

Chiltern Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121924
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	340048
Inspection dates	23–24 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Christopher Parker

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sylvia Lake
Headteacher	Mrs Penny Howell
Date of previous school inspection	7 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons, and held meetings with pupils, teachers, the headteacher and a governor. They observed the school's work, and looked at samples of pupils' work, records of monitoring and evaluation, planning and some of the school's policies. Responses to a pre-inspection questionnaire were received from pupils, staff and 51 parents.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how well marking and assessment are used to plan challenging tasks to meet the needs of more-able pupils
- the effectiveness of the provision in ensuring that children make an effective start in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- how the teaching and learning are led, managed and improved
- the effectiveness of arrangements for equal opportunities and for community cohesion.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school. Just over two thirds of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. Pupils from several other minority ethnic groups make up almost a third of the school population. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups has increased significantly in recent years. A very few pupils speak a language other than English at home, but none are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly above average.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The school provides a satisfactory education for the pupils. Their attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is broadly average. The pupils consistently do well in reading throughout the school, and as a result their attainment is above average. In writing and mathematics there is greater variation in the pupils' progress in Key Stage 2, which results in attainment not being as high as it should be by the end of Year 6. Too few potentially higher attaining pupils are reaching the levels that they should.

The senior leadership team has identified key areas where improvements are needed and self assessment is accurate. Leaders have taken steps to modify and improve teaching, assessment, marking and target setting. These developments are relatively recent and have not yet had the desired impact. Although some of the teaching is good, there is variation in quality in Key Stage 2. For example, the marking of pupils' work is not consistently helping them to improve their work because the new arrangements have not been fully implemented. Consequently, the pupils' progress is not accelerating beyond a satisfactory pace. The quality of teaching is regularly monitored. However, not enough emphasis is placed on the impact of the teaching on pupils' learning and progress.

The governors and senior management team have a strong commitment to continually improving the school. This is evident in the increased range of opportunities provided within and beyond the curriculum. The impact of these opportunities can be seen in pupils' enjoyment and their good personal development. Improvements to the outdoor area have enhanced the provision for the youngest children, who make good progress because of the effective teaching, comprehensive assessment and efficient management of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school has a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- – Increase the rate of progress and raise levels of attainment at the end of Year 6 by ensuring that:
 - lessons consistently challenge the more-able pupils to reach the higher levels of which they are capable
 - recent developments in marking are robustly implemented so as to provide teachers with the information needed for planning more accurately to meet the

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pupils' needs, and pupils with clearer guidance on how improve their work

- the monitoring of teaching is more sharply focused on the resulting learning and progress for pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

There are inconsistencies in the rate of pupils' progress. While they make good progress in some lessons, progress in others is satisfactory. The pupils say they enjoy lessons and many find them 'fun', but a few feel they could 'work harder'. In most lessons pupils work effectively and concentrate on the tasks they are set. Behaviour is good in lessons.

In a lesson in Year 2, pupils made good progress in their use of 'time' words to sequence the events in a story. Pupils in Year 6 made similarly good progress in a lesson on division linked to real-life situations. This made the activity particularly relevant for the pupils. These lessons helped the pupils to learn effectively and make good progress, because the tasks were well matched to the needs of different groups. This is not consistently the case. For example, in a Year 3 mathematics lesson not enough consideration was given to establishing the extent of different groups of pupils' understanding before the end of the lesson. While some made secure progress, others lacked confidence in adding 10 to a three-digit number.

The results of national tests and the school's assessments show that attainment is broadly average. The 2009 results of national tests show that the downward trend at the end of Year 2 has been reversed and that more pupils have reached the expected level. At the end of Year 6, the unconfirmed results of national tests in 2009 generally maintain the position of the previous two years in English and mathematics, which was just above average. Deeper scrutiny of these results and the school's assessments show attainment in reading to be high, and progress good. The school's data also show fluctuation in the rate of progress in writing and mathematics between Year 3 and Year 6. These 'dips' in progress result in fewer than expected more-able pupils reaching higher levels of attainment by the end of Year 6.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are making secure progress at the pace expected of them because of the support they receive through small-group work in English and mathematics.

In conversation, pupils say they feel safe in school. They feel that any bullying is dealt with appropriately. The pupils enjoy the wide range of sporting and other extra-curricular opportunities that the school provides. The pupils have a good understanding of staying healthy, although they acknowledge that they do not always choose the healthiest option for their lunchboxes! Their personal qualities are being developed well through a wide range of interesting activities. The curriculum provides them with opportunities to learn about a range of faiths, and they are gaining an increasingly broad national and international understanding.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The teaching is good in some respects, but there are variations and inconsistencies that result in the pupils making progress in line with expectations, rather than exceeding them. A key exception to this is in reading, where good teaching of phonics - for example in Year 1 - and effective support from teaching assistants result in the pupils doing particularly well.

A strong feature of a number of the lessons seen was the skilful questioning by the teacher to ascertain the extent of the pupils' understanding. This was the case in a Year 2 literacy lesson where pupils were using 'time' words to sequence the events in a story. However, there are occasions where assumptions are made about the extent of the pupils' understanding because questioning towards the end of a lesson is not probing enough.

The quality of marking varies considerably. The school has a clear policy but it is not being followed in all years. Consequently, some pupils are not getting the guidance they need in order to improve their work; in particular, teachers' comments do not consistently extend the more-able pupils. Pupils are given targets to strive for, but these are not routinely referred to when their work is marked. As a result, the link between assessment and planning is not as effective as it should be, and some lesson plans lack clarity about how the more-able pupils will be challenged.

The curriculum is well organised and over the last two years has become more diverse

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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and interesting for the pupils. Teachers are now making more effective links between subjects to create more coherent learning opportunities for pupils. Information and communication technology has an increasingly high profile in the curriculum and in pupils' well-being. For example, pupils are made fully aware of the dangers as well as the benefits of the internet.

In conversation a group of pupils commented that 'The teachers are fantastic and really care'. As a result, relationships are good. Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is thoughtfully deployed. The school works very effectively to remove barriers encountered by individuals, and can highlight examples where major strides have been made to help them to catch up with their peers. The school's procedures for dealing with incidents of poor behaviour are appropriate.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Having analysed the pupils' performance in some detail and identified fluctuations in their progress, the headteacher and senior staff have, over the course of the last year, taken a number of steps towards ensuring that all pupils make consistently good progress. Relatively recent developments include meetings to focus on the progress made by each pupil, along with scrutiny of their work, marking designed to help pupils to improve their work, training in high-quality teaching, and peer observations of teaching. The impact of these is not yet evident in all of the outcomes for pupils because more time is needed, and in some cases checks on how effectively they are being implemented are not sufficiently robust. For example, in some pupils' work, the new marking arrangements have been rather superficially implemented.

Monitoring of teaching and learning is a regular feature of the headteacher's work. This results in the identification of pointers for teachers to improve their practice. However, they focus too heavily on the teaching and not enough on its impact on the learning and progress of the pupils.

The school makes very effective use of partnerships with parents, agencies and commercial organisations. These have led to a range of beneficial developments in the curriculum and the many extra-curricular activities now available to the pupils. Safeguarding arrangements are robust because the school has adopted the recommended good practice in its work.

The governing body has good procedures in place to ensure that requirements for equal

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opportunity and community coherence are effective. The audit of community coherence has identified the good range of opportunities for pupils and areas for extension. Although governors hold the school to account, they have not ensured that the pupils are making good progress. Nevertheless, they have a secure grasp of the school's work and are committed to providing a good quality of education for the pupils. This is evident in their support for establishing a broad and interesting curriculum within a well-resourced environment. They have achieved this against the background of a constrained budget. The school currently provides satisfactory value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The children make a good start to school life. After only a few weeks in school they are clearly enjoying the activities provided for them, and approaching them positively and with enthusiasm. The children behave well and are already familiar with many of the daily routines. Their independence is being fostered effectively through responsibilities such as giving out snacks. They are making choices about which activities to pursue and are showing good levels of perseverance to complete them. Good links with parents ensure that the children's first weeks in school are managed as smoothly as possible.

The children enter school with the skills and abilities expected for their age. The children now in Year 1 made good progress last year, and many achieved a good level of development by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is because they learn effectively in the stimulating and well-ordered classroom. Their use of language and knowledge of the world around them is consistently developed by the adults who constantly encourage and question.

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Activities flow freely from indoors to out. The adults develop the children's learning well in the outdoor area, although there is scope to extend opportunities to develop the early writing of numbers.

The Early Years Foundation Stage benefits from good, well-focused leadership, comprehensive and accurate assessment, and a clear plan for further improvement and development.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Most parents are very satisfied with the school. Many added comments to the questionnaire to support this view; some were generous in their praise. A few parents of children who have just entered school commented on the positive start their children have made. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are very pleased with the support that they and their children receive.

A small number of parents expressed the view that the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is variable, which they feel is hindering their child's progress. One or two parents feel that the school's response to incidents of poor behaviour is too slow.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Chiltern Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 51 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 200 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	37	73	11	22	2	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	35	69	15	29	0	0	1	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	24	47	25	49	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	27	54	18	36	2	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	32	64	13	26	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	49	21	41	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	27	54	21	42	1	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	25	51	15	31	2	4	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	30	59	15	29	0	0	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	36	22	44	7	14	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	40	19	38	5	10	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	29	58	14	28	3	6	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	33	65	13	25	3	6	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



28 September 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Chiltern Primary School, Northampton, NN5 6BW

This letter is to tell you about the findings of the recent inspection and to thank you for taking the time to talk to me and my colleagues. You are able to learn in a very friendly atmosphere where the adults provide good care and support for you. You behave well, and work and play together very sensibly. The teachers make most lessons interesting. They mark your work and often make comments on it. A few of you feel that these comments do not give you the help that you need to improve your work. We agree that some of the marking could give you much clearer guidance.

You are making the progress expected of you, and some of you are doing well. You concentrate on your work. We would like to see you all making good progress. This is also the aim of the headteacher and teachers. So we have asked them to continue to raise attainment in English and mathematics. We have also asked them to use their assessments of your progress to plan more challenging tasks and help more of you reach higher levels by the end of Year 6. We have asked the headteacher to look closely at lessons to make sure that all of you learn and make progress at a good pace.

The school provides a good curriculum with a wide range of opportunities for you, both in and after school. Your involvement in many of these activities, and the good support that the school provides, result in good outcomes in your personal development. You have a very clear understanding of the importance of staying safe and of a healthy lifestyle.

We enjoyed being in your school, and hope that in the future it is even more successful in helping you to do as well as you possibly can.

Yours faithfully

Christopher Parker

Lead Inspector

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