

Chopwell Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131107
Local Authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	315721
Inspection dates	28–29 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Linda Buller

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	223
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Peter Ward
Headteacher	Mrs Bernadette Fellowes-Pryne
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2004
School address	Derwent Street Chopwell Newcastle upon Tyne Tyne and Wear NE17 7HS
Telephone number	01207 561322
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average size primary school situated in an ex-mining village that is less socially and economically advantaged than most areas. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage with only a few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average overall, although in some year groups it is significantly higher than average. The number of pupils who leave the school before they reach Year 6 is high. The school holds the National Healthy Schools award, the Artsmark award and the Activemark award and was recently chosen to be a showcase school for the 'The Global Dimension in Action' document in recognition of the international dimension of the school's curriculum.

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 and improving school. It is a happy community where pupils are well cared for, enjoy their learning and enthusiastically participate in the wide range of enrichment activities. An interesting and exciting curriculum contributes well to pupils' good achievement and their well-being. This is because senior staff have worked effectively as a team to design a curriculum that builds on previous learning and motivates pupils to play their part in bringing about improvement. Staff and pupils are rightly proud of the international dimension to their curriculum which provides pupils with an excellent range of experiences that serve them well in later life.

Pupils' behaviour, relationships and attitudes to learning are all good and on occasions excellent. As a result, pupils are safe and happy at school. Their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development means that they have a clear understanding of right and wrong, appreciate differences, celebrate their achievements and show care and consideration for others. Through initiatives such as 'health week' even the very youngest pupils in school have developed a good understanding of the importance of following a healthy lifestyle. By Year 6 the pupils are mature and responsible individuals who take their role in school and the need to be responsible citizens very seriously.

Teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good overall, resulting in good achievement. Pupils enter Nursery with skills and knowledge well below that of children of their age and make good progress in Key Stage 1. Teachers are skilled at teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, using a variety of teaching methods that hold pupils' interest and build well on what they already know. Teachers are given good guidance about how they can improve their practice through support and feedback which is helpful and incisive. Despite this, the quality of teaching is not good enough in lower Key Stage 2 and this remains a key priority for the school. Teaching in Years 5 and 6 is good and occasionally outstanding. Subject knowledge is good and teachers ask pertinent questions which are well targeted to support individuals. They know their pupils well and in the main lessons are planned so that all pupils build effectively on previous learning. In these lessons support and guidance is good and teachers take every opportunity to remind pupils what it is they need to include in their work in order to improve standards. Although pupils make rapid strides in their learning in these year groups they do not all make up the lost ground from Years 3 and 4 and this is the main reason why standards remain broadly average.

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher and her senior team share a passion for making all pupils feel valued and included. Clear areas for further improvement have been identified and standards are rising. Pupils' progress is monitored closely and regularly. There is very effective additional support for those falling behind the levels expected for their age. However, support for average and higher attaining pupils who have not made the progress expected, and therefore may not reach their targets, is less consistent. The school has come a long way in tackling the issues raised at the last inspection. Successful curriculum initiatives, together with the restructuring of leadership and management, have had a positive impact in bringing about improvements and give the school a good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good provision and effective links with parents enable children to settle quickly into the daily routines of school. Children make a good start to their schooling in the Nursery and Reception classes and a similar number to that seen nationally now reach their learning goals by the time they start Year 1. Their needs are identified effectively and good, practical activities are planned inside and outside the classroom using an interesting variety of resources which the children enjoy. Areas dedicated to particular aspects of learning, such as construction, art, number and writing, motivate children to have a go. This is more successful, however, in the Reception class than in the Nursery where support staff miss opportunities to engage children in dialogue to extend their learning further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching in lower Key Stage 2.
- Make better use of the information gained from monitoring and evaluation to ensure that all pupils make good progress and meet challenging targets.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. At the end of both key stages standards overall have risen since the time of the last inspection, and in national assessments in 2007 were broadly in line with the national average. Standards have, however, been variable year on year, especially in writing.

In Key Stage 1 there is now a good focus on increasing pupils' experiences and language for writing through story telling, role play and an awareness of topics that are appealing to boys and girls. These strategies are having a positive impact on pupils' confidence and interest in writing. As a result, more pupils are now working at or above the expected levels for their age and their progress is good.

In Key Stage 2 progress is satisfactory because teaching is not good enough in Years 3 and 4 to ensure good rates of progress are always maintained. Although pupils make rapid strides in their learning in Years 5 and 6 this is not always enough for them to make up the lost ground. Consequently, the school did not reach its statutory targets for English in 2007. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because the school identifies their needs promptly and they receive good support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good with some outstanding features. Participation in lessons is very good and pupils clearly enjoy their work and are keen to learn. They have an excellent understanding of people who are different from themselves, developed very effectively through assembly themes, cultural visits and the recent exchange programme with Japanese pupils. Pupils feel very safe in school and appreciate the measures which the school takes to contribute to this, such as the supervision in the play areas and talks on fire and road safety. Pupils' behaviour is good, they say that levels of bullying are low and point to the 'Buddy' system as being a very important factor in this. One pupil commented, 'we can sort out a lot of problems with the Buddies'. Attendance

is broadly satisfactory. The level of pupils' active participation in the school council and a wide variety of charity events locally, nationally and internationally demonstrate their outstanding commitment to bringing about improvements to the school, local and global communities. They eagerly share their knowledge of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, including the consequences which can arise from not keeping fit and well. Pupils' good progress in basic skills, including the use of information and communication technology (ICT), together with well-developed social skills, prepares them well for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall. In most classes teachers have good subject knowledge and explanations for pupils are clear. Behaviour is managed very well and strong relationships amongst pupils and staff contribute to pupils' confidence and progress. Marking is detailed and provides pupils with good information about the levels they have reached and what they need to do next. These features are less evident in lower Key Stage 2 where teaching is not consistently good enough to ensure that pupils maintain their rate of progress or build well enough on the good start they make in their early years in school. Checks on how well pupils are progressing through each year are made frequently and this information is generally used well to plan the next steps in their learning. Although this is much more effective in Key Stage 1 and Years 5 and 6. In Years 3 and 4 pupils work is not always well matched to what they need to learn next. In Year 4, where pupil management skills are also weaker, this leads to a significant slowing of progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Good curriculum provision contributes well to pupils' enjoyment of school and their generally good achievement, both personally and academically. The use of ICT in many areas of the school curriculum is well established and enhances pupils' learning. There are excellent levels of enrichment and pupils enjoy the many opportunities, both sporting and cultural, to take part in clubs and activities outside of lessons. There is very good provision for pupils to understand how to lead a healthy lifestyle, for example the health club with guidance on diet as well as fitness. Since the last inspection the school has worked hard to put in place a curriculum which provides effective continuity in learning and is specific to the needs of pupils in this school. This has been a key feature in standards overall rising year on year, although in English this has been more successful in Key Stage 1. There are two main reasons for this. Weaknesses in teaching in lower Key Stage 2 mean that the curriculum is not delivered as well as it should be and the curriculum does not yet fully meet the needs of higher-attaining pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's arrangements for the care, guidance and support of its pupils are good. The school provides a high level of care to its pupils, which contributes significantly to the confidence and enjoyment they show to being at school. Effective supervision and sensible arrangements allow pupils to play energetically and enjoy the extensive outdoor play equipment safely. Arrangements for safeguarding, including those for child protection, are firmly in place and meet current

recommendations. The support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. Support assistants know the pupils well and their guidance enhances pupils' progress very effectively. Pupils value the information they are given about their progress through consistent and extensive information, for example in their 'passports to success' which helps them to understand what they need to do to reach the next level in their learning. Such information has made a significant impact on the rate of pupils' progress in lessons where teachers provide additional guidance of how to use this information in their day-to-day work. This is not yet the case in all lessons or year groups and therefore is not impacting as well as it could on raising standards.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The impact of leadership and management upon the quality of the school's provision is good. An extensive schedule for the regular monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school, involving senior leaders and subject managers, provides the school with a good understanding of what is working well and what requires further improvement. They have used this information very successfully to implement significant changes to the curriculum which has both improved standards and increased pupils' enjoyment of school. Monitoring of pupils progress is also often used well to identify those who are not reaching the expected level for their age and swift action is taken to provide these pupils with additional support. This information, however, is not used as effectively as it could be in the setting of challenging targets for all pupils. As a result, when pupils have not made the expected progress in any given year, the target set for the subsequent year is not always challenging enough to make sure they make up the ground lost. Governance is satisfactory. Governors have a good understanding of the key strengths of the school and of those areas where standards need to improve but their knowledge as to why pupils are not making even better progress is weaker.

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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	3
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	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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	3
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	3
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

30 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Chopwell Primary School, Gateshead, NE17 7HS

We enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you for giving up your time to talk with us. You provided us with a lot of valuable information about your school. Through your school council and the work you do as 'Buddies' you play an important part in the life of the school. Well done!

You go to a good school and are very well cared for. You told us that you all feel safe and that you really enjoy the many exciting activities which the school provides for you. You clearly enjoy your work and apply yourselves very well in lessons. I was impressed by your good behaviour and by your involvement in the school community, as well as in events further afield. I was also pleased that you are keen to lead a healthy lifestyle. All of these things will help to prepare you well for secondary school.

In most classes you have good teaching which helps you to make good progress. This means that the results of your tests are higher than they used to be, and are now much like other schools. You are also helped by a good curriculum which makes work interesting both in and out of class. You benefit from good advice about how to make your work better. All this is possible because of the good work done by your headteacher and all other staff.

I have asked the school to make sure that there is good teaching in all classes, particularly in Years 3 and 4, and that all of you are challenged to do as well as you can. You have a lot of talent, so you can help to make your school even better by continuing to work hard and setting your sights high.

Yours sincerely

Linda Buller

Lead inspector