

Christ Church CE Primary School

William Street, Fenton, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 2JG

Inspection dates

28–29 June 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Changes to the leadership team and staff turnover have slowed the rate at which the school has been able to secure good teaching and better outcomes.
- Members of the senior leadership team are responsible for too many areas of school improvement to be fully effective in their roles.
- Leadership of mathematics and English is not always effective and leaders do not continually and rigorously evaluate the impact of their work.
- The quality of teaching is improving, but is variable across the school. Some teaching does not fully challenge the most able.
- Teachers' feedback in books and lessons is not always in line with what leaders have agreed should be in place and varies in its impact on pupils.
- Opportunities to practise basic mathematical and English skills are not always evident across the curriculum. Standards of presentation are mixed in some English and mathematics books and this results in disjointed progress.
- Outcomes for children in the early years and Year 1 are improving, but these good rates of progress are not sustained across the rest of the school.
- Attainment in writing and spelling, grammar and punctuation is lower than national levels. In 2015, not enough pupils made the expected levels of progress in writing at the end of key stage 2. Very few pupils make enough progress in writing to achieve at a higher level by the end of key stages 1 and 2.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are focused on the correct areas to ensure further improvement. Staff are united and share the drive and ambition of leaders.
- The quality of teaching has been strengthened by the appointment of several very enthusiastic and reflective staff.
- Behaviour has improved as a result of a positive and consistent approach from staff. Pupils respond well to the established reward systems.
- Outcomes in early years continue to improve and the learning environment has developed considerably. Children make rapid progress from their starting points in Nursery and the Reception Year.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the impact leaders have on pupils' progress by making sure that:
 - the leadership of different curriculum areas is shared more widely across the staff
 - new leaders have training to help them develop action plans that contain clear outcomes and are regularly reviewed
 - planned actions to develop mathematics and English are more precise
 - all staff consistently apply the school's feedback policy, so pupils can improve their work.
- Further develop the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
 - planning offers opportunities for the most able to be challenged and achieve at higher levels across the curriculum
 - learning in topic books is of the same standard and presentation as that found in English books.
- Increase pupils' progress and raise standards, particularly in mathematics and writing, by:
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to write at length and apply their spelling, grammar and punctuation skills in a wider range of subjects
 - ensuring that the best teaching practice is more widely shared.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Continued changes in leadership and teaching staff have made it challenging for the school to maintain a consistent approach to teaching, resulting in disjointed levels of progress.
- Leaders and teachers responsible for mathematics, English and science do not develop action plans that detail clear outcomes. As a result, leaders and teachers are not able to talk confidently about the impact their work is having on improving standards.
- The curriculum has been developed so that it excites and engages pupils more. However, the strong emphasis placed on standards in reading, writing and mathematics means that the development of other subjects is not as rigorous. Although overviews provide useful information about the areas of learning that pupils will explore, the skills, knowledge and understanding that will be acquired in these subject areas are not adequately monitored or evaluated.
- The school is currently training teachers to take on more responsibilities for leading subject areas. Staff are keen to make the most of these opportunities and have already met with teachers from other schools to share good practice.
- The senior leadership team knows the school's strengths and areas for development well. It is focused on the right areas to bring about further improvement. Staff understand and share leaders' vision.
- Leaders ensure that staff training closely matches areas identified for improvement. Teachers and support staff say that the meetings and courses they attend have helped them improve the impact of their work. This is evident in class and is a growing strength in the teaching of reading. Teachers use interesting texts to engage pupils in their learning. They make careful changes in how they share different stories and information so that they can offer a greater level of challenge. This work is resulting in better rates of progress, but is not yet sustained over a longer period of time.
- Where teachers apply the feedback policy consistently and have high expectations of what pupils can do, progress is improving. Where this is not the case, work in books can sometimes be poorly presented and the quality of handwriting can vary from lesson to lesson.
- The school is working hard to promote British values. Pupils in Years 4 and 6 have taken a very keen interest in the recent referendum regarding Britain's membership of the European Union. They enjoy debating and have transferred this interest into some very lively and persuasive writing in English. Year 6 recently visited the Houses of Parliament. During their visit, pupils sat in the gallery to watch the passage of a bill through the House and were keen to put questions to their local member of parliament.
- The school's work to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a growing strength. The extent to which pupils think about their roles and responsibilities through events and topics in the curriculum and through meeting visitors who come into school is displayed proudly around the school. This is complemented by the school's adoption and use of Unicef's 'Rights Respecting Schools' programme. The rights of a child are interwoven through the school's development plans and improvement work.
- Additional funding is used effectively to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and their peers are reducing over time. In some instances, disadvantaged pupils attain at higher levels and make better rates of progress than their peers. Leaders use some of the funding to employ a home-school link worker and learning mentor. These staff have a positive impact on disadvantaged pupils. For example, they help pupils engage more with their learning and sometimes support them through individual sessions or additional teaching. Such strategies boost pupils' confidence and help them feel ready to learn.
- The physical education and sports premium funding has been used to train staff and widen opportunities for pupils to participate in different clubs and activities. Pupils talk very positively about these clubs and the school is proud of the specialist support that has been established. During the inspection, pupils were observed participating in football coaching sessions. They were exhausted after their club and all reported that they had had a brilliant time.
- The school has received support from other local schools. This support has helped refine action plans and has created a wide range of opportunities for newly qualified teachers (NQTs). Teachers new to the profession speak very highly of the training that they are receiving. Some good levels of progress in pupils' books demonstrate how they are developing in their roles. The NQTs have brought a new energy to the profile of teaching at Christ Church. They demonstrate a strong desire to improve and are committed to helping pupils make good progress.

- The local authority and diocese have offered support to the school in the form of training and regular reviews over the last two years. This has been well received by leaders and has particularly helped secure improvements in the early years and in the approaches taken to the teaching of reading and writing.
- The school has a Christian character and its motto, 'Learning with God and Each Other to Be the Best We Can Be' is proudly displayed around the school. The pupils and staff are proud of their school and are determined to see it improve further.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Changes to governance were swift following the external review of governance in 2014. The reconstituted governing body can now speak confidently about the impact of the school's work.
 - The chair of governors knows the school well and has helped develop the skills of new governors to challenge and support leaders.
 - Minutes of governing body meetings demonstrate challenge, and governors ask leaders pertinent questions about outcomes for pupils. Several questions demonstrate governors' growing confidence and increasing expectations. Governors probe leaders to make sure that sufficient action is being taken to address weaknesses.
 - Governors play a key role in ensuring that performance management systems are robust and that any under-performance is challenged.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The single central record and personnel files are well maintained and meet requirements. Any concerns relating to pupils' safety and welfare are reported promptly and the necessary actions are taken by designated staff. Child protection training is up to date and staff have attended professional development to help them understand the duty they have in preventing pupils from being drawn into radicalisation.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The overall profile of teaching is now better as a result of recent appointments. Inadequate teaching has been eradicated, but there remains some variation in the quality of teaching between year groups.
- Where teaching is not good, the most able pupils are asked to complete activities that are too easy for them. As a result, levels of progress are not as high as they could be and not enough of the most able pupils achieve as well as they should.
- The teaching of English and mathematics is improving. Work in books demonstrates that most pupils are now making better rates of progress. However, this progress is less evident in other areas of the curriculum. Some topic books are untidy and do not meet leaders' expectations. This variation in teachers' expectations has a detrimental impact on pupils' progress. Teachers are not providing pupils with sufficient opportunities to practise their mathematical and English skills in a wider range of subjects.
- Leaders have developed new assessment systems and conduct 'cohort analysis' exercises every half term to check on pupils' progress.
- Teachers' assessments are detailed and frequent. They carefully plot what pupils can and cannot do over time. This system is very helpful and teachers use it to plan their lessons and focus learning on areas for improvement.
- Teaching assistants generally respond to pupils' needs and use effective questioning to help move learning on. However, in some classes, additional support was observed to be less effective. A minority of teaching assistants sometimes spend periods of time watching the teacher without intervening quickly enough to support the pupils around them.
- The majority of parents and carers talk positively about the quality of teaching that their children receive. Some are concerned by the changes to staffing that have occurred recently. Parents of children in the early years speak very highly of the school. They say that children settle quickly when they arrive as a result of excellent relationships.
- Teaching is stronger in the early years, particularly in Nursery. Here, children are engrossed in learning activities and progress is rapid. Planning and resources are closely aligned to the needs of children. Staff understand their roles well and skilfully support children to develop their knowledge and understanding.
- Phonics (the sounds that letters represent) is well taught when children join the school. This better teaching is also evident in key stage 1 where pupils are increasingly reaching the reading level expected for their age. Pupils are now beginning to sustain their enthusiasm for reading into key stage 2. Reading is given prominence in school displays and pupils talk confidently about their favourite authors and the books that they are reading

in class and at home.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident and inquisitive at Christ Church. They are keen to question visitors when they arrive in class. In key stage 1, some will even try to find out how old you are and discover what your 'real' name is!
- The home-school link worker and learning mentor know the pupils' needs well. They plan additional activities and support sessions to make sure that pupils feel happy and safe. Some pupils talk with a great deal of pride about the support that they receive. This support was evident throughout the school. Staff know the pupils well and encourage them to make the right choices.
- Pupils say that they know how to stay safe online and that there is someone to talk to if they are worried about anything.
- Most parents say that the school responds well to any concerns that they raise. The majority of parents report that their children are happy to come to school and enjoy learning.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- There have been marked improvements in behaviour over time.
- The new systems for managing behaviour are based on a positive approach. Staff use reward systems to recognise what the pupils are doing well. Pupils respond quickly to requests and are polite and cooperative.
- The school's own tracking systems evidence how any incidents of poor behaviour have reduced over time. Pupils have responded very positively to the systems that have been introduced.
- Pupils line up in an orderly manner after break- and lunchtime. They respond to support staff and midday supervisors in a courteous manner during this social time.
- Some pupils volunteer to be play leaders and are trained by the school council before they take up their new roles. This demonstrates the school's ambition to instil a sense of responsibility in older pupils.
- Rates of exclusion have dropped over time and any pupils at risk of exclusion are supported with additional programmes from specially trained staff.
- Attendance has improved considerably and is now in line with national averages. Attendance displays are all around school and clearly set out the school's expectations. As a result of the staff's diligence in this area, the number of persistent absentees has also fallen. Attendance for different groups of pupils is also good. Gaps between any groups have reduced and are carefully monitored by the school.
- Some parents that inspectors spoke to at home time feel that the new systems to improve behaviour have led to real improvements. They say that their children love receiving rewards and that they would recommend the school to someone else.
- Some parents raised concerns about behaviour. The school recognises that it must continue both the good work that it is doing and ensure that improvements are built upon further.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Outcomes in the early years and Year 1 have shown marked improvements in recent years and the school's new assessment systems suggest that this trend is set to improve further. Attainment across Year 2 and key stage 2 is less secure and there is some variability.
- Attainment and progress in writing are particularly low compared with national figures. Pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation skills are not always sufficiently developed. When pupils leave in Year 6, some lack the skills required to ensure that they are fully ready for the next stage of their learning.
- The most able pupils do not attain as well as they could. Too few pupils attain at a higher level in writing at the end of key stages 1 and 2. Most-able pupils make better gains in their reading and mathematics.
- Work in books mostly shows positive levels of progress in mathematics and English. Feedback from teachers helps pupils understand how well they are doing. In the best practice, work is highlighted to show exactly what is effective and what needs to improve.

- The stronger progress demonstrated in English and mathematics is not always replicated in other subject areas. In some books, the standard of presentation can fall and it is evident that expectations are not always high enough.
- Outcomes in the early years improve year on year. Children make rapid progress from their starting points and attain close to national levels. Early priority is given to developing reading, writing and mathematical skills. This is resulting in much stronger levels of attainment in writing by the time children reach the end of the Reception Year. Many children are happy to write at length. Their sentences are easy to read and simple words are spelled correctly.
- In Year 1, results in the phonics screening check are positive. The school predicts that it will be in line with or above national figures this year. Inspectors read with pupils in Year 1. Pupils are confident readers and can blend a wide range of complex words. Their diaries show the frequency with which they read to staff at school and family members at home.
- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is closely tracked by the inclusion leader. This work is also overseen by a school governor. Most pupils make progress similar to that of their peers. Where the school has any concerns about levels of progress, additional support is put in place and helps pupils catch up.
- Disadvantaged pupils continue to improve upon the better progress they have made in recent years. In many areas of the curriculum, they attain in line with, or above, their peers. Funding is used well to help pupils learn at a faster rate. Some pupils receive additional emotional or pastoral support. Some also attend extra sessions to help them with their mathematics and English. The progress of disadvantaged pupils is improving in almost all year groups. This progress is less secure in writing. The school is aware of this and has planned some new ways to use funding from September 2016 to address this weakness.

Early years provision

is good

- Leaders have responded well to the advice and support of a range of external consultants and considerably improved provision in the early years. Children make rapid progress from starting points that are lower than what is typical for their age. This good level of development is set to be in line with national figures again this year and has risen sharply. In 2014, 34% of children achieved a good level of development. This figure rose to 63% in 2015 and the school predicts that this higher attainment will be maintained again this year.
- Staff keep very detailed assessments of what the children can do over time. These assessments are accurate and supported by a strong evidence base. The school uses 'learning journeys' to demonstrate what children achieve while they are in the early years. These are complemented by further evidence of learning in mathematics and English books.
- As a result of highly detailed and accurate assessment, planning is well matched to the needs and interests of children. Staff have very high expectations of what children can do. Children observed in Nursery were seen to be making rapid progress in their understanding of the world. Children were learning with an adult in a small-group activity and were able to correctly identify the location of Australia on a map.
- Staff in Nursery are particularly skilled in asking questions that promote learning. They intervene to support learning at the right time. Some learning is more structured and led by adults to help narrow any gaps that have been identified in attainment.
- Welfare requirements are met and staff hold the necessary qualifications for first aid. The early years policy clearly sets out expectations of what staff should do and how learning will take place in Nursery and the Reception Year.
- Behaviour across the early years is a strength. Children are very settled and listen attentively to everything that staff say. They are highly inquisitive and want to show visitors everything that they do.
- Boys and girls love to write. By the end of the Reception Year, many are writing extended sentences with mostly correct spelling. Children choose to sit and write independently and use their improving phonics skills to attempt a range of complex words. During the inspection, children in the Reception Year were writing a recipe for making bread. They were describing, with great understanding, how to knead bread and the ingredients that would be required to help the dough rise.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the early years. They talk with pride and enthusiasm about what their children do and how quickly they settle. In Nursery, a bear and diary regularly go home to different families to record adventures. The diary is full of exciting journeys and everyday family life. Parents go to great lengths to write down and photograph what they do. This demonstrates their engagement with the school and desire to support the progress of the children.

- The learning environment has also improved. However, developments have been more rapid in the Nursery than in the Reception Year. In the Reception Year, there is a greater level of creative experiences and 'zoning' of learning areas, but it requires further improvement. Some resources are not as well used and there are fewer activities for children to choose from than in the Nursery.
- The outdoor environment is being used to its best by creating dens under the climbing frame, but staff recognise that this is an area they want to develop further. There is a good range of opportunities to write in the outdoor area and the role-play areas are well resourced.

School details

Unique reference number	124229
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	10002532

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	215
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Colin Parkes
Headteacher	Paula Scattergood
Telephone number	01782 234834
Website	www.christchurchfenton.co.uk
Email address	office@christchurchfenton.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	22–23 January 2014

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Since the previous inspection, an assistant headteacher has left the school and there have been several changes to teaching staff.
- The proportion of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils (those who are supported by the pupil premium funding) is above average. The pupil premium provides additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for children looked after by the local authority.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below that in most schools.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 12 lessons or parts of lessons. A number of lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and listened to them read. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime, lunchtime and at the end of the school day, as well as in lessons. They spoke with pupils during lesson and break times.
- A scrutiny of pupils' work in books was undertaken jointly by the inspection team and senior leaders.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including assessments and records of pupils' progress, the school's checks and records relating to safeguarding, child protection and attendance, records of how teaching is managed, and the school improvement plans.
- The lead inspector met with governors, including the chair of the governing body. He also met with two representatives from the local authority, a headteacher from a local school that Christ Church shares practice with, and two representatives from the Church of England Central Education Trust.
- The inspectors took account of the 20 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and talked to parents at the end of the school day. They also analysed and evaluated 19 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Jonathan Keay, lead inspector

Mark Cadwallader

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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