

St Christopher's Catholic Primary School

Wolverhampton Road, Codsall, Wolverhampton, WV8 1PF

Inspection dates 12–13 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher provides strong and caring leadership, ably supported by the deputy headteacher and a dedicated team of staff and governors. Leaders have had a sustained and positive impact on achievement and teaching.
- Achievement in reading, writing and mathematics is good throughout the school.
- The quality of teaching is never less than good and some is outstanding. Teachers succeed in engaging pupils' interest and help them to make good progress in their work.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils show consistently positive attitudes towards learning and each other. Pupils feel safe and work hard. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in their above average attendance.
- The school provides pupils with an exceptionally caring and nurturing environment which is fully appreciated by parents.
- The learning environment is very attractive. Displays are interactive, colourful and highly informative. Resources are of very good quality and are easily accessible to pupils, encouraging them to investigate and learn for themselves.
- The governing body contributes well to the success of the school. Governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. They are not afraid to ask challenging questions and hold the senior leaders to account.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' learning targets are not used consistently well to improve the quality of their work.
- The best aspects in teaching have not been fully shared across the school.
- Teachers' comments in marking do not always show pupils the next steps to help them improve their work, and they do not make sure pupils act on any advice given.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons or parts of lessons and saw all classes in operation. Five of these observations were shared with the headteacher or the deputy headteacher.
- The inspectors observed morning playtime, lunchtime activities and attended an assembly.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's data on pupils' current progress, leaders' reports on lesson observations, the school's improvement plan, planning and monitoring documents, documents relating to safeguarding, and records relating to behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books and also scrutinised a range of their work elsewhere.
- Discussions were held with pupils and an inspector listened to them read.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, governors, senior leaders and staff. In addition, the lead inspector had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- The views of 72 parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account, as well as those gathered through discussions with parents.
- The inspectors also received and considered the views of the 15 staff who completed questionnaires.

Inspection team

Sarah Somers, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Linda Brown

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average size for a primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and others) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of such pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- All classes contain pupils of the same age group.
- The school meets current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and raise pupils' achievement to the highest levels, by:
 - ensuring that pupils' targets for learning are used effectively to close any gaps in learning and raise the quality of their work to the next level
 - ensuring that comments in marking show pupils what they need to do to improve their work, and teachers check that they have responded to any advice given
 - sharing the outstanding practice that already exists within the school to develop the skills of all staff so they are as good as those of the most effective teachers.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills that are broadly typical of those seen at this age, although their language and mathematic skills are slightly lower. Children make good progress in all areas of learning because adults provide interesting activities and help children to learn and develop new skills. By the end of the Reception Year in 2013, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development was above the national average.
- Pupils continue to achieve well through Key Stage 1. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 is consistently above average. Lesson observations and school records show pupils make good progress from their starting points on entry to Year 1.
- Pupils achieve well throughout Key Stage 2. In 2013, at the end of Year 6, attainment in reading and writing was well above average but standards dipped to broadly average in mathematics. Progress, whilst good in all three subjects, is slightly stronger in reading than in writing and mathematics.
- The school's information about how well pupils are doing shows that current Year 6 pupils are on course to achieve above average standards in the national tests in all areas. Pupils' achievement in science is excellent.
- Pupils make good progress in reading. They read regularly and have a good knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds they make). The proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in the Year 1 national phonics check was well above average in 2013. Pupils who read to inspectors were enthusiastic about reading and demonstrated good skills and understanding for their age.
- The school's detailed tracking information shows that most pupils are currently making good progress whatever their starting points. This is confirmed by inspection evidence and work in pupils' books. The school's information about pupils' progress, observations of learning during lessons and the quality of work in books show that pupils make good progress. An increasing proportion of pupils are on course to attain above expected levels in both English and mathematics by the time they leave school.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is usually good because they receive good teaching and support. The school is effective in ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils in their learning. Pupils work hard and are keen to do well and have positive attitudes to learning and as a result, they make good progress.
- There were too few pupils for whom the school received additional funding (the pupil premium) last year to compare their performance with others without potentially identifying individuals. The income received by the school to support these pupils is spent on tailored interventions, individual and group support and on a range of experiences. The impact of this spending is closely monitored by the headteacher and governors. As a result, this small group of pupils generally achieves well.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good across the school and some teaching is outstanding. Nearly all parents who responded to the Parent View questionnaire said that their children are taught well and make

good progress.

- Effective monitoring by leaders has ensured teaching and learning have continued to improve. Senior leaders ensure that there is a clear focus on promoting high quality teaching, learning and achievement so that all pupils make good progress.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have access to a wide range of high-quality resources and an enhanced outdoor learning facility. A good balance of child led and teacher-directed activities helps the children to develop the ability to follow their own lines of enquiry successfully while receiving a good grounding in basic skills.
- Pupils gain from lessons which give them the opportunity to work individually, in pairs and groups. Excellent learning habits are acquired starting from Reception, where pupils are already making choices and taking responsibility for their learning.
- Where teaching is at its most effective, learning moves along at a rapid pace and pupils are highly motivated to succeed. In a Key Stage 2 lesson on finding averages, the task was challenging for pupils of all abilities. The levels of cooperation between pupils, the discussion of mathematical thinking and the teachers' incisive questioning contributed to pupils' rapid progress.
- Teachers ask pupils carefully-chosen questions to keep them engrossed in each lesson. In a Year 5 philosophy lesson, questioning by the teacher helped to consolidate learning and to challenge pupils' thinking by encouraging them to explain their reasoning.
- Teaching assistants work closely and effectively with teachers to help the pupils they support, including pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding and those who are disabled or have special educational needs, and encourage them to develop appropriate attitudes to their learning and, consequently, make good progress.
- Pupils present their work well showing pride in their achievements. The school has recently introduced a new marking policy. Teachers mark work regularly, but pupils are not consistently made aware of the next steps to take in their learning. Teachers do not routinely make sure that pupils act upon their advice and, therefore, the impact of the guidance is lost.
- Although teachers identify targets for pupils' next steps to improve their work, these are often too general. They are not consistently based on identified gaps in learning or on what the individual pupil needs to do to achieve the next National Curriculum level.
- The many colourful displays of pupils' work in classrooms and throughout the interior of the school reflect the range of the curriculum and the genuine pride that adults and pupils clearly take in their school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour in class and their enjoyment of learning are outstanding, so they are able to get on with their work very well and learn extremely effectively. Pupils take responsibility for managing their own behaviour and set themselves very high standards.
- Behaviour around school is equally outstanding. Pupils are unreservedly polite and courteous to one another and to staff and there is a strong community feeling to the school. Pupils' exemplary behaviour is reinforced by warm and trusting relationships with staff. Pupils are very

welcoming and friendly to visitors.

- School records show that incidences of misbehaviour are rare. There is no disruptive behaviour in lessons.
- Pupils are eager to learn and are highly motivated. They demonstrate excellent social skills, working well together in pairs or small groups. They respond well to teachers' high expectations and enjoy opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning and consequently achieve well.
- Although they say that bullying is rare at school, the pupils have an excellent understanding of what bullying is, including cyber bullying. They are confident that if they had any problems, they would be listened to by staff. Nearly all parents who responded to the online questionnaire, and all those who talked with the inspector at the school gate, agree, and feel the school keeps their child safe and that behaviour is managed well.
- Pupils enjoy school and the school has a long-standing track record of above average attendance, with no exclusions for many years.
- Pupils are proud ambassadors for their school and willingly take on a range of responsibilities as, for example, play leaders, house captains and litter pickers. The pupils have very effectively organised a range of activities to raise money for the recent Philippines disaster appeal.

The leadership and management are good

- The school is extremely well led by the headteacher, who provides caring and effective leadership. Together with the deputy headteacher and staff, she has created a clear vision in which developing both the academic potential of pupils and their wider social needs is a priority.
- The overwhelmingly positive responses from staff who returned questionnaires demonstrate that the headteacher has built an effective team with a strong team spirit. Leaders at all levels have been encouraged and supported to develop their roles and responsibilities, and this has strengthened leadership. One staff member commented, 'It's a pleasure to work in a caring, supportive school. I feel very proud to be part of the St Christopher's team.'
- The school is oversubscribed and popular with parents. Nearly all those responding to Parent View said they would recommend the school to other parents.
- The school's self-evaluation identifies its strengths and weaknesses precisely and development plans are focused accurately. Teaching is well led. As a result of regular monitoring and support, teaching has improved since the last inspection and is consistently good across the school with examples of outstanding practice. The most outstanding teaching, however, has not yet been fully shared across the school or used to develop teachers' skills to the full.
- The performance of staff is monitored closely and there is a close link between teachers' pay and the quality of teaching. Teachers' pay rises are carefully managed and promotions are only given when the impact on pupils' achievement shows they are merited. Good staff training has led to a whole-school approach to improvements.
- The curriculum meets the needs of pupils extremely well. Pupils are provided with variety of valuable and exciting experiences. These include trips to places of interest and visitors to the

school to stimulate pupils and broaden their horizons. Staff develop independence and creativity in the wide range of activities in art, music and sport, which inspire and enthuse pupils. There is no discrimination or exclusion of any pupil from any aspect of school life.

- The school's well-developed personal and social education programme and its caring ethos make a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their outstanding behaviour and relationship skills.
- The funding provided by the government to support the development of physical education in schools is being spent on additional professional coaching for staff and pupils. A range of sporting activities and health education. The impact is already being measured in terms of increased physical health and well-being, increased staff expertise and pupil participation in a range of sporting activities.
- Fully supported and monitored by the governing body, the school makes full and effective use of the money derived from the pupil premium to support frequent small-group and one-to-one work. This helps to ensure that eligible pupils make good progress.
- The school has a number of effective partnerships. There are strong links with the local church, the Diocese and local community. The headteacher in her role as a local leader of education has supported other schools to improve by providing training opportunities, shared resources and expertise.
- The local authority has taken a light-touch approach in recent years to its support for the school. This is because it has confidence in leaders to make the right choices about how to move the school forward.
- The school has ensured that its safeguarding policies and procedures meet all statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are well informed and have a good range of experience and expertise. They have a clear understanding of how well the school is doing and where it needs to make further improvements. They have a clear overview of pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. They are very supportive of the school, but also challenge and hold it to account by asking searching questions and by setting challenging targets as part of the headteacher's performance management. They make sure that decisions about teachers' salary progression are based on their performance and impact on pupils' achievement. They ensure that the school's finances are well managed and have a good knowledge of how pupil premium funding is spent and the impact it is having. They make sure that the school meets its statutory duties, including those related to safeguarding.

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	124374
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	427100

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	216
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Noel Gallagher
Headteacher	Kathleen Brown
Date of previous school inspection	25 September 2008
Telephone number	01902 434310
Fax number	01902 434310
Email address	office@st-christophers.staffs.sch.uk

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