

# Chater Infant School

Southsea Avenue, Watford, Hertfordshire, WD18 7NJ

**Inspection dates** 5–6 June 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The headteacher knows the school well. She is ably supported by a senior leadership team in bringing about improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Pupils make good progress from their below-average starting points and most pupils, from all different backgrounds, achieve well.
- Standards at the end of Year 2 were in line with the national average in 2013 and they are on track to be a little higher this year.
- Teaching is good in all age groups. There is some highly effective practice on which the school can build.
- Pupils behave well, feel safe and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Their attendance has improved this year.
- Governors know the school well. They are supportive and have high expectations of the senior leadership team.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, they could be reaching higher standards by the end of Reception.
- Pupils' knowledge, use and understanding of phonics (the sounds that letters make) are not sufficiently well developed.
- Standards in writing are not quite as high as those in reading and mathematics. More-able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently.
- Teachers do not always make best use of teaching assistants to support learning.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 11 lessons, two of which were seen together with the headteacher. In addition, the inspectors made a number of other shorter visits to lessons and attended an assembly. They spent time looking at pupils' books and heard some pupils in Year 2 read.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff, groups of pupils and a local authority representative.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including the data the school has collected on pupils' attainment and progress, procedures for keeping pupils safe and the school improvement plan.
- In making their judgements, inspectors took account of the 17 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View), a recent school survey of parents' views and 36 questionnaires returned by members of staff.

## Inspection team

David Wynford-Jones, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jane Richmond	Additional Inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

- The school is similar in size to the average primary school.
- Most of the pupils come from a number of different minority ethnic backgrounds. Pupils of Asian heritage form the largest group. The proportion of pupils from a White British background is considerably smaller than that found in most schools.
- The proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language is much higher than average. Very few are at the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion identified for additional support through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average. Most of these pupils have speech and language difficulties.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is below average. This is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The headteacher was appointed in January 2012.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards at the end of Reception by:
  - promoting the children’s understanding and use of phonics more effectively
  - ensuring children use mathematical terminology correctly and develop a better understanding of shape and space
  - making more effective use of the outdoor area to promote learning.
- Accelerate pupils’ progress and raise standards in writing in Key Stage 1 by:
  - building on the recent changes in the way phonics are taught
  - encouraging pupils to use a wider range of vocabulary
  - providing consistently challenging work for more-able pupils.
- Ensure teaching assistants are used effectively to support pupils’ learning.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children get off to a good start in the Nursery. They settle quickly and feel safe because relationships with the adults are good. Children enjoy the various activities in the classroom and outdoors.
- Most of the children transfer to the Reception classes where they are joined by others. Some have attended other settings; others have not. Children's skills on entry to the Reception classes are still below those expected for the age, especially in language and mathematics.
- From their various starting points, children make good progress in the Reception classes but, in 2013, too few reached the age-related expectations in literacy and mathematics by the end of the year. This was because not all children were confident in the use of phonics when reading and writing, and their knowledge of mathematical terminology, particularly related to shape and space, was not sufficiently well developed. School data show that a greater proportion of children are reaching age-related expectations this year. However, standards are not yet as high as they could be, particularly in their knowledge of phonics and use of mathematical language.
- Pupils' work and school assessment records show that most pupils are making good progress in Years 1 and 2. Work in pupils' books shows that standards are rising. Good support for pupils who speak English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs help them make similar progress to their classmates.
- In Year 2, pupils' reading skills are in line with expectations for the age. Most read confidently and can talk knowledgeably about their favourite books. The school's emphasis on improving pupils' reading skills and developing their knowledge of phonics is paying dividends. In 2013, too few reached the expected standard in Year 1 and in the follow-up phonics checks in Year 2. This year, a greater proportion of pupils in Year 1 have already acquired the phonic skills expected for the age.
- In writing, pupils' standards are broadly in line with those expected for the age. Older pupils are beginning to use basic punctuation, including full stops, question marks and inverted commas correctly. Pupils have many opportunities to write in different subjects and apply their skills to a variety of topics. The content conveys the meaning but is not always brought to life with interesting and diverse vocabulary. Too few pupils, especially the most able, are working above the expected level for the age.
- In mathematics, standards are in line with those expected for the age. Pupils have a good understanding of number. More-able pupils undertake calculations involving hundreds, tens and units. They draw and interpret bar charts and are confident when talking about simple fractions.
- In the 2013 Year 2 assessments, pupils supported by the pupil premium did slightly better than their peers nationally in reading, writing and mathematics but not as well as the other Year 2 pupils in the school. They were about half a term behind their classmates in reading and mathematics. The gap in writing was marginally higher. Current school data suggest that the gap in performance between eligible pupils in the current Year 2 and their classmates is closing. This is because their progress is now being checked more closely and additional help, if needed, is being provided promptly.
- The primary school sports funding is being used appropriately. Staff are more confident in teaching a range of sports and pupils are eager to become involved. Pupils have a much better

understanding of how sporting activities contribute to healthy living.

### **The quality of teaching is good**

- Teachers know their pupils well and relationships are good. As a result, pupils want to do well and please their teachers. All staff strive to ensure that all pupils are fully included and have equal access to the same learning opportunities as other pupils.
- Teachers' expectations are high. Lessons are well planned. Most ask questions skilfully to check and develop pupils' learning. Pupils' progress is checked regularly and they are given extra help to boost their progress if needed. Occasionally, the work set by some teachers does not reflect sufficiently high expectations of the more-able pupils, especially in writing.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and encourage them to share their ideas with each other and with the adults. This promotes their social skills and their ability to communicate clearly with others. The emphasis placed on developing good relationships in this culturally diverse school is reflected in the pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The marking of pupils' work is good. Pupils are given clear guidance on what they have to do to improve their work. This helps them to make rapid progress and reach their challenging targets.
- Although considerable improvements have been made to the Early Years Foundation Stage outdoor area, its potential to promote the children's skills in reading, writing and mathematics has not yet been fully developed or realised.
- Teaching assistants usually provide good support for pupils. However, at times, particularly when the class teacher is leading discussions, they are not involved in promoting pupils' learning.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The vast majority apply themselves in lessons and have a positive attitude towards learning.
- Most pupils behave well at all times. They move around the buildings sensibly and are generally polite and well-mannered in the way they speak to adults and to each other. Incidents of inappropriate behaviour and racist incidents are rare. Pupils say that if any incidents occur, they are dealt with fairly and swiftly by the senior leaders.
- Pupils are proud of their school. Displays and equipment are treated with respect. There is no litter. They know about different types of bullying, for example name-calling, fighting, racial bullying, or religious intolerance. The diverse ethnic nature of the school contributes significantly to pupils' awareness of different cultures.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The school meets the latest requirements for safeguarding. Members of the governing body check to make certain that procedures are followed and the site is safe.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They appreciate the safety features around the school site, for example the secure fencing and system for gaining entry to the school, and are aware of potential dangers when using the internet. Pupils know who to turn

to if they are worried, and are confident they will be listened to.

- Pupils' attendance has risen steadily from a low base since September 2013, and is now average for primary schools. This is because senior leaders have followed up absences with greater rigour and made it clear to parents the impact of poor attendance. Better attendance is helping pupils to make accelerated progress.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher and senior leaders are working together effectively to raise standards. During the last two years, and since the headteacher was appointed, there is renewed energy to ensure that the school keeps pace with national initiatives so that a greater proportion of pupils make good progress.
- Senior leaders know the school's strengths and have identified the key areas for development, which are set out in their detailed improvement plan. They are developing their roles well in supporting the headteacher and contributing to the leadership and management of the school.
- The headteacher has successfully led changes to assessment procedures, introduced more rigorous staff discussions on pupils' progress, and undertaken regular observations of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning. The information is shared with the governing body and used to decide if the teachers should receive a salary increase.
- Staff have responded positively to the initiatives and rightly feel that the school is moving forward in the right direction. They have attended courses to ensure they are kept up-to-date and have reviewed and made changes to the way they teach phonics.
- Teachers plan together in their year groups so that pupils in parallel classes cover the same ground. General details of the work to be covered are uploaded on a termly basis onto the school web site. In all classes, there is a suitable focus on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. However, the expectations of the more-able pupils are not always high enough.
- When possible, subjects are brought together through a theme or topic. For example, during the inspection there was a whole-school 'arts week'. Pupils studied various artists and, using different media, created pictures in the style of the artist they were studying. This successfully inked learning in a number of different subjects including English, mathematics, history, information technology and art. It also contributed to their cultural development.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils are given many opportunities to enrich their education, for example by working and discussing things together in lessons, through educational visits and by taking part in a range of sporting and other additional activities.
- The local authority has provided appropriate support through termly visits to review the school's performance, plan for future developments and help the governing body in setting targets for the headteacher.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body has an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. Governors attend courses and are developing their skills and understanding of governance well. They are keen to promote good relationships within the school and the local community and will not accept discrimination of any sort. Governors regularly ask the

headteacher about the quality of teaching, pupils' attainment, their progress and behaviour. Their recent training on understanding pupils' performance data and making national comparisons helps them understand where teaching is consistently good and where additional support is needed. They know how targets are set for teachers to improve, and understand the process for rewarding good teaching.

- Governors monitor the budget closely to ensure that money, including the primary sports funding and the pupil premium allocation, are spent as intended. For example, the sport funding is being used to employ specialist sports staff, train teachers and extend the range of sporting activities and clubs. Pupil premium money is being spent wisely on additional staffing to support pupils' learning in literacy and numeracy. Governors set the headteacher suitably challenging targets and check the progress of the actions to tackle the priorities identified in the improvement plan regularly.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	117159
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	443760

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	240
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Geoff Warman
<b>Headteacher</b>	Amrit Bal-Richards
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 October 2008
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