

Chaucer Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112709
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	337993
Inspection dates	12–13 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Jackie Barnes

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	188
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jason Smith
Headteacher	Mark Whyman
Date of previous school inspection	3 May 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 12 lessons, and held meetings with senior leaders, staff, pupils and a representative governor. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including the school's improvement plan, self-evaluation information and parental questionnaires.

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

- Pupils' progress through the year groups, especially for the more-able pupils.
- The impact on pupils' progress of teaching, including the use of assessment information in planning their learning.
- The effectiveness of the senior leaders in improving pupils' performance.

Information about the school

This is an average size school situated close to the centre of the town. It serves a local community of mixed social and economic circumstances. Entitlement to free school meals is above average. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and the school has a settled population. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than average and has increased since the last inspection. Almost all the pupils who start school in Year 3 come from the nearby infant school.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Pupils enjoy school, especially meeting with their wide circle of friends. 'This school is perfect for everybody and anybody', was typical of the comments from pupils. They feel secure and well cared-for in school, and know they can approach members of staff to help them if they have a problem. They are also knowledgeable about the hazards they may face in school and beyond, and recognise their own contribution to keeping themselves safe. The school has some good features, including the behaviour of the pupils, which helps the school to be a calm and welcoming place. It enjoys the confidence of parents and pupils, and is particularly successful in ensuring pupils are happy in school. This works well in developing a strong sense of community amongst pupils. A few find good behaviour difficult and receive additional support. Other pupils are generally patient and understanding about this, and although occasionally difficulties arise, these are dealt with quickly and usually resolved. Almost all pupils are keen to learn, and participation in clubs and voluntary activities illustrates their enthusiasm.

When pupils start school in Year 3, their attainment is wide-ranging but average overall. Most make satisfactory progress and by Year 6 their attainment is broadly average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities enjoy their learning, make good progress and attain at least as well as similar pupils nationally. However, some pupils do not make the progress they should, especially the more-able pupils, and their attainment is not yet high enough. This is often because their learning experiences in lessons are not always consistent enough to ensure all pupils make the rapid progress at which the school aims. The inconsistency is mainly due to the constraints of the arrangements for English and mathematics every morning in which expectations for the learning and progress of pupils were not sufficiently linked to their needs. The groups also limit class teachers' contact with their class, and reduce the effectiveness of the planning and checking of learning and progress.

Almost all lessons are well managed with excellent relationships that encourage pupils' confidence and willingness to co-operate. Lessons are calm and orderly. The quality of teaching and learning are at their best when teachers work with their own classes, especially when an additional adult was available to enable teaching in small groups within the lesson. These lessons made good use of the school's early moves to develop a curriculum which enables pupils to consolidate their basic skills in literacy and numeracy alongside their learning in other subjects.

The determination of the senior leadership team to continue with school improvement is well embedded in the approach of the headteacher, governors and subject leaders. Difficult decisions are carefully considered and made when needed, such as the move

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towards mixed-age classes that the falling roll necessitated. The school's tracking system enables pupils' attainment and progress to be monitored and is used well to identify those pupils most in need of support. It is not yet used well enough to identify those pupils whose progress is satisfactory but should be better because targets for individual pupils do not reflect their individual potential.

Staff are proud to be part of the school, would like to continue their useful programme of professional development and to be more involved in the school's self-evaluation. Although the school's self-evaluation is accurate, with governors being particularly knowledgeable about the school's strengths and weaknesses, the contributions from other interested parties could usefully be extended. The leadership team recognises that not all pupils are making enough progress and are working to improve this. Recent staff appointments have brought additional expertise to the teaching team which is improving the quality of teaching. The increased proportion of pupils needing support with their learning has been successfully integrated into the school, and the school's data is now showing that improved use of assessment is starting to have a positive impact on pupils' progress. These improvements demonstrate the school's satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in English and mathematics, particularly those of the more-able pupils, by the end of the current school year, ensuring that:
 - expectations of attainment for all are ambitious
 - the progress of pupils of all abilities is closely monitored.
- Improve the continuity of pupils' learning throughout the school, ensuring that:
 - class teachers have sufficient time with all their pupils to plan their learning effectively
 - the school's curriculum planning identifies clearly how skills and knowledge are to be developed progressively across subjects.
- Accelerate the progress of pupils who are not achieving as well as they should, ensuring that:
 - tracking systems clearly identify suitably challenging targets for individual pupils
 - assessment information is used effectively to plan lessons that are challenging and achievable for all pupils.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 is average and has been for several years, with slight variability over time between different subjects and genders. In the 2009 national

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tests the percentage of pupils who attained the expected Level 4 for their age was similar to other schools in English and science, but dipped from the previous year in mathematics. The proportion of more-able pupils attaining the higher Level 5 was below national figures. Pupils' progress from Year 3 to Year 6 has been too slow for some time. This has been partly due to some difficulty in aligning the assessment results between Year 2 and Year 3, which has now been resolved, and also the increase in the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, there remain too many pupils who should be making faster progress.

Current work in lessons and pupils' books indicates that these are mainly the more able pupils, but not exclusively so. This is partly due the organisation of learning in English and mathematics into morning sessions of two hours each day when pupils are grouped by ability for their lessons. Groups are large and include wide-ranging attainment, and many pupils are not taught by their class teacher. As a result some pupils have three teachers involved in their learning of basic skills. The inflexibility of this daily arrangement reduces the effectiveness of the class teachers' planning for consolidating pupils' learning across other subjects, because they are not always fully aware of pupils' immediate needs in literacy and numeracy. It also limits the opportunities to accurately monitor each pupil's progress. Nonetheless, a minority of pupils have made good progress from low starting points.

Achievement is satisfactory and pupils enjoy their learning. They are keen to succeed in all their activities. They are particularly positive about practical activities such as sport and cooking, and have recently performed well in a local gardening challenge. These positive attitudes are reflected in attendance, with almost all pupils having good attendance records. However, despite the school's best efforts a small number of pupils are not regular attenders and this inhibits the progress they make. The morning groups for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are effective in promoting their learning and progress as expectations are high. The number of adults involved enables frequent attention to be given to each pupil, and assessment information is used well to plan, check and record the ongoing progress of individual pupils.

Pupils' personal development is good. They make good contributions to the school community, such as older pupils taking care of younger ones in the playground. They bring positive attitudes to their learning and support each other in lessons and around the school. Much of this is due to the positive relationships and clear expectations for behaviour that are engendered by staff. Curriculum programmes for social and emotional development also encourage them reflect on how to relate to others and respect themselves. They know how to keep safe and healthy, as shown in their good choices at lunchtimes, in their take-up of sporting activities and in walking or cycling to school. A few pupils are particularly well informed about the multi-cultural nature of the extended local environment, although not all pupils are so familiar with different cultures. Pupils are reasonably well prepared for their future with good personal skills, regular attendance and keenness to learn, although some are not yet sufficiently proficient in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
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	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have good subject knowledge and prepare resources for lessons thoroughly, with a clear sequence of teaching points. Good use is made of electronic white boards and other visual resources to support pupils' understanding. All staff have clear expectations of behaviour and pupils respond well to knowing what is expected of them. In morning lessons the constraints of time often result in too few checks on what pupils have learned, and a pattern of moving on too quickly to the next topic the following day. This leaves some pupils with insecure understanding. The quality of the teaching when teachers are with their own classes is often good with a lively response from pupils, including in those in classes with mixed year groups. In these lessons, the teachers' knowledge of individual pupils, the interesting topics and the opportunities to teach individuals or small groups, contribute to a good pace of learning and high levels of enjoyment. Assessment information is used effectively to plan different activities that reflect the wide range of ability in each class. There is more flexibility in the time available which enables teachers to discuss any problems and pupils to complete their tasks. Good use is made of additional adult help to use a variety of teaching strategies

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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guided by assessment of pupils' needs.

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils across the ability range, through clubs and links with other schools. These successfully enhance pupils' enjoyment and widen their experience within the local community. Developments are underway to link learning across various subjects, and lessons. These initiatives are helping to make learning in afternoon lessons more interesting and to consolidate basic skills.

The school has a larger than usual number of vulnerable pupils who need regular or occasional care beyond that usually expected. All staff take this responsibility seriously and the quality of their care is a main contributor to pupils feeling safe. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have effective support that results in good achievement. All pupils benefit from the positive guidance they receive about their behaviour and other aspects of their personal development.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The leadership of the school has successfully managed improvements to the fabric and resources of the school within a tight budget and gained the confidence of parents. It has also developed a strong, cohesive school community, and is now extending this to the local community. The school is a bright and welcoming place with a strong commitment to equality and in which all pupils have access to a wide range of curriculum opportunities. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements.

School self-evaluation has identified the school's main strengths and weaknesses with reasonable accuracy and suitable priorities for improvement have been agreed, but the consultation process is narrow and unsystematic, and this is reflected in the limited documentation. The membership of the senior leadership team is unsettled at present but as all staff share the same positive approach to further improving the school, the plans for development remain unaffected. Governors are actively involved in the school and share strong links with the contributing infant school which successfully supports the pupils' smooth transition between the two schools.

The leadership of teaching and learning has been active and successful in maintaining standards, often in difficult circumstances. Arrangements to promote better progress have been less successful. The headteacher and governing body are already considering additional ways to improve the planning and organising of learning. The school's

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tracking system generates a range of useful data and, although targets could be more ambitious for some pupils, it is used effectively in most class lessons.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

Although only a few parents responded to the questionnaire, the views reflected in the school's own surveys and in discussion during the inspection were also taken into account. Parents are mostly supportive of the school. They particularly comment on how much their children enjoy school and how quickly they settle. Inspectors agree. They find the staff approachable and helpful with any problems, especially when the families are facing challenging circumstances. Most parents who responded to the questionnaires are happy with the school's communication, but a few feel they would like more information about their child's progress, and how they could help at home. Inspectors agree that the school engages well with parents, but information about pupils' progress could be developed further in consultation with parents. Opportunities to join the parents' group are open to everyone but a small number of working parents report they cannot regular attend meetings. The school would welcome suggestions from parents to overcome this.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Chaucer Junior 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 34 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 188 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	18	53	16	47	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	21	62	13	38	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	11	32	20	59	1	3	2	6
My child is making enough progress at this school	12	35	20	59	0	0	2	6
The teaching is good at this school	18	53	14	41	0	0	2	6
The school helps me to support my child's learning	12	35	18	53	2	6	2	6
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	53	16	47	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)	13	38	17	50	0	9	4	12
The school meets my child's particular needs	11	32	21	62	0	0	2	6
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	26	21	62	2	6	2	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	29	20	59	2	6	2	6
The school is led and managed effectively	12	56	14	42	0	0	2	6
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	18	50	18	50	0	0	1	3

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.



14 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Chaucer Junior School, Ilkeston, Derbyshire DE7 5JH

Thank you for making me and my colleagues so welcome when we inspected your school recently. You helped us to see how well behaved you are and how much you help each other. You enjoy going to school, especially meeting your friends, and almost all of you have good attendance records. We were very pleased to hear that most of you walk or cycle to school, and that you are involved in sport and other physical activities after school. You know how to keep safe and healthy and you showed us the vegetables you have been growing, and how well you can cook. Staff take good care of you, and the school has made sure you are as safe as possible.

You are keen to learn and work well with each other and your teachers in lessons. Sometimes you say you find your work too hard or too easy, especially in your morning lessons. The inspectors agree with this. Most of you attain the standards expected for your age group and make satisfactory progress. However, many of you could make even better progress.

Your headteacher and governors work hard for you and want you all to be as successful as possible, so I have asked them to help to make the school even better by making sure that:

Standards are improved in English and mathematics, by giving you just the right amount of challenge in your lessons so that you are all as successful as you can be

The way you are taught enables you to do your best in every lesson

Teachers use the information they have about your learning to speed up your progress.

You can help by continuing to be enthusiastic about your learning, keeping up your attendance, and taking good care of yourselves and each other.

Yours sincerely

Jackie Barnes

Lead inspector

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