

Corpus Christi RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111713
Local authority	Middlesbrough
Inspection number	378342
Inspection dates	14–15 March 2012
Lead inspector	Linda Buller

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	252
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Les Boutell
Headteacher	Carolyn Baker
Date of previous school inspection	29 April 2009
School address	Cargo Fleet Lane Middlesbrough TS3 8NL
Telephone number	01642 211597
Fax number	01642 231916
Email address	corpuschristi@middlesbrough.gov.uk



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Introduction

Inspection team

Linda Buller
Jane Beckett
Peter Bannon

Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 21 lessons taught by 11 teachers. Two observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher. Discussions were held with groups of pupils, members of the senior and middle leadership teams, and representatives from the governing body. There were no responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) to aid inspection planning. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the self-evaluation documentation, assessment and tracking information and development plans. A scrutiny of pupils' work was also undertaken. Inspectors heard seven pupils read. They analysed the 23 inspection questionnaires returned by parents and carers and others submitted by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

This is an average sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. Most pupils are of White British heritage with very few pupils from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of disabled pupils and of those with special educational needs is above average. The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress. There have been a number of changes to staffing within the school since the time of the last inspection.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. The performance of staff is managed effectively; as a result, inadequate teaching has been eradicated and levels of attainment have improved. The vast majority of lessons result in pupils’ good progress. The key reasons why the school is not yet outstanding are because children’s progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1 is not as consistently brisk as that of older pupils, and although the good teaching contains elements of outstanding practice, it not outstanding overall.
- Pupils’ good achievement results in attainment which is broadly average by the end of Year 6. An increasing proportion of pupils are attaining standards above those expected in reading, writing and mathematics. This prepares pupils well for their next stage of education.
- Teaching is good. Consistent strengths in teaching are the clear explanations and probing questions which guide pupils in recognising what they already know and how this will facilitate new learning. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, whilst the same good features of teaching are evident in adult-led activities, there is not a sharp enough focus on what children are required to learn in those activities planned for children to access independently.
- Pupils typically behave well. They have positive attitudes to their work and are keen to investigate and learn new things. They and their parents and carers say they are confident that their school is a safe and welcoming place to learn.
- Leadership and management are good. The drive to improve the quality of teaching through effective systems of self-evaluation and performance management carefully links the up-skilling of staff to the school’s challenging targets for pupils’ attainment. Clear points for development and the sharing of good practice have resulted in a high proportion of good teaching. Slightly less effective is the consistency of the guidance given to teachers in order to improve the impact of teaching from good to outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency in the rate of progress made by children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils in Year 1 so that it is at least good in all lessons by:
 - keeping a sharp focus on what different groups of children are required to learn when planning the curriculum activities which children will access independently
 - ensuring all lessons, including those to develop early reading skills, fully engage and enthuse pupils in their learning
 - adjusting the targets and guidance provided for pupils to reflect their different levels of ability.
- Further increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding by:
 - teachers consistently using the information gained from marking pupils' work to adjust planning of future tasks
 - leaders and managers clearly identifying why teaching is good and not outstanding and providing teachers with clear points for further development.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils' achievement is good. Children enter the Nursery class with skills that are generally well below those typical for their age, particularly in reading, writing and calculation. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is broadly average. This represents good progress from their starting points, however, progress is stronger in Years 2 to 6. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also make good progress because of well-focused interventions and support both in and outside lessons. Their progress is carefully tracked and provision adjusted to ensure their needs continue to be met. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good progress when working in small groups with an adult. Progress slows when children are engaged in self-chosen activities. Children enjoy the activities provided but there is not enough focus on what they are required to learn or sufficient quality intervention by staff to ensure consistently good progress.

Almost all parents and carers state that their children enjoy school and that the school helps them to develop skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics. Inspectors endorse this view. Daily phonics lessons provide pupils with regular opportunities to acquire and develop knowledge of the sounds that letters make. In Year 1, these lessons do not always enthuse or sufficiently engage pupils in their learning and consequently do not consistently lead to good progress in the development of early literacy skills. The inspection team found that rapid progress in Year 2 is closing the gap between the attainment of pupils in this school and those nationally. The majority of pupils are on track to reach the expected level for their age, but few attain higher levels, therefore, attainment in reading remains below average overall by the end of Key Stage 1. Older pupils have positive attitudes to reading and use a range of strategies when they encounter an unfamiliar word. They choose to read a range of texts and have a good understanding of how this extensive reading can in turn influence and promote their own ability to write at a high standard. As a result, attainment in reading and writing is broadly average by the end of Year 6.

Pupils say they enjoy learning. This is particularly evident when they are engaged in practical activities and have the opportunity to investigate and solve problems. These attitudes are contributing well to their good progress in mathematics. For example, pupils in the class of Year 1 and 2, made good progress in their ability to recognise the relevant information within two and three step problems and select the correct number operation. This good progress continues in Years 3 to 6, so that by Year 6, pupils use their knowledge with confidence to devise and solve simple formulae, with the most able expressing these in letters and symbols.

Quality of teaching

All parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaire agreed that their children are taught well. Good teaching is evident throughout the school and is consistently good with elements of that which is outstanding in Years 2 to 6. In most lessons, teachers use well targeted activities and exciting visits to provide the stimulus for pupils to extend their literacy and numeracy skills and to promote good spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. Teachers have good subject knowledge and a very good understanding of how to ensure progression in pupils' learning. They set high expectations of what pupils can achieve and to maintain a good pace throughout lessons. Well-constructed open questions are used to help pupils identify what they already know. For example, pupils in the class for Years 3 and 4 made outstanding progress in a mathematics lesson because they could recognise the relationship between numbers and that the strategies of halving, quartering or doubling a number equally applies in solving problems involving fractions of money, measure or capacity.

Teachers successfully plan a curriculum that provides pupils with opportunities to practise and extend their communication and mathematical skills in subjects such as history, geography and religious education. This is also linked well to the development of skills such as cooperation, independent thinking and knowledge of issues such as sustainability and equality. For example, when considering the impact of traffic pollution in the local area or apartheid in countries such as South Africa. Overall, the quality of teachers' marking guides pupils' learning well. Pupils are provided with clear success criteria for the level they are aiming to reach. The impact of this system is lost when the same target level is provided for all pupils regardless of their prior attainment. In the main, teachers adapt the curriculum well to meet the needs of pupils of different ability, including that for those with special educational needs. Sometimes, the information gained from marking pupils' work is not used well enough to adjust tasks and this is the main reason why teaching is not having a consistently outstanding impact on pupils' progress.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour is good. They show a good level of respect for their teachers and each other and respond positively to the school's high expectations. Throughout the school, there is an emphasis on pupils reflecting on their experiences, considering different points of view, and working productively with partners and in small groups. Pupils are usually very attentive in lessons and particularly enjoy practical activities and the regular opportunities provided to find out things for themselves. When lessons are more mundane their interest slips and learning loses a little momentum. The majority are punctual and attend school regularly. A small number of pupils are persistently absent.

Most pupils feel safe in school and most parents and carers agree. School records show that incidents of any form of bullying are rare, that they are resolved quickly and that parents and carers are kept well-informed. Almost all of them believe that the school deals well with any cases of bullying. Pupils are well informed about various types of bullying including the risks associated with social networking sites. As a result, pupils were quick to alert staff when evidence of name calling using this form of media occurred enabling the school to act swiftly to further educate pupils and resolve concerns.

Leadership and management

The school's commitment to equality of opportunity is strong. All staff share the headteacher's commitment to meeting the needs and enhancing the life chances of all pupils. Procedures to safeguard children are secure and parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the work of the school. Since the last inspection, there is clear evidence of planned actions leading to improvements in pupils' attainment. The school identified several factors that contributed to the decline in pupils' levels of attainment. Whilst some were cohort related, such as a larger proportion of pupils with special educational needs, consistency in the quality of teaching were significant factors. The school took decisive and successful action to tackle the decline which reflects the school's good capacity to improve further. Senior and middle leaders monitor the quality of teaching regularly and track pupil performance effectively. This has resulted in the appointment of staff who model good practice, well-targeted professional development and clear guidance from leaders and managers as to how teaching can improve from satisfactory to good. As a result, teachers have a deeper understanding of the continuity and progression of learning which they use to good effect in guiding pupils on their learning journey. However, when observing lessons, leaders and managers do not always clearly identify why teaching is not having an outstanding impact on pupils' learning and, therefore, sometimes miss opportunities to provide teachers with the guidance needed to improve the quality of their teaching even further.

The governing body have provided good support to the school in the drive to improve the quality of teaching and raise attainment. They question and challenge the headteachers' reports of pupils' progress and make careful checks that resources are used effectively to close the gap between the attainment of pupils in this school and those nationally.

The curriculum is good. It is broad and is planned carefully to meet the pupils' interests and varied learning styles. Good use is made of local places and events to extend pupils' experiences. It makes a strong contribution to the development of pupils' communication and mathematical skills and successfully combines this with the pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, the school's link with those in Uganda is used as a focus for pupils' writing development alongside pupils finding out for themselves what it is like to live and attend school in a country very different to their own. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are provided with a wide range of activities which they access with enthusiasm and enjoyment but insufficient attention is given to ensuring that the curriculum consistently provides for children's next steps in learning.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



19 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Corpus Christi RC Primary School, Middlesbrough TS3 8NL

Thank you for being so polite, welcoming and friendly when the inspectors visited your school recently. We very much enjoyed talking to you about your work. Your views and those of your parents and carers are very important and we have taken them into account when making our judgements.

Yours is a good school, where good teaching leads to your good achievement. By the time you leave Year 6, your good progress means that you attain average standards and have developed good spiritual, moral, social and cultural knowledge and skills. You told us that bullying is rare, that you feel safe and that it is a friendly school. Your good behaviour and positive attitudes make an important contribution to the success of your school.

So that your school continues to improve and that you all do as well as you can I have asked the headteacher, the governing body and the staff to make sure that:

- children in the Nursery and Reception classes and those pupils who are in Year 1 always make the same consistently good progress as those in the other classes
- those who lead and manage your school provide teachers with the guidance they need to make sure more of their good teaching becomes outstanding.

All of you can help by continuing to work hard, behaving well and doing your best to help the school improve further.

Please accept our very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Linda Buller
Lead Inspector

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