

Christ Church Church of England Primary School

Woodland Vale Road, St Leonards-on-sea, East Sussex, TN37 6JJ

Inspection dates 25–26 April 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because attainment is low in English, and not all pupils make enough progress in this subject.
- Teaching is not always sufficiently challenging, especially for the more-able pupils, and pupils are not given enough chance to practise and extend what they have learned in reading and writing.
- Teachers' marking does not provide enough advice on how pupils should improve their work or help to improve work quickly.
- Staff do not all pronounce letter sounds correctly when helping pupils with their reading.
- Not all activities in the Nursery and Reception classes are purposeful and move learning forward when children are working independently.
- Leadership and management, and the monitoring of teaching and learning, including by governors, do not ensure that all teaching is good or better and that inconsistencies are eliminated.

The school has the following strengths:

- Pupils make good progress in mathematics in Years 1 to 6 and in personal development in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are given specific help, enabling them to learn quickly.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe at school. They are polite and keen to help others.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength and enables pupils to become well-rounded individuals.
- Leaders know what needs to be done to make the school good and have shown that they can improve areas that are not good enough.
- Parents and carers are positive about the work of the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 23 lessons with five lessons observed jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, teachers, pupils, members of the governing body and representatives from the local authority.
- The inspectors took into account 37 responses to the online Parent View survey and two letters from parents and carers, and held informal discussions with a sample of parents and carers.
- The inspectors considered the views expressed in 27 staff questionnaires.
- A range of information supplied by the school was scrutinised, including the school's own information about how well pupils are doing, planning documents, checks on the quality of teaching, the school development plan, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and safeguarding documents.

Inspection team

Alison Cartlidge, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Elizabeth Cole

Additional Inspector

Stephen Mellors

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- About one in five pupils have special educational needs and are supported through school action. This proportion is much higher than the national average. A further one in 10 pupils are supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, which is above average.
- Approximately two fifths of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium (additional money provided by the government for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and the children of service families). This is well above the national average. The school has no pupils from service families.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school runs breakfast and after school clubs.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in English and increase the proportion of good or better teaching, by:
 - ensuring pupils, especially the more able, are always given sufficiently challenging work
 - providing more opportunity for pupils to practise and extend their reading and writing
 - making sure that pupils are involved more in checking their work and have clearer guidance on how they can improve it next time
 - improving the knowledge of staff in how to sound out letters correctly.
- Ensure that tasks provided in the Nursery and Reception classes are always purposeful and staff help children to extend their learning when they are working independently.
- Strengthen the impact of leadership by:
 - increasing the rigour in monitoring teaching and learning so that inconsistencies are eliminated and learning is always quick enough
 - carrying out an external review of governance in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement is not good because pupils' attainment is low in English and not all pupils in Years 1 to 6 make sufficient progress in this subject.
- The majority of children join the Nursery working at below the levels expected for their age. Progress in the Nursery and Reception classes requires improvement because learning slows at times when children are working independently. Some tasks are insufficiently challenging or purposeful and staff do not help children to develop their ideas and vocabulary sufficiently. Children make good progress in personal development because staff are kind and caring and encourage independence. As a result, children are confident, make choices from the good quality resources and can organise themselves. For example, children in a Reception class worked together well when selecting what they needed to make puppets for their puppet show.
- Attainment by the end of Year 6 is broadly average, although it is lower in English than in mathematics. Pupils' progress in Years 1 to 6 requires improvement because in reading and writing, pupils do not always work at a challenging level or practise and extend what they have learned often enough. In contrast, pupils in mathematics make good use of what they have learned when working in other subjects and have additional daily opportunities to practise their skills and use their knowledge. Consequently, progress in mathematics is good and has improved since the dip in attainment in 2011.
- Progress is inconsistent between ability groups, and more-able pupils, in particular, are not consistently challenged to complete hard enough work. As one pupil said, 'Sometimes the work is too easy but never too hard.' Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because leaders use information about how well they are doing effectively to pinpoint what they need to learn next, leading to good, specific support in class and in additional group work.
- The school promotes equal opportunities and pupils in receipt of the pupil premium funding make good progress from their starting points and their attainment gap with other pupils is closing. By the end of Year 6 in 2012, they were a term behind other pupils at the school in reading and mathematics and two terms in writing. These gaps are similar to those found nationally.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because expectations for what pupils can achieve are not always high enough, particularly for the more-able pupils. As a result, in some lessons, pupils work too slowly or on tasks that are too easy for them. When this happens, pupils have to wait for others to catch up or do not apply themselves fully because they are bored. In a few lessons, teachers do most of the talking and when this occurs, pupils do not have enough opportunity to think for themselves.
- Staff develop good relationships with the pupils and manage behaviour well. As a result, pupils want to learn and do their best. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution towards supporting groups of pupils, particularly disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Teachers plan interesting activities that help pupils to concentrate and ask some good questions to ensure that pupils know what to do. For example, pupils in Year 6 enjoyed sorting statements into facts and fiction in preparation for writing a review, and in Year 4, pupils re-enacted the mummification process of ancient Egyptians with great enthusiasm.
- Not all staff with responsibility for teaching pupils the sounds letters make (phonics) are careful about being accurate when helping to sound out words. As a result, the teaching of reading is not always good enough.
- Staff in the Nursery and Reception classes provide a wide range of attractive activities indoors

and outside but do not always provide children with enough support and challenge when they are working on activities they have chosen for themselves to ensure that they are always purposeful.

- Teachers mark pupils' work frequently and write positive and encouraging comments. They do not consistently make clear how pupils could improve next time, involve pupils in checking their own work or make sure that their writing improves quickly.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well most of the time and enjoy learning, especially in mathematics. For example, in Year 6, pupils enjoyed carrying out an investigation where they were exploring the various properties of shapes.
- Pupils feel safe and are well informed about keeping safe. Parents and carers who responded to the Parent View survey agree that behaviour and safety are good.
- The school tackles discriminatory behaviour rigorously and consequently, instances of unkind behaviour or bullying have reduced. When minor instances occur, they are mostly dealt with to the pupils' satisfaction. Pupils say, 'Teachers are good at sorting out arguments.' Peer mediators relish their responsibility for helping other children sort out disputes when out at play. Pupils understand about different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying.
- Pupils are proud of their school and attendance is improving, with the school council contributing towards the campaign for improving attendance. A well-attended breakfast club has helped to improve punctuality.
- Pupils are good at working with each other and sharing resources. For example, in a Year 2 literacy lesson on the Great Fire of London, pupils cheered each other's good ideas. Occasionally, when pupils are not given hard enough work they can become a bit restless and lose concentration. Pupils admit that they occasionally 'mess around' but that this is linked to work being 'too easy'.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because teaching and learning are not monitored with sufficient rigour to ensure that they are consistently good and that school policies are always being followed.
- Leaders admit that they were taken by surprise when attainment and progress dipped in 2011. Since that time, they have been working with renewed vigour to ensure that the school improves again. While strategies to develop the school are now in place, it is too soon for the full impact of the action taken to be clear. Self-evaluation identifies the right areas to work on next, although it is slightly over generous in where it judges the school to be.
- Information on how well pupils are doing is used much more rigorously than in the past to identify individuals and groups of pupils who should be learning more quickly and to put in place plans to improve achievement. Leaders have demonstrated the capacity to further improve the improvements already made in pupils' achievement in mathematics.
- Procedures for developing the performance of teachers are securely in place. They link closely to the school improvement plans and what teachers need to do to become good or better. Pay awards are related closely to how well the pupils are doing.
- Pupil premium funding is spent flexibly to match the current needs of the pupils concerned. It mostly pays for additional staffing to run specific support groups.
- The local authority provided additional support for the school following its dip in attainment and has appropriately reduced the level of support now that the school is demonstrating the capacity to continue developing.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. Members of staff are trained in how to keep pupils safe and are checked for suitability for working in school.

- The curriculum requires improvement in English but is good in mathematics because pupils have good opportunities to develop skills in 'early morning maths' sessions and in other subjects.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is provided for well, leading to good relationships within the school and pupils caring for others globally. For example, pupils are generous in volunteering time and money to support a school in Sierra Leone. Pupils are fully aware of the 'Christ Church thing to do' and assemblies have focused well on qualities such as 'tolerance' and 'making the right choices'.
- Parents and carers are pleased with the work of the school and make positive comments such as 'The staff are very friendly' and 'Christ Church is committed to serving its community.'
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance requires improvement because governors are still developing their capacity to challenge the school to ensure that it does well in all aspects of its work. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and what needs to get better. They keep a watchful eye on expenditure, including the funding for pupils who benefit from the pupil premium. They are aware of how well their school is doing compared with other schools nationally, and understand how teachers are rewarded for good work and are supported and challenged when teaching is not good enough. Governors are supportive, keen to strengthen their roles further and consequently ensure that they attend relevant training sessions.

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

Unique reference number	114572
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	413071

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	454
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Philip Crow
Headteacher	Anne Hanney
Date of previous school inspection	9–10 February 2013
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