

Chalkhill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101526
Local Authority	Brent
Inspection number	333388
Inspection dates	7–8 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Jane Wotherspoon HMI

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

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	409
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	60
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Jessie Atack (acting)
Headteacher	Ms Rose Ashton
Date of previous school inspection	6 December 2007
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Barnhill Road Wembley HA9 9YP
Telephone number	020 8904 4508
Fax number	020 8904 1227

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Chalkhill is larger than most schools. The Nursery provides part-time education for children from the age of three. The school serves an area of huge cultural and ethnic diversity. An increasing number of pupils are from refugee families or families seeking asylum. Many are in temporary accommodation. A very large number of pupils join or leave the school at various times during the year. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is very high. The proportion with learning difficulties is broadly average and includes pupils with moderate learning, or speech and language, difficulties. The large majority of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds: the largest groups are of Black African and Eastern European heritage. The vast majority of pupils speak English as an additional language, with a high proportion in the early stages of learning English.

When Chalkhill Primary was inspected in December 2007, it was judged to require special measures. Since then, it has undergone significant changes in teaching and support staff. A new headteacher was appointed from September 2008 following a period of acting headship. The school is part of a soft federation with a local primary school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. Chalkhill Primary is now a satisfactory school. Many aspects of its work have improved well since the last inspection. Strong, determined leadership from the headteacher, together with good support from the senior leadership team, has helped to drive forward the school's improvement. The high level of support from the local authority and the soft federation has gradually been reduced and the school has a good capacity to meet the challenge of sustaining improvement. Staff and governors share the vision and ambition to make this an outstanding school in the future. Staff morale is high and teamwork strong.

The relentless focus on improving the quality of teaching means that teaching is satisfactory, with much that is good. As a result, pupils make satisfactory progress. Many are making accelerated progress to make up lost ground. Standards remain below average but are rising, slowly but surely. Pupils' achievement over time is satisfactory. The challenge for the school now is to enable pupils to make progress steadily, year on year, by raising teaching quality to a consistently good level. In particular, the modification of activities to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities is not always as sharp as it could be. Generally, such modification is successful in meeting the needs of those with learning difficulties and those in the early stages of learning English. However, at times, there is insufficient challenge for those pupils with the potential to achieve more.

The school has, rightly, focused on improving English, mathematics and, to a lesser extent, science. Leaders of other subjects are beginning to work together to develop their role in strengthening links between subjects. They recognise that there is more to do to present activities in ways that enable pupils, especially higher attainers, to work independently, to find different methods of solving problems and to present information in different ways.

Pupils themselves have recognised how the school has improved. One older pupil told inspectors, 'I have been at this school a long time. It's getting very much better; behaviour is now normally good every day.' Others acknowledge that there is little bullying and few disagreements between pupils; racism is practically unheard of. They say, too, that 'learning is more fun'.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children achieve satisfactorily. Improvements to the learning environment, especially in Nursery, provide better organisation and structure to enable children to become independent learners. Generally, children settle quickly to activities, cooperate, and get on well with each other. They make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. In the main, activities are interesting and purposeful. At times they are introduced to children in a way that is exciting and captures their imagination. However, in Reception, children spend too long sitting on the carpet in some whole-class sessions. Opportunities for developing children's mathematical skills have improved but there are insufficient writing experiences built into the activities, especially as this is a weaker element of children's learning.

Staff know the children well. Observations of children's learning are detailed and collated into individual 'learning stories' that chart each child's progress. Planning for adult-led activities is detailed, with a clear focus on what children will learn. Assessment of their learning is effectively

integrated into the plans. By contrast, planning for continuous provision (the activities provided for children to choose for themselves) is less detailed, particularly for outdoor activities. It is not apparent what staff expect children to learn from the play they initiate for themselves. At times, this leads to a lack of focus in children's play because it is not sufficiently steered by adults. Systems for monitoring children's choices are not rigorous enough to ensure that each receives a careful balance from the potentially good range of activities on offer.

What the school should do to improve further

- Strengthen further the progress that pupils make, particularly in writing, by:
 - improving teaching to a consistently good level through better use of assessment information to provide activities that more accurately match pupils' abilities
 - increasing the level of challenge through opportunities for pupils, especially higher attainers, to work independently, to explore their own ideas, and to present them in their own way
 - developing the roles of subject leaders to increase their impact on the quality of pupils' learning across the school.
- Improve the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - being clear about what children should gain from continuous provision so that adults can observe, monitor choices and intervene to steer learning in the right direction
 - providing more opportunities for developing early writing skills.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

From a low point in 2006, the results in National Curriculum assessments in Year 6 have been rising, albeit slowly. English results are weaker than mathematics and science, where results are closer to average. Few pupils attain higher levels. Writing remains the area that needs most improvement. Handwriting, presentation and spelling are common weaknesses, although the content of pupils' written work is improving. The school's data show that more pupils are working at the levels expected for their age. Variations between subjects reflect past underachievement and the fact that pupils are still making up lost ground.

Pupils' progress has accelerated this year. They are catching up, especially in Year 6, where they have received consistently good teaching. In all classes, pupils' progress is generally satisfactory. It is good where teaching is sharp, so that activities are carefully modified to meet their needs precisely. There are no significant differences in the progress of different groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties; any variations are a legacy from the past or a reflection of individual circumstances. Pupils in the early stages of learning English make good progress in developing a basic vocabulary.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils have a good knowledge of how to keep themselves safe at school, when out and about and when using the internet. Their good understanding of healthy lifestyles is reflected in their

knowledge of the need to eat healthily and to exercise regularly. Large numbers of pupils participate in sports during and after school, as reflected in the award of the Activemark. Pupils' attendance has improved dramatically during the year and figures are average for the summer term. In part, this is because the school tracks and follows up absence quickly but it also reflects pupils' increased enjoyment of school. Behaviour is good. Incidents of misbehaviour are rare, and so pupils work in an atmosphere of mutual respect and support that promotes learning. Pupils get on well with each other and relationships are harmonious. They are developing an understanding of the lives of others through links with schools in this country and abroad. 'Blue caps' and school council members take their role in supporting others seriously. Pupils reflect on their own work and that of their peers. They work together effectively in pairs and groups when given the opportunity; they cooperate well, share ideas and listen to each other. Older pupils have a good knowledge of how to improve their work and this gives them a strong sense of achievement.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

An increasing proportion of teaching has good features. Lessons frequently start with a recap from the previous day that gives pupils opportunities for consolidation and reflection. A brief discussion of the expected learning reminds pupils what they should achieve. In the best examples, teachers modify lesson planning as a result of pupils' response to the previous lesson. They build on pupils' responses during lessons to move learning forward, use errors and misconceptions as teaching points, and often refer to pupils' targets. Good opportunities for speaking and listening are helping to raise pupils' participation. There is also a good focus on learning specific subject vocabulary and key words. Marking is regular and generally helpful but not always as sharp as it needs to be to help pupils improve their work. Pupils do not always have time to respond to comments in their work. Assessment and record keeping have improved significantly, so teachers have a clear picture of what pupils can do. There is more to do to sharpen the use of assessment information in planning modifications to activities. The matching of work for lower-attaining pupils and support materials, such as visual prompts for those learning English as an additional language, are often good. More focus is needed to target those with the potential to work at a higher level. Teaching assistants are clear about their role in pupils' learning and so they provide much good support in lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school has, rightly, given the greatest priority to developing pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills. The focus on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills is helping to raise their confidence and self-esteem, as well as providing opportunities to rehearse what they want to write. A systematic approach to teaching phonics has yet to work its way through the school to have an impact on raising standards in writing. Recent projects to develop the creative aspects of the curriculum have been introduced. For example, a good start has been made on increasing opportunities for pupils to design and carry out their own experiments in science lessons and during Science Week. A good range of after-school activities are much enjoyed by pupils and the addition of visits and visitors contribute well to pupils' personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are looked after well. Health and safety is monitored regularly and safeguarding requirements are met. Pupils are confident that staff listen to them and respond to their needs. As a result, they feel safe at school. Support for pupils who need guidance on how to relate to others, or on modifying their behaviour, is successful. The Place2B gives pupils emotional support when they need it most. The management of support for pupils with learning difficulties and those learning English as an additional language has improved, to ensure that support is appropriately focused on their needs. Detailed tracking of their progress shows the good impact of intervention programmes. The school acknowledges the need to do more to advise parents on how to support their children at home. Good systems to track the progress of individuals enable the school to identify quickly those that are underachieving. All pupils have suitably challenging targets and older pupils understand well the next steps in their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and senior leadership team set high expectations of the school community. A commitment to meeting those expectations is shared by all staff and by the pupils they teach. The school has made good use of support from local authority consultants and from staff from the soft federation, to target the weakest areas. A programme of training has helped staff to develop their teaching skills. They now reflect critically on their practice and are eager to improve. Termly meetings are held to discuss the progress of each individual, to set challenging targets and to hold teachers to account for the achievement of their pupils. Underachievement is identified quickly, so that any inequalities can be addressed and any barriers to learning removed through targeted support. All staff have clear roles and responsibilities. The role of subject leaders is developing to ensure greater impact on the quality of teaching and learning in their subject across the school. Monitoring is thorough, is based on a range of activities and is accurate in identifying what needs to be improved. It is not reliant on senior leaders and is carried out by a number of staff. Appropriate plans are in place to address areas for development. Governance is developing well. Increasingly, governors ask challenging questions and hold the school to account for its performance. The duty to promote community cohesion is met through the school's strong links with the immediate community and satisfactory efforts to extend links with other communities.

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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?	3
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
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?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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

How good are 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
The extent to which 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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

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

03 September 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Chalkhill Primary School, Wembley, HA9 9YP

As you know, I have been visiting your school regularly to check how well it is improving since it was inspected in December 2007. This was my fourth visit. You told me that things are improving and I am pleased to say that your school is now satisfactory. Some things are good.

I was pleased to see that you are working hard and making satisfactory progress. It was good to see you assessing your own work and that of your partners. You work well together, cooperate and listen to each other. These are important qualities that will help you get on in life. Your behaviour around the school is good. I am pleased to say that attendance has improved. Well done, and keep it up! It was good to hear that you enjoy school now.

You said that staff listen to you and that helps you to feel safe. Staff look after you well and there are plenty of people to turn to for help, including some of the children who have jobs as school council members, 'buddies' and 'blue caps'. It is good to see that many of you take part in the sporting activities and enjoy some of the other activities the school provides.

I have asked your teachers to help you make even more progress in the future, particularly in writing. I want them to challenge some of you to work independently, to explore your own ideas and to present your work in different ways. I have asked teachers who are in charge of different subjects to check more carefully how well you are doing. Finally, I have asked teachers of the youngest children to give them more opportunities for writing, and to check more carefully what they are learning.

I am confident that the school can continue to improve in the future. I know you will work hard and play your part. I wish you all the very best in the future.

Yours faithfully

Jane Wotherspoon

Her Majesty's Inspector