

# St Christopher Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103652
<b>Local Authority</b>	Coventry
<b>Inspection number</b>	376944
<b>Inspection dates</b>	28–29 November 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Christine Merrick

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	458
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Anke Brooker-Davis
<b>Headteacher</b>	Clair Robinson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 February 2009
<b>School address</b>	Allesley Old Road Coventry CV5 9JG
<b>Telephone number</b>	024 76675017
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<b>Email address</b>	headteacher@st-christopher.coventry.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	28–29 November 2011
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Thirty four lessons were observed taught by nineteen teachers. The inspectors held meetings with staff, pupils and the Chair of the Governing Body. They spoke informally with parents and carers as they arrived at school with their children. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including information about pupils' progress, child protection and safeguarding procedures. They looked at pupils' past and present work and analysed questionnaires completed by 124 parents and carers, 16 teachers and 67 pupils.

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

- Why is mathematics improving faster than English at Key Stage 2, especially for girls?
- Has the quality of teachers' marking improved and how is it helping pupils to improve their learning?
- How do leaders seem to have been more successful in improving achievement in mathematics than English?
- Has provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage improved enough to give a higher starting point in Year 1, especially in communication, language and literacy?

## Information about the school

St Christopher is a larger-than-average primary school. Most pupils come from a White British background with the remaining few from minority ethnic groups. A very small minority of pupils speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The Early Years Foundation Stage includes morning and afternoon nursery and two Reception classes. The school has Healthy School Status. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2010 and several changes have been made to teachers' roles and responsibilities at a management level.

There is a playgroup on site and a Kool Kids club which runs before and after school. These facilities are not managed by the governing body and are inspected and reported separately.

**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

This is a satisfactory school. It is improving rapidly under the strong leadership of the headteacher. Working in close partnership with governors and staff, she has brought about significant improvements. Gaps in provision have been identified, particularly in English at Key Stage 2, which were retarding progress. As a result of curriculum changes, management restructuring and improved professional development, the school is now successfully refocused on raising standards and achievement. Attainment is now securely average. Accurate self-evaluation underpins plans for development, but these need more detailed timelines and stepping-stones towards the ambitious goals set to secure improvement. The headteacher's clear vision supports the school's good capacity to sustain improvement. Safeguarding systems are implemented rigorously and ensure the effective care and safety of pupils. Attendance is above average and pupils enjoy school. The atmosphere in school is warm and friendly. Pupils and adults are kind and courteous to each other. Behaviour is good and instances of bullying are rare.

Attainment on entry to Nursery is broadly in line with expectations. Children share and play together well. They enjoy the activities provided, but adults do not always use opportunities to extend children's thinking in free play activities. Satisfactory progress allows children to reach levels that are average. In Key Stage 1 progress quickens and at the end of Year 2 attainment is above average. In recent years progress through Key Stage 2 has been less than expected, particularly in English. This is now being tackled effectively through careful tracking of the progress of individual pupils and groups, the rigorous monitoring of teaching and the introduction of highly differentiated, closely targeted teaching in English. Consequently, pupils make at least satisfactory progress and those needing support are identified quickly. New English programmes have seen significant gains in Key Stage 2 reading in a very short time. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and other identified groups are benefiting from more focused support, leading to greater progress that is at least in line with their peers.

There has been significant improvement in the quality of teaching which is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. One parent referred to the recent 'massive improvement' and a member of staff recognised that with the appointment of the new headteacher the school 'has been able to make decisions that support the school in moving forward'. Lessons are increasingly well organised. They now have specific learning objectives but do not always have clear success criteria. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution, supporting teachers well in classrooms and

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working with groups and individuals. The curriculum is satisfactory. The introduction of new programmes is proving successful in improving writing. A new creative curriculum is in the early stages of being developed by the curriculum team in conjunction with a member of staff from a neighbouring school. Activities and trips such as the Year 5 visit to the Transport Museum and Year 6 participation in the Young Voices at the National Exhibition Centre enrich the curriculum. Clubs range from choir to zumbatonics, the latter being very popular. Pupils have good access to information and communication technology (ICT) facilities. The Wake and Shake video, performed and produced by pupils, is a good example of its use.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Ensure that programmes to support English across the school are securely embedded and lead to sustained improvement by developing clear timelines and milestones.
- Increase the proportion of good or better teaching across the school to 80% by January 2013 by ensuring that all teachers:
  - check for learning and adjust tasks to meet individual needs during lessons
  - share examples of successful teaching
  - develop criteria for successful completion of tasks that are focused on what pupils should learn rather than what pupils should do.
- Increase children's learning in Nursery and Reception by:
  - developing the role of adults when interacting with children's learning, especially during activities that children plan for themselves
  - analysing assessments so that they can be used more purposefully to focus future learning.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

The attainment of pupils is broadly average and they make satisfactory progress as they go through school. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and other groups, such as those who speak English as an additional language, make progress at least in line with other pupils. This is because there are effective processes for identifying their specific needs, programmes to address these and careful monitoring to ensure that positive outcomes result. Booster groups are implemented early to bridge gaps in learning. The achievement of all pupils is, therefore, satisfactory.

When lessons are well taught the pace of learning is good. In an effective Year 1

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class pupils enthusiastically discussed addition as ‘getting more’. They are keen to contribute their ideas. For instance, in a Year 6 class when suggesting alternative vocabulary they offered words such as ‘distracted’ and ‘dispirited’. They also maintain concentration well and persevere with tasks when working individually. This is less evident where learning in lessons is less active, and there are fewer imaginative activities to sustain their interest.

Pupils enjoy school and attendance is above average. They feel safe because behaviour is good and any bullying that does occur is dealt with effectively. They know that they can talk to the adults if they are worried, will be taken seriously and that action will be taken. Pupils are considerate towards others and, when referring to the anti-bully week, one pupil said, ‘It was terrific, it really made us think’. They are aware of issues relating to internet safety. Most pupils have a clear understanding about how to stay healthy and they enjoy healthy snacks, reflected in the school’s Healthy School Status. They contribute well to the school community in many different ways such as through the school council and eco-council and like applying for jobs around the school such as helping on reception. Pupils’ contribution to the wider community is less well developed. They are gaining a respect for different cultures through taking part in celebrations and exchanges with other schools. They have a clear sense of moral values and an interest in the way schools and society function. For instance, in an assembly based on the Coventry blitz they asked mature, sensible questions and showed empathy and understanding of difficult moral issues.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

<b>Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils’ behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

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

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## How effective is the provision?

Teaching in Key Stage 1 is strong and it is improving elsewhere across the school. When talking about lessons pupils said: ‘They’re different’, ‘We don’t get bored’, and ‘They’re all fun’. Teachers plan for different abilities within the class where teaching assistants make a significant contribution, supporting teachers well in classrooms and working with groups and individuals, particularly those with behaviour problems. Teachers do not assess pupils’ learning consistently during lessons so opportunities for extending learning and moving it on at a faster rate are missed, as are opportunities for ensuring that all groups of pupils are effectively engaged. There are few opportunities for teachers to observe best practice to help them improve their skills. The teaching of phonics, the sounds that letters make, is improving significantly, resulting in significantly rising attainment in reading and writing across the school. Structured programmes ensure that pupils are taught specific elements such as grammar and extended vocabulary. Groups are flexible so that pupils are able to move on at their own pace without being held back. Information and communication technology is used to support learning effectively. For instance, pupils use self-correcting programmes to consolidate mathematical understanding. In the best lessons teachers use assessment well and give detailed feedback so pupils know how well they have done and how they can improve. They also focus on neat presentation which pupils say they ‘really like’.

The school is a supportive, caring community where pupils’ welfare is given a high priority. Pupils with physical disabilities and medical needs are given good support to ensure they are fully included in all activities. Those with a behaviour plan receive good support from the learning mentor to help them engage positively in lessons. Transition arrangements are effective, especially those to support pupils who are moving on to secondary education.

The curriculum is satisfactory, but improving rapidly. In response to a rigorous analysis of assessment information, there is a clear focus on the development of literacy. The new curriculum means that planning for teaching important literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills across the curriculum is strengthened. It is in place in Key Stage 1 and work continues to ensure this is fully in place in Key Stage 2. There is a variety of broad, and balanced activities in a range of subjects. For example, computer activities enable pupils to create pictures of themselves in Egyptian settings. Homework activities include open-ended, relevant problem-solving tasks that encourage pupils and families to work together to extend learning. Gifted and talented pupils are supported and challenged, most notably through opportunities for art and music after school.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3

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<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is effective in driving through rapid and strong improvements to all aspects of the school’s performance. The deputy headteacher and standards leaders support her well in communicating high expectations to staff. They ensure that all staff are fully involved in action planning and reviewing the work of the school. Teaching and pupils’ progress is checked regularly and subsequent feedback has resulted in significant improvement to the quality of teaching. Good use is made of a range of monitoring activities followed by constructive feedback. Well targeted development opportunities have galvanised the enthusiasm of staff, and, as one member of staff said, ‘the major difference has been that staff feel more supported and have a reinvigorated professional confidence’. This has resulted in teaching that, whilst satisfactory, is improving rapidly and outcomes are improving strongly.

The governing body receives all the information they need to be actively involved in monitoring and evaluating the school’s work. They are adept at asking challenging questions and providing the critical friendship necessary for the continued development of the school. They discharge their statutory duties well. The school adopts recommended good practice in safeguarding arrangements. Policies and procedures are detailed and reviewed regularly. The governing body ensures all staff attend regular and relevant training. Comprehensive risk assessments cover all aspects of school life. The school’s relationship with parents is very positive and they value recent workshops such as the cyber-bullying workshop.

The school tracks the progress of individuals and different groups of pupils closely to ensure that no-one suffers from any form of discrimination. School improvement priorities have clearly targeted actions and are regularly monitored by the governing body and senior leaders. They are committed to working in partnership with others and this is demonstrated by the school’s work with other local schools such as through the ‘Achievement for all’ project. The community ethos and commitment to ensuring all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed is strong. However, there is limited evidence of its success in promoting community cohesion beyond the school. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities</b>	<b>2</b>



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<b>met</b>	
<b>The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes in Nursery and Reception are satisfactory. Children make sound progress in all areas of learning except in their personal, social and emotional development which is good. This is due to the range of opportunities to share and the way resources are organised so that they can be accessed independently. For instance, children fetch small world toys to display a scene on the interactive whiteboard and they take care not to bump into one another when negotiating the vacuum cleaner in a limited space. By the end of the Reception year, attainment is typical of children of the same age in all areas of learning. A greater focus on teaching letters and sounds resulted in improved attainment in this aspect last year.

Children settle well because relationships are positive and key workers involve parents and carers in the assessment of children’s learning. Learning journals are maintained on the children and leaders use information from on-going assessments to track children’s progress. This not used as effectively as it could be to focus future provision since planning tends to focus on activities rather than learning. Leadership and management, together with the quality of provision, are satisfactory. With support from the local authority, leaders and managers in the Early Years Foundation Stage have identified strengths and weaknesses in provision. Consequently, improvements to the Nursery environment are resulting in focused areas that support learning better both inside and out. Children enjoy access to the outside areas on a free-flow basis. They are provided with a satisfactory balance of child-initiated and adult-directed activities. Whilst adults adapt activities and resources in response to children’s needs, they do not use their knowledge of children’s learning to target individuals with specific support when joining in with children’s play.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

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## Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Very few concerns were raised. The inspection endorses parents' and carers' positive views that their children feel safe and enjoy school. Most believe that the teaching at the school is good and that their children are making enough progress. Most also believe that the school is led and managed effectively. Inspectors endorse that there has been significant and rapid improvement in all aspects of the school's work since the appointment of the new headteacher. One parent writes, 'The new headteacher has made a real difference and the school has improved greatly over the last year'. Another commented, 'Changes so far have been well planned and communicated to the parents and are instilling great progress, especially in literacy'.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Christopher 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 124 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 458 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	67	55	53	44	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	74	61	46	38	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	45	37	69	57	4	3	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	47	39	62	51	9	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	50	41	65	54	4	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	50	41	59	49	9	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	38	31	72	60	8	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)	37	31	64	53	4	3	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	47	39	64	53	4	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	44	36	64	53	10	8	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	26	76	63	7	6	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	63	52	51	42	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	69	57	46	38	4	3	0	0

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 are 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](http://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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



30 November 2011

Dear Pupils,

**Inspection of St Christopher Primary School, Coventry, CV5 9JG**

Thank you for being so welcoming when we visited your school recently. You go to a satisfactory school where standards are rising. Your new headteacher has made a big difference and is helping your teachers to become even better at their job. We were very impressed by your good behaviour and your politeness and enjoyed listening to your views. We were pleased to see that most of you work hard in lessons and enjoy being in school. You told us it is a super place. Perhaps that is why your attendance is good. Well done! You have a good understanding of how to keep yourselves healthy through a balanced diet and taking plenty of exercise. You also have a good awareness of how to keep yourselves safe.

We know that your teachers have changed the way you work in English lessons and this is helping you learn more effectively. We want them to go on improving your school and we have asked them to make sure that:

- they continue with changes they have made to help you improve
- they increase the amount of good teaching by making sure they check your learning regularly to make sure you have the right work to do and that you know what you need to have learned.
- in Nursery and Reception, adults are more involved in children's play so that they learn more.

All of you can help the school to improve by continuing to work hard.

Thank you again for being so helpful and courteous.

Yours sincerely

Christine Merrick  
Lead inspector

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