

# Chater Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117159
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	326538
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 October 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sheelagh Barnes

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<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 on roll</b>	
School (total)	201
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	25
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Neil Hart
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Meena Modi
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 November 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Southsea Avenue Watford Hertfordshire WD18 7NJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01923 221060
<b>Fax number</b>	01923 481300

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<b>Age group</b>	3–7
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 October 2008
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized infant school situated in Watford. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly higher than average. Overall, children's attainment on entry is well below the expected level for their age. Most pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and four fifths speak English as an additional language, with an extremely high proportion at very early stages of learning the language. The proportion of pupils who arrive at the school at times other than the start of the school year is high and many of these are also at very early stages of learning English. A significant proportion of the teachers are new to the school this year and some are at the start of their teaching career.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Chater Infant School has major strengths and is an outstanding school. Not least amongst these are the strong emphasis on developing a sense of pride and high self-esteem in each pupil and in the excellent links that school leaders have developed, both within the school community and wider afield. These outcomes are as a direct result of the outstanding leadership of the headteacher, effectively supported by staff and governors. The headteacher has a clear understanding of the school's particular areas of strength and an honest and objective understanding of areas for review and further development. Her wholehearted enthusiasm, encouragement and involvement inspires pupils and staff alike to strive for the highest standards.

Personal development is excellent. Pupils clearly enjoy their time in school, as shown by their exemplary behaviour, their ability to work well together and their excellent attitudes to learning. Parents and helpers contribute to the high levels of care and support, which are excellent. Pupils are given very good guidance in their work and in their personal development. As a result, they achieve extremely well. Standards have risen and progress is extremely good. By the time they transfer to other schools at the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly in line with those expected for pupils' ages. Pupils are developing confident skills in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and are developing a real sense of responsibility for their work and actions.

The quality of teaching and learning is excellent overall and the strong emphasis on developing pupils' language skills runs very effectively through the whole school day. Adults, including support staff are adept at questioning and at modelling correct forms of language, which accelerates pupils' learning effectively. Lessons are based on a variety of practical and interesting activities, which make learning fun. The pace of lessons is generally brisk, although on occasion, in parts of lessons when the teacher speaks to the whole class, this can slow, although it is still at a satisfactory level.

The curriculum is excellent and has considerable impact upon pupils' personal as well as academic development. It has helped create an environment in which difference and cultural diversity, as well as learning, are recognised and celebrated. As such, the curriculum contributes to a high level of community cohesion, with parents, and representatives from local groups and faiths actively involved in the life of the school. The school provides excellent value for money and has an excellent capacity to maintain and continue to improve and refine standards even further.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children get a good start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). This is as a direct result of good provision, high quality care and effective leadership. Consequently, children settle quickly and engage happily in their learning. At the time of the inspection, children had just joined the Nursery and Reception classes but were already working confidently and happily and co-operating well with each other. Children play well, demonstrate a good understanding of what they are learning and are developing confidence to start to talk about what they are doing. Good liaison exists between the school and home, and this effectively supports children's transition into school. Staff keep parents regularly informed of their children's progress, which contributes positively to building trust and a good working relationship between home and school. Arrangements to ensure the health and safety of children are good. Staff

effectively evaluate children's progress in learning and plan activities to meet their needs well. Sessions are based on practical, 'hands-on' themes, with lots of opportunities for the development of vocabulary and language skills. Teaching assistants provide an excellent level of support in these activities. Particular emphasis is also given to developing personal, social and communication skills which are good. This all has a major impact on children's learning. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage although not all reach the expected level by the time that they move to Year 1. Although the outdoor area is used each day, the EYFS leader and the headteacher have identified the need to further develop opportunities for outdoor learning. Development of this outdoor learning forms part of the whole school improvement plan.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Develop opportunities for children in the EYFS to learn outdoors.
- Ensure that the pace of teaching is more often like the very best.

### **Achievement and standards**

#### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' achievements are outstanding and are the visible confirmation of the dedication and hard work of all staff. Consistently, year-on-year, boys and girls from all groups, including those who find learning more difficult, make at least good and frequently excellent progress in developing confidence and skills in reading, writing and speaking English, and also in mathematics, ICT and science. By the time they leave school at the end of Year 2, standards in National Curriculum subjects are broadly in line with those attained nationally. Pupils with English as an additional language make outstanding progress in improving their vocabulary and confidence in speaking English. However, they have not all attained full levels of fluency at the end of Key Stage 1, due to the time required to assimilate a new language fully.

### **Personal development and well-being**

#### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development, including their social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding are outstanding. Pupils join with enthusiasm in the wide range of school activities and play co-operatively at break-times. They are tolerant of the wide range of cultures in the school and enjoy learning about them. They willingly take responsibility through the active school council and as buddies, register and library monitors. Pupils are actively involved in the local community through the outstanding curriculum and the forging of links within the local and wider community is a real strength of the school. Pupils know how to stay healthy and participation in sport is high. They say they feel safe in school and safe practices are followed, especially in the many visits and practical activities that enrich their learning. Almost all pupils attend school regularly, although a few take extended visits abroad in term-time. The school works hard to improve punctual attendance. The outstanding progress made in literacy and numeracy, supported by the very good use made of ICT, and pupils' ability to start to take responsibility for their behaviour and their learning, provides good preparation for future study and life in general.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 1

Teachers and teaching assistants work together extremely well to maximise the learning potential for pupils at each moment of the school day. Lessons and other activities are planned very effectively to match the needs of pupils of all levels of ability and from all groups. Excellent support is provided from teaching assistants, which is particularly beneficial in helping to develop pupils' language skills. For example, on occasion, brief explanations are provided in a language the pupil is confident in, to facilitate their understanding. All staff make the most of opportunities to develop pupils' vocabulary in interesting and memorable ways. This extends to technical vocabulary in ICT lessons and mathematical terminology in lessons and daily activities, such as when printing, painting or preparing for a party. All staff manage pupils' behaviour well and take every opportunity to involve them in practical activities, such as when counting or learning the sounds letters make. In this way, pupils' interest is seized and maintained. Much of the teaching undertaken this way in small groups is extremely successful. Occasionally however, when the teacher is talking to the whole class altogether, the pace of learning can slow from the excellent brisk level, which is the norm, to an average level. This is in part due to the extremely wide range of pupils' ability to listen and follow extended conversations and instructions.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 1

The broad and balanced curriculum is outstanding in its relevance and interest for all pupils. The curriculum is very well planned to encourage the potential of all pupils, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school provides particularly well for those whose first language is not English, often supplying bilingual resources and activities as well as specialist support staff for such learners. The more able are clearly identified and are beginning to be well challenged. A range of practical activities in lessons based upon extensive visits and visitors ensures that pupils' interest is maintained. The emphasis on practical work including art has resulted in very high quality displays of work around the school. Extra curricular activities are varied, with a good focus upon sports and the arts and are well attended. The curriculum contributes very well to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural awareness.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 1

Pupils' excellent personal development and academic achievement are significantly helped by the outstanding levels of care, guidance and support the school provides. The school has developed the capacity to cope successfully with a wide range of needs and abilities. Pupils new to the school, and especially those whose first language is not English, are sensitively and warmly welcomed and fully supported in their learning. The needs of all are carefully monitored as they progress through the school. Skilful teaching assistants and other helpers, often working with small groups extracted from classes, ensure that pupil's confidence grows as well as their learning. Individual, class and school target setting provides challenge to learners and its impact can be seen in standards over the last few years. Academic guidance is good, with a robust assessment and tracking system identifying areas pupils need to develop further. Effort and progress are constantly rewarded and pupils especially value the weekly 'Leaves Assembly' that

celebrates their achievements. Child protection arrangements are fully established and all safeguarding, risk assessment and site health and safety requirements are in place.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

The leadership of the headteacher is excellent. She has a clear and accurate understanding of the strengths of the school and of areas for development based upon rigorous and objective assessment and analysis. Under her guidance, effective management teams have been developed which impact very positively on continuous improvement and development. Governors are extremely supportive. They have a very good understanding of the school and confidently question and challenge to raise standards further. There is a very strong emphasis throughout the school on developing skills through training and striving for the highest standards. As a result, levels of expertise and teamwork are exceptionally strong. This has ensured that pupils' achievement remains exceptionally high. There is also a very strong commitment to involving parents in activities and in their children's school life. This has a very positive impact on the progress pupils make and on the links within the community as a whole. The school is well placed to continue to develop and maintain extremely high standards.

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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?	1
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

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<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

6 October 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Chater Infant School, Watford, WD18 7NJ

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently.

I would like to tell you what we think about how well you are getting on and how well your school is helping you to learn. There are many extremely good things about your school. Some of them are:

- your teachers and other staff teach you outstandingly well so that you make extremely good progress in your work
- you all take very good care of each other and work and play together very well
- you thoroughly enjoy learning because teachers plan exciting activities for you
- the school takes excellent care of you and keeps you safe
- you get on well with your teachers and with each other and your behaviour is extremely good
- the school provides lots of interesting and exciting things, such as clubs, trips and visitors that you really enjoy
- your headteacher knows your school really well and has the right plans to make it even better.

There are two things in particular that could help to improve your school. They are:

- to have more opportunities for those of you in the Nursery and Reception to do even more learning outdoors
- for more of your lessons to be as excellent as the best ones we saw.

We hope you all carry on doing your very best and enjoying your learning.

We would like to wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Barnes

Lead inspector