

Chantry Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114427
Local Authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	338357
Inspection dates	22–23 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Wendy Simmons

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	220
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Simon Allen
Headteacher	Mrs Christine Dickens
Date of previous school inspection	2 September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. In total, 13 lessons were observed. Further to this, inspectors held discussions with three governors, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, six middle managers and a sample of teaching assistants. Staff who are responsible for managing child protection and safeguarding were also interviewed. The inspectors looked at a sample of the pupils' work and assessment records, especially the tracking information, which shows pupils' progress. Other documentation was also scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation evidence, the development plans, and child protection and care information. Altogether, 53 parental/carers questionnaires were analysed. Informal discussions with pupils and parents contributed to the evidence gained.

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

- how well leaders, managers and teachers are improving achievement, especially in mathematics and for higher-attaining girls in their writing, science and mathematics work
- how well children in the Early Years Foundation Stage do
- how well new initiatives are helping pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to do as well as possible
- how well the curriculum helps to promote community cohesion and pupils' wider multicultural awareness
- the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements.

Information about the school

Chantry Community Primary School is an average sized school that is oversubscribed. Pupils almost wholly come from White British backgrounds, although a very few come from mixed heritages or Asian backgrounds. No pupils are at the very early stages of learning to speak English. Pupils come from varied social circumstances but fewer than average receive free school meals. The school has an average proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils' needs most often relate to moderate learning or speech and language difficulties. A few have behavioural/emotional difficulties or have recently been identified for help with dyslexia. Children start school at the age of four and join the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Reception class. The school has gained the Healthy School Award and the Activemark.

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

2

Main findings

Chantry Community Primary is a satisfactory school, which is recovering quickly from a period when it experienced a high degree of staffing difficulties due to illness. Staffing is now stable and this is having a positive effect on everyone. Staff work together effectively; they know the pupils as individuals and are keen for them to succeed in all that they do. The care, guidance and support given to pupils, and pupils' behaviour are both outstanding. The school provides a wide range of interesting activities for pupils, which contribute to their considerable enjoyment of school and their development of many different skills and interests that enrich their lives and skills for the future. Pupils contribute outstandingly well to the community and embrace an excellent commitment to adopting healthy and safe lifestyles.

Until 2007, standards of work had been above average and pupils' achievement was consistently good. However, staffing difficulties affected the quality of pupils' learning and progress in some year groups, especially in 2008, and in some classes earlier in 2009. In particular, pupils did not do well enough in mathematics and the progress for higher-ability pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities was very variable. Pupils' achievement has improved to become satisfactory, reflecting the sound overall quality of teaching and learning, but there is still more to do in order to ensure that pupils make the best possible progress. The school has been working to ensure that higher attaining girls do as well as higher attaining boys. Although the national tests for 2009, showed that there was a gap in their performance, this is not the case in the rest of the school. This is because the staff have taken robust action, which is now coming through the school, to close the gap between the performance of girls and boys. For example, higher attaining girls are given focused support and they benefit from interesting clubs that them to perform similarly to other groups. Leaders take equal opportunities very seriously.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall but variable in quality within classes and subjects. In the school as a whole, some teaching and learning is good and occasionally outstanding, as evident in Year 6. Teaching and learning are often good in English but more inconsistent in mathematics and science. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to do investigation work and teachers do not always provide enough suitable practical resources to help pupils to understand new ideas and explore and research things for themselves. Real-life problem-solving activities, in mathematics and science, are underdeveloped.

The school has a good capacity to improve. This is because its self-evaluation is robust and well led by the headteacher and other managers. As a result, there are effective plans to bring about improvements, which are already well underway. Their impact can

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be seen in the higher standards achieved, especially by the most able pupils, in the national tests in 2009. Standards in Year 2 have risen from average to above average levels in the last year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that pupils achieve as well as possible by:
- improving the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good
- ensuring that all teachers use a wide range of resources and give pupils more opportunities to be independent learners
- developing opportunities for pupils to do more investigation work in science and mathematics so that they explore ideas in depth and do more real-life problem-solving activities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils do well in developing their speaking, reading and writing skills. As a result of 'Reading Recovery' and other initiatives, pupils are enjoying reading more and they often make consistently good progress, whatever their ability in English.

Pupils' achievement and progress in mathematics is uneven in the school. Leaders have been keeping a close eye on the progress of higher-attaining pupils in mathematics, especially as some girls have not done as well as they should in the past. Attainment in mathematics is satisfactory and now improving, as evident in the national test results in 2009 and from most lessons and work seen; the trend for improvement is now coming through the school in almost all year groups. Work has begun to help all pupils do more real-life problem solving, investigation and 'hands-on' practical work but this has not yet had its full impact on raising achievement. For example, in a lesson where pupils were learning about money, they did not have sufficient opportunities to link this to shopping. Moreover, they did not use enough real coins to help them to understand how to convert one pound into 100 pence. This prevented pupils from making links with hundreds, tens and units.

Pupils enjoy science but work is not always finished and this means that pupils are not exploring ideas and investigations in enough depth. Higher-ability girls are sometimes not gaining complex skills well enough, such as drawing conclusions from their experiments. As a result, fewer reach the higher levels in their work.

As a result of stronger leadership, new initiatives and better assessment procedures, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are now achieving more consistently than they did in the past. This is also the case for higher attaining pupils.

Pupils behave extremely well and are friendly, polite and helpful. They are proud of their school and quickly gain confidence and an ability to take responsibility, which sets them up well for their future lives. They value all that the staff do for them and parents confirm that their children enjoy school and are well cared for. Pupils especially enjoy sports, information and communication technology (ICT), trips out and taking part in musical and dramatic performances and clubs. They agree that they are very safe and

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happy at school. As one pupil put it, 'I like my school because everyone gets on', while another commented, 'Teachers understand how I feel and it makes me feel like people do listen to me'. Pupils do many things for the community, especially by raising a great deal of money for many different charities. The superb choir performs regularly in the local area. Pupils are very active and know how to be healthy because the curriculum and teachers promote this very well. As one pupil said, 'I really enjoy sports because it keeps you healthy so you don't get chubby'. Recent good developments in ICT set pupils up well for their future lives. Pupils especially enjoy 'podcasting' and 'blogging'.

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	3
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	1
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?

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall but teachers' skills and knowledge of how to extend pupils' learning are often better in English than they are in mathematics and science. Marking and assessment procedures are developing well but are not yet being used consistently well in all classes. In science, pupils learn about a wide range of things but teachers' expectations are variable. In some instances work is not finished and lacks suitable challenge for the most able pupils.

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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The teaching of reading is good and staff help pupils to enjoy doing this. Pupils talk confidently about books, as was evident in the work on 'Hitler's Canary' when pupils used prompt cards to enable them to lead discussions and answer thought-provoking questions about the text. Opportunities for writing have also improved and pupils confidently produce more extended pieces of work; this is helping all pupils to make faster progress and especially the higher-ability girls and boys. Drama is used well to help pupils to widen their speaking skills as a way of generating good ideas for writing. Pupils also use their writing skills well to record and extend their learning in other subjects such as history, although it is not as well developed in science. The school has introduced a handwriting scheme and this is helping pupils to present their work more neatly than a year ago.

In mathematics, lessons are sometimes over-directed by the teacher, with some inconsistency in the way pupils are encouraged to learn in different ways. In particular, pupils sometimes have too few opportunities to learn through independent investigation and enquiry. There is not enough emphasis on solving real-life problems to make learning more meaningful for pupils. This is especially evident in Years 3 and 4.

The school has many clubs and opportunities for pupils to enjoy the arts. Music is well promoted through specialist teaching, and pupils enjoy plenty of sporting activities, often taking part in community sporting events. Pupils greatly enjoy the gardening club. As one said, 'It's lovely to squeeze the soil in your hands'. They also get a great deal out of the visits that enrich the curriculum, as when Year 6 pupils visited Newhaven Fort as part of their work on the Second World War. These good features of the curriculum contribute much to pupils' moral, social and cultural development.

The care given to pupils is often exemplary. The family link worker's excellent help and support have enabled vulnerable pupils and some who have special educational needs to gain much more confidence to overcome difficulties in their learning. Partnership with other agencies is embedded in the work of the school. The emotional support for pupils is very good. The school now has very well-targeted support for pupils. For example, staff have increased their knowledge of dyslexia, case studies are conducted about individual pupils and specialist support is given; this helps pupils to gain confidence and make faster progress.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

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The headteacher is forward-thinking and has high expectations. Leaders at all levels promote equality for pupils and are ambitious to improve; their evaluation of the work of the school is good. The arrival of some new staff over the last two years has enabled the headteacher to reorganise roles and to place staff strategically so that they can share good practice with others and accelerate pupils' progress where it has been slower in the past. Staff have become more accountable for evaluating and being responsible for pupils' progress as they move through the school.

Middle managers are reflective and excited to initiate change. Already they have helped senior leaders to improve writing, reading, aspects of mathematics and ICT in particular. Most staff are working together well to bring about changes for the benefit of the pupils. Staff are embracing new ideas and technology. Most teachers are successfully following the school's recently introduced system of how to mark pupils' work so that they know what they have done well and are clear about how to improve. Leaders' rigorous checks on the quality of teaching and learning have identified inconsistencies and have led to clear plans to bring about improvement.

The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily and evaluates its impact so that it can make suitable plans to improve still further. There are good links with the local community and local schools. For example, members of the local community help pupils with their reading in a dedicated way. Plans are in place to make links with several schools in other parts of Britain; this is a good initiative to further widen pupils' awareness of different cultures and faiths. Parents value the regular coffee mornings and tea afternoons. The curriculum promotes community cohesion satisfactorily.

Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses and are extending their understanding of how well pupils make progress. As a result, they are asking more challenging questions of the headteacher and other senior staff. They are not as fully involved in development planning as they could be. However, they are very committed to ensuring that pupils are very well cared for and provided with a very rounded education. Too few governors are familiar with the latest updated requirements for safeguarding but overall safeguarding arrangements are good.

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	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	2

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The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

As a result of good leadership, children enjoy a strong start to their school life and they achieve well. A new leader has just taken over and is very well supported by other senior staff. Children's skills and knowledge, when they join the school, are wide-ranging and in some year groups they have been lower than expected for their age. By the end of Reception, standards are average and have been at this level for more than five years. Children learn quickly and there is a strong focus on helping them to communicate and socialise well, while also learning the basic skills of reading, counting and problem solving. Children especially enjoy doing creative activities, exploring things outside and engaging in make-believe play, as evident when they played in the hospital. Adults join in with these activities well and this helps children to play in a cooperative way and to speak in longer sentences.

Teachers make sure that children learn in fun and meaningful ways. Writing skills are developing steadily and staff know that it is important to establish this early by doing plenty of activities that help children to make shapes and gain greater dexterity. The teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) is effective. Children's welfare is given high priority and the close working partnership with parents aids this. Relationships between all adults and children are very good. Assessment procedures are used effectively to plan the next steps of children's learning and this starts well when adults visit children at home prior to starting school.

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

Parents are largely happy with the school overall and say that their children enjoy attending and are safe. They confirm that pupils are helped to adopt healthy lifestyles. A very large majority say that leadership is good but a small minority feel that the school does not take enough account of their suggestions and concerns. A few feel that the

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school does not always inform them well enough about their children's progress. Inspectors note that the school has similar arrangements to many schools in relation to the number of parents' evenings and they also have informal meetings where parents can discuss any worries. The headteacher said, 'I operate an open door policy and am always ready to talk to parents about their children, especially their progress or worries'.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Chantry Community 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 75 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 220 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	38	51	29	39	6	8	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	44	59	28	37	0	0	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	28	37	28	37	13	17	2	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	26	35	31	41	9	12	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	33	44	28	38	4	5	2	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	33	35	47	9	12	2	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	38	51	35	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)	25	33	36	48	4	5	3	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	32	34	45	11	15	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	30	40	24	32	7	9	3	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	32	28	37	13	17	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	33	44	29	38	7	9	3	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	37	49	24	32	7	9	4	5

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.



24 September 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Chantry Community Primary School,
Bexhill-on-Sea, TN40 2AT

You may remember that two inspectors came to your school recently. Thank you for being so friendly and telling us about your school. From the moment we arrived, we found the school to be a caring place. You also agree and so do your parents.

Your school is satisfactory overall. This means that most things are suitable for you, some things are particularly good and a few aspects need to be better. Your school has improved in the last year because the adults have been busy trying to make it better for you. You do well in English but could be doing a bit better in mathematics and science. You make steady progress overall but sometimes you make faster progress in one year than another. We were impressed by your excellent behaviour and very pleased to hear that you enjoy coming to school. Well done for trying so hard to become fit and healthy. We were delighted to find out about how much you do for the community, such as fundraising and singing. Your singing is superb ' well done! Your headteacher and all of the other teachers and helpers do a great job in looking after you and they are keen to try to do the best they can for you.

We want to help them so we have asked them to do the following important things.

- Make sure that more lessons are good so that you can all do as well as possible and have good opportunities to use lots of resources to help you with your learning.
- Give you more opportunities to do experiments in science and finish your work, so that you can think hard about what these experiments tell you. Also we would like you to have more chances to explore things in depth in mathematics by doing plenty of real-life problem solving and exciting investigations.

We hope that you will continue to try your hardest in the future.

Yours faithfully

Wendy Simmons

Lead inspector

(on behalf of the inspection team)

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