

Chesterton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124169
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	340507
Inspection dates	29–30 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Patricia Davies

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

The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	159
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Cooper
Headteacher	Jonathan Jones
Date of previous school inspection	4 April 2008
School address	Brittain Avenue Chesterton Newcastle-under-Lyne
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Age group	2–11
Inspection dates	29–30 September 2009
Inspection number	340507

Registered childcare provision	The Wigwam
Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision	35
Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	Not previously inspected

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 11 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and a group of pupils. They observed the school's work, talked with pupils in lessons and visited clubs before and after school. They looked at a range of documentation, including assessment and attendance information, lesson plans, safeguarding arrangements, school development planning, governing body minutes and pupils' work. Inspectors also scrutinised 54 questionnaires received from parents, as well as those from staff and a sample of pupils.

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

- the consistency of progress across the school, especially from the Early Years Foundation Stage into Years 1 and 2, and in English
- the use of assessment to adapt lessons and ensure all pupils are challenged to do their very best
- the impact of monitoring by subject leaders and governors on the school's work and outcomes
- the success of initiatives to improve attendance and extend pupils' cultural awareness beyond their local community.

Information about the school

Chesterton is smaller than many other primary schools. About 98% of pupils are from White British families. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is high, and particularly so in some year groups where proportions are between 40% and 50%. The range of needs within this group of pupils is wide. There have been some changes to the teaching staff in the last two years, and these include staff new to the teaching profession. Among its awards the school has gained Arts Gold, Healthy School and Basic Skills.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage into the Reception class. The school also contains a community children's centre. This facility includes a community nursery with placements for two, three and four-year olds in half and full day sessions, provision during school holidays, and care before and after school. These clubs are attended by pupils from four local primary schools and also provide for children from the nursery.

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

Chesterton has done much in recent years to increase its effectiveness and performance. As a result, improvement is secure and sustained in a number of key areas, leading to important increases in academic outcomes. Good capacity for future development is demonstrated in significant improvement to the curriculum and the school's pastoral support, moving provision in these areas from satisfactory to good. Attention given to safeguarding pupils is outstanding. Pupils benefit from a rich and varied range of activities in addition to essential everyday work in English and mathematics. A high take-up of the school's many clubs - from brass and art to cross-country running and gardening - reflect how much pupils value and enjoy these experiences. Indeed, a sample of their views shows unanimity in their enjoyment of school, with trips and teachers high on their list. These strengths in provision, together with pupils' positive attitudes, provide a crucial foundation for learning. At the heart of the school's work is its focus on the needs of its local community, captured in the work of the children's centre. Ever mindful of the need to move on, the school has now started to develop links elsewhere to widen pupils' religious and ethnic experience.

Children receive a strong start to their education in the Nursery and Reception classes. Although achievement is not yet good because of remaining inconsistencies in performance, there are firm signs of academic improvement in accelerated progress and rising trends in attainment. The school's success is most evident in mathematics and science, where attainment is now broadly average at Year 6. Attainment in English has been more variable, and is low overall. It has been particularly affected in last year's Year 6, and in the current group, by a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There is a concerted drive across the school to make inroads on pupils' achievement in this core subject, and especially to extend pupils' language and vocabulary to give their writing greater breadth and liveliness.

Uneven progress reflects similar variability in teaching and learning. In particular, activities in lessons are not always adapted enough to pupils' needs and abilities so that they are always challenged to do their very best. As a result, although there is a solid seam of good teaching and learning, and nothing that is inadequate, in other lessons progress is no greater than satisfactory. Poor attendance from a very few pupils also constrains their progress and has a large impact on the school's overall attendance figures - which are low. The school works constantly to draw these pupils into school. Its painstaking attention is making a strong impact on parents' response and attendance itself. Punctuality has been much improved with new arrangements for registration.

A passion for improvement at all levels has driven the school's increasingly successful performance. Assessment now gives staff and governors a clear view of pupils'

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achievement over time, produces challenging targets and directs additional support. This knowledge provides a sharp focus for monitoring and gives the school a clear understanding of its priorities. This same detailed attention has yet to be given to checks on the quality of teaching in order to spread and extend the best practice.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in English, and particularly in writing, by:
 - extending pupils' language and vocabulary to give their writing greater breadth and liveliness.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils make consistently good progress, most particularly through
 - matching activities in lessons more closely to the abilities and needs of pupils, ensuring all are challenged to do their very best
 - closely monitoring lessons and sharing and extending good practice across the school.
- Improve attendance to at least average levels by:
 - working closely with parents to promote the importance of regular attendance.
- Strengthen pupils' understanding of faiths, cultures and traditions beyond their own by:
 - strengthening links already gained with other schools in this country
 - forging links with schools overseas .
- About 40% of schools whose effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

Growing success in academic outcomes over recent years - both in attainment and progress - marks out pupils' overall satisfactory achievement. While progress remains uneven in lessons, and across subjects and year groups, overall improvement is secure, sustained and accelerating at a swift pace. This picture is true for all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. During lessons, learning is never less than satisfactory and there are increasing signs of good and better progress over time. Significant factors in pupils' learning are their good relationships with staff and largely sensible and attentive behaviour, which create a purposeful learning atmosphere during lessons. There is sometimes restlessness, and the very occasional uncooperative behaviour, but also much enthusiasm and motivation where teaching is skilful and lively, leading to brisk learning.

More rapid progress is, in turn, lifting attainment. Children join the Nursery and Reception classes with low attainment, especially boys. Weaknesses are most evident in key aspects of communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and in their knowledge of the world. While all children progress well at this early stage,

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attainment remains well below average on entry to Year 1. By Year 2, however, the gap between boys' and girls' attainment has narrowed and attainment at this point shows year on year improvement. Attainment at Year 6 also shows a rising trend, aided by a rapid acceleration in progress during this last year. Improvement is strongest in science and mathematics, and there are also more pupils reaching the higher Level 5. While there is an overall rise in English, the general pattern has been of low standards in two of the last three years and attainment is at this same level in the current Year 6. To a large degree these low standards reflect the large proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities within these small year groups, but also the limitations in pupils' speaking skills and vocabulary that are present throughout the school. The quality of pupils' writing is particular affected by these factors and they sometimes struggle to explain ideas or what they are doing during lessons.

Friendship is clearly something pupils cherish about their school. While a few express some concerns about behaviour, they report no bullying. Pupils show good levels of understanding about personal safety and the need for security at school. Thoughtful suggestions in assembly about the strength gained in working together, expressive singing and sensitive responses to moments of quiet reflection, show pupils' developing moral and spiritual awareness. There is also much enjoyment of music and art. All these qualities contribute much to the school community and make it the 'family' place described by one governor. The many pupils who opt for school lunch and the popularity of physical activity display a ready appreciation of keeping fit and healthy. Indeed, school lunch taken with parents and grandparents, and mixing with others in the clubs and during the many sporting activities, also mark out much involvement with the immediate community outside. All these strengths in pupils' personal qualities, their enthusiasm and ready contribution to life at school, rising academic trends and improvements to attendance give them important assets for the future. So, too, do the school's innovative projects to encourage 'enterprise' - such as running a 'mini-market'.

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	4
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	2

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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Pupils' behaviour	3
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 Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

While giving due prominence to the basic core subjects, the school has successfully created a broad and diverse curriculum that widens pupils' horizons. Their experience is greatly enriched by many trips locally and beyond, specialist teaching of art and music, for instance, and a strong programme for personal, social and health education. Their enjoyment of these activities is clear: the focused attention of pupils as they strum the ukulele and their great enthusiasm as they play African drums says it all. Computers are used well in lessons as a back up for learning - Year 6 pupils were writing emails, for example - while personal and social topics are woven into lessons in other subjects to reinforce personal development.

Excitement and interest also enliven most lessons. Where these features are delivered with a brisk pace, and work is refined and varied to provide the right levels of challenge for different abilities, pupils rise to the challenge and learning is good for all. At its best, close individual attention to those with particular learning and emotional needs ensures they keep up the pace too. While assessment information is used well to identify the broad pitch of work, it is not always used with the refinement necessary to ensure the right degree of challenge in every lesson. For example, not enough is made of discussion and role play for extending pupils' ideas and vocabulary, especially during activities in smaller groups. However, improvements to assessment mean that many pupils know their targets, and they are happy that they can ask for help about their work. While some marking provides pupils with a good level of feedback, this is not always the case, so that pupils are not always sure how well they are doing.

Support for pupils' personal development is extensive. Attention to their health and well being is reflected, not just in opportunities for physical activity, but also in the provision of a morning 'toast' time to keep up energy levels and healthy school meals. There is much support for vulnerable pupils and families, while facilities at the children's centre provide a 'wrap-around' care throughout the day for those who need it. Breakfast club offers a wide and nourishing menu. Together with the club after school, it is well supervised and provides a wide range of activity. Electronic registration has injected a competitive element to time keeping that has significantly improved punctuality, and the early start to the school day allows pupils to have a quiet moment to themselves. Attendance has received rigorous attention. This work remains a challenge for the

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school, but good ground has been gained. Importantly, tighter procedures with regard to term time holidays are drawing parents in to discuss proposed absence with staff.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and staff are ambitious for improvement and team work is strong. There is little complacency and staff have high expectations of where they want pupils to be. Work to engage pupils' interest and develop self-esteem has proved to be successful in extending equal opportunities and increasing achievement for all. Despite a sometimes over enthusiastic view of the school's effectiveness, there is an accurate and realistic knowledge of what needs to be done, aided by sharper assessment and detailed planning for the future. Checks on lessons and of pupils' views and work, give school leaders valuable information about the school's effectiveness. Nevertheless, the monitoring of teaching and learning is not yet rigorous or extensive enough to iron out inconsistencies and ensure good practice right across the school. Subject leaders, in particular, are keen to take a greater part in evaluating provision and outcomes.

Governors radiate the same passion and commitment, are well organised and fulfil their legal requirements. Attention to pupils' safety is integral to the school's work and safeguarding procedures are impressive. Key governors in particular are closely involved with the school and the local community. They are aware that this is not true of all members and are in the process of sharing out responsibilities for subjects and aspects of the school's work so that they, too, can keep a sharper eye on what is happening. Community cohesion is strongly promoted in school and the immediate area. Links and partnerships with other schools nearby, outside agencies and local businesses, for example, are extensive and show a keen understanding of local needs and challenges. Despite making a start in this direction, pupils' experience is not as well served by links further afield to widen their perspective of different faiths and ethnic groups.

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	3

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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
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The care and nurture provide in both settings ensure a successful start to children's education. Staff work closely together. In the nursery, for instance, adults move seamlessly in and out of activities, responding to individuals or taking part in larger group activities. In keeping with rest of the school, attention to the welfare and safety of children is strong. Qualifications and staffing levels are appropriate for children of all ages and the required support is extended into before and after school provisions. Induction arrangements give parents many opportunities to visit, and subsequent sessions and family learning are designed to keep them on board. From low starting points, children's confidence grows a great deal, such that children from the nursery, for example, are ready to move swiftly into Reception, without the need for a gradual introduction.

There is a very wide range of attainment and need. Exciting activities, patience and good fun gradually encourage the very hesitant or tearful child. Sometimes these qualities pay off within a session, while for other children it takes more time. New experiences clearly fascinate - touching their eyelids, for example, was a source of great wonderment for some in the nursery. In Reception, children greatly enjoy stories and books. Many respond enthusiastically to questions and calling out is gently discouraged. Despite their confidence, however, a significant minority struggle to express their ideas clearly. Staff make careful assessments of achievement, although this information is not always analysed in enough detail to identify trends in performance or ensure that small group activities always provide good levels of challenge. Work is underpinned by focused and attentive leadership. Plans are already underway, for instance, to improve access and facilities indoors and out.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Views of parents and carers

Considerable satisfaction among parents and carers reflects the strong links between home and school. Concerns were few. A very small minority expressed some disquiet about bullying and the management of behaviour in written comments, and about supervision outside. Inspection evidence found occasional inconsistency in managing behaviour in the playground and during lessons, sometimes holding up teaching, but no evidence to indicate that pupils were troubled by bullying. Some parents were also unsure of the extent of their children's progress, which was found to be satisfactory, and improving at a good rate.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

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

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 54 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 159 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	27	51	24	45	2	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	25	47	26	49	2	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	24	45	27	51	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	26	49	23	43	4	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	26	49	26	49	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	45	29	55	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	53	24	45	1	2	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)	27	51	24	45	2	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	43	28	53	2	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	43	26	49	3	6	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	40	31	58	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	25	47	28	53	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	28	53	25	47	0	0	0	0

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

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

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

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

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

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

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



1 October 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Chesterton Primary School, Newcastle-under-Lyne, ST5 7NT

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed our two days with you and finding out about all that you do. It was great to see how much you enjoy singing and playing musical instruments and to learn how much you like school trips, your teachers and your friends. This letter is to tell you that your school is doing what it should to help you learn. In fact, staff and governors have worked so hard to make things better that you are making faster progress all the time. Here are some other things we found out.

Children in the nursery and Reception make a good start.

All the adults take good care of you.

You have a clear understanding of how to keep yourselves safe - and you said there was no bullying.

You keep yourselves healthy through taking part in lots of sports and games, while the school sees that you keep up your energy with toast in the morning and a good school lunch.

You are keen to make it into school on time in the morning.

There are lots of activities in school and locally to widen your experience.

There are some things that the school could be doing even better, and so we have asked staff and governors to look at improving these things.

Help you to learn lots more words and language to make your writing more lively and interesting and help you to explain your ideas better.

Make sure that you are challenged to do your very best and make good progress in every lesson. To help do this the school has been asked to check up on lessons much more often and for staff to share their good ideas even more than they do.

Improve your attendance, especially by working with you and your parents to show why good attendance is important for you to learn.

Give you lots more opportunities to learn about how other people live and think in other parts of this country and abroad.

With our best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Patricia Davies

Lead inspector

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