

Churchmead Church of England (VA) School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133580
Local Authority	Windsor and Maidenhead
Inspection number	360535
Inspection dates	13–14 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Daniel Burton

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	540
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr S Parker - James
Headteacher	Mrs Gaynor Goodman
Date of previous school inspection	12 May 2008
School address	Priory Way Datchet, Slough Slough SL3 9JQ
Telephone number	08444 772446
Fax number	01753 580046
Email address	churchmead@rbwm.org

Inspection number 360535

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 1234 234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 1234 234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 24 teachers and 27 lessons. Year 11 were undertaking work experience during the inspection so no Year 11 lessons were seen. Meetings were held with staff, members of the governing and groups of students. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at policies, data and analyses, including the school's self-evaluation, minutes of governing body meetings, and 30 questionnaires completed by parents and carers. They also looked at questionnaires completed by staff and students.

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

- What were the reasons for the rise in attainment by the end of Year 11 in 2010 in English and mathematics?
- To what extent does teaching secure good progress for all groups of learners, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language?
- To what extent has the quality of middle leadership been strengthened since the last inspection?
- What is the impact of leaders and managers in reducing variations in achievement between subjects?

Information about the school

Churchmead Church of England (Voluntary Aided) School is a smaller than average school that admits the majority of its students from the borough of Slough, which operates a selective secondary system. The majority of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The largest group is of Asian British heritage, representing 27% of the school roll. Approximately 40% of students are of White British heritage. In recent years the proportion of students of Polish heritage has also increased. The school has an above average proportion of students from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller backgrounds. Approximately one third of students speak English as an additional language, with some at the early stages of English language acquisition. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. The majority of these students have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, though there are some students with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia and some with moderate learning difficulties. Churchmead is designated as an 11-18 school. However, the growing number of sixth form students, recruited by the school, are currently registered with Slough Grammar School and, therefore, are not included in this report. Since the last inspection, the school has been designated a specialist college in arts, media and English and has been awarded Healthy Schools status. The school is part of the Gaining Ground initiative.

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

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Churchmead Church of England (Voluntary Aided) School has improved significantly since the school was last inspected. While the school's overall effectiveness remains satisfactory, there have been a number of important improvements. Crucially, students' achievement, although satisfactory overall, is improving strongly and the school recently achieved its best ever examination GCSE results. Fifty-four per cent of students achieved five GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics, compared to 36% in 2009. The proportion of students attaining five good GCSE grades increased from 64% to 75%. While progress is less consistent in other year groups, these advances reflect a clear trajectory of improvement and demonstrate the school's growing effectiveness in improving outcomes for students. They have been achieved because of significant improvements to provision. For example:

- Systems to monitor and track students' progress have been strengthened very considerably. Leaders and managers have a very clear understanding of how well students are doing, and are able to respond much more quickly and sharply to support students at risk of not fulfilling their potential. A comprehensive range of intervention strategies has accelerated the achievement of Year 11 students, particularly in English and mathematics, and these strategies are now being extended to other year groups.
- The school is extremely vigilant in monitoring the progress of different groups of students and, as a result, gaps in achievement are narrowing rapidly.
- The school's specialist status as an arts, media and English college has had a significant impact in raising achievement. Attainment in all specialist subjects is above average.
- The curriculum has been improved to include a good range of courses that meet the needs, interests and aspirations of students well. This has helped to ensure that all students leave school with accredited qualifications.
- Care, guidance and support have improved and are now good. Pastoral care for students experiencing difficult personal circumstances is outstanding. Middle leadership has been strengthened through good appointments in key subject areas. These changes are having a clear impact in raising achievement in mathematics and science and in addressing underachievement in subjects which have performed less well.
- Middle leadership has been strengthened through good appointments in key subject areas. These changes are having a clear impact in raising achievement in mathematics and science and in addressing underachievement in subjects which have performed less well.

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

However, the headteacher and her team know that the pace of improvement to the quality of teaching and learning now needs to be accelerated to secure consistently good progress in lessons. For example:

- While there is some good teaching and a few lessons are outstanding, too many lessons remain satisfactory because they are not sufficiently well matched to students' individual needs and abilities. This particularly applies to students with moderate and specific learning difficulties and for those at the early stages of English language acquisition. In some lessons, opportunities are missed to develop students' personal, learning and thinking skills through activities which encourage them to take risks, formulate and test hypotheses, and work together to solve challenging problems.
- The school has introduced strategies to share the best practice in teaching and learning, but these have not yet had sufficient impact because monitoring and evaluation do not yet give enough attention to the progress made by different groups of students during lessons.
- In some subjects, curriculum plans do not articulate with sufficient clarity the key subject-specific components which make for effective learning. This particularly inhibits the ability of non-specialists to plan for progression in their teaching.

While variations in achievement between different subjects are now reducing, leaders and managers recognise that in a small number of subjects, particularly information and communication technology (ICT), attainment remains too low.

Accurate self-evaluation has led to very significant improvements to the quality of provision since the last inspection, in the quality of care, guidance and support, the curriculum, behaviour and other outcomes for students. These improvements, together with the clear rising trend in achievement, demonstrate the school's good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that, by December 2011, 80% of lessons secure good or outstanding progress, by:
 - extending strategies to share the very best practice in teaching and learning more widely across the school
 - ensuring teachers consistently use assessment information to plan learning activities which fully meet the needs of all groups of students, especially those with learning difficulties and those who speak English as an additional language
 - extending opportunities to develop students' skills as independent learners through increasing opportunities for them to take risks, formulate and test hypotheses and work together to solve challenging problems
 - ensuring lesson observations focus sufficiently on how much progress all groups of students make in lessons
 - ensuring that planning for progression is consistently clear in all subjects so that teachers, including non-specialists, are fully equipped to develop students' subject-specific knowledge, skills and understanding.

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

- Eliminate underachievement in the small number of subjects in which students attain less well.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

- Behaviour has improved significantly since the last inspection and exclusions have reduced significantly. Students are fully aware of the school's behaviour policy and say this has had a real impact on securing consistently good behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- Students thrive when they are given opportunities to work together in lessons, though these are not provided with sufficient regularity or for sufficiently sustained periods in lessons. As a result, while in some lessons students make good progress, progress remains satisfactory overall.
- Good progress occurs when students are given engaging and challenging learning activities which provide opportunities for team-working, investigation and reflection. For example, in a Year 10 English lesson, students worked well together to draw inferences from the opening lines of poems from other cultures. In a Year 7 religious education lesson, students enjoyed speculating about the different ways that people with contrasting religious beliefs might interpret different events. When teaching is too didactic, however, or tasks less stimulating, students become too passive and are not sufficiently engaged by the learning.
- In some lessons, insufficient opportunities are provided to develop students' skills as independent learners. This, together with underachievement in ICT, results in only satisfactory preparation for their future economic well-being, despite the school's good track record in helping students to gain access to education, training and employment.
- Students clearly enjoy coming to school and older students, in particular, recognise how much it has improved since the last inspection.
- Attendance has improved significantly from below to above average for a wide range of groups, particularly those of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller heritage.
- Students from a wide range of groups make a very positive contribution to the school and wider community. They are committed to raising money for charitable causes to support others in the local and wider national and international community. Students respond well to opportunities to improve the school, for example through the Olympic committee and the school council.
- All groups of students report that they feel very safe in school. They value the excellent pastoral support they receive from teachers and the Blue Guardian Angel scheme. Students are also very confident that the very little bullying seen in the school is dealt with robustly and effectively by staff. Students get on very well together and racist incidents are rare. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those at the early stages of learning English benefit from good specialist support which secures good gains in developing basic skills. However, not all teachers make sufficient provision to enable these students to make good progress in lessons.

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

- Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those at the early stages of learning English benefit from good specialist support which secures good gains in developing basic skills. However, not all teachers make sufficient provision to enable these students to make good progress in lessons.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

- In the very best lessons, as seen in specialist subjects and physical education, students made outstanding gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding because teachers provided stimulating and challenging learning activities and were extremely mindful of individuals' prior attainment and specific learning needs. For example, in one outstanding Year 10 media studies lesson, students made excellent gains in their learning because a wide range of activities had been planned which demanded that they work together to evaluate a range of media. Roles within groups were allocated according to ability and, as a result of excellent planning for progression, all students were able to quickly apply technical vocabulary. However, such practice is not yet seen enough to secure good and better progress across year groups and subjects. On occasions, over-long teacher introductions minimise the impact of additional support staff and slow the pace of learning.

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

- While there are some good examples of marking, teachers' comments are not yet consistent in helping students develop a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve their subject-specific skills.
- A wide range of BTEC provision results in good achievement for students who find more traditional courses less engaging. Vocational provision is particularly impressive given the small size of the school. The school's decision to condense the Key Stage 3 curriculum is valued by students, who welcome the increased choice it affords. Achievement in science is now rising as a result of well-conceived plans to modify the curriculum in Key Stages 3 and 4. A very wide range of specialist support ensures that the needs of those students whose circumstances make them more vulnerable are met exceptionally well. For example, strategies to address the needs of students exhibiting challenging behaviour have had marked and often striking impact in transforming students' attitudes to school and their conduct in lessons. The management of systems to support students with special educational needs and/or disabilities has been strengthened to ensure that progress is monitored more rigorously and that students receive their full entitlement for extra support in public examinations. Similarly, students at the early stages of learning English are assessed quickly and effectively to ensure that appropriate specialist support can be immediately provided to meet their particular needs. Transition arrangements into the school are excellent.
- A very wide range of specialist support ensures that the needs of those students whose circumstances make them more vulnerable are met exceptionally well. For example, strategies to address the needs of students exhibiting challenging behaviour have had marked and often striking impact in transforming students' attitudes to school and their conduct in lessons. The management of systems to support students with special educational needs and/or disabilities has been strengthened to ensure that progress is monitored more rigorously and that students receive their full entitlement for extra support in public examinations. Similarly, students at the early stages of learning English are assessed quickly and effectively to ensure that appropriate specialist support can be immediately provided to meet their particular needs. Transition arrangements into the school are excellent.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

- Leaders and managers have successfully secured key improvements to students' achievement and other outcomes through improved curriculum provision and

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

strengthened arrangements to provide care, guidance and support. Staff at all levels shares the headteacher's determination to secure good achievement for all groups of students. Robust line management arrangements now ensure that all leaders are held fully to account and are increasingly effective in addressing underachievement in subjects which have performed less well.

- Monitoring and evaluation procedures have been strengthened considerably through the development of a talented, committed and well-informed team of governors, who are well equipped and effective in supporting the school while holding leaders and managers to account.
- Strategies to promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination are effective. Staff are alert to variations in achievement between different groups of learners and have worked very effectively to raise the achievement of White British students. Strategies to support the achievement of students of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller heritage, enhanced through vigorous work to engage parents, have ensured that the attainment of this group of learners is much higher than for similar students nationally.
- The school has an excellent understanding of its own community and has good strategies in place to celebrate the rich diversity of the school and local community.
- While robust actions to reduce the proportion of inadequate teaching have had a clear impact, leaders and managers have not yet secured consistently good and better teaching. Lesson planning does not focus sufficiently on students' progress or consistently ensure that the needs of all groups of learners are fully met. As a result, too much teaching secures only satisfactory progress during lessons. Staff are rigorous in ensuring that students remain safe. Leaders and managers are acutely aware of the risks associated with the presence on site of health club, open to members of the general public and are meticulous in managing this risk.
- Staff is rigorous in ensuring that students remain safe. Leaders and managers are acutely aware of the risks associated with the presence on site of health club, open to members of the general public and are meticulous in managing this risk.

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

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	3
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

Inspectors received a much smaller proportion of questionnaires from parents and carers than is usually seen in secondary schools. This, in part, is explained by the absence of Year 11 students. Those who did respond to the questionnaire are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. A few made very positive comments about the quality of care, guidance and support provided by the school, sometimes in the face of challenging personal circumstances. One commented, 'I am very impressed with the school and would recommend it to parents.' Five parents disagreed with the statement, 'the school helps me to support my child's learning'. Inspectors looked at this aspect of the school's work and judged that the school's work to involve parents in their child's learning is good, particularly for those with additional needs.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Churchmead Church of England (Voluntary Aided) 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 30 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 540 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	18	60	10	33	2	7	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	13	43	15	50	1	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	11	37	15	50	3	10	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	11	37	16	53	1	3	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	11	37	17	57	2	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	8	27	17	57	5	17	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	7	23	21	70	2	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)	10	33	17	57	3	10	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	10	33	17	57	1	3	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	40	16	53	1	3	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	8	27	19	63	3	10	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	8	27	20	67	0	0	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	14	47	14	47	1	3	1	3

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.



15 October 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Churchmead Church of England (Voluntary Aided) School, Slough SL3 9JQ

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to inspectors when we recently visited your school. Here are our main inspection findings.

- Your school is satisfactory and improving. Year 11 students made good progress last year and achieved the school's best ever examination results.
- The curriculum has improved significantly since the last inspection and ensures that you can choose subjects which meet your needs and interests well.
- You told us that you are well cared for in school and, as a result, feel safe.
- The school monitors your progress very carefully to ensure that extra help can be provided if you fall behind. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those learning English for the first time receive very good specialist support to help improve their skills.
- Your behaviour and attendance have improved and are now good.
- It is particularly pleasing to see how you have helped to improve the school, through the school council and Olympic committee, and how well you support others through charitable work.

To help ensure that the school continues to improve, we have asked staff to improve the quality of teaching and learning by:

- making sure that lessons are more closely matched to your different abilities and give you more opportunities to develop your skills as independent learners
- strengthening systems to share the best teaching practice more widely and to ensure that lesson observations really focus on how much progress everybody makes
- making sure that all teachers have a good understanding of how they can strengthen your subject-specific skills, so that you achieve well in all your subjects.

We have also asked that they raise levels of attainment in the small proportion of subjects where you achieve less well.

You can help by continuing to maintain your good attendance. Well done.

Yours sincerely

Daniel Burton Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 1234 234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.