

# Ellesmere Port Christ Church CofE Primary School

Deeside, Whitby, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, CH65 6TQ

**Inspection dates** 19–20 March 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.

- From starting points which are typically below those expected, pupils make good progress in English and mathematics. By the end of Year 6, pupils reach standards that are at least in line with age-related expectations.
- Progress in reading is a particular strength.
- Teaching is usually good and some teaching in Years 5 and 6 is outstanding.
- The broad range of subjects and activities on offer, as well as the attention given to the arts, helps pupils to develop a wide set of skills.
- Pupils who find aspects of learning or school life difficult receive high quality support. As a result, they do well at school.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is good because expectations are high and staff manage pupils with care. Consequently, pupils feel safe and enjoy school life.
- School leaders and governors are well informed about the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils are making.
- Governors' hands-on support and strategic planning for the future are strong. The effective teamwork between all leaders, together with their forward-looking approach, has been the key factor in bringing about improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement. They have set the school on an upward path.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress in mathematics lags behind the faster progress that pupils make in English.
- There is still a small amount of teaching that requires improvement.
- Some of the action plans and checks that leaders make on teachers' work do not focus sharply enough on improving pupils' learning.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 lessons, three of which were joint observations with the headteacher, and made short visits to small group teaching sessions. Inspectors also visited an assembly and the forest school area; they observed break times and listened to pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, school staff, the Chair and four members of the governing body, and the lead inspector had a telephone conversation with a local authority adviser.
- Inspectors took account of 22 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's own parental surveys. In addition, inspectors talked to parents on the school playground and considered the views that one parent expressed in a letter to the inspection team.
- A number of school documents were examined. These included information about pupils' progress, school improvement plans and records of governors' meetings. The work in pupils' books and records relating to the quality of teaching, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding were also scrutinised.

## Inspection team

Martin Pye, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Chris Griffin

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Christ Church Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is similar to that found in most schools. The proportion supported at school action is lower than that seen in most other schools.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the additional pupil premium funding is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding to provide extra support for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, pupils in local authority care, and pupils who have parents serving in the armed forces.
- Christ Church Primary School meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A new school building will be opening on a nearby site in the near future.

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

- Increase the rate of progress that Key Stage 2 pupils make in mathematics so that it is at least in line with the faster progress that they make in English by:
  - making sure that all teachers always check that all pupils understand each small step of learning in every lesson, and are not just following instructions or procedures that they do not fully understand
  - making sure that pupils are given time to act upon the comments that teachers make when they mark their books, as this will help teachers to check pupils' understanding and to push on new thinking and learning
  - giving pupils more opportunity to practise their mathematical skills in different subjects and situations.
- Make sure that the actions school leaders take to check the quality of teaching and drive school improvement are always sharply focused on improving pupils' learning by:
  - making sure that the regular lesson observations that already take place focus clearly on how teaching is helping pupils to deepen their understanding and learn new skills
  - making sure that improvement plans always have clear success criteria that are based on improved outcomes for pupils.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils make good progress at Christ Church Primary School, with progress in English being faster than progress in mathematics.
- Most children start school with knowledge and skills that are below expectations for their age, particularly in early language and communication. They do well in the Reception class and many children catch up during the year so that they start Year 1 with average attainment. Nevertheless, a few children are still behind in their learning when they go into Key Stage 1.
- Since the last inspection, the rate of pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 has got faster each year. Consequently, standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 have risen steadily and, in 2012, were broadly average for the first time in several years, with the strongest trend of improvement being seen in reading and writing.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has also risen since the last inspection. By the end of Year 6, most pupils now reach standards in English and mathematics that are in line with those expected for their age.
- Across the school, pupils of all abilities make particularly strong gains in reading. Many pupils make faster progress than is seen in most other primary schools. This is because the teaching of reading is given a high priority in the school. There is a structured whole-school approach in place, reading sessions are lively and fun, and pupils can enter a weekly competition if they read regularly at home. Well-trained support staff and a specialist teacher work with small groups each week so that no-one falls behind.
- In order to boost progress in mathematics, a new teaching style has been adopted and in the current Year 5 and 6, for example, pupils who made slow progress in earlier years are now being pushed to make faster progress in order to catch up. This is meeting with some success. It is clear that pupils are now making faster progress than they used to and that most are reaching the standards expected for their age. Nevertheless, school records and work in books confirm that, for some pupils, progress in mathematics across Key Stage 2 could be even faster.
- Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and supported through the use of the pupil premium do well at Christ Church Primary, particularly in English. At Key Stage 1, they reach similar levels as their classmates. The most recent end of Key Stage 2 test results show that in English, the gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and other pupils in the year group, as measured in average point scores, is narrower than that seen in most other schools. In mathematics, the gap is wider and is similar to that seen nationally.
- Pupils with special educational needs and disabled pupils also do well because they are given the extra help that they need.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching at the school is usually good and some teaching in Years 5 and 6 is outstanding.
- In the very best lessons, teachers' expectations are high, all understand what they are learning and why, and tasks require pupils to use and develop their skills in purposeful ways. In a very effective English lesson, for example, the high quality communication between pupils and teacher meant that all pupils were clear about the skills they needed to use in order to produce a persuasive letter about the problems caused by graffiti, and were motivated to write in order to challenge a local problem.
- Work in books and on display around the school shows that pupils are given many reasons to read and write for a real purpose, although chances to use mathematical skills in other subjects or situations are more limited.
- The school has recently introduced a new approach to the teaching of mathematics. Staff have received training, and progress information indicates that the new approach is bringing benefits. In lessons, teachers provide clear guidance and explanations and pupils are required to explain

their thinking to one another while staff listen to check how well they understand. Most of the time, this works well but sometimes teachers do too much talking and not enough listening. When this happens, it is harder for teachers to check whether pupils understand a new idea or are just following instructions in order to complete a task.

- There is a good quantity of work in pupils' books and all teachers use information about previous learning to plan lessons that meet the different needs of pupils in their class. Most marking is helpful and teachers often make written comments to prompt pupils to check their work or to push their thinking on. However, in some classes, pupils are not given time to respond, which means that this chance to check understanding or introduce new learning is missed.
- The support provided to pupils with particular needs, whether in class or in small group teaching sessions outside the main class, is highly effective and means that these pupils keep up with the others.

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

- Pupils say that they enjoy school because of 'all the fun stuff [they] do'. Their level of attendance is above average; they arrive on time, and feel safe and secure at school.
- In lessons, most pupils are attentive and keen to learn. Anyone who finds it hard to concentrate in class, or to cope with an aspect of school life, is given calm encouragement and support. School records confirm that disruption is rare and that typically pupils behave well.
- At break times, pupils play well together. Older pupils willingly help younger pupils and all are polite to adults and visitors.
- Pupils understand that all types of bullying are unacceptable. They do report some rough play at break times and say that name-calling does happen from time to time. However, when it does, it is stopped.
- Good behaviour is rewarded and any poor behaviour is challenged effectively. Adults are good role models and pupils know that if they need help, they will get it.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The improvements seen since the last inspection are the result of thoughtful leadership and strong teamwork. The headteacher knows all the pupils in the school; she knows what matters to them and takes a keen interest in their lives and well-being. In order to make sure that every pupil gets the best from school, she has built a capable team that shares her vision and values.
- Senior and subject leaders have clearly defined responsibilities and do their jobs well. The systems for tracking pupils' progress are well organised and efficient. Staff meet regularly to check how well pupils are doing and to make decisions about where extra support is needed. All staff know that their effectiveness in the classroom, and the progress made by pupils in their class, will influence decisions about their future pay and career progression.
- The headteacher has a regular routine for watching teachers at work and staff get frequent advice and training to help them improve their teaching. Lesson observation records are detailed and helpful but written feedback to teachers often focuses on describing what the teacher and other adults are doing, rather than on how well the pupils are learning as a result of teaching.
- All leaders use information about the school's performance to plan for improvement. Many detailed and lengthy plans are drawn up and no time is wasted in putting them into action and making sure that all are on board and understand what is expected from them. While there is no doubt that some recent changes have made a difference, leaders could do more to check how successfully these plans and actions are improving outcomes for pupils.
- Different subjects are linked together through topics which make learning exciting and relevant to the pupils. The attention to the arts is a significant strength. On display around the school, the high quality work inspired by the work of artists and events, such as the London 2012 Paralympics, highlights the school's commitment to celebrating talent, diversity and excellence.

- Outdoor learning and the many educational trips on offer are indicative of the efforts the school makes to teach pupils about the world beyond the classroom and to broaden their horizons.
- Pupils are taught about right and wrong and staff make sure that all are treated fairly and have the same opportunities.
- Links between home and school have been strengthened by a recent change to the homework policy, which now invites pupils to complete a family-based project that is then shared in school.
- The local authority provides low-level support for this good school.
- The school meets statutory requirements relating to safeguarding and equality of opportunity.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body is very well informed because governors have regular meetings with staff. They know how well pupils are doing and receive regular updates about the quality of teaching and how any under-performance is to be tackled. They use this information to make decisions about school improvement priorities, staff pay, deployment and recruitment. Governors say that everything they do must be 'in the best interests of the children' and they do not shy away from making tough decisions when necessary. In addition to shaping the direction of the school, many governors have a hands-on role; each governor is linked to a particular class and makes visits to classrooms to help out and to join staff in checking pupils' work. The governing body manages funds carefully, including the use of the pupil premium, to pay for the staff, activities and resources that help to boost pupils' progress. They are aware of the improvements that this has brought about in English.

## 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>	111351
<b>Local authority</b>	Cheshire West and Chester
<b>Inspection number</b>	401181

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 aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	173
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Peter Robson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jeanette Herbert
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 July 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 338 2062
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