

Corpus Christi RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105718
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	377287
Inspection dates	19–20 October 2011
Reporting inspector	James Kidd

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	319
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr Dermott Heakin
Headteacher	Mr Andrew Sowerby
Date of previous school inspection	27 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 18 lessons or part-lessons, taught by 13 teachers. They held meetings with pupils, teaching and non-teaching staff and members of the governing body. They observed the school's work, and looked at school improvement planning, internal and external pupil progress information, governing body meeting minutes, safeguarding and child protection documentation and pupils' workbooks. Also, inspectors scrutinised 93 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, 17 returned by staff and 71 completed by pupils in Key Stage 2.

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

- How and with what impact the school is attempting to improve pupils' skills in writing.
- Whether there are any differences in the quality of teaching and in the levels of pupils' learning and progress between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- The extent, quality and accuracy of school self-evaluation.
- Whether the curriculum meets the needs of all groups of pupils and whether it promotes equal levels of progress in mathematics and English.
- How and with what impact the school has tackled the area for improvement identified in the previous inspection in relation to outdoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

This larger than average-sized primary school serves a socially and economically mixed area. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and the percentage at early stages of learning English are just above those usually seen. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Corpus Christi is an Investor in People, a UNICEF Rights Respecting School and holds enhanced Healthy Schools status. It has the Artsmark and also the Food for Life (silver) award.

Since the previous inspection, there has been considerable building work, including remodelled classrooms and a new kitchen. There have also been significant changes in staff, including the appointment of a new deputy headteacher.

The privately-run Corpus Christi out-of-school provision was inspected separately and receives a separate report which is available on the Ofsted website.

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 and improving school. Parents and carers speak positively and accurately about the outstanding care, guidance and support their children receive. One parent spoke for many with the words, 'Both teaching and non-teaching staff are committed to making sure are children are safe and that they become happy and confident learners.'

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with below age-related skills levels, particularly in communication, language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world. As a result of good teaching, all groups of pupils progress and achieve well across the school, to reach broadly average attainment by the end of Year 6. Attainment in mathematics exceeds that in English and, although improving, pupils' writing skills often lag behind their fluency in reading. However, attainment in writing is in line with national expectations. The school recognises that more work needs to be done, particularly in preparing pupils for their writing assignments, if their attainment in this area is to continue to rise.

Pupils are proud of Corpus Christi and feel safe within it. They make an exceptional contribution to the school and wider communities and members of the school council are active in expressing their ideas about how things can be improved. As they say, 'It was our idea to get bike racks!' Pupils have an excellent understanding of what makes a balanced diet and of the importance of physical fitness. Their active support for a range of charities, local, national and global, is just one aspect of their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The developing curriculum meets the needs and aspirations of all groups well and several initiatives to promote pupils' interest and skills in writing are narrowing the gap between their progress in mathematics and English. There is a good range of enrichment activities and pupils in Year 4, for example, enjoyed meeting and talking to the Roman soldier at Manchester Museum.

Staff with all levels of experience and responsibility are actively involved in gauging the performance of the school in all areas of its life. The school, therefore, knows itself well and demonstrates a good capacity for sustained improvement. It is also more than aware of its duty to support the local community. As a consequence, the school promotes community cohesion exceptionally well and local groups and others as far afield as Uganda are very grateful for its support.

Corpus Christi is a school in which the welfare of children and young people comes first. In the words of its most important clients, 'We are happy here and the grown-ups and our own classmates always look after us.'

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to rehearse their ideas before they put pen to paper
 - sharing good and exemplary practice in the teaching of writing across all classes
 - ensuring that assessment of pupils' performance in writing is rigorous and accurate and leads to activities in lessons which meet pupils' individual learning needs more closely
 - introducing targets in writing which are understood more clearly by pupils, so that they know exactly what they need to do to reach them.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

When asked what their favourite aspect of Corpus Christi is, pupils reply 'The learning!' Indeed their attendance is above average and they often skip into school in the morning, eagerly anticipating what the day has to offer. Most pupils are fully engaged in lessons and are delighted when they can work in pairs and in groups to act as extra learning resources for each other. Pupils make good progress and achieve well in both Key Stages; pupils with additional needs make the same good progress as their peers because of the effective support they receive from teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils' attainment in mathematics has been a strength since before the previous inspection, but their standards in English, particularly in writing, have lagged behind somewhat. However, pupils in Year 2 are using more complex words and phrases as a result of the school's emphasis on fostering higher standards of attainment in writing. Similarly, in Key Stage 2, pupils are writing more confidently in a range of genres and presenting both sides of an argument, as a result of their involvement in 'big writing'.

Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes safe and unsafe situations and can also give visitors a plethora of accurate information on what makes a balanced diet and why it is important to remain fit, both physically and emotionally. They display an enviable social conscience, supporting a wide variety of charity appeals, helping their peers through their roles as play leaders and providing support for local elderly people, inviting them to their Christmas production. Indeed, pupils treat their classmates and the adults who work with them with the utmost dignity; mutual respect abounds. They have an outstanding awareness of right and wrong, behave well, and value their involvement with pupils from other cultures and religions, speaking highly of Corpus Christi's link with a school in Uganda. Transition procedures to support pupils' entry to secondary education are good, but preparation for their next stage of education is only satisfactory because attainment in writing is still not as high as it needs to be.

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	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is good across the school and there are examples of outstanding practice throughout Key Stage 1 and with Key Stage 2. The school recognises that this expertise, particularly in the teaching of writing, should be shared more widely across the school. In the best lessons, for example, two excellent Year 6 literacy sessions, challenge is realistic, pace is rapid and activities are designed to meet pupils' individual learning needs. As a result, pupils are fully engaged in their learning, are often surprised at what they can achieve and are also delighted when their classmates succeed. As one pupil said, 'I am really proud of my writing, but just look at how good my friend's work is!' In a minority of lessons, there is a 'one-size-fits-all' approach and pupils' learning is sometimes stifled by slow pace and a lack of flexibility; pupils are desperate to answer questions, but sometimes lose concentration when their contributions are not considered rapidly enough. In addition, the school recognises that there is a need to provide more opportunities for pupils to share their ideas with their classmates before they begin their writing assignments. Assessment is good overall. The monitoring of pupils' progress is a major strength and generally marking offers accurate advice on how work may be improved, even though sometimes pupils find their writing targets and, therefore, how to reach them difficult to understand. Teachers are now attempting to ensure that they have an accurate understanding of the pupils' attainment in writing, so that they can plan activities which meet the pupils' needs more closely.

The curriculum is under review continuously, particularly since the school recognises that, over time, the curriculum has not always facilitated good progress in English, especially in writing. Programmes which focus on 'talk for writing' and on pupils' more accurate spelling and use of grammar are now beginning to tackle this problem, with increasing success. The school is a flagship for the promotion of healthy eating and overall the curriculum has a positive impact on pupils' personal development. There is a good and well-attended range of enrichment and extra-

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

curricular activities, including sport, games and Irish dancing. Visits to Lower Hurst farm, Manchester Museum and the Imperial War Museum North are popular amongst pupils and they report that such visits bring their learning alive. Pupils value the learning days for the gifted and talented also, delivered in conjunction with a local high school.

The school provides a welcome learning environment for all its pupils and there is a wealth of vibrant artwork and thematic displays, celebrating their successes. Furthermore, the school focuses on pupils as individuals and this is reflected in the outstanding care, guidance and support for all, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. There are very strong links with a wide range of external agencies for the benefit of pupils and induction and transition arrangements for pupils new to the school and those entering secondary education are of the highest quality, ensuring continuity in learning and development. The school is active in its efforts to promote regular attendance, through close monitoring of absence trends and through rewards to encourage pupils to attend as often as they can. As a result, attendance has improved since the previous inspection and is now above average.

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?

Principled and sensitive leadership from the experienced headteacher and able support from the talented senior and extended leadership teams ensure that all staff share the same clear vision for how the school is to move forward. Teaching and non-teaching staff feel supported by their senior colleagues; one spoke for many with the words, 'We all work as a team, supporting each other and working as hard as we can for the benefit of the children in our care.' The leadership and management of teaching and learning are good and the school places considerable emphasis on providing relevant training to promote improvements in educational practice. The governing body supports the school well and has strong links with many aspects of its life. It challenges the leaders with increasing rigour.

There are good links with parents and carers, who value the opportunities they have to become more aware of how to support their children's learning at home. Similarly, there are close partnerships with a range of outside agencies, including primary and secondary schools in the local area. The school promotes equality of opportunity well and is currently researching ways it can support the learning of its increasing number of pupils with English as an additional language even more effectively. There is zero tolerance of discrimination in all its forms.

Safeguarding procedures are good and continue to meet national requirements. Relevant training is fully up to date and staff are well aware of their responsibilities in

relation to child protection. The school promotes community cohesion exceptionally well; the school is a harmonious community, pupils are involved most actively in the local area, offer outstanding support for the elderly, and are linked closely with a variety of schools with different cultural and socio-economic intakes. In addition, their extensive links with a school in Uganda complement their already excellent understanding of cultures and religions which are different from their own.

Financial management is good and the school directs its spending after detailed consideration of its educational priorities, for example when undertaking the recent building work to enhance the learning environment. It provides good value for money.

These are the grades for the 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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

This is a good Early Years Foundation Stage. It prepares children well for entry into the Nursery and they settle down quickly into their new surroundings as a result. The children feel safe in both the Nursery and Reception Year, get on and play well with each other. The sharing of resources is a particular strength. Teachers and teaching assistants support and develop children's learning well and ensure the children make good progress across both years. Teaching and assessment are good and staff give the highest priority to children's welfare and safety. The indoor environment, comprising light and airy classrooms, is a particular strength, and there is a good range of activities to engage children and to encourage them to enjoy learning. The school has worked effectively and with success since the previous inspection to improve outdoor provision, but this would be enhanced further by better access to the large play area. Nonetheless, children's play in the setting is purposeful, there are many opportunities for children to learn through exploration and there is a good balance between child-initiated and adult-led activities.

The setting is led and managed well. Staff are ambitious for the development of both the Nursery and Reception Year. They work effectively as a team, planning together and sharing their accurate assessments of how well children are progressing on a regular basis. Available resources are used and managed well. Parents and carers speak highly of the Early Years Foundation Stage and comment 'Our sons and

daughters are made to feel very welcome and staff are always concerned to involve us in our children’s learning.’

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who returned the questionnaire believe that their children enjoy school and that Corpus Christi keeps their children safe. Moreover, most are entirely happy with their children’s experience at the school: they are of the view that teaching is good, that their children make enough progress and that the school meets their children’s particular needs. A very small minority of parents and carers does not believe the school deals effectively with inappropriate behaviour. Inspectors examined that concern and found behaviour management to be good and judge that pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and around school as a result.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Corpus Christi RC Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 93 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 319 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	60	65	30	32	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	52	56	40	43	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	43	46	38	41	10	11	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	46	49	37	40	6	6	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	55	59	33	35	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	45	48	42	45	4	4	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	53	57	36	39	2	2	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)	40	43	35	38	7	8	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	45	48	39	42	6	6	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	45	48	36	39	10	11	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	41	44	37	40	7	8	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	49	53	31	33	8	9	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	52	56	34	37	2	2	1	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

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

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

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



21 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Corpus Christi RC Primary School, Oldham, OL9 7HA

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspection team when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you and watching you learn and we are particularly grateful to those of you who gave up your time to meet us on Wednesday lunchtime. You were so keen to find out how the inspection was going and I promised to write to you to tell you what we found.

Corpus Christi is a good and improving school. The adults take excellent care of you and you support each other and people outside the school, too! You behave well and you have an exceptionally good understanding of what makes a healthy lifestyle. Your attendance is good and it continues to get better. You make good progress in your studies, but your standards in mathematics are higher than they are in English, especially in writing.

You told us that your teachers teach you well and you are right! In fact, we saw some outstanding lessons in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, when you showed just how much you enjoy learning.

Your headteacher and all the other staff are always looking for ways to make Corpus Christi even better. To support them, I have asked them to help you improve your writing by giving you more opportunities to talk about what you are going to write, to make sure that your writing targets are easier to understand and to plan activities in lessons which meet your learning needs more closely. I think it would be a good idea also if your teachers shared more with each other the things they do to make the teaching of writing really effective.

Thank you again for being so friendly, kind and polite to us. Please keep working hard and looking after each other.

Yours sincerely,

James Kidd
Lead Inspector

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