they are expected to work hard. Rigorous monitoring ensures that no one falls behind. An ongoing review has tightened up assessment systems to provide accurate information about progress. However, this information is not always used to plan the next steps in learning and build on pupils' previous knowledge. Opportunities to self-assess increase pupils' involvement in learning, and they say teachers' marking, oral comments and knowing their targets help them to do better. Exciting activities and popular clubs enrich the good curriculum and enhance learning and enjoyment very effectively: pupils spoke enthusiastically about curriculum trips, for example, to the local Pioneers' Museum.

Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to look after their health; their commitment and efforts have been recognised by an Activemark and the Healthy Schools Award. Visits and partnerships, such as those with high schools, local churches and the mosque, give pupils experience of other cultures within our society. However, they are less aware of the lifestyles and cultures in the wider global community. Their academic and personal skills give pupils a good basis for their future economic well-being.

Senior leaders have established an ambitious vision for ongoing improvement and created a sense of unity and purpose shared by all staff and governors. This gives the school good capacity for sustained improvement. Leaders at all levels evaluate the school's performance and inspection findings match their judgment of the school's overall effectiveness. Staff, governors, parents and pupils contribute to development planning. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body is supportive, but does not

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always challenge, for example, not questioning why evaluation of the impact of community cohesion plans is incomplete. Improvements since the previous inspection include accurate assessment, monitoring and individual target-setting, increased commitment to health matters and building developments, including an outdoor area for the Reception classes. Value for money is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure consistent use of assessment information to plan the next steps in learning.
- Complete the evaluation of the impact of community cohesion work and extend pupils' knowledge of cultures and lifestyles in the wider world.
- Raise the level of challenge from the governing body to hold the school to account in all areas.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

All groups of pupils achieve well. Pupils' enthusiasm and excellent behaviour show how much they enjoy learning and really aid progress. They listen carefully and cooperate well in lessons. Friendly, respectful relationships and strategic use of praise give them confidence to try harder. They relish self-assessing their work, for example, using a system of 'traffic lights' to show how well they understand.

National data shows consistently above average standards but less than expected progress. The school acknowledges that, in previous years, Key Stage 1 assessments were not always accurate, so pupils did not appear to make good progress in Key Stage 2. Rigorous actions have remedied this situation. The legacy of inaccurate assessments is almost eradicated and good quality systems now give an accurate picture of standards and progress. Lesson observations and scrutiny of workbooks show that pupils make consistently good progress through the school to reach challenging targets. There are some examples of pupils with special needs and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language making very good progress as a result of well managed, high quality provision for their needs.

Pupils feel extremely safe and move around the building and grounds with careful regard for their own and others' safety. They are keen to contribute to the community as 'buddies', play leaders and school councillors and to participate in local activities. They show high levels of respect and concern for others and for the environment. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, as seen in pupils' thoughtfulness and consideration for others, their strong sense of right and wrong and their excellent social skills. Respect for different lifestyles and cultures is promoted well through visits and studies of major faiths, but pupils are less aware of the global dimension.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Good teaching was observed across the school, with some exemplary practice for the oldest pupils. Outstanding teaching created a real buzz of excitement as Year 6 pupils imagined they were evacuees writing letters home. Carefully targeted, open questions draw out ideas, enhance thinking and reasoning skills and build on pupils' enjoyment of learning so they progress well. Lessons provide activities that challenge pupils of all abilities, including those learning English as an additional language, so they all progress well. Pupils agree that teachers' marking shows them how to improve their work. However, when assessment information is not used in planning the next steps, learning does not always build on pupils' previous knowledge. Teaching assistants are well deployed and the majority provide skilled support, especially for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The curriculum provides carefully adapted activities to ensure all groups of pupils experience success. Staff are beginning to link subjects to make learning more meaningful, for example, using history topics as a basis for writing. A wide range of exciting enrichment activities, including specialist music and language teaching, add to pupils' enjoyment of learning and thus their good progress. There is a high take-up of out-of-school activities, including sports and chess clubs. The carefully planned programme of personal development includes 'Circle time' and 'bubble time', providing quiet opportunities for pupils to reflect on their feelings and worries in a secure setting.

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

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Parents, staff and pupils agree that the school is an extremely safe and secure environment. Outstanding care arrangements include well considered pastoral care reports that alert all staff to any concerns and lead to prompt action. Very good transition arrangements ensure pupils move confidently between key stages and on to the next steps in their education. Well managed and organised provision for vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures they receive well targeted support, and the school reaches out to ensure parents and all outside agencies are fully involved. Consequently, these pupils make good, and sometimes better, progress. Parents value the before and after school provision, confident their children enjoy a good variety and have some fun whilst being well cared for in a very safe, familiar environment.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders' strong vision for ambitious improvement is expressed in the well focused school development plan. Performance management targets drawn from the outcomes of regular monitoring have resulted in consistently good quality teaching. Curriculum leaders monitor standards in their subjects and use the information to plan further improvements. Many governors attend events such as Harvest Festival. The governing body fulfils all statutory responsibilities but does not really challenge senior leaders. Very positive relationships between school and families form a supportive framework for pupils' learning and care, and nearly all parents and carers say they feel well informed about their child's progress. Effective partnerships with local schools and community organisations provide experiences the school cannot provide, for example, sports, drama and staff professional development.

This fully inclusive school ensures that all pupils have equal opportunities, very successfully: discrimination is unheard of. Safeguarding procedures are exemplary. Participation in the 'Love to learn languages' project helped pupils appreciate the different languages represented in school. The promotion of community cohesion impacts well at school and local levels, but does not yet extend pupils' awareness of global issues fully.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are broadly typical for their age but weaker in the vital area of language. They make good progress in all areas of learning and, when they move to Year 1, have skills above the expected levels. Parents praised the excellent welfare and induction arrangements. Children are warmly welcomed so they feel secure, safe and settle quickly, and are ready for learning. Good links with the before and after school clubs ensure children who attend have the same key worker at the club and in class.

Good teaching provides an exciting range of activities that capture children's natural curiosity and challenge them to investigate and explore. They become increasingly independent and understand how to be healthy, saying they must wash hands and use a tissue if they sneeze to avoid spreading germs.

The strong focus on communication and language skills results in rapid progress: after just a few weeks in school, many children are confidently blending letters and 'sounding out' words. Good provision for children to learn outside in the fresh air enhances the good balance of activities led by staff and those they choose themselves. Occasionally, adults intervene too much during child chosen activities rather than allowing them to extend their learning independently. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led, with a strong staff team who constantly seek to improve provision for every child.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate
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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers returned questionnaire responses. The vast majority were extremely positive and very happy with their children's experience at school. They say the school is very caring, keeps children very safe and helps them to be healthy. Many commented warmly on the friendly ethos and open, welcoming and professional approach of the staff and headteacher. Typical comments were: 'There has never been a single day when my child has not wanted to go to school.', 'The headmaster and staff work as a team.', 'Staff genuinely care about the well-being of the children.' and 'Excellent pastoral care.' Several wrote simply, 'Thank you' to the school.

The very few negative comments referred to specific issues; the inspection found the school makes every effort to resolve any difficulties that may arise.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Chesham Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 112 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 310 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	158	70	62	28	2	1	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	172	76	52	23	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	132	58	86	38	8	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	138	62	76	34	4	2	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	156	70	64	29	2	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	126	56	86	38	10	4	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	140	62	78	35	4	2	2	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	126	58	80	37	4	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	128	57	82	37	8	4	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	128	57	90	40	2	1	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	126	57	82	37	6	3	4	2
The school is led and managed effectively	152	68	66	29	0	0	4	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	166	73	56	25	4	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



16 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Chesham Primary School, Bury BL9 6PH

I would like to thank you all for your help and for being so friendly and polite during the inspection. Happy, smiling faces and good attendance told us how much you enjoy school, which really pleases your parents and carers. Your excellent behaviour is a credit to them and to the staff. We heard about many visits and sporting successes, and were sorry we couldn't be there on Friday to hear the brass instruments playing! We saw how much you care for others in the lovely Harvest gifts you bought to share, and we heard that the 'Buddies' even look after the little ones outside school!

This is what the inspection found.

Chesham is a good school.

Children get off to a good start in the Reception classes, where they work outside as much as possible.

The school has good leaders and staff who work very hard to make your lessons challenging and interesting. They care for you extremely well so you feel very safe and secure, and you certainly know how to look after your health.

The school councillors are proud to help make the school even better, especially in setting up the "Fruitilicious" tuck shop. There are so many clubs and extra activities, and many of you enjoy the breakfast and after-school clubs.

The inspectors have asked the school to:

- make sure they always build up your learning step by step
- help you learn more about different cultures in the wider world
- expect more challenge from governors to keep the leaders on their toes!

We really enjoyed our visit and are sure you will continue to enjoy everything you do at Chesham School.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Kathleen McArthur

Lead inspector

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