

Christ Church CofE Primary School

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

Inspection dates 11–12 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders, managers and governors have tackled the issues raised by the previous inspection with vigour and great determination. They have improved teaching across the school so that it is now consistently good.
- Leaders and teachers know pupils' needs and capabilities particularly well and track their progress very carefully. They identify problems at an early stage and take prompt action to organise additional support if needed.
- Pupils make good progress in developing reading, writing and mathematics skills because teachers build effectively on what they already know and can do. They also achieve well in a range of other subjects.
- Outstanding provision in Nursery and Reception gives children an excellent start to their education.
- Pupils enjoy learning and work hard. They behave well in lessons and around the school.
- The governing body is strongly committed to improving the school and provides high levels of challenge and support to senior leaders.
- Exceptionally thorough procedures for keeping pupils safe underpin the school's work. Pupils say they feel very safe and know how to keep themselves safe.
- Developing a sense of wonder in learning lies at the heart of the school's curriculum and is evident in lessons and during worship. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is the school's greatest strength.
- Pupils who have additional learning needs achieve well because of carefully planned support.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress as they move through the school as a result of the school's effective use of pupil premium funding.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, a few pupils are not moved on quickly enough when they have grasped new learning.
- There are still inconsistencies in the effectiveness of teachers' marking and feedback to pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons in Years 1 to 6 and visited the Nursery and Reception classes on three separate occasions. Six observations were undertaken jointly with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher. Inspectors also observed an act of collective worship.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally at break and lunch times. They also met with two groups of pupils. Together with senior leaders, they looked at pupils' work in their books in every year group.
- Inspectors had discussions with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, a representative from the local authority, the Chair of the Governing Body and five other governors.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance, the school improvement plan, information about pupils' progress and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors took into account the 41 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the governing body's most recent survey of parents. They also spoke to parents at the start of the day. Responses to the staff questionnaire were also taken into account.

Inspection team

Carole Skinner, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Wolfson

Additional Inspector

Joanna Brinkley

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are White British. Around a third of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. This is above the national average.
- There is a high turnover of pupils each year, especially throughout Key Stage 2. On average over the past three years, this represents around 30% of the pupils in Years 3 to 6.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average. Between them, pupils speak 27 languages other than English, the most common being Russian and Bengali.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding for disadvantaged pupils) is well above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above average.
- The early years provision includes a Nursery which children attend part time. There are two full-time Reception classes.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school provides breakfast and after-school clubs.
- There has been a relatively high turnover of staff since the previous inspection, especially in the early years and Key Stage 1. Recent appointments of senior and middle leaders include the assistant headteacher with responsibility for teaching and learning, the early years leader and the English subject leader. Seven new teachers have been appointed, two of whom lead a phase.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement to even higher levels in Key Stage 2 by:
 - ensuring pupils are always moved on to more challenging work as soon as they have fully mastered new learning
 - making sure all teachers implement the school's marking policy rigorously and consistently.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders have taken decisive action to improve the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection. The recent creation of the role of assistant headteacher, for teaching and learning, has provided a new impetus for this work.
- Leaders, including those with responsibility for the early years, Key Stage 1 and for lower and upper Key Stage 2, make thorough, frequent checks on the quality of teaching in all classes. They take steps to address shortcomings through additional support, coaching and training. The school is aware that, while teaching has improved strongly, some initiatives have yet to be fully effective in ensuring rapid progress for all.
- The introduction of 'Quality Reviews' for each teacher has brought a greater degree of rigour and precision to the monitoring of teaching. The reviews take into account evidence from lesson observations, pupils' views, scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning.
- Carefully targeted professional development opportunities enhance the skills and expertise of teachers and support staff.
- Leaders at all levels, governors and staff are highly ambitious for the school. They set challenging targets for all pupils, including those with additional needs, and use these effectively to measure pupils' progress throughout the year.
- Teachers also have challenging targets that are used to measure their impact on pupils' learning. Leaders and governors use this information when deciding which teachers are eligible for a pay increase.
- Many subject leaders, who are relatively new in post, are still developing their roles and responsibilities. All have made a good start in contributing to school improvement, for example, by leading staff training in their subjects. The leadership of mathematics and English has been strengthened well by recent appointments.
- The school makes effective use of the pupil premium to boost pupils' learning, for example, by funding additional teachers and support staff to provide extra tuition that has speeded rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics. They also help disadvantaged pupils who can speak very little English when they join the school. The school also funds pupils' participation in the breakfast and after-school clubs and this has encouraged pupils to attend school more regularly.
- The sport premium is used to good effect. It has funded a specialist sports assistant and training for teachers which has improved the quality of teaching and coaching for pupils in all areas of physical education. Pupils enjoy a wide range of clubs, including football, netball, badminton, cricket, athletics and indoor curling. They have achieved numerous successes in competitions at local and county level, despite having no playing field.
- The school's stated aim is 'to bring learning to life with a sense of awe and wonder.' Staff have made a good start on planning a revised curriculum which meets this aim, in line with new national guidelines. Planning is based around high quality texts which serve as a central theme. Teachers then plan effective links with other subjects that make learning meaningful.
- Key aspects of English and mathematics are still taught separately, but teachers plan relevant opportunities for pupils to use and apply their skills and knowledge in other subjects.
- The school gives high priority to preparing pupils for life in modern Britain. Pupils learn about the democratic process through holding elections and taking part in debates. They learn what it means to be a good citizen. Older pupils write letters of application for posts of responsibility.
- The school fosters excellent relationships between pupils of all ethnicities, faiths and backgrounds. The school community reflects the diversity of modern British society and staff take every opportunity to celebrate this. Equal opportunities and mutual respect for each other's differences are deeply engrained in the day-to-day life of the school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a significant strength. Pupils show curiosity and creativity in learning, and understand moral issues that affect their lives. Pupils participate with enthusiasm in art, music and sporting activities, and learn a great deal about life in developing countries, for example, through an established link with a school in Sierra Leone.
- The school works hard to engage parents in their children's learning. Phonics (the sounds that letters make) and mathematics workshops are well attended. Although only a small proportion of parents responded to the online survey, Parent View, most were happy with their children's education.
- The local authority has provided valuable support for the school since the last inspection, which has helped to accelerate the rate of improvement by improving teaching and the rate of learning. It continues to check the school's work periodically, recognising that leaders now have a strong capacity to sustain

improvement.

- The school has exceptionally thorough and effective arrangements for protecting children from harm. Staff implement procedures rigorously and deal with concerns promptly, involving relevant outside agencies as necessary. Governors ensure that all requirements are met.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has improved considerably since the last inspection. Governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths, know what needs to improve, and work closely with senior and middle leaders to monitor its effectiveness. For example, governors meet regularly with their staff counterparts to check pupils' learning and progress in different subjects. They are frequent visitors to the school and keep abreast of all developments.
 - Governors have a thorough understanding of data so that they know about the school's performance, including how it compares with other schools nationally. They receive detailed reports about the progress made by different groups of pupils at five points during the year and analyse and discuss report contents in depth. Governors ask perceptive and challenging questions to senior leaders about aspects of the data, for example, about the progress of disadvantaged pupils in mathematics. They are committed to ensuring that all pupils are enabled to reach their potential.
 - Governors are well informed about the strengths in teaching and know where improvements are still needed. They check that salary decisions are based on a rigorous evaluation of each teacher's performance.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Most pupils show enthusiasm for learning and behave well in lessons. Inspectors saw examples of exemplary behaviour in some lessons. Pupils showed respect and reverence when the parish priest led an act of worship.
- Inattention and restlessness are rare because teachers make learning interesting.
- Pupils generally take great pride in their work and enjoy explaining their learning to others. Many pupils present their work neatly, but a few do not take enough care with their handwriting or the way they set out mathematical calculations.
- Pupils move around the school in an orderly manner and behave sensibly in the dining hall, chatting amicably as they eat. They get on well at playtimes and records show that the number of incidents of misbehaviour has fallen significantly over the last three years. Most parents agree that behaviour is good when they respond to school surveys.
- Pupils help to keep the classrooms and corridors tidy. They handle resources carefully and treat the environment with respect.
- Many pupils take responsibility for jobs around the school and in classrooms. They are keen to apply for these posts and take their responsibilities seriously.
- A few pupils told inspectors that, occasionally, their learning is interrupted by a small number of pupils who find it difficult to behave well all the time in lessons. The school makes every effort to support pupils with challenging behaviour, for example, through one-to-one discussion and incentives such as the 'Earn and Learn' shop. Leaders only resort to exclusion if a pupil's behaviour is likely to endanger others' safety.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say they feel safe at all times and most parents agree that their children are kept safe. Frequent thorough checks on the school site ensure that pupils are safe when playing outside.
- There are rigorous procedures for checking if pupils fail to arrive at school and staff contact parents promptly to find out the reason.
- Pupils understand about different types of bullying. They say they learn a lot during Anti-Bullying Week and E-safety Day. Pupils know who to inform if they have concerns, although these are rare. Parents agree that pupils are kept safe at school.
- Pupils are cared for very well at the breakfast and after-school clubs.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers' knowledge of different subjects and their enthusiasm successfully capture pupils' interest and motivate pupils to learn.
- Teachers work well together in phase and year group teams to share knowledge and expertise, which benefits staff and pupils alike. They generally have high expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Teachers check pupils' learning well in lessons, for example, through discussion and targeted questions to evaluate the depth of their understanding. They use this to plan the next steps in learning for each pupil and organise additional support if a pupil is struggling. In a few lessons, they are not quick enough to give pupils more challenging work as soon as they are ready.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils in lessons, both for those with behaviour issues and pupils who lack confidence when tackling new learning. Some take a key role in delivering specific programmes to develop pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills.
- As a result of effective training by the new English leader, the teaching of phonics has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Accurate teaching of sounds begins in Nursery and Reception, and this forms a solid foundation for learning to read and to spell words correctly. As a result of these improvements, Year 1 pupils did particularly well in the national phonics screening check in 2014.
- Good teaching of reading continues throughout the school. Teachers ensure all pupils have plenty of opportunities to apply their skills to a wide range of fiction and non-fiction texts. Pupils are very enthusiastic about the 'Bug Club', their individualised on-line library, which provides a selection of books for home and school learning.
- The introduction of 'Target Writing' has increased the focus on developing specific skills and knowledge, such as the use of grammar and punctuation. Teachers assess how well pupils meet their individual targets for each task and use this information to determine pupils' next steps. Pupils' books show that pupils apply these skills well in longer pieces of writing.
- Focused training from the subject leader has raised the quality of teaching in mathematics across the school. Teachers check the depth of pupils' understanding before moving them on to new work and revisit tricky concepts, such as decimal fractions and percentages, as often as needed to consolidate learning.
- The new school marking policy is having a better impact in some classes than others. Teachers do not always make clear what pupils need to do next or ensure that they follow advice given.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Actions taken to raise standards after the last inspection have had a significant impact. In 2014, there was a marked rise in pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics, despite the high turnover of pupils over the key stage. Standards in reading and mathematics were broadly average.
- The biggest success was in writing, where standards were above the national average. Every pupil in Year 6 made the progress expected across the key stage and almost half did even better than this, including pupils who are disadvantaged. The school continues to build on this success. Inspectors saw evidence in pupils' books of good progress in writing across all year groups.
- Although standards in grammar, punctuation and spelling showed considerable improvement in 2014, they remained below average. Pupils' work shows that an intense focus on these aspects of English since September 2014 has greatly improved pupils' skills and the quality of their written work as a whole.
- The most-able pupils achieve well. In 2014 most of these pupils reached at least the higher National Curriculum Level 5 in reading and mathematics, and all did so in writing. The proportion that reached Level 6 was similar to the national figure in each subject. Current Year 6 pupils' writing is of a high standard, especially the Level 6 writers. Their style, expression and use of literary techniques are exceptional.
- In 2014, a small proportion of pupils who were close to achieving Level 3 in reading and mathematics in Year 2 did not progress to Level 5 in Year 6. The school is rightly focusing on pupils at a similar level to maximise their progress in these subjects.
- Daily 'morning maths' sessions and the use of 'maths mats' are helping to raise standards further in mathematics. Pupils' books show that pupils develop a good understanding of mathematical concepts and are proficient in applying their skills and knowledge when solving a range of problems.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieved well in 2014. Their progress was similar to that of other pupils in school and nationally, although one or two of the most able pupils did not reach their full potential in reading and mathematics.
- In 2014, disadvantaged pupils were approximately two and a half terms behind others in school in

mathematics and writing, and one and a half terms in writing. Compared to non-disadvantaged pupils nationally, they were approximately two terms behind in mathematics, one and a half terms in reading and just over half a term in writing. This represents a significant improvement on the previous year. Nevertheless, the school is aware of the need to narrow the gaps further, especially in mathematics and reading, and is taking appropriate steps to do this.

- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because they are supported well in lessons and through additional individual and small-group tuition. Pupils who are learning to speak English grasp the language quickly and soon become fluent enough to cope with everyday work. They receive specialist support as needed and this helps them to overcome any barriers to learning.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- Highly effective leadership has brought about rapid change in the quality of provision for children in the Nursery and Reception classes. Expectations are high and staff work together as a cohesive team to provide an excellent range of experiences for children in all areas of learning.
- The 'Foundation Village' approach makes enables children to move between Nursery and Reception activities as appropriate to their stage of development. For example, able Nursery children who are ready to tackle more challenging learning sometimes join groups of Reception children to learn about phonics.
- Classrooms are bright and colourful, and eye-catching displays support children's learning and celebrate their many achievements. High quality resources are plentiful. The large, exceptionally well-equipped outside area provides children with numerous opportunities to explore, investigate and learn through play in all weathers.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Children thoroughly enjoy learning about the world around them and engage in activities with great enthusiasm. They cooperate very well with others, sharing resources and ideas, for example, when investigating what makes cars go faster.
- Pupils are kept safe at all times through rigorous checks on the indoor and outdoor spaces. Staff know the children very well and are quick to respond to any concerns.
- Precise and accurate teaching of phonics ensures children quickly acquire the building blocks for reading and writing. Numerous opportunities to count, calculate, measure and sing number rhymes ensure rapid progress in developing mathematical skills and understanding.
- Children make rapid progress from starting points that, for many, are well below those typical for their age, especially in language and communication and personal and social development. In 2014, almost three quarters of children reached a good level of development, which is above the national average. This prepared them exceptionally well for Year 1, where they are now building successfully on their early learning.
- Teachers work closely with parents and pre-school providers to assess children's needs and capabilities. Excellent arrangements ease children's first days at school and involve parents productively in their learning. This close partnership continues throughout children's time in the early years.
- Excellent assessment procedures involve all staff and parents in recording children's achievements, both at school and at home, in their 'Learning Journal' books, which are of exceptional quality. This gives staff and parents a very clear picture of how well each child is progressing in each area of learning.

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	453693

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	467
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Fairless
Headteacher	Anne Hanney
Date of previous school inspection	25–26 April 2013
Telephone number	01424 422953
Fax number	01424 720707
Email address	office@christchurch.e-sussex.sch.uk

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