

Chartridge Combined School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110298
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	337466
Inspection dates	22–23 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Nick Butt

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	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Keith Irvine
Headteacher	Steve Butler
Date of previous school inspection	10 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 17 lessons and observed 8 teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a selection of documentation, including planning, evidence of monitoring, such as lesson observations, analysis of pupils' work and other assessment information. Inspectors scrutinised inspection questionnaires returned by 94 parents and carers, and by staff and pupils.

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

- what the school is doing to raise attainment in mathematics for girls
- how effectively the school tracks pupils' progress
- the impact of the monitoring role of subject leaders in bringing about improvement.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average-sized school. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A quarter of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest group being Pakistani. Few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Among other awards, the school has Healthy School status and Activemark. A study support breakfast club was introduced in January 2010.

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

Chartridge is a good school. It has improved well since its last inspection and aspects of its work are now outstanding, including pupils' behaviour and the care, guidance and support it offers. The headteacher provides highly effective leadership through his energy, drive and determination, and plays a central role in ensuring that curriculum enrichment is also outstanding. The school runs an exceptionally wide variety of sports and other clubs that are extremely well supported by pupils. These contribute to the outstanding way in which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles. Parents speak highly of the school's work, including one who said, 'We feel the school is very well managed and our children are extremely happy there and making great progress.'

Pupils achieve well from broadly average starting points, with attainment above average by the end of Year 6. In 2009, girls did not do so well in mathematics, but this situation has been turned around this year following productive work by the school to support and engage girls, and to find out what they enjoy about the subject. The rate of pupils' progress, while good overall, does vary, with particular acceleration in Year 6, where teaching is often outstanding. The school has invested in a new tracking system this year, which is beginning to yield useful information, although it is not that easy to access the data the school requires. Leaders and managers have introduced a mid-year assessment to monitor pupils' progress, but this leaves a long period of time in the autumn when it is not clear how well pupils are doing.

Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do and achieve and have good subject knowledge. They use resources well to support learning and provide a good level of challenge for pupils. Occasionally the pace of lessons slows if pupils are not involved enough, or if they are not clear what they are supposed to be doing. In the best lessons, pupils make excellent progress because the work captivates them and is tailored very well to their needs. Not enough sharing of this outstanding practice goes on. The curriculum is in the process of being reviewed, with teachers trialling new ways of working through adopting a more thematic approach to learning. The impact to date on pupils' learning and enjoyment is good. Excellent pastoral care ensures the school caters for all pupils' needs and provides them with the security and support to grow in confidence.

The school's self-evaluation is accurate, based on regular and rigorous monitoring of teaching by the headteacher. Whilst other leaders' roles have developed since the last inspection, leaders do not have sufficient opportunities to monitor the impact of initiatives being implemented in the classroom. This reduces their effectiveness in ensuring that there is a consistent approach to improving learning. The governing body knows the school's strengths and areas for development well, and produces a detailed

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report on parents' views of the school each year. There are outstanding links with parents, and the school communicates with them extremely well, running a range of workshops and other events to keep them abreast of the latest developments. Based on its good track record of bringing about improvements and ensuring pupils' good achievement, the school's capacity for further improvement is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make the monitoring of pupils' progress more effective by:
 - improving the tracking system so that it is easy to use and clearly shows how well pupils are doing
 - ensuring pupils are assessed at termly intervals so that leaders and managers are clear about their rates of progress and can more readily identify and support any underachievement.
- Increase the influence of senior leaders and middle managers on teaching and learning by:
 - sharing outstanding classroom practice
 - having regular opportunities to observe lessons so as to monitor initiatives being taken to develop and improve classroom practice.

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

A pupil said, 'They make learning fun but you also learn a lot.' Pupils enjoy school and are keen to take part in a wide range of activities. The school develops pupils' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills well, enabling them to make good progress in all key stages, and to be prepared well for the next stage of their education. Year 6 pupils were engrossed in designing their own theme parks and calculating how they could make them profitable. As well as being creative, this taught them about running a business. Pupils in Year 4 took pride in making a computer-generated presentation of Watership Down, complete with their illustrations and soundtrack. An emphasis on developing team-building skills gives pupils the personal qualities they need to be able to negotiate and cooperate with others successfully. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well because they receive good support from learning support assistants. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also make good progress.

The award of Healthy School status and the Activemark confirms pupils' outstanding understanding of healthy lifestyles and their willingness to make healthy choices. Pupils are excellent ambassadors for sport, often hosting events and taking a leading role in supporting younger pupils. They have a good understanding of staying safe, with junior road safety officers promoting traffic awareness, and members of the school council working with governors to ensure the school site is safe and secure. Pupils have liaised with lunchtime staff to help make the midday break a calm and enjoyable one for all. The school council is influential in canvassing pupils' views, bringing about

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improvements and supporting good causes. Pupils take part in community events, but are not as involved in the wider community as they could be. Pupils' attendance is good, and has been above average for several years. The school's distinctive ethos gives purpose and fulfilment to pupils, ensuring their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They respect each other, care for those less well off and think seriously about the wider issues facing society and the world, such as global warming. Pupils have a good understanding of the richness and diversity of other cultures. Their enjoyment of drama and the creative arts gives them regular opportunities to reflect upon the human condition and the beauty of the world around them.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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	2
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?

Very good relationships ensure that learning takes place in a supportive and positive working environment. Teachers make good use of ICT and other resources to engage and interest pupils, adopting a variety of teaching styles. Marking is generally good, giving pupils clear guidance on how they can improve their writing in particular. There is a consistent approach to setting targets so that all pupils know what their targets are

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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and their purpose. Sometimes too much time elapses before new targets are set. Pupils work well in pairs and groups, and the older pupils assess their own and others' work sensibly, having a good understanding of what constitutes a successful outcome. There are many opportunities for pupils to write at length in different subjects. For example, Year 6 pupils wrote letters calling for the release of Nelson Mandela as part of a study into the history of South Africa. They also imagined themselves visiting the township of Soweto for the first time. 'As I strolled along the dusty road of Soweto, the sun beating down on my face, I caught a glimpse of a cluster of tin-roofed houses...'

Excellent enrichment adds to pupils' enjoyment of school and contributes positively to their personal development and well-being. Themed weeks allow them to focus on a subject in depth, while visits to places of interest help to consolidate their learning, as when pupils attended a Tudor re-enactment day at Sulgrave Manor. Good use is made of the extensive and attractive school grounds, with pupils having individual plots to cultivate and a pond and wild area. The school has begun trialling more creative approaches to the curriculum and is evaluating the impact of these, especially in terms of making the curriculum more relevant for pupils. There is a wide range of activities to support different groups of pupils, including those with disabilities and low self-esteem. Children from a local special school visit monthly to work with Reception children, who benefit greatly from the partnership. The school provides well for pupils at the early stages of learning English and for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Its ethos promotes the outstanding pastoral care that enables all pupils to feel valued and included.

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?

The headteacher gives strong leadership that ensures there is a momentum for continuous improvement, grounded in high expectations and common accountability. Staff back this vision, meaning that there is a good level of consistency in terms of planning, setting targets and managing pupil behaviour. The headteacher leads by example and is very visible around the school, as well as organising a raft of clubs and extra-curricular activities. He does most of the monitoring of teaching and learning, which gives him a very clear picture of how things stand. However, this reduces the effectiveness of other leaders and middle managers in measuring the success of initiatives they have introduced. The school is moving over to a different tracking system

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and is learning how to produce the reports it needs to show clearly the progress that different groups of pupils are making. It is seeking ways to monitor the performance of particular groups in more depth. It promotes equality of opportunity well and there is no discrimination. Leaders, managers and the governing body have a good understanding of what the school does well and where it needs to improve. The school improvement plan identifies the correct priorities, but does not focus enough on outcomes for pupils that can be measured as a way of evaluating their success. Class representatives among parents convey their views to the school and help support its work. There are outstanding links with parents and the school works hard to engage all groups, including its Asian community.

Safeguarding arrangements are effective. All policies and procedures are reviewed regularly. The school promotes community cohesion well. It has analysed its context and has put in place actions to reach out to all groups and include all pupils in its activities, regardless of their circumstances or backgrounds. There are strong international links, including with an orphanage in Thailand set up by the headteacher and others following the tsunami of 2004. Children from Chernobyl visited the school and gave pupils insight into the challenges faced in different parts of the world. The school is seeking to develop links with children from different communities and cultures in the United Kingdom.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children join the Reception class with attainment that is close to that expected for their

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age. They make good progress as a result of good provision that has outstanding elements. Most reach or exceed national expectations by the end of the year. Children settle quickly and enjoy a variety of stimulating and well-chosen activities centred upon their own interests and set up in response to the questions they have asked. This led children to make pig houses out of different materials, including paper and wood, and attempt to blow them down. Good assessment means staff have a clear knowledge of children's progress and this is partly recorded in attractive 'learning journeys'. Other assessments are kept elsewhere and staff are now working to combine them for ease of access in one place. Children work well together and can concentrate on tasks. Good use is made of the outdoor area in all aspects of learning. The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well with a dedicated staff team.

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

The majority of parents and carers strongly agree that their children are safe, lead healthy lifestyles, enjoy school and that it is led well. A few queried whether their children were making enough progress or whether the school met their particular needs. Inspectors found that pupils make good progress overall, although this can vary from year to year. They found that the school meets the needs of pupils well and that all groups of pupils achieve well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Chartridge Combined 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 94 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 201 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	54	57	34	36	4	4	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	63	67	29	31	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	30	32	58	62	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	36	45	48	12	13	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	40	43	46	49	6	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	34	36	49	52	7	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	59	63	35	37	0	0	0	0
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)	29	31	56	60	4	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	34	46	49	10	11	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	33	35	49	52	6	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	29	52	55	6	6	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	59	63	31	33	4	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	59	63	25	27	8	9	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



24 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Chartridge Combined School, Chesham HP5 2TW

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited Chartridge. Yours is a good school and here are some of its strengths.

- Children in the Reception class get off to a good start.
- You make good progress in your work.
- Your behaviour is outstanding.
- You know all about living a healthy lifestyle and take plenty of exercise.
- The school council does a good job in helping the school to improve.
- The teaching is good and lessons are interesting and enjoyable.
- There are plenty of clubs and visits for you to take part in.
- The school cares for you extremely well.
- The school has excellent links with parents.
- The headteacher is a very good leader.

Your teachers are keen to keep a track how well you are doing, so we have asked them to improve their system so that it gives them the information they need. We think it would be good if they found out how well you were doing each term and could quickly identify those of you who need extra help. All of you can help by telling them how you think you are getting on. We have asked your teachers to visit one another's classes more often to see all the excellent work that is going on, and to get a feel for what is happening in other parts of the school.

Thank you once again for your help. Continue to work hard and enjoy school.

Our best wishes for the future.

Nick Butt

Lead inspector

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