

Christchurch Junior School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 113733 |
| Local Authority | Dorset |
| Inspection number | 357404 |
| Inspection dates | 6–7 October 2010 |
| Reporting inspector | David Curtis |

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

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|--|--|
| Type of school | Junior |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 7–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 506 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Gaenor Johnson |
| Headteacher | Simon Adorian |
| Date of previous school inspection | 8 October 2007 |
| School address | Clarendon Road Christchurch BH23 2AA |
| Telephone number | 01202 485579 |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 30 lessons taught by 19 teachers. They held meetings with the senior staff, members of the governing body, the school council and a group of pupils from Year 6. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at policies and procedures for safeguarding pupils, the school improvement plan, assessment data and notes of visits from the School Improvement Partner. Inspectors looked at the 352 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, 468 returned by pupils and 42 completed by members of staff.

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

- Pupils' current progress in writing and mathematics.
- If pupils of average and above-average ability make the progress of which they are capable?
- How well do leaders and managers analyse gaps in pupils' learning, especially in writing and mathematics?
- How well do pupils use information and communication technology in other subjects?

Information about the school

This is a very large junior school with four classes in each year group. The school has a designated Speech and Language Base for 16 pupils with speech and language or communication difficulties, all of whom have a statement of special educational needs. Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. Most of these have a specific learning difficulty or speech, language and communication difficulties. The headteacher took up post in September 2009. There is a privately managed after-school club on the site for pupils from the junior school, Christchurch Infant School and other local schools, including a special school; this provision is inspected separately.

In Years 5 and 6, pupils are taught in five ability groups (sets) for numeracy. In Year 6, there are four mixed-ability groups for literacy lessons and one additional teaching group (for above average pupils aiming to reach Level 5 in English).

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. It has a significant strength in the outstanding quality of care, guidance and support provided. This is a major factor in the good progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those in the Speech and Language Base. The quality of communication between the Speech and Language Base and parents and carers is excellent and reflects the school's high-quality partnership with all of its parents and carers.

Pupils' achievement is good. Attainment, having been low in 2006 and 2007, is on a rising trend. In reading, it is above average, but broadly average in writing and mathematics. In the last year, leaders and managers have analysed in great detail the reasons as to why attainment is not higher. Their key findings supported by inspection findings are that, in writing, pupils do not write for a wide enough range of purposes or different audiences. In mathematics, pupils do not develop their skills sufficiently in using and applying the use of numbers in problem solving and investigations. In the recent past, there was significant variation in the progress made by groups of pupils, with average and above-average pupils underperforming quite significantly against similar groups nationally. As the result of determined and rigorous action by senior leaders in the last year, the gap in performance between different groups is closing rapidly.

Most teaching is good, with an increasing proportion that is outstanding and this is a major factor in the rapidly improving progress made by pupils. A significant strength of outstanding lessons is the way teachers constantly check pupils' understanding of, and confidence in, new learning. As a result, those who are totally confident can start work immediately, while others can, at any point in the lesson, go back to the teacher and ask for additional help or support. In the few lessons where teaching is less effective, teaching assistants are not deployed effectively at the start and make little contribution to pupils' learning.

Pupils feel totally secure in school and act sensibly and safely at all times. Their excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles is evident in the high number attending the impressive range of after-school clubs in sport and dance. The 'Global Challenge' to walk 15,000 steps a day is a great 'hit' with pupils in Year 5.

School self-evaluation is accurate. Leaders, managers and the governing body have as their absolute priority the raising of attainment and improving pupils' progress. Taking into account the positive impact of actions taken in the last year, the school has good capacity for further improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment in writing and mathematics from broadly average to above average by July 2012 by:
 - maximising opportunities for pupils to write for a wide range of purposes and audiences
 - a rigorous focus on ensuring pupils regularly use and apply key mathematics skills in problem solving and investigations.
- Ensure that all teaching is good, with at least 50% that is outstanding by July 2011 by:
 - deploying teaching assistants more effectively for the whole lesson
 - spreading the outstanding practice already evident where teachers assess pupils' confidence in new learning and amend lessons to meet the needs of those who ask for additional help
 - using 'steps for success' consistently in all lessons.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in their above average attendance. In lessons, they work hard and take particular care and pride in the quality of their presentation. Pupils show great perseverance and determination when challenged. In a Year 6 numeracy lesson, in a middle set, pupils made good progress in exploring number sequences because they stuck to the task and collaborated with each other successfully. In a Year 4 literacy lesson, pupils really enjoyed the challenge of finding words and phrases to describe how it would feel to go into battle as a Roman soldier. Through listening to an audio clip and then watching a video clip, their vocabulary was enhanced and when they wrote the opening paragraph, their writing was lively and imaginative. On the few occasions when pupils have to sit and listen for too long, their interest waivers and they make insufficient progress. Since the last inspection, pupils' use of information and communication technology has improved. Pupils in Year 6 spoke confidently about the use of spreadsheets linked to work they are doing on supermarket prices. Pupils in the Speech and Language Base make good, and at times outstanding, progress both in literacy and numeracy when they are taught in the Resource Base and in other subjects when they join their peers.

Behaviour is good and often exemplary in lessons. Pupils in Year 6 take their roles as monitors and peer mediators seriously and perform their duties conscientiously. The school council is very proactive in the day-to-day life of the school. Fifty per cent of the funds they raised through organising a disco were given at their suggestion to a foundation for training and developing youngsters set up in honour of a local young man killed in action in Afghanistan, and a school in Uganda with local links. Relationships between pupils are often excellent and the quality of paired and group work is a key factor in their rapidly improving progress.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

| | |
|---|----------|
| Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning | 2 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Pupils' attainment ¹ | 3 |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress | 2 |
| The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils feel safe | 1 |
| Pupils' behaviour | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| 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 | 2 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Pupils' attendance ¹ | 2 |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |

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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers make effective use of the curriculum to engage and motivate pupils. Where pupils see and understand meaningful links, for example between history and writing, they make good progress. The strengths in the quality and range of educational visits and visitors to the school provide pupils with valuable first-hand learning experiences. As a result, pupils in Year 6 talk most knowledgeably about coastal erosion, stacks and cliff formation. Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards to introduce new skills, knowledge and understanding. Where teaching is most effective, teachers share 'steps for success' with pupils so that they understand exactly what they must do in a lesson to be successful learners. However, this is not evident in all classes. Teachers' marking is good and tells pupils how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Pupils know their individual targets for literacy and numeracy and the way in which they negotiate with their teachers when they think they have been achieved. Knowing their next steps is an influential factor in pupils' rapidly improving progress.

Teaching in the Speech and Language Base is often outstanding. There are strengths in the way teachers use 'hands-on' resources to interest pupils and engage their thinking. Pupils' progress is tracked in great detail. Staff are skilled at maximising learning for pupils within very cramped accommodation.

Parents and carers value the quality of transition from the infant school and to the secondary school to which all pupils transfer. The use of outside agencies, for example the

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National Health Service Language Therapist and the school's pastoral care worker, make a significant contribution to the high-quality support the school gives to its vulnerable pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|--|----------|
| The quality of teaching | 2 |
| Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning | 2 |
| The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships | 2 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 1 |

How effective are leadership and management?

Since his appointment, the headteacher has taken swift and very effective action to address areas of underperformance in pupils' attainment and progress. The most significant progress is that all leaders and managers are empowered to take full responsibility for teaching and learning in their subjects and year groups. Equally, all staff know that they are accountable for the progress pupils make in their classes. All staff have a much more informed understanding of school data and the reasons why there were significant gaps in pupils' prior learning and variations in the progress of different groups. Leaders and managers know exactly what needs to be done in the immediate future to raise attainment further. Very effective monitoring of pupils' progress means that potential underachievement is identified quickly and intervention and support strategies put in place. For example, in Year 6, an extra literacy group was created with the aim to ensure that a group of average-ability pupils fulfil their potential to reach the expected Level 5 or above in the national tests. Leaders and managers are aware that much remains to be done in order to build on the successes of the last year, especially in raising attainment in writing and mathematics.

The governing body is effective and very supportive. It understands and shares fully the school's immediate priorities. It challenges the headteacher and senior leaders as to progress made against the targets set for improving pupils' performance as stated in the school improvement plan. The arrangements for safeguarding pupils are outstanding, with the local authority using the school as a model of excellent practice. There is no discrimination in the school and it is tackling rigorously and effectively previous significant gaps in the progress of different groups of pupils to ensure quality of opportunity. The school plays an important part within the local community and has strong links with schools and other institutions in Europe and the wider world. It is actively seeking ways to improve its links with schools in more ethnically-diverse parts of the United Kingdom to improve its promotion of community cohesion.

The leadership and management of the Speech and Language Base is a significant strength, especially in engaging parents and carers as full partners in their children's learning.

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

These are the grades for leadership and management

| | |
|--|----------|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 2 |
| Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met | 2 |
| 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 | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 2 |

Views of parents and carers

Seventy per cent of parents and carers returned the questionnaire. Most are very supportive of all aspects of the school's work. In written comments, positive views were expressed as to the positive impact of the headteacher on the work of the school since his appointment. Others expressed appreciation for the quality of transition from the infant to junior school and from the junior to secondary school. Inspectors found no evidence to endorse the view of a very small number of parents that pupils' behaviour is not managed effectively. Inspectors found that in the past there is evidence of pupils not making good progress. However, in 27 of the 30 lessons inspectors observed, pupils made at least good progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Christchurch Junior 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 352 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 506 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 165 | 47 | 168 | 48 | 14 | 4 | 4 | 1 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 202 | 57 | 146 | 41 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| My school informs me about my child's progress | 119 | 34 | 193 | 55 | 23 | 7 | 1 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 117 | 33 | 193 | 55 | 20 | 6 | 3 | 1 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 146 | 41 | 195 | 56 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 127 | 36 | 198 | 56 | 20 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 131 | 37 | 197 | 56 | 16 | 5 | 2 | 1 |
| 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) | 141 | 40 | 189 | 54 | 8 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 135 | 38 | 186 | 53 | 17 | 5 | 2 | 1 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 109 | 31 | 191 | 54 | 28 | 8 | 8 | 2 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 104 | 30 | 205 | 58 | 19 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 163 | 46 | 171 | 49 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 170 | 48 | 163 | 46 | 11 | 3 | 3 | 1 |

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 | 58 | 36 | 4 | 2 |
| Primary schools | 8 | 43 | 40 | 9 |
| Secondary schools | 10 | 35 | 42 | 13 |
| Sixth forms | 13 | 39 | 45 | 3 |
| Special schools | 33 | 42 | 20 | 4 |
| Pupil referral units | 18 | 40 | 29 | 12 |
| All schools | 11 | 42 | 38 | 9 |

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 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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. 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 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.



8 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Christchurch Junior School, Christchurch BH23 2AA

Thank you very much for the very warm welcome you gave my colleagues and me when we inspected your school. We enjoyed meeting so many of you in lessons and around the school. I must say a particular thank you to the school council and those of you in Year 6 who met with us at lunchtime. I am delighted to tell you that you go to a good school. These are a few of the things that particularly impressed us.

- Your attainment in reading is above average.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and keep fit and healthy.
- You enjoy your lessons and work hard. You take great care and pride in the way you present your work.
- You know your individual targets for literacy and numeracy.
- The quality of care, guidance and support you receive is excellent, including for those of you in the Speech and Language Base.
- Your headteacher and senior leaders and managers are determined that you can do even better in your learning.

There are two important things that we have asked your headteacher, teachers and governing body to do in order to make your school even better. These are to:

- make sure that your attainment in writing and mathematics is above average
- make sure that every lesson you have is at least good, with even more that are outstanding.

You can help by continuing to work hard, especially with your writing and in your mathematical investigations.

Yours sincerely

David Curtis

Lead inspector

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