

Christ Church CofE Primary School, Pennington

West Bridgewater Street, Pennington, Leigh, Lancashire, WN7 4HB

Inspection dates

5–6 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well at this warm, welcoming school because every child is valued and every experience counts.
- The early years is extremely well led so that from their starting points, children in the Reception class receive a good start to their education and make good progress.
- Pupils continue to make good progress throughout the school so that they are well prepared when they move onto secondary education.
- Pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics and, by the end of Key Stage 2, standards are above average. Some pupils make outstanding progress, especially in writing.
- Pupils of all ages are well taught. Teachers have excellent relationships with pupils and make learning interesting and exciting.
- The school's set of values helps the pupils to understand the importance of good behaviour. Pupils behave well and feel very safe.
- Attendance is above average. Pupils say learning is fun. They particularly enjoy the broad range of activities on offer to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- The headteacher, very well supported by leadership at all levels, has had a significant impact on improving teaching and achievement. This is an improving school. Standards are rising.
- Leaders systematically check the achievement of individual pupils to ensure that their needs are well met.
- The governing body knows the school well and makes a valuable contribution to school improvement.
- Parents are supportive and are pleased with their children's education. Those who responded to the Parent View questionnaire would recommend the school to others.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Disadvantaged pupils do not make the rapid progress needed to close the gap between their attainment and that of others in the school, particularly in Key Stage 1.
- Tasks and activities do not always stretch all pupils to achieve to the best of their ability.
- The curriculum does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to learn about the diverse life-styles in modern Britain.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed lessons or parts of lessons across the school and carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, staff, members of the governing body and groups of pupils.
- A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority and a parent governor.
- Inspectors examined the school's own documentation to help gain an accurate picture of its performance, including: safeguarding policies; the school's evaluation of its own performance and development plan; minutes of governing body meetings; records of behaviour and displays of pupils' work and achievements around school.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and spoke informally to pupils during playtimes and lunchtimes.
- They took account of 19 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the 17 responses to the staff questionnaire and spoke to a parent on the telephone.

Inspection team

Pamela Davenport, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Margot D'Arcy

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average size primary school, although the number of pupils on roll is increasing.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, supported by the pupil premium, is above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed to their posts since the previous inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement even further so that it is outstanding by:
 - consistently planning activities which stretch all pupils throughout the school to achieve the best they can
 - ensuring that school leaders more frequently compare the achievement of different groups, so that any gaps in attainment can be closed earlier, particularly for disadvantaged pupils in Key Stage 1.
- Further improve the curriculum by providing opportunities for pupils to learn about and appreciate the diverse life-styles of modern Britain.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is relentless in her drive to improve standards for all pupils at Christ Church and, with the strong support of her leadership team, including middle leaders responsible for leading subjects, she has created an ethos of high expectation throughout the school. Pupils and staff are in no doubt that only the highest standards of work and behaviour are acceptable.
- A clear set of values underpins this ethos and helps to prepare pupils for the next steps in education and life. Pupils' understanding of the school's values reflects in the way they conduct themselves in and around the school and in their support for each other both in lessons and on the playground.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very strong. Pupils are very respectful of each other and all adults. Artwork displayed around the school is of a high standard. Pupils are proud of their musical accomplishments, including their participation in a number of singing events in the community.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and priorities for development and take a systematic approach to school improvement. Rigorous systems to check on the achievement of individual pupils enable actions to be taken swiftly to support any who are at risk of falling behind. The school is committed to ensuring every pupil has an equal opportunity to succeed. It uses the pupil premium funding effectively to support disadvantaged pupils so that they achieve well overall. However, leaders do not yet compare the achievement of different groups, including disadvantaged pupils, often enough so that any gaps in attainment, such as those in Key Stage 1, are closed earlier.
- Leaders at all levels contribute to improving teaching throughout the school. All staff have benefitted from working with colleagues in 'triads', supporting each other's practice to ensure that pupils make increasing progress in lessons. Targets set for teachers concentrate on raising pupils' achievement and are well linked to training and to teachers' salary progression.
- The range of subjects taught provides rich opportunities for pupils to have fun and enjoyment while learning. Children in the early years visit a boat museum to find out about life on the canal; Year 1 make termly visits to the park to learn about seasonal change, while Year 3 enjoy a French breakfast to help them to understand different cultures. The school is committed to ensuring that the new curriculum continues to be driven by interesting experiences to extend pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. However, while the school's values help to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain, the curriculum overall does not yet provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to learn about and appreciate the diversity of life-styles within Britain.
- The primary school sport and physical education funding is used effectively. Its impact can be measured in the increased participation of pupils in after-school clubs and in increased staff expertise as a result of working alongside qualified coaches.
- Leaders are proud of the school's partnerships with parents, which enable to support pupils' learning and development together. Parents express confidence in the school's leadership and management and believe that pupils are taught well. The increase in the number on roll since the previous inspection, including requests for more places than are available, is testimony to the popularity of the school in the community.
- The school engages very well with the local authority, which has no concerns about leaders' ability to manage continued improvement on their own. Strengths in teaching and leadership, including in the early years, are used to support improvement in other schools.
- Arrangements for safeguarding pupils and child protection procedures fully meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors support the drive to improve teaching and raise pupils' achievement effectively. They know the school well and provide support and challenge for school leaders appropriately, as they strive to improve standards.
 - They ensure that they fulfil their statutory duties in relation to finance and safeguarding and draw on the wealth of expertise of individual governors in addition to training provided by the local authority.
 - They are fully aware of the school's key strengths and the areas which need to develop further. Their accurate analysis of school and national assessment data gives them a clear picture of the school's performance in comparison to others and they are aware of the impact of the pupil premium funding in helping disadvantaged pupils to achieve the best they can.
 - In their drive to improve teaching they check that management of teachers' performance is thorough and understand how advancement in teachers' salaries is underpinned by performance in the classroom.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Sometimes, it is outstanding. Year 6 pupils for example, demonstrated their eagerness to learn in their excellent response to activities designed to develop their understanding of algebra.
- Attitudes to learning are positive but, very occasionally, a very small minority of pupils lose concentration when work is not challenging enough and this hinders the progress that they make. However, pupils demonstrate pride in their learning and respond very well to the teachers' high expectations for presenting their work.
- Pupils have excellent relationships with staff and with each other. They say that 'adults look after you,' and 'most people help each other.' They are proud of the buddy system, which is designed to ensure that those in Key Stage 2 support younger children.
- Behaviour around school, during playtimes and lunchtimes, is never less than good. Pupils are polite, courteous and extremely welcoming to visitors. They were keen to tell inspectors that 'we're all nice children and we have lots of fun, but school is for learning.'
- Pupils enjoy the responsibilities they are given through the school council. They are proud of their recommendations for fund raising and the money they have raised for various charities, including the Welly Walk to support a charity for improving the supply of water in Africa. They talked enthusiastically about upcoming events to raise funds for children less fortunate than themselves around the world.
- Pupils' attendance, which is consistently above the national average, demonstrates their love of the school. Pupils arrive to school on time and ready to learn.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Parents endorse this view.
- Most pupils say that they feel safe in school because they are confident that adults and their friends will help them if they have a problem. A typical comment about the school was that 'it gives me a warm feeling so that I feel happy and know that I am safe when I come inside.'
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe when using the internet and enjoy the activities which are planned to teach them about safety in potentially unsafe circumstances including safer cycling, road safety, the potential danger from strangers and water safety.
- Pupils are taught about some types of bullying but they do not yet have a secure knowledge about some aspects of prejudice-based bullying to enable them to be fully prepared for life in modern Britain.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching in all key stages is good and its impact over time for some pupils is outstanding. The quality of teaching is continually checked and teachers are responsive to the guidance and support given by leaders.
- Teachers and support staff work closely together, taking every opportunity to get to know pupils exceptionally well so that they can plan activities to meet individual needs.
- Support is targeted to ensure that pupils make good and sometimes outstanding progress from their starting points during their time in school. Pupils were enthusiastic when telling inspectors about the range of exciting experiences which are provided to make learning fun, including the stimulating visits to a residential outdoor learning centre and to Chester.
- The vibrant environment in classrooms, corridors and the school hall provides further support for learning. Pupils are stimulated to use prompts and examples of best practice to help them to achieve success.
- Strong relationships between pupils and adults are a feature of all classrooms and, where learning is most effective, pupils are encouraged to support each other and take responsibility for improving their own work. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to ask pupils searching questions, which challenge them to think more deeply and achieve well. For example, the most able pupils in Year 6 were observed using algebraic equations to express the area and perimeter of two-dimensional shapes. They deepened their understanding in discussion with peers and were able to answer the teacher's challenging questions independently.
- Occasionally, tasks are not challenging enough in some classes.
- Pupils know how to improve their work. Teachers' marking in their books is thorough and provides them with the opportunity to further challenge themselves and they are given time to respond. Pupils' writing has improved significantly as a result of the consistent approach throughout the school to setting targets

and providing feedback to help pupils to make progress. Marking in mathematics books challenges pupils to apply their newly acquired skills in a different context or to consolidate understanding with further practice. Pupils request additional work when they have not fully understood a mathematical concept and homework is used very effectively to address this.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Since the previous inspection, standards across the school have risen steadily. In 2013, and 2014, Year 6 pupils reached above average standards. They left Christ Church well prepared for their learning at secondary school.
- Children start school with levels of skill and knowledge that can vary but, over time, are below those typical for their age. They make good progress in the early years and in Key Stage 1 so that by the end of Year 2, most pupils are working at average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because of the good teaching they receive. Standards by the end of Year 2 have been rising steadily and, in 2014, were the highest in five years. School data and inspection evidence shows that this trend of improvement is set to continue. More pupils in Year 2 are now working at the higher levels of attainment.
- By the end of Key Stage 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average. This represents at least good, and for some pupils, outstanding progress from their lower starting points on entry to Year 3. The proportion of pupils making the expected rate of progress and doing better than this in 2014, compared very favourably with the proportion that did so nationally.
- Pupils enjoy and achieve well in reading. In Year 1 in 2013, the proportion of pupils reaching the required standard in the national check of their understanding and use of phonics (the link between letters and the sounds they make) was close to average. Although this proportion dipped slightly in 2014, this reflects pupils lower starting points. Younger pupils who read to inspectors demonstrated a secure knowledge of letters and sounds. Older pupils go on to read with confidence, fluency and enjoyment so that, by the time they leave primary school, they are capable readers.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well. This is as a result of the relentless focus of leaders and all staff who ensure that the progress of individual pupils is regularly checked so that additional support can be provided for pupils who are in danger of falling behind.
- In Year 6 in 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils was about three terms behind that of non-disadvantaged pupils in the school in mathematics, and two terms behind in reading and writing. Compared to other non-disadvantaged pupils nationally, their attainment was about one term behind in each of these subjects. School data and inspection evidence show that in Key Stage 2, disadvantaged pupils are achieving at least as well as, and sometimes better, than other non-disadvantaged pupils in the school. However, in Key Stage 1, the achievement of disadvantaged pupils is lower than that of their peers because, as a group, the support they need to make rapid progress is not always identified quickly enough.
- The most able pupils achieve well because they are given demanding work and tasks are planned to challenge them to deepen their understanding. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 is increasing and is average.

The early years provision is good

- There is often a wide range of skills, knowledge and understanding among the children who begin the Reception class each year. Over time, however, the starting points of many are generally below what is typical for their age. This is particularly so in relation to early reading, writing and number skills.
- During their time in the Reception class, children make good progress from their different starting points. By the end of the year, over half have reached a good level of development. This, along with their good behaviour means that they are ready to learn in Year 1.
- The early years is led well by a Specialist Teacher in Education. The leader has a very secure understanding of how young children learn and high expectations of what they can achieve. Children are kept very safe. Leadership provides an outstanding role model for teaching. For example, excellent questioning of children enables them to use their senses to describe the look, feel, smell and sound of autumn leaves which develops their language and vocabulary very well. Excellent links are established with parents, including regular workshops and imaginative homework tasks to help parents support their children's reading and understanding of mathematics in the world around them. Priorities for improvement appropriately identify the need to raise attainment further so that more children are well prepared for Year

1 work by the end of Reception.

- Teaching is good overall. Planning for teaching and learning is well organised and stems from robust and accurate assessment of individual children's skills, abilities and needs. Central to this are the very good links with the numerous nurseries children have attended prior to starting school and strong links with parents. Information from these sources, including pre-school home visits, provides a wealth of information about children's all round development, which is carefully considered to make secure assessments of their starting points.
- Regular, ongoing assessment of children's achievements is a strong feature of the provision, with the information used well to plan 'next steps' for individual children's learning. The information technology-based system used has numerous benefits, capturing children's achievements and ensuring parents are constantly updated about their children's progress. However, at times, support staff's overuse of the system limits their interaction with children so that opportunities to extend their learning are missed.
- The teaching of phonics is particularly effective. This enables children to quickly develop basic reading and writing skills. Opportunities abound, both indoors and outside, for children to enjoy books, read signs and practise writing; for example in the class Chinese restaurant, around the outdoor autumn table and when registering their names against activities in which they choose to work.
- Children develop a good awareness of number. Many are able to count and work with numbers up to 10 and some children show increasing competence in working with numbers to 20. Children's speaking and listening skills are continuously promoted, as are their personal and social skills. They enjoy the wealth of exciting activities on offer, choosing tasks confidently and sustaining concentration. They are keen to please teachers and are learning how to play and work effectively as part of a group.

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	106512
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	448324

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	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gill Fisher
Headteacher	Janet Rigby
Date of previous school inspection	21 September 2009
Telephone number	01942 673667
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