

Chancel Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124168
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	314828
Inspection dates	27–28 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Brian Holmes

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alison Coles
Headteacher	Penny Carter
Date of previous school inspection	8 December 2003
School address	Wolseley Road Rugeley WS15 2EW
Telephone number	01889 256137
Fax number	01889 256138

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Chancel Primary is a popular average-sized school. The school is currently undergoing a reorganisation from a two-form entry infant school to a one-form entry 3–11 primary school. This process will be completed by September 2008. There is an acting headteacher in post, seconded from a local school. Attached to the school is a designated inclusion nursery unit for children with special educational needs who are aged 2–5 and identified within the autistic spectrum. The unit is used by the local authority for children from across the county. Most of these children transfer to other schools at the age of five. There are few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or who have a first language other than English. The school has achieved the Activemark and Healthy School 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. One of its strengths is a hard-working and conscientious staff. During a period of transition, as the school expands from an infant school to a full primary school, and is awaiting the arrival of a newly appointed headteacher, it has shown great commitment to build on the good standards of attainment, achievement and personal development and well-being that pupils reach. The school has a good capacity to improve further because the staff, ably guided by the acting headteacher and well supported by the governing body, have developed a strong partnership with parents and pupils, almost all of whom have positive views of the school and high levels of confidence in its work. As a parent typically commented, 'I could not wish for a better school; he has come on leaps and bounds.'

Pupils enter the school with attainment that is broadly in line with what is expected nationally, but a significant number of children have weaknesses in their speech and language development. Once at school, children in the Foundation Stage make good progress and achieve well. This good progress continues in Years 1 to 5. Pupils attain standards above the national average by the end of Year 2. Pupils make good progress and achieve well in Years 3, 4 and 5. A significant number of pupils in the current Year 5 class are on track to reach Level 5 by the end of Year 6. The thorough self-evaluation systems the school has put in place to track and check pupils' progress are used well by teachers to plan work that is well matched to pupils' needs. Teachers engage pupils well in lessons with interesting activities, although in some classes, not all pupils are sure how to improve their work or how they can judge when they have achieved the learning objectives they have been set. A well planned curriculum gives pupils opportunities to develop their skills and achieve well and enables children in the inclusion nursery to access their learning.

Parents have extremely positive views of the school. As one typically commented, 'This is a caring school that has the best interests of the child at its heart.' Pupils share these views of the school, and with the strong ethos of care, guidance and support, this results in good personal development for all pupils, including the children in the inclusion nursery. Pupils' behaviour is good and the positive attitudes they demonstrate towards their learning and their participation in the activities the school offers shows a clear enjoyment of their education. They have a good awareness of how to stay safe and live healthily, with many choosing fruit at lunchtime. Their contribution to the school is satisfactory because the school council is newly formed and the effect it has had on the life of the school in representing the pupils' views and making changes that pupils would like to see has been limited so far. Pupils' good standards of attainment and achievement, and their positive attitudes to learning and responsibility, mean that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good provision in both the Nursery and Reception classes enables children to get off to a good start and achieve well. Most reach the goals expected of them before moving into Year 1, and about a third of the children in the Reception class are on target to exceed them in personal, social and emotional development and reading. Skilled teaching, excellent relationships and a stimulating curriculum develop children's independence and challenge them to learn through a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Good teaching of letter sounds enables children to make a good start in reading and writing and effectively addresses weaknesses in their speech and language. Assessment is used well to record children's progress and plan the

next steps in their learning. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed and there are good links with parents, who are extremely positive about the quality of education their children receive. Children enjoy a smooth transition into Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' contribution to the life of the school through the work of the school council.
- Improve pupils' learning by consistently making it clear to them how they can improve their work and how they can judge when they have achieved their objectives.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' good achievement results from a good quality of teaching and learning that meets pupils' different needs, a stimulating curriculum and thorough assessment procedures which track their progress. By the end of Year 2, pupils reach standards that are above the national average and in the current Year 2, an increased number of pupils are on track to reach higher levels. This good progress continues in Years 3 to 5 and pupils are attaining standards above those expected in English and mathematics. A significant number of pupils in Year 5 are already working at the level expected for the end of Year 6. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress and achieve well, because of good planning to meet their needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school, as seen in their good behaviour and their positive attitudes to learning. They are proud of the responsibilities they are given, such as playground buddies, play leaders and games monitors, and undertake these roles reliably and responsibly. Pupils' attendance is good and improving and their punctuality is excellent. Pupils thrive in school because of the strong ethos, which underpins all the activities they undertake. For example, in the inclusion nursery, adults and children relate well to one another. As a result, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are developing into confident, articulate and sensible young citizens. The school council has a lead role in making pupils' voices heard in school but formal procedures to take account of pupils' views and involve them in the development of the school have only recently been introduced. Pupils contribute to the wider community through their involvement in projects in the local community, like 'Keep Rugeley Tidy' and fundraising for local charities. Pupils know that they can offer their opinions and views on the understanding that staff will respect and respond to what they have to say.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers plan their lessons to meet a wide range of abilities and their success is seen in the good progress of pupils of all abilities. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and extend pupils that are more able so that they achieve their best. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those children in the inclusion nursery, are well supported by teaching assistants. Teachers use a good range of learning approaches to stimulate pupils, so they are well motivated and engage in their learning with high levels of interest. Learning objectives are shared with pupils but success criteria are not always made clear. Consequently, not all

pupils know when the learning objectives have been met. Marking of pupils' work is thorough and makes clear to them what they have done well. The best marking makes clear to pupils when they have reached their targets and what to do next to improve, but this is not consistent across all classes.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is adapted well to meet the needs of all pupils, including pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children in the inclusion nursery, and provides well for the development of pupils' basic skills. The strong focus on phonics to improve pupils' speech and language is raising standards in literacy. Teachers make good links across subjects to provide pupils with opportunities to use their basic skills to support their learning, particularly in writing. This approach is well used in the Years 3, 4 and 5 classes. Pupils said that this makes their learning fun and helps them enjoy their lessons. The personal, social and health education curriculum is good and contributes well to pupils' good personal development and well-being. There is good enrichment of pupils' learning with the introduction of Spanish lessons in all classes, and brass tuition for all Year 5 pupils. Extra-curricular clubs are well attended by pupils and the variety of activities on offer is satisfactory.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The good level of care shown by all adults in the school enables all pupils to feel safe and secure. The well established routines, high expectations of behaviour and welcoming learning environment all contribute towards the confidence pupils demonstrate as learners. The arrangements for safeguarding pupils, and to ensure their health, safety and welfare, are thorough, including systems to monitor pupils' attendance. Relationships between pupils and adults are excellent, so pupils are comfortable in asking for help when they need it. Pupils say their teachers are their friends and they particularly like the way they take an interest in them and make them feel safe. Children in the inclusion nursery are well cared for and the school has good links with other agencies to ensure the health and welfare of these pupils. The systems to support and guide pupils in their academic progress are effective and identify any underachievement early. All pupils have targets and most know what their targets are, although not all of them know what they need to do to achieve them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The staff have a clear vision for the school to 'put children first' and enable all pupils to reach the highest standards they can in their learning and their personal development and well-being, including the children in the inclusion nursery. They are ably led by the acting headteacher, who is guiding them well through a period of transition. This vision for the school is shared by the governors who support and challenge the school to good effect. They fulfil their duties well as the school expands to a full primary school. There are thorough systems in place for self-evaluation, although pupils are not yet fully involved in making their voice heard through the school council. The systems for checking and tracking pupils' progress and achievement towards challenging targets are rigorous. They are used effectively to check pupils' progress towards their targets by their teachers and by subject leaders, who fulfil their roles well. All

pupils are equally valued and have equal access to the opportunities that the school offers. They like the school a lot and said that all the adults in school help them to do as well as they can.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

29 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Chancel Primary School, Rugeley, WS15 2EW

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and listening to what you had to say. We know you are very proud of your school and enjoy going there. We enjoyed looking at the story boxes that children in Years 2 and 3 have made for younger children in the school. We think that Chancel Primary is a good school with several strengths. These are the main things we found out about your school.

- You make good progress in your work and achieve well.
- You behave well, like coming to school and enjoy your learning.
- You have a good understanding of how to live healthily and stay safe.
- You have very good relationships with your teachers and like them a lot.
- You are provided with a lot of interesting activities and clubs.
- You are well looked after by all the adults in school.
- All the adults in school work hard to help you to do your best.

In order to make the school better we have asked it to:

- give you more opportunities to make your views heard through the work of the school council
- give you more help in knowing how to improve your work and how to judge whether you have achieved the learning objectives in lessons.

You can help your teachers by continuing to work hard and doing the best you can.

Best Wishes

Yours sincerely

Brian Holmes Lead inspector