

Cheadle Catholic Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106111
Local Authority	Stockport
Inspection number	324333
Inspection dates	11–12 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Peter Jones

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	301
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	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs A Wadsworth
Headteacher	Mrs A Cassidy
Date of previous school inspection	3 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Conway Road Cheadle Hulme Cheadle Cheshire SK8 6DB
Telephone number	0161 4858733
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Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This large infant school takes in pupils from a variety of social and economic backgrounds. The school offers Early Years Foundation Stage provision in its Nursery and Reception classes. The vast majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than in most schools. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average as is the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The school holds the Investors in People award and has National Healthy Schools status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. It has maintained the excellent quality of pupils' personal development and their outstanding overall achievement seen at the time of the previous inspection. The school is cautious and modest in some of its judgements of its performance but there is no doubt about the exceptionally consistent impact and effectiveness of its self-evaluation. As a result, it provides excellent value for money. The outstanding leadership provided by the headteacher and other senior staff has helped to ensure that the school is meeting its mission statement to 'Provide an excellent education for all children.' There is no room for complacency. The school remains ambitious and forward looking and, to this end, it constantly refines the rigorous ways it checks all aspects of its performance. The exceptionally committed and highly effective governors help to ensure that the school has the resources it requires and is kept on course for success. Consequently, it has made excellent improvement since the last inspection.

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and excellent progress in Years 1 and 2 to reach exceptionally high standards in all subjects. These standards represent excellent overall achievement from children's broadly average starting points. Achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and improving, especially as a result of the impressive improvements made to outdoor resources since the last inspection. In Years 1 and 2 the excellent teaching and the good curriculum result in exceptionally high achievement. The school is extremely successful in matching work to the individual needs of pupils. It provides excellent additional support for pupils who require extra help, and also to stretch and challenge those who progress most quickly. The way in which the school ensures that it meets the needs of these groups of pupils is a good example of the excellent way it promotes diversity and equality of opportunity.

Pupils greet visitors with beaming smiles and are unfailingly polite and helpful. They take great pride in their own achievements and even more in those of their classmates and the school community as a whole. It is this sense of unity and the importance of service to others that is the hallmark of pupils' excellent personal development. Pupils love coming to school and taking part in the stimulating lessons and wide range of clubs and activities provided for them. Their attendance is consistently good and their parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school's work. One comment, typical of many received by inspectors, stated: 'Our son has grown in confidence, empathy and knowledge. We cannot praise this school enough.' Behaviour and relationships are exemplary. Pupils understand the importance of healthy eating and lifestyles and are enthusiastic about taking exercise. They say they feel very safe, get on extremely well together and receive total support from the adults in school. Their proficiency in basic skills, and the opportunities provided to learn through role-play, mean that pupils quickly begin to acquire the skills and personal qualities they will need to succeed in later life.

Pupils' care and well-being is given the highest priority, and this is greatly appreciated by parents and carers. Staff know pupils and members of their families very well and there is an extremely caring atmosphere in the school. The school's academic guidance, an area identified for improvement by the last inspection, is excellent. Teachers set clear, challenging and attainable targets for improvement and carefully track pupils' progress towards them. They give pupils the advice they need to take the next steps in their learning. This makes a significant impact on their outstanding achievement.

Given the school's consistently excellent performance, the continued impact of its strategic planning and the part played in this by leadership at all levels, it demonstrates outstanding capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter Nursery with skills and abilities that are broadly in line those expected for their age. They settle quickly into school and respond well to the well-organised activities and routines. Their personal, social and emotional development is outstanding. The children show consideration and respect towards adults and each other. They learn how to share and to take responsibility, and their good behaviour underpins their success both here and in the rest of the school. They become confident and enthusiastic learners and, as a result, most children make good progress to achieve above national expectations in all areas of learning by the end of Reception. Children enjoy the well-planned activities that the good teaching provides and this further promotes their good progress and excellent personal development. Staff provide a good range of adult-led learning activities. However, children have limited opportunities to organise and choose their own activities, particularly outdoors, and this hinders their progress and the development of their independent learning skills. Also, children from Nursery and Reception classes are not given opportunities to work together to accelerate their achievement. Children are well managed and supervised because staff implement established routines consistently. Children's achievement is further enhanced by the good ongoing assessment. The welfare of children is promoted excellently, ensuring that children are safe at all times. The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well. There is a strong sense of teamwork and effective liaison with Year 1 which ensures that children move smoothly into the next stage in their learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Create more opportunities for Nursery and Reception children to work together to further improve their achievement and personal development.
- Allow children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to have more choice to organise and choose their learning, particularly in outdoor activities, to improve their independent learning skills.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement overall is outstanding. Pupils build extremely well on their good beginning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They achieve excellently as they move through Years 1 and 2. Provisional results in the 2008 national tests at the end of Year 2 confirm that pupils are reaching exceptionally high standards in reading, writing and numeracy. The pupils currently working in school are reaching similar standards, and so the school has maintained its excellent performance from the time of the last inspection. Given pupils' broadly average starting points, this represents outstanding progress. The school's effective strategies are improving boys' performance in relation to girls, particularly in writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well supported and they too make outstanding progress. The school successfully provides the more able pupils with the challenge and opportunities they need to make the best possible progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Pupils thrive in this inclusive school and thoroughly enjoy all that it has to offer. Attendance is consistently above the national average. Pupils say they feel safe at all times, and that the very few minor disagreements that do occur are quickly resolved, often by the pupils themselves. Pupils' confidence and self-esteem improve rapidly because all staff value them as individuals, listening to and respecting their ideas. They quickly develop extremely positive attitudes to learning because it is made so enjoyable. Pupils are very friendly towards each other and show respect and tolerance. Behaviour is excellent at all times. Their ability to cooperate is a strength, as was demonstrated when pupils quickly settled down to compose nonsense verses, meticulously discussing which vocabulary was most appropriate. Conscientious school councillors voice their opinions and pupils are very keen to help in the classrooms and playgrounds. Pupils make a very positive contribution to the wider community, for example through fundraising for a range of charities. They gain an impressive knowledge of other faiths and cultures through lessons, assemblies and visits and as a result of their well established links with a school in Tanzania. Pupils appreciate the excellent meals provided for them and have exceptional awareness of health and safety issues. Pupils' superb grounding in social and academic skills prepares them extremely well for the next stages of learning and life in their community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The excellent behaviour and relationships between staff and pupils are significant factors in the highly successful teaching and learning that takes place. Staff provide excellent role models to engender the personal qualities of kindness, consideration and politeness evident in pupils. The high expectations of staff are tempered by a sensitive approach to the needs of individuals. There is a strong sense of partnership and pupils are highly motivated and work very hard. They really enjoy their learning. Teachers make excellent use of a range of extensive resources including electronic whiteboards and computers to add sparkle to all lessons. They encourage pupils to experience a range of different learning opportunities in the classroom, and the pupils do so confidently and with enthusiasm. Their independent and collaborative working skills flourish as a result. Reward for effort and the celebration of achievement are strong features of all lessons and help accelerate progress. The careful assessment of pupils' progress and highly appropriate match of work to their individual needs and abilities are other key elements in their success. The impressive teaching assistants are used extremely well to provide additional, intensive support for pupils and also additional opportunities to stretch and challenge the quicker learners. All pupils have excellent opportunities to develop their well above average speaking and listening and problem solving skills and this further enhances their achievement and personal development.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum enables pupils to enjoy their education and achieve extremely well. Staff are currently working together successfully to explore the ways in which subjects can be linked to

enhance pupils' learning and enjoyment of lessons even further. Careful monitoring and modifications have made sure that there is a strong emphasis on developing literacy, numeracy and other basic skills. The well-planned personal development programme helps pupils to gain mature attitudes towards healthy lifestyles, their future well-being and relationships with others. The curriculum gives good opportunities for learning through first-hand experiences; for example, in a science lesson pupils had the opportunity to play a variety of musical instruments to give them insight into designing their own instrument. Pupils in Year 2 learn French, which further adds to their linguistic and cultural knowledge. The curriculum is enriched through visitors, such as artists and authors, and with a range of popular after-school clubs, many involving musical and sporting activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Parents are justified in highlighting this as one of the strongest aspects of the school's work. There are many tributes to the excellence and sensitivity of the extremely effective support provided for emotionally vulnerable or disadvantaged pupils. Teachers are full of enthusiasm and offer much support to pupils. 'My children have loved their time in school and have developed into individuals we are proud of,' is a representative comment made by parents. Arrangements for safeguarding and protecting pupils are fully in place and meet current government requirements. Pupils say they feel very safe and secure in school and know there is always an adult to turn to with any worries. Excellent partnerships with outside agencies enhance the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who require specialist support. Systems to ensure pupils' excellent achievement are rigorous and used effectively to highlight any potential underachievement, initiating extra help where needed. All pupils benefit from the high-quality marking and advice they are given. This is very carefully tailored to be appropriate to their individual age and abilities. As a result, pupils make consistently outstanding progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The talented and dedicated headteacher provides excellent leadership and is extremely well supported by an energetic and able staff. Teamwork and morale are exceptionally strong. Staff at all levels have been empowered to contribute to the development of the school and the monitoring of its work, and so ensure that it maintains its consistently very high performance. They make excellent use of the data the school produces to drive up pupils' achievement. A comprehensive and well-focused programme of professional development helps to improve staff expertise further and maintain the excellent quality of teaching and learning. The school's strategic planning is firmly focused on raising standards and achievement but also very successfully ensures that all pupils are provided with enriched and exciting learning opportunities to enhance their personal development. The school's efforts to promote community cohesion are good in terms of its links with the local community and globally. The school is aware that its links with the broader community are a little less strong. Governors' wide range of expertise and experience enables them to carry out their roles with outstanding effectiveness. Led by a committed and versatile chair of governors, they provide unswerving support for the school and are fully involved in all aspects of its work. At the same time, they act as critical friends to ensure that the school continues to maintain and improve upon its outstanding performance.

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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?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
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

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?	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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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?	2
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**

Inspection of Cheadle Catholic Infant School, Cheadle, SK8 6DB

I am writing on behalf of the inspection team to thank you for being friendly and helpful when we inspected your school recently. We enjoyed our visit very much. I would like to share our findings with you.

You go to an outstanding school. You work hard and make excellent progress. You told us that your teachers make learning really interesting and enjoyable. Your behaviour is excellent and we were impressed with your politeness and consideration towards us, the staff and each other. You told us that the school keeps you safe and how much you enjoy being there, including enjoying the many clubs, activities and visits the school organises for you. You like to eat healthily and take lots of exercise. Many of you like to help make school better by becoming school councillors, playground friends or class helpers. We like the way you think of others by raising money for charities here and abroad. Everyone at your school wants the very best for you, and we have suggested two things we think will help. We have asked your teachers to make sure that children in the Nursery and Reception classes have more chances to work together. Also, we would like the same children to be given more opportunities to choose their own activities, particularly in the outside learning areas. We think this will help them make even better progress. You can help by continuing to work hard and trying your best.