

Chater Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117158
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	338958
Inspection dates	15–16 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Selwyn Ward

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	222
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sohbat Ali
Headteacher	Peter McEntee
Date of previous school inspection	6 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 16 lessons and observed nine teachers. They spoke with staff, governors and groups of pupils. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work, the analysis of the tracking of pupils' progress, school policies and procedures, school leaders' monitoring records, school development planning and risk assessments. They also analysed the questionnaires received from pupils, staff and 148 parents and carers.

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

- the impact of mobility on outcomes for pupils
- the effectiveness of measures taken by school leaders to maintain high quality provision, accelerate rates of progress and to improve attendance.

Information about the school

There are more boys than girls in this average size school. Although the ratio varies between year groups, in the current Year 6 there are twice as many boys as girls. Most pupils come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The largest group are of Pakistani origin. A high proportion of pupils are learning English as an additional language, including a number who are new to the country and who are at a very early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Pupil mobility is high, with an above average proportion of pupils joining and leaving the school partway through Key Stage 2 as families move into and out of temporary accommodation within the school's catchment area. Chater Junior offers an extended curriculum run in conjunction with other local schools. It has an Eco Schools award and Healthy Schools' status.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school where pupils make excellent progress in both their academic and personal development. The headteacher, leadership team and governing body have continued to build on the school's many strengths. As a result, all of the features that were judged outstanding in the last inspection remain so, while other aspects of the school have improved. This, and the school's very accurate self-evaluation, demonstrates Chater Junior's outstanding capacity for continued improvement. Attainment has risen since the last inspection so that it is now above average, although standards are higher in English than in mathematics because the school has given priority to developing pupils' reading and writing. This is understandable, given the high proportion of pupils who are learning English as an additional language and the number who join the school from overseas, often partway through Key Stage 2 and at an early stage of learning English. Leaders have identified that, despite pupils' growing proficiency in English, language skills still hold back some pupils in mathematics when they have difficulty decoding the way in which mathematical problems are phrased. Nevertheless, pupils' achievement is outstanding. In English, all have progressed by at least two National Curriculum levels over the course of their time at the school, and around a third have made three or more levels progress. Although data for progress in mathematics is not quite as impressive, it nonetheless outstrips national expectations.

Pupils of all abilities make rapid progress in lessons because they benefit from teaching which is of a high standard. Teachers have high expectations of what their pupils can do, and pupils eagerly rise to the challenge. Teachers are especially adept at motivating pupils through lively questioning that draws out thoughtful responses. This prompts pupils to think about their learning and to grow in confidence. Pupils know their targets and benefit from good guidance through marking that has helped, particularly, to improve spelling and punctuation. Teachers are not always rigorous, however, in following up feedback made in marking to ensure that pupils have taken note of their comments. The curriculum is made exciting and fun, and this contributes to pupils' keen enthusiasm for learning. Year 6 pupils, studying World War II, have been so enthused by the way in which history has been interlinked with art, design technology, literacy and numeracy, that they have produced imaginative writing and impressive artwork. Many have invested much effort into individual research, completed at home, to produce work that delves into greater detail than typically seen in comparable Year 6 projects. The quality of care, guidance and support provided for pupils is equally outstanding. Its impact is most readily seen in the carefully tailored support given to vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, enabling these pupils to

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make progress that, in many instances, is spectacular.

A feature that stands out at Chater Junior is the way the school works as a harmonious community where children from diverse backgrounds get on very well with each other and learn to appreciate their own and each other's cultural heritage. They also enjoy the opportunities the school affords them to broaden their horizons by meeting and working with pupils from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. These, and their exemplary behaviour, illustrate pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils play very active roles in the school and wider community, and their views are taken into account in shaping the curriculum, as leaders consult with them as part of their planning for each subject. Pupils participate eagerly in sports and their demand for healthy food includes growing fresh vegetables for the canteen in the school garden and making their own blackcurrant cordial. They are equally safety conscious. They learn how to protect themselves, for example when using the internet or when taking valuables, such as mobile 'phones, out into the street.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in mathematics by giving pupils more opportunities to practise deciphering the language used in framing mathematical problems, and ensuring that the most able pupils are always set work that extends their thinking.
- Make time for pupils to read and reflect on teachers' marking so that they answer questions posed by teachers in their marking and follow the teachers' prompts in correcting their own work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Boys and girls of different abilities achieve highly because they are very well motivated and are keen to learn. They listen attentively to their teachers and to each other. When questions are posed in lessons, they are quick to volunteer answers. They are not always as responsive, however, when teachers correct their written work. Sometimes, when teachers pose questions in their marking, these go unanswered. Pupils' enthusiasm in lessons, however, regularly spills over into home activities. During the inspection, Year 4 pupils volunteered to do further work at home to build on what they had done in class in science.

Pupils' good relationships, with staff and with each other, contribute to the happy, friendly atmosphere at Chater Junior. None can recall any incidents of others being unkind, but all are extremely confident that if they had worries or concerns, there is an adult that they could go to who would help them. As a result, pupils feel very safe at school, and they learn a great deal about how to keep safe. The pupils are unfailingly polite and commendably inquisitive. They take on key responsibilities within the school community, for example as 'huff and puff' sports leaders, wet play monitors, and playground buddies. They are very active in supporting a wide range of local, national and international charities, which help also to broaden their view of the wider world. The pupils' excellent knowledge about healthy diets is due in no small part to the regular

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opportunities throughout the school for cookery, often using ingredients grown by the gardening club, where staff routinely emphasise the importance of healthy options. Pupils eagerly take part in the wide range of sports and after-school clubs on offer throughout the year, facilitated by the school's all-weather playing surface. Attendance, which has been below average in the past, is now above average, although punctuality could be better; each day, as many as a dozen pupils are late for school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
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	1

How effective is the provision?

Throughout the school, lessons move forward at a brisk pace so that pupils get a lot done. They are inspired by a curriculum that brings learning to life by ensuring that all tasks are purposeful. Year 5 pupils, working on mathematics problems scaling up ingredients in recipes, were very well motivated at least in part because they could see a practical real-life application to this task. Year 4 pupils were energised by their visit earlier in the week to Woburn Safari Park and made particularly good use of similes to compose their own poems and haikus about the animals they had seen. Chater Junior's very close working relationship with other local schools, especially the boys' grammar

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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school, has helped to enrich curriculum provision, including for mathematics, science, French and drama. The partnership working, for example, has given staff the confidence and skills to teach French.

Pupils routinely assess their own and each other's work, especially in the older classes, and they are able to do this because teachers set out their expectations through clear success criteria against which the pupils can benchmark what they do. Their challenging targets and much of the teachers' marking, show pupils what they need to do to improve their work; especially their writing. Teachers are rigorous in identifying spelling and punctuation errors. However, they do not always check that pupils have followed the advice they have given in their marking. Teachers know the pupils well and mostly plan work that is matched carefully to pupils' different learning needs and pushes them to achieve their very best. The impact of this is evident in the very strong progress made over the course of the year by more able pupils as well as those who need extra help with their learning. Despite this, there are still, on occasion, lessons where the most able pupils are not challenged as much as they could be. Sometimes 'extension work' that they are set, for example in mathematics, asks them to do more of the same rather than posing questions to genuinely extend their thinking.

The provision for the many pupils learning English as an additional language, and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is key to these pupils' often exceptional progress. Careful tracking, regularly updated, enables staff to cater precisely to pupils' individual learning needs. Induction arrangements ensure that pupils quickly settle into the school's very orderly routines. There are close ties with the infant school from which most pupils transfer, including some shared assessments in Years 2 and 3, so that there is agreement over how well pupils have done in Key Stage 1. Induction arrangements are equally thorough for those joining the school other than at the start of Year 3. Pupils joining the school with little English are initially partnered wherever possible with bilingual pupils who can help them to settle in. Systems to promote attendance have resulted in a dramatic improvement. As a result of the school's intensive work in conjunction with the local authority, the number of pupils with persistent absence has this year fallen from 16 to just two.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
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	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

This school's sustained success can be attributed to the drive of the headteacher and

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governing body. Along with other leaders and the staff team, they are ambitious for pupils to do well and are constantly on the lookout for ways of further improving provision and outcomes for pupils. Leaders keep a careful track of each pupil's progress in English and mathematics, and are currently piloting ways for extending this to track progress in every subject. Leaders' monitoring of lessons has helped to drive up the quality of teaching. Teachers are given detailed feedback on their teaching. Record keeping is comprehensive and points for development are rigorously followed up in leaders' subsequent lesson observations. The impact of monitoring of marking is evident in the improved quality of marking of many pupils' books following a review in January, of practice across the school.

The governing body play a very active role in the life of the school. They challenge leaders and have also helped to drive improvements. They have steered the building project currently underway for an extension to the school, but they have not allowed building works to distract them from their focus on pupils' attainment and progress. They have ensured that the school meets all legal requirements, and with notable success in the arrangements for pupils' safeguarding. These are exceedingly thorough. For example, the school's records relating to the suitability of adults to work with children go some way beyond the basic requirements of current regulations.

The headteacher and governing body take a particular pride in the inclusive nature of the school. There is full equality of opportunity for girls and boys of all backgrounds and abilities. That manifests itself in pupils' excellent personal development as well as their impressive academic progress. The promotion of community cohesion is very evident in the way in which pupils from diverse backgrounds get on so well together and in the way they take a genuine interest in other people's experiences and beliefs.

Well-established ties with a Jewish faith school have built a strong bridge between communities in a school where more than half the pupils are Muslim. In a further example of leaders' keen awareness of the school's context and as part of its drive to broaden pupils' horizons, leaders have ambitious plans to further develop global links by corresponding with a school in India.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1

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The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

Two-thirds of the parents and carers returned questionnaires. They express overwhelmingly positive views. Many comment on how approachable staff are, but a number feel that the communication could be improved. Inspectors were impressed with the quality of information provided to parents and carers, particularly through individual school reports. A small number of parents and carers told inspectors that they felt able pupils were not challenged enough, particularly by homework. Inspectors found homework reinforced learning at school. Pupils of all abilities are doing extremely well at Chater Junior and an above average proportion of pupils are attaining the higher Level 5 in the Year 6 national tests, but inspectors observed some lessons where able pupils were not stretched as fully as they could be.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Chater 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 148 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 222 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	96	65	50	34	1	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	90	61	54	36	0	0	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	78	53	62	42	6	4	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	65	44	71	48	7	5	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	71	48	70	47	4	3	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	65	44	76	51	5	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	76	51	65	44	5	3	1	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)	74	50	65	44	4	3	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	49	33	76	51	13	9	3	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	57	39	76	51	7	5	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	45	30	80	54	12	8	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	65	44	74	50	3	2	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	80	54	64	43	2	1	1	1

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.



19 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Chater Junior School, Watford, WD18 0WN

Thank you for making us so very welcome when we came to visit your school. You told us that you thought Chater Junior was a super school. We agree. It is an outstanding school. It is exceptionally well run. Staff take the greatest care in looking out for your welfare, and you feel very safe at school. The curriculum is made interesting and exciting, and teaching is of a high standard. As a result, you make outstanding progress to attain above average standards, especially in English. That is a particularly impressive achievement for those of you who are quite new to the language. We were delighted to see how very well you all get on together and to see exemplary behaviour in lessons and around the school. You are helping to make Chater Junior such a happy, friendly place to be. Indeed, we could see that those of you in Year 6 are sad to be leaving. You listen and concentrate hard in lessons, and that contributes to the great progress you are making.

We have made just a couple of suggestions to help you to do even better. Although you do well in mathematics, the standards in this subject are not as quite as high as in English. This is because some of you have difficulty understanding what calculation is being asked of you when you read a written problem in mathematics. To help you with this, we have asked the school to give you more practice in decoding the words used in mathematics problems. For those of you who are especially good at mathematics, we have also asked your teachers to look out for ways of challenging you to think more for yourselves when tackling mathematics problems. Your targets, and teachers' marking, have helped you to improve your work. Sometimes teachers pose you questions when they mark your work but they do not always check that you have responded. We have asked teachers to make the time available for you to read their comments and to make any corrections they suggest or answer any questions they ask in their marking. You can certainly help by always doing your best to check and correct your work and by trying hard to follow your teachers' advice.

Thank you again for all your help on our visit, and a special thanks to those of you who made the delicious drink from the school's blackcurrant harvest. Our best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Selwyn Ward

Lead inspector

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