

Christ Church Church of England Controlled Primary School

Brookhill Road, Bootle, Merseyside, L20 3JL

Inspection dates

27–28 March 2014

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

- Achievement is not consistent between key stages and across year groups. Not enough pupils, particularly the most able, make rapid progress.
- Attainment is well below that seen nationally in reading and writing and below in mathematics and has not improved sufficiently over the last three years, particularly in Key Stage 1.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve are not sufficiently high. Tasks do not provide enough challenge, especially for the most able, to enable them to learn as quickly as they should.
- The teaching of early reading skills, letters linked to their sounds, is not taught effectively enough.
- School leaders have not yet secured consistently good teaching throughout the school.
- The targets set for planned actions to raise pupils' achievement and improve teaching are not rigorous enough and do not enable school leaders and governors to check on their success as effectively as they could.
- Subject leaders, other than those for English and mathematics, are not given sufficient time or opportunity to check on standards in their area of responsibility.

The school has the following strengths

- The school provides a caring, nurturing environment where pupils feel safe and well cared for by all adults. Pupils' behaviour is good.
- Children get off to a successful start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good progress.
- The school curriculum is rich and broad and contributes very well to pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development.
- The sports provision both in and after school is excellent.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 23 lessons, which included three joint observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. In addition, some short visits were made to a few lessons to observe specialist teaching in music and physical education. Short visits were also made to other parts of the school to observe behaviour and safety and to hear some pupils read. No lessons were observed in Year 5 because pupils were on a residential trip for the duration of the inspection.
- A range of meetings was held with the headteacher. Inspectors also held meetings with senior leaders and middle managers, subject leaders, staff, representatives of the governing body, a local authority representative, a group of parents and two groups of pupils. Inspectors talked informally with pupils on the playground, in the dining hall and during lessons. An inspector also talked with parents at the school gate.
- The inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a range of documents including the school's own information about pupils' progress; school improvement planning; the checks made on learning and teachers' performance; organisation of the curriculum; safeguarding information; and the minutes of governing body meetings. Inspectors also looked at the school's website.
- Inspectors took account of 28 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), telephone calls from parents and letters from parents. They also considered 39 responses to the inspection questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Peter Martin, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lyn Pender

Additional Inspector

Pritiben Patel

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an above average-sized primary school and has recently introduced an Early Years Unit for two year olds. This was recently inspected in February 2014 and was judged good.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils from a minority ethnic group or for which English is an additional language is very small.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus is twice the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is approximately twice the national average. This is additional funding provided by the government for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- A significant number of pupils join the school at times other than the beginning of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The school has recently achieved the Silver Sportsmark.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to accelerate pupils' progress and raise standards, particularly in Key Stage 1, by making sure that:
 - all pupils, particularly the most able, are provided with the right level of challenge to match their abilities
 - standards set for pupils' work are consistently high
 - checks on pupils' understanding are carried out while they are learning and tasks adjusted to meet more effectively the pupils' needs
 - pupils are provided with the time and opportunity to respond to teachers' marking and to correct and improve their work
 - the teaching of early reading skills is more effective.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - checking more closely that actions put in place to improve the quality of teaching are effective and result in accelerating pupils' achievement and raising their attainment
 - making the targets for school improvement clear and measurable and more closely linked to pupils' progress to enable school leaders and governors to check the success of the school's actions more effectively
 - providing all subject leaders with the time and opportunity to check on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in their subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

Requires improvement

- The progress made by pupils between Year 1 and Year 6 is uneven. Achievement, particularly in reading and writing, is too slow and not enough pupils achieve the higher levels at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Children enter the Nursery class with skills and knowledge well below those typical for their age. Well-planned provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage provides an exciting range of activities and a happy and nurturing environment; ensuring children settle in well and make good progress.
- Progress slows in Key Stage 1. Pupils' attainment has declined over the last three years and pupils' progress has been less than expected. The school has re-organised its classes to address the causes of this decline and early indications are that pupils' progress is now beginning to accelerate.
- The rate of pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 speeds up. The proportion of pupils who make the expected progress and achieve average standards is similar to that seen nationally. However, the proportion of pupils who make more rapid progress is below the national average, particularly in reading and writing.
- Not enough pupils achieve the higher standards in all subjects in both Key Stages 1 and 2 because the most able pupils are not consistently stretched by the work they tackle.
- The school's checks on pupils' achievement in all classes from Year 1 to Year 6 confirm that, although good progress is seen in some classes, it is not consistent across, or within, these key stages.
- The school has given an increased focus to the teaching of reading and writing this year. For example, more emphasis has been placed on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills and linking pupils' writing to familiar texts to support the development of their writing skills. Early indications are that this is beginning to have an impact on the development of pupils' skills and the school's predicts that pupils are on track to reach higher standards at the end of both key stages this year.
- Pupils do not make enough progress in learning phonics (understanding the sounds that letters make). Although the proportion of pupils who achieved the required standard in the Year 1 national screening test increased in 2013, it remained below the national average. The proportion of pupils who achieve the standard by the end of Year 2 is also below average.
- The gap between the achievement of boys and girls is quite marked when they start school but, by the end of Year 6, this gap has closed considerably, although boys are still about one term behind in all subjects.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide additional support for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. This has enabled these pupils to make more rapid progress than other pupils in the school and to close the gap in their attainment between those eligible and those who are not eligible for support through this funding. At the end of Year 6, they are doing as well as similar pupils nationally and are about one term behind their peers in reading and mathematics and two terms in writing.
- The provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is well managed. Well-targeted additional support ensures these pupils make good progress overall, although it is not as rapid in classes where the teaching is less strong.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The teaching of reading, writing, and to a lesser extent mathematics, is uneven between Year 1 and Year 6 and requires improvement. Tasks do not always provide a good level of challenge for all groups, especially the most able and this slows their progress.

- It is not always made clear to pupils that they must always try their hardest in the work they do and to concentrate carefully on their learning.
- Pupils' understanding is not checked early enough to enable activities to be adjusted while they learn so that they meet pupils' needs. This results in some pupils not fully understanding what they have to do and others making unnecessary mistakes.
- Phonics is not taught effectively. Teachers do not always check whether pupils make the correct sounds they are learning. In some cases, the level of challenge is not sufficient and this slows down the progress pupils make, holding back pupils' reading development.
- Marking is generally good. It is closely linked to what pupils are expected to learn. It tells pupils what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve their work. However, in some cases, the next steps for pupils are not clear enough. Also, pupils are not routinely given time to consider teachers' marking or given the opportunity to correct and improve their work.
- Pupils have their own targets and are able to keep track of their progress. Pupils respond well to these targets or 'steps to success' and are able to judge for themselves how well they have done.
- Subject knowledge is good and pupils benefit from interesting activities which help them to enjoy learning.
- Good questioning skills are used to probe pupils' understanding, extend their thinking and test their understanding. Questions are often directed at individual pupils to keep an eye on their learning.
- When the work is very challenging pupils are keen to do well. For example, in Year 6, pupils were given complex line graphs on rainfall and asked to interpret the data and work often includes calculating percentages. In both cases, the work involved pupils applying their mathematical skills and knowledge to problems set in the context of real-life situations.
- Pupils said they enjoy their lessons and that the teachers made them interesting. They like their teachers and feel they really try to make their learning fun. 'They put a lot of enthusiasm into lessons to encourage us to do our best.'
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is consistently good. The well-planned provision provides children with a range of exciting activities to stimulate their imagination, allows them to explore the world, develop their speaking and listening skills, and to learn from and with each other. For example, children were playing in a 'Pizza Parlour'. Children eagerly baked pizzas, took orders, used the till and announced when the 'pizza' was ready over the microphone.
- Teaching assistants are not always deployed effectively during lessons to support pupils' learning, particularly in the main part of the lesson, when the teacher is talking to the whole class.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are friendly and polite. They speak courteously to the adults in school, open doors for people unbidden and generally behave well in and around the school.
- Pupils usually behave well in lessons. They are eager to learn and cooperate with teachers, enabling lessons to run smoothly without disruption. However, pupils do not learn as well when teachers do not set high enough expectations of behaviour, and so pupils lose concentration.
- Pupils said that behaviour in their school was good, that bullying was very rare and when it occurred, it was dealt with very quickly and effectively by the school. Parents and staff agree with this view. Some concerns were expressed about behaviour by a small minority of parents which were followed up, but inspectors found no evidence to support this view.
- Pupils have a very deep, and in some case very mature, understanding of what bullying is and the different forms it can take, for example, cyber bullying. One pupil described being bullied as, 'Getting physically or emotionally hurt on a regular basis'. Pupils also understood that some pupils presented the school with challenging behaviour on occasions, but were confident in the school's ability to handle these situations.

- A pastoral manager is employed to help pupils and families who have difficulties. There is a nurture room where pupils can go if they are having difficulty behaving. This enables staff to minimise the loss to the pupil's education and ensure that the education of others is disrupted as little as possible.
- The school keeps detailed records of incidents and these confirm that incidents of bad behaviour are reducing.
- Pupils are proud of their school and very ready to take on responsibilities. The school has an active school council which meets regularly and is consulted meaningfully on its views. The council was successful in having a vegetarian option put on the lunch menu and also has a very strong sense of community. For example, they led a campaign to reduce dog fouling in a passageway used by children when coming to school. Members designed posters and invited in the local Member of Parliament to discuss what he could do to help with the issue.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The site is kept very secure and pupils say they feel safe and well cared for by all the adults in the school. 'Teachers and children in the school always look out for you,' said one pupil. Parents and staff all agree with this view.
- Pupils have a good awareness of the dangers they face and how to keep themselves safe. For example, they are knowledgeable about the potential dangers posed by the internet.
- Attendance is improving but remains just below the national average. Parents say that the school does all it can to promote good attendance and there has been some success in reducing the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- The school's systems to check on, and the development of, the quality of teaching have not yet resulted in consistent levels of good achievement, particularly in Key Stage 1. Pupils' progress remains uneven in Key Stage 2 and not enough pupils are making accelerated progress.
- The school's own judgement on its performance is over-optimistic. It does, however, identify the important areas in need of improvement. A detailed school improvement plan sets out extensive actions to bring about these improvements and to increase pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. However, the targets set for these improvements are not always clear and measurable to enable school leaders and governors to judge effectively the success or otherwise of the actions taken.
- School leaders and the staff are united in their desire to provide a safe, happy environment in which the pupils can feel secure, develop self-confidence and make progress in their learning.
- A robust system for checking on the performance of teachers is in place. Teachers are set challenging targets and their progression up the pay scale is clearly linked to their performance.
- The checks made on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching in subjects other than English and mathematics is not yet rigorous enough. Although plans are in place to improve this, middle leaders have not as yet been given sufficient time or opportunity to effectively check on standards in their subjects.
- Leaders track pupils' progress and use their records to identify pupils who are falling behind, as well as checking on the progress of specific groups of pupils. This information is used to inform teachers' planning and to organise additional support for those pupils who need it. The impact of these actions is checked regularly and, as a result, the proportion achieving the expected progress in mathematics is above that seen nationally and similar to that seen nationally in reading and writing.
- The school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. The curriculum is rich and broad and provides pupils with many life experiences. Trips and visitors enrich the curriculum. At the time of the inspection, pupils in Year 5 were enjoying a residential trip to an outdoor adventure centre. Pupils' musical and artistic talents are also given many opportunities to blossom. During the inspection, for example, Year 4 pupils were participating, with great enjoyment, in a lively and vibrant drumming lesson.
- Sports provision is a particular strength of the school and is excellent. The school has just

achieved the Silver Sportsmark and is seeking to achieve the gold standard. The additional primary school sport funding has been used most effectively to further enhance the already extensive sports provision in the school. Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to participate in competitive sport with great success. During the inspection, the indoor athletics team competed in the county championships, representing Sefton.

- The large majority of parents are happy with the quality of communications between them and the school and say that teachers are very approachable and responsive to their concerns. A few parents expressed the wish to be able to be more involved in the school.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.
- The local authority has provided intense support in the past but currently provides light touch support only.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is good. Governors are very committed to the school and to pupils' welfare and achievement. Governance is much improved since the last inspection. Governors have sought appropriate training to enable them to carry out their function more effectively. They have a clear and accurate picture of the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. They provide constant challenge to the school for its performance and the success of its actions. Governors pay particular attention to the progress of vulnerable groups, such as those pupils known to be eligible for support by the pupil premium. The governing body has a firm grip on school finances and questions how effectively any additional funding, such as the pupil premium or the additional sports funding provided by the government, is used and the impact it has on pupils' learning and well-being.

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	104893
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	440707

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	2–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	367
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev T Rich
Headteacher	Mrs J Evans
Date of previous school inspection	9 November 2010
Telephone number	0151 922 2136
Fax number	0151 922 2360
Email address	admin.christchurch@schools.sefton.gov.uk

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