

# Birkenhead Christ Church CofE Primary School

Mount Grove, Birkenhead, Merseyside, CH41 2UJ

**Inspection dates** 22–23 January 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The headteacher, staff, governors and the local authority have worked well together. They have improved the quality of teaching and the proportion of pupils who are making good progress.
- Governors ensure that pupil premium funding is used well to improve pupils' achievement. As a result, pupils supported by the funding achieve well.
- The majority of teaching is good or better. Teachers check how much pupils have learned and generally use the information well to plan what to teach next.
- The teaching of reading is particularly effective and pupils achieve well in reading across the school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is good. They work well together in lessons and enjoy positive relationships with adults in the school.
- Pupils benefit from specialist support to help develop their music skills and safety awareness.
- Pupils' attendance is improving and they feel safe and happy.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In Years 1 and 2, targets are not challenging enough for pupils to help them make faster rates of progress.
- More-able pupils are not consistently challenged in lessons.
- Information on pupils' progress is not presented simply enough so that teachers, leaders and managers can quickly and accurately check the impact of improvements on outcomes for pupils.
- Teachers' marking does not consistently inform pupils whether they have reached their targets and not enough opportunities are given for pupils to respond to teachers' written comments on their work.
- Not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to apply their mathematical skills across different subjects.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons and made two short visits to lessons.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read from different year groups.
- Inspectors took account of 22 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and responses to a parental questionnaire recently carried out by the school.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils. Inspectors also held discussions with the headteacher, the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority and school staff.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a number of documents, including the school’s own data on pupils’ current progress, documents relating to the school’s plans for improvement and its procedures for checking the quality of teaching, records relating to behaviour, attendance and performance management of teachers and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Pupils’ books were checked by inspectors.

## Inspection team

Clarice Nelson-Rowe, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Sheila O’Keeffe	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a smaller than averaged-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- A high proportion of pupils are supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and the children of forces families.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- To increase the proportion of pupils exceeding expected progress by:
  - ensuring targets for pupils in Years 1 and 2 are more challenging to help bring them nearer to age-related standards by the end of Year 2
  - increasing the consistency of challenge for more-able pupils in lessons
  - giving time in lessons for pupils to respond to teachers' comments, so that they can improve their work more quickly
  - teachers linking comments in marking to whether pupils' targets are being met or not, so that pupils know what are the key areas that they need to improve on
  - simplifying the information on pupils' achievement so that teachers can check more quickly and accurately the extent to which pupils are making expected, or better than expected, progress
  - using simplified information regarding pupils' achievement to measure and build on the success of the actions taken by leaders and managers to move pupils on further in their learning.
- Raise achievement in mathematics by increasing the opportunities for pupils to use and develop their mathematical skills across different subjects.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children enter the school with knowledge and skills that are well below those typically expected for their age. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes due to good teaching.
- While they make steady progress through Years 1 and 2, they reach standards that are below the national average by the end of Year 2. This is because of their very low starting points but also due to targets that are not set high enough, to encourage pupils to make faster rates of progress. However, by the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 6, they reach standards that are broadly in line with national averages, with English being stronger than mathematics.
- Progress in Years 3 to 6 is generally good and improving strongly, particularly in reading. The proportion of pupils who make expected and better than expected progress compares well with pupils who do so nationally, particularly in English. However, more-able pupils do not consistently reach higher levels because teachers do not always plan activities that stretch their learning.
- Pupils read with interest in lessons due to the range of interesting books that are available to them. Readers at the early stages try hard to sound out words and read with growing confidence. Phonics teaching (looking at the sounds letters make) is well-structured and encourages good progress and enjoyment.
- The school demonstrates a strong commitment to ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils. For example, pupils who are eligible for pupil premium achieve as well, and often better than, other pupils in the school. This is because pupils benefit from being taught in smaller classes with a good number of adults to assist teachers.
- Most disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make just as good progress as other pupils in the school due to the carefully planned support they receive.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers make it clear to pupils what they are going to learn; this helps pupils reflect on their learning throughout, and at the end of, lessons. Teachers also regularly check around the class on how well pupils are doing and provide further support as needed to ensure pupils succeed.
- Teachers and teaching assistants show and encourage pupils to use a wide range of words when speaking and writing. They pay good attention to helping pupils to sound out parts of words correctly. This helps pupils to read well and to improve their writing.
- Teachers use questioning well to get pupils to think about accuracy in their work and the steps involved in tackling problems. This was particularly evident in a Year 5 mathematics lesson. Pupils successfully considered the importance of entering accurate numbers into calculators and clearly outlined in their books the steps involved in solving complex mathematical problems around the cost of football tickets.
- The quality of lesson planning is good across the school and is often linked to what pupils need to improve from previous lessons. Teachers plan activities that are enjoyable and encourage pupils to work well together to support each other's learning. However, the more-able pupils in classes are not always consistently challenged.
- The marking of pupils work is generally good because pupils are informed of what they have done well and what they need to do to further improve in specific pieces of work. However, pupils are not always told how well they are doing with relation to termly targets that have been set for them. Pupils are also not given time to respond to comments by teachers to show they have understood them.
- The teaching of mathematics is developing well and is increasingly becoming a favourite subject for many pupils. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical understanding across a wide range of subjects across the school to develop their skills further.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils are very happy and feel safe at school and this is reflected in their improving attendance. Most parents also agree that their children are happy and safe. Pupils show good effort in lessons when tackling tasks and work well on their own, in groups and with adult support.
- Their good behaviour creates a positive environment for learning. Records related to pupils' behaviour confirm that it is typically good.
- Pupils behave well during break times and with adults who do not normally teach them. They have a good understanding of the school's behaviour policy that is consistently applied by all staff when giving out rewards or sanctions. Pupils readily admit that they do fall out with each other from time to time; however, they say that bullying is very rare.
- Pupils' show a good knowledge and understanding of the risks posed by the internet, drugs and alcohol. This is due to the way that the school organises lessons, and makes use of outside specialists to teach children about different types of safety.
- They enjoy opportunities to lead others such as through the work of the school council but also in lessons. For example, in a Year 4 lesson that was delivered by an external music specialist, different pupils eagerly and confidently led others from the front of the class in different songs and successfully encouraged pupils to join in.
- Proud of raising money for charity and enjoying the good range of opportunities to develop their knowledge about different cultures and religions, pupils' display good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

**The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher has steered the school well, on the journey from satisfactory to now a good school. This is due to her clarity of vision and through the way she supports and inspires staff to work well in teams and to do their best for the children. She has also worked well alongside other leaders in the school and with governors, to draw on the good support from the local authority to help take the school forward.
- The frequent and varied ways of checking on the quality of teaching and well-focused training delivered by staff within the school and externally has helped to improve the quality of teaching and so improve the achievement of pupils. There is therefore good evidence of the schools' ability to maintain and to further build on its improvements.
- The performance of staff is managed well and is closely linked to the government's standards for teachers. There is a good match between the salaries of staff and the performance of the school.
- Overall, the school is generally accurate about its strengths and weaknesses and what it needs to do to improve further. However, information about the progress of pupils is not always clearly and simply presented to ensure that all staff can quickly and accurately assess whether pupils are making expected, or better than expected, rates of progress. This means that sometimes the school does not focus sharply or quickly enough on where further improvements are needed, or build upon the success of improvements already made.
- The local authority provides effective support in assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage and with the teaching of mathematics. As a result, these areas are improving in the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors of the school are very effective. They have a good handle on the quality of teaching and have been appropriately trained on achievement data to be able to check whether pupils are learning as best as they can. As a result, they are able to provide good support and challenge for the school. They are knowledgeable about the performance and salary progression of staff and make good use of external support to manage the performance of the headteacher. Particularly effective is the well-planned use of the pupil premium funding and their understanding of the positive impact this has on pupils' achievement.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	105064
<b>Local authority</b>	Wirral
<b>Inspection number</b>	400752

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	211
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Linda Christian
<b>Headteacher</b>	Marie Szydłowska
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 November 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 652 1278
<b>Fax number</b>	0151 652 7681
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