

Little Chalfont Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110271
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	378073
Inspection dates	2–3 November 2011
Reporting inspector	John Earish

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	227
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kate Anderson
Headteacher	Tracey Dowsing
Date of previous school inspection	8 May 2007
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Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	3–4 November 2011
Inspection number	110271

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 16 lessons, with 10 teachers being seen. Meetings were held with the members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at school documentation including teachers' planning, assessment information, safeguarding policies and pupils' work. Inspectors analysed 81 questionnaires from parents and carers, 124 from pupils and 28 from staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The involvement of pupils in their own assessment and target setting and the impact on their progress and learning.
- The effectiveness of systems for monitoring teaching and learning to achieve greater consistency in all classes.
- The extent to which the curriculum is designed and modified to meet the needs of all ability groups to sustain their rapid progress.
- The progress in mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage with a small number from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. A very few are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities varies from year to year but is usually lower than the national average. Their range of needs includes specific learning difficulties and behavioural, language and emotional difficulties. Two have statements of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The school has achieved a number of external accreditations including the Healthy Schools Award, Sports Activemark and the ECO School Bronze and Silver Awards. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Reception class.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school. Pupils, parents and carers hold it in high regard. One parent wrote, 'We are very happy with the school and are pleased that our child is becoming a confident and rounded individual.' Another added, 'Little Chalfont is a great little school. The children's eyes are opened to life outside the school environment.' Pupils are very eager to learn, thoroughly enjoy attending and behave exceptionally well.

Excellent leadership and management have resulted in an extremely positive ethos where all pupils are highly valued. Leaders and managers share an ambitious vision for the school and are fully committed to bringing improvement across all outcomes for pupils. As a result, pupils' motivation is high and all groups are achieving exceptionally well. Systems for monitoring teaching and learning are robust and effective. This was an area for development at the last inspection report. The governing body supports the school very effectively and is fully involved in strategic management and the cycle of self-review. Accurate and detailed self-evaluation of the school's performance enables the high standards to be maintained. The school's challenging targets are fully reflected in the improvement plan to accelerate and sustain the achievement for all groups of pupils. As a result of these positive features, the school has an excellent capacity for sustained improvement.

Attainment is high by the end of Year 6 and has been for a number of years. A detailed analysis of the performance data for different groups of pupils and a scrutiny of their work show they make outstanding progress from their starting points at the school and achieve exceptionally well. Pupils who have moderate and other learning difficulties and/or disabilities are making outstanding progress against their targets.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are making good progress and a good number are doing better than this. Children are especially successful in personal, social and emotional development, and developing communication, language and number skills. However, the dedicated outdoor learning area is not as stimulating as the indoor learning environment in supporting all areas of children's learning.

Teaching and learning are outstanding overall. Teachers are excellent at challenging thinking and providing pupils with opportunities to work independently or in small groups to solve problems and explore their own ideas. This has been particularly successful in mathematics where a recent small dip in progress has been very successfully addressed. Effective questioning is used extremely well to gauge pupils'

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understanding, to consolidate previous learning and clarify any confusion. Older pupils are fully involved in assessing how well they are doing and setting achievement targets in partnership with their teachers. Pupils find this is very helpful and informative.

The innovative and imaginatively planned curriculum contributes extremely well to pupils' excellent learning and enjoyment. It is very well balanced and there are many effective links between the different areas of learning so that skills learned in numeracy, literacy, and information and communication technology (ICT) are developed very well in other lessons. A wide range of interventions meets the needs of all ability groups so they can sustain their rapid progress. An excellent range of extra-curricular clubs and activities add very much to the pupils' enjoyment of school.

Pupils are extremely well cared for and feel exceptionally safe and secure. Their very positive attitudes to each other, their learning and their determination to succeed are reflected in high levels of attendance. An outstanding range of partnerships with parents and carers, other schools and the wider community makes an excellent contribution to pupils' outstanding achievement and the outstanding care and support they receive. There are, for example, around 60 parents and carers who regularly help and support children in school. The school's strong emphasis on promoting healthy lifestyles, recognised in its national awards, ensures that pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay fit and healthy. Pupils show excellent concern for the needs of others and make a major contribution to the local and wider community. They are enthusiastic recyclers and have raised considerable sums of money to help children globally, for example during the recent natural disasters in Haiti, Sri Lanka and Japan.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the Early Years Foundation Stage outdoor learning environment as a stimulating resource to support all areas of learning to match those provided in the classroom.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Attainment in English and mathematics is high by the end of Year 6 from levels that are above those expected for the age group at the start of the Early Years Foundation Stage. In addition, standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 are above average overall. Pupils' very positive attitudes for learning, outstanding achievement and progress, and very well-developed social and interpersonal skills mean they are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education. There is no significant difference in progress between the different groups represented within the school community. Those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are also very positive about their learning and also achieve exceptionally well.

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Pupils are very enthusiastic learners and have very positive attitudes to all aspects of school life. As a result, they are actively involved in lessons, behave exceptionally well, help and support each other, and show respect for adults. For example, Year 4 pupils were exploring the importance of bones and the skeleton. They worked exceptionally well in groups and used technical vocabulary extremely well. One girl commented, 'Our teacher makes science fun because it is practical and we do experiments rather than just read and write. It helps us learn better. We also use computers and videos to help us understand.' On another occasion, Year 4 pupils were making masks using plywood and hand tools. They had retained an excellent level of understanding from their previous lesson, and showed great enthusiasm and competence. Teachers always share the lesson objectives so pupils clearly understand what they have to do and achieve by the end of the session. This is effective and inspires pupils to do their very best work.

Pupils feel very safe in school and are confident that teachers deal with any concerns they may have. Pupils were adamant that, 'Teachers really understand us and keep us very safe.' Worry boxes in each classroom allow them to raise issues privately. They take their responsibilities around the school very seriously. For example, pupils are very enthusiastic recyclers and are champions for energy conservation. They collect old mobile phones, CDs, DVDs and printer cartridges to recycle valuable metals and raise money for charities. They make an excellent contribution to the local community through, for example, activities with the Parish Council, Rotary Club, the Amersham Music Festival and during Enterprise Days. From the community, they gain an excellent understanding of the world of work and economic and personal well-being through, for example, links with a project to provide village sanitation in Burundi.

Pupils have an excellent understanding of the consequences of their actions and a keenly developed awareness of the differences between right and wrong. They are open to new ideas and very aware of the values of living in a democratic society. The school council has achieved many successes including the purchase of a computerised system for the library, new play equipment for the playground and a talent show. They appreciate the wide range of influences that have shaped their lives and older pupils understand that their future ambitions rely upon doing well at school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1

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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Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning are of outstanding quality overall. Assessments of pupils' progress are used extremely well to meet their differing needs and targets are adjusted regularly to ensure work remains challenging. For example, Year 5 pupils were studying the evacuation of children during the Second World War. One pupil, who had already read a number of books, watched videos, conducted research on the internet and interviewed family members, said, 'I can now see how it all fits together and it really helps me understand how they felt and behaved. We really like history because our teacher is really good at getting us to use lots of different ways of learning including reading information books, writing, discussion, problem solving, drama, art and use of the internet.' Teachers frequently check, question and clarify ideas during lessons and use the pupils' responses exceptionally well to move learning on a rapid rate. The extent to which older pupils are involved in assessing for themselves how well they are doing is building a learning environment where all share a commitment to continuous improvement.

Throughout the school, there is a very strong focus on the development of pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT. Pupils' personal development is outstanding and is helped through very effective teaching about relationships and citizenship. Pupils have very many opportunities to take part in educational visits and to work in partnership with other local schools. They are extremely proud of their artistic, musical and sporting achievements, and eagerly participate in the many clubs and activities that are organised for them.

The school works extremely well with parents and carers, volunteers and a variety of external agencies to support those children most at risk. The school is very effective at assisting them in fully supporting their children's learning through termly meetings, reports, regular emails, letters and booklets outlining the areas to be covered each term and advice on how to help their children in their endeavours. Pupils also have access to an interactive learning platform for homework and additional study. As one adult said, 'We get lots and lots of information but, when asked, will always want for more.'

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The outstanding impact of leadership is seen in the way the headteacher and her senior management team have embedded ambition and driven improvement. Staff morale is high and all are committed to the school's pursuit of excellence. All are clearly focused on raising pupils' achievement and promoting high standards of care. The management team has established a very accurate view of what needs to be done to sustain these high standards. This is reflected in the school's detailed and coherent plans for improvement.

The governing body ensures that safeguarding procedures are of excellent quality and that all statutory requirements, including child protection, are regularly reviewed and approved. It has an excellent understanding of the school and the community it serves. It takes a strategic view of the school's development and seeks the views of parents and carers. It holds the school to account extremely well and ensures that statutory duties are fully met.

The contribution the school makes to community cohesion is outstanding. A clear plan is in place for promoting pupils' understanding from local, national and global perspectives. They are very well aware of the differing values, traditions and religions represented within the school and the wider community. This is enhanced further this year through developing links with an inner city school in a large multicultural setting within the United Kingdom

The school is extremely active and effective in tackling discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity extremely well. For example, the gap in performance between boys and girls is successfully addressed by the end of Year 6 and pupils needing extra help and support with their learning are making excellent progress overall. There is no evidence of discrimination.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities	1

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met	
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

The provision is well led and managed by a full-time teacher and early years assistant, currently on maternity leave. They work well together as a team and take great care to guarantee that all children are equally involved. Safety and safeguarding are high priorities and the quality of provision is good. Good teaching means that children settle quickly and benefit from well-structured routines that help them to feel very safe, secure and excited about coming to school. Regular observations and assessments are made in each aspect of learning and children’s learning journeys provide useful records of progress.

The adults use opportunities well to develop children’s vocabulary and reading skills. For example, children enthusiastically play games to identify a range of initial letter sounds and blends and the associated written equivalent. This work is linked very well with other aspects of learning, such as the language used for naming of mathematics 3D shapes. They are also offered very good opportunities for talking together, for example about Bonfire Night and the safe use of fireworks. Adults use questions well to find out what children know in order to extend their understanding and vocabulary. Pupils happily collaborate together, take turns, and help and support each other.

Adjustments to the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum are enabling all groups to make consistently good progress and a good number are doing better than this. Opportunities for children to make independent choices to increase their investigative, deductive physical skills through activities provided outdoors are not as stimulating as those organised within the classroom. However, the vast majority of children are achieving well and exceed the levels expected by the start of Year 1.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	2

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire was similar to the national average for a primary school. The overwhelming number of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were happy with their child’s experience at the school. Inspectors agree with the very many positive comments about the pupils’ enjoyment of school, the quality of teaching and learning, and the progress they make. A few parents and carers had concerns about how the school helps them support their children’s learning, the information about progress and the response to suggestions and concerns. Inspectors examined school reports and found them very informative about both the pupils’ academic and personal development. Leaflets are distributed each term outlining curriculum plans and have suggestions to help parents and carers support their children’s learning at home. These will soon be available on a new electronic information system that can be readily accessed by pupils and parents and carers. Senior leaders and governors take suggestions and concerns extremely seriously. They recently commissioned an externally moderated survey of parental satisfaction, which showed very high levels of satisfaction with the overall performance of the school. Just over 80% of families participated anonymously. The outcomes have been widely distributed and any areas of concern are being carefully examined and reviewed.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Little Chalfont 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 81 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 227 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	59	73	21	26	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	64	79	17	21	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	21	26	48	59	9	11	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	46	37	46	5	6	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	44	54	26	32	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	29	36	37	46	14	17	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	42	52	33	41	6	7	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)	29	36	45	56	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	31	38	35	43	6	7	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	38	47	32	40	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	30	39	48	14	17	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	44	54	26	32	6	7	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	47	58	31	38	2	2	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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



5 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Little Chalfont Primary School, Amersham HP6 6SX

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed looking at your work, seeing you in lessons and talking to many of you. We were pleased to hear that you like your school very much and enjoy helping each other.

Yours is an outstanding school. You behave exceptionally well, which means that your teachers can get on with teaching you new and interesting things without the distraction of any misbehaviour. We particularly enjoyed talking to you about your work and were impressed with your enthusiasm for school and that you want to do so well. The teaching in your school is outstanding, and it means that, together with your very positive attitudes to work, you make excellent progress and attain standards that are much higher than the national average. Well done!

To make your school even better, we have asked your teachers and governors to improve the outdoor area for the very youngest children so they have even more activities to help them learn even better than they do already.

Each of you can play your part in ensuring that your school maintains high standards by continuing to work hard to meet the challenging targets the teachers set for you.

Yours sincerely

John Earish
Lead inspector

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