

Christ Church Pellon CE (VC) Primary School

Sandbeds Road, Pellon, Halifax, west Yorkshire, HX2 0QQ

Inspection dates 2–3 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- Pupils' rate of progress is not consistently good. This means they do not always achieve as well as they should.
- The quality of teaching is variable and requires improvement. In the less effective lessons, expectations are not always high enough, marking does not always help pupils understand how they can improve, and opportunities for pupils to build on their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects are missed.
- The quality of teaching is not strong enough in mathematics.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage do not do as well as they could when speaking, and thinking imaginatively to prepare them for writing. Equally, their understanding of the world around them is very low.
- Until very recently, the key areas of mathematics and the Early Years Foundation Stage have been without a suitable leader. This has affected the provision. As a result, the impact of leadership and management on pupils' achievement has not been strong enough.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have been successful in keeping a sense of community through a time of considerable staff changes.
- Leaders have made some good appointments. Staffing is now stable and leaders have successfully eradicated all the inadequate teaching.
- Consistently good teaching in Years 5 and 6 allows these pupils to make greater than expected progress.
- The school makes good provision for the high proportion of pupils who join during the year, especially those who speak very little English.
- Pupils receive good care and support and feel safe. The pastoral support officer contributes significantly to the well-being of pupils and their families.
- The school is successful in turning round the behaviour of the high proportion of pupils who have been excluded, or who are at risk of exclusion, from other primary schools.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 13 lessons or parts of lessons taught by eight different teachers. Two were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspectors heard pupils read, looked at the work in their books.
- Discussions were held with pupils, representatives of the governing body, staff, including senior and middle managers, and representatives of the local authority.
- From discussions and the responses to questionnaires, the inspectors took account of the views of staff.
- There were very few responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), therefore, inspectors looked at the views of parents in the school's own recent survey, and of the letters they received.
- The inspectors looked at a range of evidence including the school's own data on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents concerning safeguarding.

Inspection team

Katharine Halifax, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sharon Bruton

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This smaller-than-average sized primary school serves the Parish of Mount Pellon on the outskirts of Halifax.
- Children entering the Reception class come from up to 19 different settings.
- Almost one half of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium. This is above average. Pupil premium funding is intended for the support of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, in the care of the local authority, or from families in the armed forces.
- The majority of pupils are White British. At almost one fifth, there is a steady increase in the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups. Most are from Eastern Europe, others from South Asia and some of mixed heritage. Currently, 10 different languages are spoken.
- The proportion of pupils identified as disabled or with special educational needs and supported at school action is below average. Similarly, the proportion of those at school action plus, (which means they need additional help with their learning), and those with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- A far higher proportion than is usual join the school during the course of the year.
- The school met the government's current floor targets which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress by raising the quality of teaching to consistently good or better by:
 - making sure every teacher has the highest expectations of the levels pupils will achieve and in the presentation of their work
 - taking advantage of every opportunity to further pupils' reading, writing and mathematical knowledge in all subjects
 - improving the teaching of mathematics through suitable staff training, the teaching of mental problems, and in displays and investigations to support learning
 - making sure books are marked consistently, and that comments show pupils what they need to do to make better progress.
- Speed up the progress of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - using every opportunity to promote children's speech and encouraging this in their play in preparation for writing
 - providing more opportunities for children to have first-hand experiences that further their understanding of the world around them.
- Improve the leadership and management of the school by:
 - quickly implementing the plans drawn up by the recently appointed mathematics and Early Years Foundation Stage leaders
 - embedding the agreed ways of working to ensure consistency in all aspects of the school's work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Pupils' rate of progress is not consistent in all classes and all subjects.
- By Year 6, pupils' attainment is broadly average. This means they are not making the good progress that is expected from their individual starting points. This is because the rate of progress is not consistent in all classes and all subjects.
- Progress in mathematics requires improvement. Pupils learn their tables. They have a suitable knowledge of calculation, but their ability to solve problems mentally is slow. Furthermore, while pupils mostly come up with the right answers, they are not always able to say how they worked them out.
- As a result of good teaching, pupils make greater than expected progress in Years 5 and 6, with almost a half of pupils making twice that expected in reading and writing.
- The proportion of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 is rising year-on-year, as is the number of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 in English.
- Pupils' attainment and progress in writing is improving because of the way it is taught. The opportunity to write at length and imaginatively each week has resulted in improved sentence structure, grammar and interest to the reader.
- Daily lessons in reading, coupled with daily sessions in phonics (recognising letters and the sounds they make), have seen an improvement in reading in Years 3 to 6. By Year 2, pupils read simple texts with confidence and use their knowledge of phonics to help them recognise new words. However, they do not always refer to the illustrations, nor fully understand what they have read.
- By Year 6, the majority of pupils read fluently and with understanding. Pupils confidently scan non-fiction texts to gather information and many read for pleasure. Pupils who do not speak English make particularly good progress in their understanding of the language, and in reading texts in the English language because of the skilled teaching they receive.
- The pupil premium funding has been used wisely to provide more adults to support in classrooms and in providing exciting experiences to make learning meaningful. As a consequence, these pupils, including those who are known to be eligible for free school meals, are making greater progress than their peers. Other than pupils with disabilities or special educational needs, all those entitled to the pupil premium funding attained the expected Level 4 or above in English, though a small proportion missed out in mathematics.
- Leaders ensure all pupils have equality of opportunity to all aspects of school life. Taking account of their individual starting points, pupils who are identified as disabled and those with special educational needs make good progress. If they are found to be slipping behind, additional work in small groups or individually helps them catch up. Other pupils who have taken part in small group work make equally good progress.
- On entering the Reception class, children's knowledge and skills are only slightly below those typical of their age. A few children make good progress, but the progress for many requires improvement. While children take part in daily phonics lessons, their progress is slow because of a lack of pace and misconceptions. For example, when recognising the letter 't' children said 'bear' to the given object rather than 'teddy bear' and this went uncorrected. Furthermore, children have too few opportunities to speak in phrases and sentences and this limits their ideas for imaginative work and story-telling. Children enter the Reception class with a very limited experience of the world around them. While they have visits and visitors, too little time is taken to explain the real world.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Although the quality of teaching is improving with the previously inadequate teaching being eradicated, it is still too patchy and, therefore, requires improvement.
- Teachers are confident when teaching literacy, but not so sure of mathematics. Although each lesson begins with a mental mathematics challenge, these are not always crisp or sufficiently challenging. Pupils' books show erratic progress with limited examples of different tasks for pupils of differing abilities, and a dependency on commercially produced worksheets. Marking is generally praise with little indication of the next stage of learning.
- Mathematics does not feature highly in displays around school. While all classrooms have a numeracy wall, few have investigation and problem solving areas to encourage pupils to think and reason.
- Teaching has some strengths, including a consistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour and when encouraging pupils to assess their own learning. Teachers and support staff work well together and resources are generally used well. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to be excited by their learning. For example, pupils in Year 1 were fascinated when investigating materials which would help them be seen in the dark.
- Teaching in Years 5 and 6 has a sense of urgency and is meaningful. For example, pupils in Year 6 extended their understanding of ratio and proportion when 'doubling' the ingredients in a recipe to batch-bake chocolate buns. Teachers in these year groups challenge pupils to achieve the best they can and to produce their best work at all times. In some other year groups, however, tasks are too easy so pupils are not challenged to think and their learning slows. In addition, pupils do not always produce their best work in their books.
- Some good examples were seen of pupils extending their literacy skills in other subjects. For example, exciting writing about the 'jungle' topic, but overall opportunities are missed for pupils to build on their literacy and numeracy skills in history, geography and religious education.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Inspection evidence agrees with parents' and pupils' views that behaviour is good. The behaviour of many pupils is impeccable. Pupils are cheerful, welcoming and curious about visitors. They demonstrate good concentration, but on the occasions where the pace of the lesson slows, some lose interest.
- Pupils eagerly take on responsibilities. They are kind and considerate to each other, for example, if they see one of their classmates struggling they are quick to give a helping hand. Bullying is rare. Pupils say there has been the occasional name-calling and know what to do should any form of bullying arise.
- The behaviour of the high proportion of pupils who have been excluded or who are in danger of being excluded from other primary schools shows remarkable progress. This is because individual programmes are created for the pupils who need help in order to control their behaviour and emotions. These are successful because staff follow the agreed steps and pupils learn what is expected of them.
- Pupils have a good understanding of keeping safe, particularly when using the internet. They say behaviour is improving and that they feel safe in school. Their understanding of safety in the home, on the road and in water is equally good.
- Attendance is slowly improving and leaders and the pastoral support officer are working with parents to reduce the rate of persistent absenteeism.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Mathematics and the Early Years Foundation Stage have not been led effectively. This has affected the rate of school improvement. Over the past term, it has been possible to appoint suitable staff to take on the vacant leadership roles and strengthen the leadership team.

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have maintained a clear sense of community and team work within the school through trying times, including difficulties with staffing. Clear agreed ways of working are in place and are generally followed. However, while adults follow the behaviour policy well, teachers' response to the marking of pupils' work and the preferred method of teaching mathematics is variable.
- A rigorous system to keep a check on pupils' progress and attainment is in place. The information is analysed and discussed each half term with class teachers to hold them to account. Professional training and termly checks on the classroom performance of teachers has seen the end of inadequate teaching, and is moving a higher proportion of teaching to good or better.
- Initiatives have been taken to raise pupils' achievement and these have been particularly successful in reading and phonics. Leaders have identified mathematics as an area for improvement alongside a continued focus on writing.
- The curriculum is balanced with a good amount of time allocated to the important subjects of literacy and numeracy. However, there are no specific policies for the promotion of pupils' literacy and numeracy in other subjects. Pupils enjoy the themes they study, for example, the 'terrible Tudors'.
- The curriculum provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils say they especially enjoy the work they have done on Halifax, commenting that 'Percy Shaw's invention of cats' eyes all those years ago is still helping road safety today.'
- Leaders say they have received good support from the local authority.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Since becoming reconstituted and taking over from the interim executive board in September, the governing body has taken concerted steps to improve governance. Its members have taken up further training, and they support the school well through their frequent visits. Through the governors clear understanding of school data, they ask pertinent questions regarding achievement and attendance. They know the aspects of teaching that need to be improved and take these into consideration when awarding pay increases. Governors ensure the arrangements for safeguarding the pupils meet requirements and that no pupil or member of staff is discriminated against. Financial management is good. The use and effect of the pupil premium funding is monitored closely.

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	107535
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	400065

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	188
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael James
Headteacher	Helen York
Date of previous school inspection	21 June 2011
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