

Cheam Common Infants' School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102963
Local Authority	Sutton
Inspection number	286536
Inspection dates	2–3 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Christopher Gray

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	307
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs J Little
Headteacher	Mrs E Gregory
Date of previous school inspection	21 May 2001
School address	Balmoral Road Worcester Park KT4 8SS
Telephone number	020 8337 4152
Fax number	020 8337 2517

Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is similar in size to most of its type. More pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds than in most schools, but very few of them are at the early stages of learning English. However, this proportion is likely to increase. Pupils begin the school with a range of skills that is similar to that found nationally. The school holds the Healthy Schools' award and Investors in People status.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school which gives its pupils a good standard of education. Pupils achieve well and their personal development is good. They enjoy school, as their enthusiasm and good attitudes to learning show. Their understanding of the need for a healthy lifestyle and how to lead one is outstanding. As one very young child put it, 'If you keep healthy you get good at all the stuff'.

Pupils reach above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. They make good use of their literacy skills in other subjects. For example, one pupil wrote about Guy Fawkes, 'Guy knew all about gunpowder and so was perfect for the job.' Their skills in information and communication technology (ICT) are not as highly developed because teachers do not match the work they give to pupils closely enough to their prior learning.

Children in the Foundation Stage have a good start to their schooling. The curriculum has been revised recently to put play more firmly at its heart. Teaching is good and children enjoy a wide range of purposeful activities inside and outside the classroom. By the time they enter Year 1, most pupils reach the goals expected of them and some exceed them.

Teaching and the curriculum are good. Teachers match activities well to pupils' prior learning in English and mathematics and this enables pupils of all abilities to do well in these subjects. The school has an increasing number of pupils for whom English is an additional language. These pupils achieve as well as others by the time they reach Year 2, but the school lacks expertise in diagnosing and providing for the needs of the few with very little English. Work for these pupils is not always organised in such a way as to help them develop their oral English quickly enough.

Pupils receive good care, guidance and support and say they feel safe in school. One parent wrote, 'I can leave my children in a safe and loving environment, where I trust my children's well-being'.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's direction for the school is purposeful and effectively founded on a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. She receives full support from all staff and governors. The recent improvements to the Foundation Stage show that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make more use of assessment in ICT to match work to pupils' prior learning and so raise standards.
- Improve the strategies to help pupils who are at an early stage of learning English.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. From average starting points, they reach standards by Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics that are significantly above average. Records show that most pupils make good progress in all classes. A careful track is kept on all to ensure that any whose rate of progress might fall off are given quick, appropriate support. Standards in ICT are not as high as in reading, writing and mathematics because few pupils reach the higher levels consistently.

Boys achieve as well as girls and better than their national counterparts. School data show that individuals from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve at rates similar to other pupils. Most pupils for whom English is an additional language perform better than the equivalent national group, but the few with little English could sometimes receive more appropriate support. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities receive good support which enables them to achieve a rate of progress as good as that of other pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good. This is seen in their friendly, confident manner. They say that they enjoy school and most parents agree. Behaviour is good, though there is a very small number who behave less well than others. The youngest children make good progress in personal and social development. They cooperate well with each other and clearly enjoy their activities. Pupils feel safe at school and know to whom to turn if they have a problem. There are occasional examples of bullying but pupils are confident that these incidents are generally dealt with well. Attendance is good.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The value of a healthy lifestyle is insisted on by many. One pupil said, 'I always have a healthy drink in my lunchbox'. They know what is bad for them and practise self-denial: 'I only eat sweets on Fridays', another person said. Regular exercise is part of their life, both inside school and out. They contribute well to their community. 'The school council makes the playground and school better' said one (not herself a member). 'I help people when they're stuck', said another. Good basic skills in literacy and numeracy stand pupils in good stead for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers in the Foundation Stage plan fun activities which are successful in helping children to learn. A group of Reception children used a variety of equipment to build a 'river crossing'. This encouraged them to work cooperatively and to improve their balancing skills. Enjoyment was evident as they tried to avoid the crocodiles. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 use drama and speaking well to help pupils produce better writing. This was evident in pupils' recent work, where they had used speech marks effectively to report the dialogue between the Three Bears. Pupils' needs are met well in many lessons, but tasks in ICT are sometimes too easy or too difficult.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy a good range of learning opportunities including French and specialist music tuition. Well planned work in English and mathematics meets the range of needs of all pupils and has contributed to rising standards. Work is linked well across subjects, which enhances pupils' learning and enjoyment. Provision for ICT has improved since the last inspection, though the tasks given to pupils are not always at the right level of difficulty. The curriculum in the Foundation stage is good, with significant, recent improvements in ensuring that children learn through play. The range of enrichment activities provided for pupils is good. Pupils in Year 2 enjoy a good range of clubs. Good arrangements are made to extend pupils' learning at home,

particularly in mathematics, by involving their parents. A few working parents regret that some meetings are not timed to accommodate them.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support for pupils are good and contribute well to pupils' development. Assessment is used very well in reading, writing and mathematics to make sure that individual pupils keep on track to meet their challenging targets. However, the school does not yet systematically monitor pupils' progress by ethnic groups, except at the end of Year 2. Pupils who are at an early stage of learning English are assessed on arrival but these assessments are not always updated with sufficient frequency to reflect accurately their developing grasp of English. This means that sometimes they are not helped to develop their oral English quickly enough. Arrangements for child protection are good and staff are fully trained. Pupils who may be vulnerable are carefully identified and appropriate support provided for them in school and through good liaison with outside agencies. One parent wrote, 'We are very pleased with the school. It is very well organised and is a happy environment for my child'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher and the senior team have a sharp focus on monitoring teaching and attainment to improve achievement. This has contributed to significant improvements in standards in reading, writing and mathematics since the last inspection. This shows the effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation. The school improvement plan provides a clear view of priorities for development and subject leaders evaluate effectively the progress towards targets. They have sufficient time to monitor teaching and learning, often in conjunction with an outside consultant, and this builds well on the school's expertise to help it to improve further. Governors have good links with the school and regularly hold the school to account. The governing body has arrangements to monitor its policy on race equality and assess its impact but does not yet communicate the results to parents.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

14 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cheam Common Infants' School, Balmoral Road, Worcester Park, KT4 8SS

We enjoyed our visit to your school in all that lovely May sunshine. I'm glad the weather was so good, as it gave us lots of chances to see you playing and working outside. You were very polite and friendly and told us how much you enjoy school.

You go to a good school. The teachers help you very much and teach interesting lessons, which help you to do very well in reading, writing and mathematics. You told us how much you enjoy other subjects, like art and physical education. You have plenty of opportunities to work on computers, though sometimes the activities you are asked to do are too hard. Sometimes they are too easy. We have asked the school to try to match the work to your individual computer skills.

The adults look after you well and you told us that you feel safe in school. The headteacher leads the school well and she and her staff know what is good about it and what might be even better. Some of you speak other languages as well as English, and a few of you start school without being able to speak English at all. We have asked the adults to give a bit more help to these children.

Most of you try very hard to keep fit and healthy, and you were very good at telling us why you think that is important. Most of you behave well and work hard in your lessons. One of you told us, 'I like doing hard work - it can make you clever'. Your singing in assembly was very good to hear.

I hope you go on enjoying your time at Cheam Common Infant School.

Yours sincerely

Christopher GrayLead Inspector