

Chiltern Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134652
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	341490
Inspection dates	7–8 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Liz Kounnou

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	258
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jane Pratt
Headteacher	Mrs Joanne Loveless
Date of previous school inspection	4 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 31 lessons, looked at some pupils' books, held meetings with governors, staff, and groups of pupils, and spoke to some parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school documentation including the development plan, safeguarding documents, school data about pupils' progress, and curriculum planning. In addition, inspectors considered 133 parental questionnaires, as well as 27 questionnaires from staff and 137 from pupils.

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

- How well leaders at all levels are tackling improvement across the school
- The attainment, learning and progress of boys in writing, especially in Years 1 and 2, in addition to the attainment, learning and progress of higher and lower attaining pupils in Years 3 to 6, especially in English
- The extent to which pupils' behaviour and enjoyment in lessons contribute to their learning.

Information about the school

Most pupils at this primary school of average size are from White British backgrounds. A very small minority are learning to speak English as an additional language. Almost a third of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals; this is well above average. Just over half the pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, which is much higher than average. Pupils' needs include severe learning needs, speech and language difficulties and some emotional and social behaviour issues. More pupils leave or join the school during the school year than is typical.

The school appointed a new headteacher in April 2009 after an extended period of instability. About half the current teaching staff and several new governors joined the school in the last academic year.

A privately run nursery, and a local authority children's centre share the school site. These are inspected separately.

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

Although the school is not as effective now as it was at the last inspection, it is satisfactory in most areas. Recent marked improvements suggest that the school is poised to move forward. After an extended period of instability in leadership and staffing, the new headteacher has quickly won the support of parents, pupils, governors and staff in making some important changes to accelerate progress all through the school. There is already a strong, shared, culture of self-evaluation and higher expectations. Staff and governors have drawn up a clear development plan. This addresses the weaknesses through a sound range of activities designed to find out what is working well, and what needs urgent attention. Recent improvements in pupils' attainment, their behaviour and attitude have given the school a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

Pupils' attainment is below average in English, particularly writing, and mathematics in all years. School leaders are rightly focused on improving this and have made key changes in lesson planning and assessment, which are helping improve the attainment of pupils in all years. However, teachers do not use assessment consistently well to build on pupils' prior learning. Marking is regular, but does not always give pupils a clear idea of the steps they need to take to improve their work. The school has introduced new systems to involve pupils in assessing for themselves how well they have learned. Leaders know that more needs to be done. For example, they know that pupils are not yet always well involved in evaluating their own progress and that some lessons are less effective than they should be at challenging the most able pupils.

New planning formats for English and mathematics have contributed to recent improvements by ensuring that pupils cover all aspects of the curriculum and the objectives of each lesson are made clear for staff and pupils. Pupils in all years are making satisfactory progress except in writing where some inconsistencies remain. This is because there are not enough opportunities for them to practise a range of writing skills every day; too often pupils are asked to complete worksheets which do not effectively promote independent learning.

Parents and pupils are most impressed by the recent improvements in behaviour and attitudes. These have been secured by the introduction of popular, positive systems to promote good behaviour in lessons and all around the school, such as a 'Golden Table' at lunchtime. Almost all the pupils who wrote comments for the inspection team mentioned that they like the 'bands' system that operates at lunchtimes. Pupils choose an activity they would like to take part in, for example netball or football among many others, and wear a coloured band to illustrate their choice. This has ended disputes about playground games, and the resulting energetic exercise contributes well to pupils'

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healthy lifestyles. Both parents and pupils comment positively on the way that their views are taken into account, with pupils being extremely proud and pleased to be invited to the headteacher's tea parties. A happy family atmosphere permeates the whole school. Pupils feel safe because pastoral care is very good. Despite this, pupils' attendance is low.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in English and mathematics from Reception to Year 6, especially in writing, by:
 - providing more opportunities to develop writing skills in lessons across the curriculum
 - reducing the use of worksheets all across the school so that pupils have more opportunities to develop their independence
 - improving the level of challenge for the most able pupils
 - improving the rate of attendance.
- Improve the use of assessment information by:
 - ensuring that children and pupils of all abilities, particularly the most able, build on their prior attainment at a good rate in lessons
 - ensuring that children and pupils, all through the school, know how to reach the next steps for learning.

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

In Key Stage 1, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in writing doubled last year. Boys improved their skills significantly. Because pupils who have special needs and/or disabilities are effectively supported by carefully designed resources and additional support in small groups, they make the progress expected of them. The resources sometimes provided for the most able, mean that they go over work and skills they already know and don't have time to get to the most challenging activities. As a result, few reach the higher levels.

Targets for the current year are set at a more challenging level than previously, reflecting a sea change in expectations. This is leading to a steady improvement in pupils' progress in learning which is at least satisfactory in most lessons.. Pupils' good behaviour contributes well to this and it is very evident that pupils enjoy the activities in lessons. Some boys working in a booster group to improve their English skills were buzzing with enthusiasm and ideas for their stories, and followed a clear system to help them plan their writing more effectively.

Pupils' basic skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology are improving and they have a good understanding of the personal effort needed to reach their targets both now and later in their lives. They show this in their willingness to work hard. For a few pupils a low attendance rate adds another barrier to

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their learning. However, a few persistent absentees have made a significant improvement in their attendance due to the support of the school and outside agencies. Pupils put their good knowledge of healthy lifestyles into practice over a range of enjoyable sports activities. Pupils are wrapped in an atmosphere of care throughout the school day, which explains why most are confident to say that they are very safe at school and have very good relationships with the adults and each other.

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
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
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	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

There are good relationships in all classes so that lessons are calm and have a good atmosphere. Classrooms are consistently well organised and full of attractive displays that value pupils' work. Teachers are improving the help that they give to pupils to take the next steps in their learning. They are beginning to provide pupils with individual and group learning targets on well presented cards to help them see how to reach the next level. At the moment these do not relate to all the different aspects of literacy and numeracy, so they are only relevant for a few activities. This lessens the impact of personal targets on improving the rate of progress. Resources are well prepared for

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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lessons; however, teachers sometimes spend too much time explaining work and this slows the pace of learning.

Curriculum activities provide a lot of interest. Pupils value the opportunities to suggest the content of some topics, and say how much they enjoy them. Year 2 pupils could not wait to tell any passing visitor about their recent visit to the local fire station. However, the school has not reviewed planning for subjects other than English and mathematics for some time and opportunities to improve basic skills through other subjects are not clearly planned. Effective sports activities are provided through good links with the local secondary school. An appropriate range of extra activities, including a residential visit for the first time this year, enriches the curriculum. Pupils reduced the cost of the trip for each family by working hard to raise money through several events.

Adults throughout the school work well to ensure that pupils are safe and happy, and readily involve workers from outside agencies when necessary. This good care for all pupils ensures that the most vulnerable pupils are supported well.

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 new headteacher has galvanised the whole school community in a drive for improvement. Much has been achieved in a short time, but there are some important issues to tackle even more rigorously. School leaders are in the process of changing the emphasis of self-evaluation to give a further impetus to raising standards in all areas, so that leaders at all levels focus more on the outcomes of the school's work. The governing body is enthusiastic about developing the school, and several new governors have ensured they have the training and skills to help them contribute fully. All aspects of safeguarding procedures are well organised and up-to-date. Spot checks carried out by governors means that they are well informed and ensure that appropriate safeguarding procedures are in place.

The new system of tracking pupils' progress using an electronic data package has greatly assisted school leaders in their determination to raise standards and ensure that there is equality of opportunity for different groups. The system allows leaders to check pupil progress in a simple format, and compare the progress of each group to others. Senior staff share the information with governors so that they can see where improvement is needed. Importantly, parents are also involved, setting targets for their children with staff, using the data available to inform their meetings. Several focused

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discussions between class teachers and senior leaders examine the progress of individual pupils who appear to be falling behind. This leads to a clear plan of action to accelerate progress for these pupils. Together these strategies made a good contribution to an improvement in standards last year.

School leaders have created a cohesive community where all are valued. Pupils' good moral development helps school leaders tackle discrimination effectively. Provision for community cohesion is satisfactory. Leaders have succeeded well in ensuring that the school is a harmonious community. They recognise that opportunities for pupils to learn about cultural, ethnic and religious diversity beyond the school gates are limited. This is a high priority in the school's community cohesion action plan.

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

When children start school their abilities are typically below those expected for their age, particularly in their language development. While they make satisfactory progress overall, by the time they leave the Reception class just over half have not reached average standards in all the areas of learning. Language development and writing are their weakest areas. Children settle into school at a gentle pace because a great deal of sensitive care is provided. Consequently, their behaviour is good and they try hard to please the adults. They enjoy the activities provided, both inside and outdoors, and quickly make friends. However, some activities lack the challenge needed to help children accelerate their progress in developing basic language and mathematical skills. A small group of children were very happy sticking ten whiskers onto a printed picture of 'Tiger Ten'. They developed their social skills appropriately, chatted and shared the

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resources well together, and practised their counting skills. Nonetheless, the activity provided little scope for children who could already count to extend their mathematical reasoning through talking about numbers. Occasionally, the high level of care and meticulous preparation prevents children from using their own initiative, making their own decisions and extending their learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of the parents are content with the school and some say they are delighted. Many parents comment that the new headteacher is dealing with behaviour in a positive way and has secured an improvement in many aspects of school life. One wrote, 'The new headteacher has made a remarkable difference to children and to staff attitudes'. A very small minority express concerns about the way the school tackles poor behaviour. The inspection team found systems to promote good behaviour to be a strength. Parents are particularly pleased that their children enjoy school. The open door policy is a welcome development and parents appreciate being consulted and involved with making decisions. They say they are well informed about their children's progress. A few were happy with the school but comment that the more able pupils could be asked to do more difficult tasks; the inspection team agree this group could be challenged more in lessons.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Chiltern 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 133 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 258 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	85	64	45	34	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	91	68	38	29	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	90	68	40	30	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	69	52	58	44	5	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	92	69	38	29	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	89	67	39	29	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	78	59	52	39	2	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)	80	60	38	29	4	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	80	60	48	36	4	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	73	55	50	38	8	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	70	53	56	42	3	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	85	64	43	32	4	3	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	89	67	39	29	2	2	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.



9 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Chiltern Primary School, Basingstoke, RG22 5BB

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. Your school is satisfactory. You are beginning to reach higher standards since the new headteacher introduced some new systems for checking how well everyone is doing. You told us how much you like the rewards you receive for behaving well. Your favourite thing seems to be the 'bands' you choose at lunchtimes for all the activities. All the adults care for you well so that most of you feel safe and happy at school. You enjoy the topics and mostly try hard to finish your work in lessons. Some of the older pupils help each other to check their work. The teachers give you a lot of opportunities to tell them what could be better in your school. The headteacher's tea parties are very popular and sound like a real treat.

The headteacher, staff and governors are working really hard to improve your school. Your parents commented how much they like all the changes, and you told us yourselves that behaviour is much better now. We have asked the school to work at three things in particular:

- To help you improve your work in English and mathematics a bit faster so that you catch up and reach even higher standards, especially in writing.
- To use the information gathered from looking at your work to make sure that all the lessons are challenging, especially for pupils who find the work too easy.
- To improve the attendance of pupils who are absent too often. You could help by making sure that you come to school every day so that you don't miss any important work, by using your targets to help you improve your writing, and by letting the teachers know if the work is too easy for you.

Yours faithfully

Liz Kounnou

Lead Inspector

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