

Christ Church Ainsworth Church of England Primary School

Tommy Lane, Ainsworth, Bolton, Lancashire BL2 5SQ

Inspection dates

4–5 October 2016

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Care, respect and tolerance underpin warm relationships, strong teamwork and a joyful atmosphere at this successful school. Staff and pupils live up to their Christian values so everyone can flourish and succeed.
- Leaders keep a close eye on pupils' achievement and teaching. They take quick and successful action whenever they spot weaknesses.
- Different groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and the most able, are making the same progress as other pupils nationally, especially in reading and writing.
- Pupils' achievement in reading is a cause for celebration. Pupils' strong phonics knowledge and a whole-school culture of reading for purpose and enjoyment ensure that they are confident and interested readers.
- Pupils enjoy their time at school and make the most of all that is on offer. This is reflected in their excellent attendance rates. Very few pupils miss time away from the classroom.
- Pupils behave well, work hard and feel safe. Their courteous behaviour means that everyone has the chance to thrive because learning is rarely interrupted and bullying is rare.
- Teachers ignite pupils' enthusiasm for learning through creative activities which make lessons fun. Teachers' positive manner ensures that classrooms are inviting and pupils feel secure.
- Recent improvements in the early years mean that all groups of children are prepared well for the demands of key stage 1.
- The move from the early years to Year 1 is not quite right. This means that pupils tread water instead of building on their strong achievement at the end of Reception.
- Pupils' punctuation and grammar skills do not match their rich vocabulary and writing flair.
- A small minority of teachers do not have the same high expectations as their colleagues. This shows in the weaker presentation and quality of work in some pupils' books.
- Although improving, pupils' achievement in mathematics lags behind reading and writing. Teachers are not giving pupils enough opportunity to deepen their mathematical learning and reasoning skills.
- Governors are not keeping themselves fully up to speed with national changes that have an impact on school procedures and policy.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement further by:
 - ensuring that the move from the early years to Year 1 helps pupils to capitalise on their strong starting points
 - raising the expectations of all teachers so that pupils work as well as they should for their age and ability
 - tackling weaknesses in pupils' punctuation and grammar skills so that the technical part of their writing matches their creative ideas and lively vocabulary
 - providing pupils with greater opportunity to deepen their understanding of mathematical ideas and concepts
 - providing greater challenge in the early years so that the most able children are able to exceed the early learning goals by the end of Reception.
- Tightening the systems that governors use to keep abreast of their statutory responsibilities so that they are fully alert to national changes in school policy and procedure.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Cheerful smiles and a warm welcome from senior leaders greet parents and pupils at the front gate each morning. This sets the tone for the day. Christ Church is a happy place to be. All pupils regardless of their background, age or ability are accepted, included and cherished. Staff are valued, free to share their ideas and respected for their expertise. Consequently, pupils love their learning community, staff morale is high and almost all parents and carers would recommend the school to others.
- Leaders know the school well. Weaknesses are spotted early and the wheels are set in motion to halt signs of decline. Quick action and a willingness to embrace change account for the recent improvements in mathematics teaching, pupils' stronger achievement in writing and the considerable success that children in the early years enjoy. The capacity of leaders to improve the school further is strong.
- Teachers' skills and knowledge are continually refreshed because leaders make the most of external expertise. Links with local schools mean that teachers can share and learn from good practice. This positive partnership has been instrumental in helping teachers to make accurate judgements about pupils' achievement.
- Frequent checks on teaching, plus effective systems for managing teachers' performance, mean that teachers know what they need to do to become the best.
- Everyone has a part to play in improving teaching and raising pupils' achievement. Responsibility is shared well. New ways of working are championed by different staff, who try out alternative teaching strategies, share their successful practice and become respected resident experts.
- Helping pupils to prosper in modern British society is at the heart of the school's work. Developing pupils' emotional and social skills runs alongside the drive for academic success. Staff are quick to spot any barriers that are getting in the way of pupils flourishing academically and personally. Thoughtful strategies set pupils on the road to recovery swiftly.
- Behaviour is managed effectively. Even the smallest incidents are recorded and analysed to make sure that the school is a harmonious, safe and calm environment.
- Additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is making a difference. A range of strategies are in place to help these pupils blossom. Extra teaching sessions, small-group work and nurture activities mean that disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, make better than expected progress across school.
- Expert sports coaches, funded by the primary sport premium, are enhancing teachers' skills while making physical education lessons active, fun and purposeful.
- The curriculum is shaped carefully to entice pupils' enthusiasm for learning. Interesting topics link different subjects together to help pupils gain a sense of their place in the world, an understanding of past events and an appreciation of diversity. Classroom activities are enriched through a range of visits and visitors to bring learning alive.
- Good use is made of external expertise. Skilled teaching ensures that pupils are confident to converse in French. The impressive art work on display shows how well pupils are encouraged to excel in subjects other than English and mathematics.

- British values are threaded throughout all that happens at school because they are enshrined within the Christian ethos. Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures. Differences are celebrated and respected. Pupils' love of learning, plus the experiences they encounter at Christ Church each and every day, account for their strong social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

Governance of the school

- Members of the governing body have a good overview of the school. The detailed and accurate reports from the headteacher ensure that they are fully informed about pupils' achievement and teaching. This information, plus their frequent visits to school, means they are in a good position to ask appropriate questions of leaders. The achievement of disadvantaged pupils, and the difference that additional funding is making, has a prominent position in their discussions.
- Governors check their own skills and seek training opportunities to make up for any shortfalls. At a strategic level, they ensure that teachers' performance is managed in line with national guidelines and they have an influence on decisions about teachers' pay.
- Although they know their statutory responsibilities, governors' checks on policies and practices are not as rigorous as they should be. The updated government guidance for keeping children safe slipped their attention. Consequently, urgent action was required during the inspection to ensure the school's safeguarding policy met requirements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. In reality, safeguarding practice on the ground is much stronger than the school's published policy. Staff are trained well to keep pupils safe in a variety of situations. For example, all staff are first-aid trained, and most carry extra responsibility as fire marshals.
- Different staff know the signs that could indicate pupils are subject to abuse from adults or other pupils. Staff willingly admit that training has opened their eyes to different forms of abuse such as female genital mutilation, forced marriage and radicalisation. It has made them realise that abuse can happen anywhere. This has sharpened their antennae and strengthened their skills in safeguarding the pupils in their care. They know to report, and act on, any concern without fear or favour.
- School records show that senior leaders listen to concerns and give them due weight. They take appropriate action, working with external agencies, to keep pupils safe and to support families facing challenging times.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers enjoy their time in the classroom as much as the pupils. This is evident in the good-humoured, friendly and caring relationships between adults and pupils. Teaching areas are calm and safe, meaning that pupils of all abilities are willing to try their best and confident to express their ideas.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work in strong partnership to support pupils' learning. This is especially true for those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Skilled teaching assistants know the small steps these pupils need to make in their learning. They encourage pupils to try their best, to work hard and to stay on

task until they reach their goals.

- Adults use their good subject knowledge to ask effective questions which check pupils' understanding and illuminate gaps in knowledge. They are adept at linking new learning to pupils' experiences. For example, a group of the older most able pupils grasped the idea of subtracting negative numbers because the adult leading the session explained the concept in everyday, easy-to-understand terms.
- Teachers meet the needs of the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, well. Small-group teaching sessions, funded by the pupil premium grant, are enabling these pupils to bloom. Teachers expect pupils to think hard, to grapple with ideas and to explain their reasons.
- The whole-school approach to reading is not only fostering a love of the written word, it is also gifting pupils with rich vocabulary and creative ideas. Teachers harness pupils' imagination well and encourage them to write across different subjects. Nonetheless, too little attention is given to developing pupils' technical knowledge to make sure their writing is accurate.
- Mathematics teaching is improving. The new system for teaching basic skills is working well. Teachers shape tasks so that pupils can recall and use their skills in different ways. Recent training is helping some teachers to offer more opportunities for pupils to think logically and develop their reasoning skills to solve problems.
- Year 1 teachers are trying hard to make the move from the early years to key stage 1 as easy as possible for younger pupils. They are meeting pupils' social and emotional needs fully. Pupils are happy to be in the Year 1 classrooms. However, not enough attention is paid to what these pupils already know and can do. Consequently, pupils are not able to make the best of the strong foundations they gain by the end of the Reception Year.
- Teachers make learning interesting through creative topics which ensure pupils can achieve well across different subjects. Most teachers have high expectations of the pupils in their care. This is not the case in all classrooms; a small minority of teachers do not demand enough given pupils' age and ability.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are confident, friendly and articulate youngsters who care about their school, their teachers and each other. They work and play together nicely. Pupils are happy to review the work of others and give constructive feedback. In turn, pupils accept this guidance and act on the advice of their peers. In the Year 5 class, pupils take their role as 'punctuation and spelling police' very seriously, milling among their friends and highlighting any mistakes.
- The 'Seeds and Gardeners' project sums up pupils' willingness to support each other and make a positive contribution to the school community. Year 6 pupils have written moving letters of welcome to the youngest children. Phrases such as 'never forget, I will always be there for you...' show pupils' sense of responsibility, empathy for others and their good nature.

- Pupils feel safe in school because bullying happens rarely and name-calling is not tolerated. The few incidents of bullying reported and recorded last year confirm that adults listen to concerns and take swift action to stop any unkindness. Those pupils who find learning more difficult have no worries of being taunted because they need extra help. Similarly, the most able pupils do not have to hide their talents for fear of hurtful teasing.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe when outside of the school gates, especially when using the internet and mobile phones at home. Pupils of different ages know how to use the report icon on their school computers if they come across anything unsavoury. A range of visitors help pupils to understand the dangers that they may face as they grow older. For example, a national charity equips pupils with the skills and knowledge to report, and stop, any physical or virtual abuse they may encounter.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They work hard, listen carefully and follow instructions without fault. Learning is rarely disrupted by poor behaviour because pupils enjoy their activities and are keen to succeed.
- Pupils' good manners are evident everywhere. 'Please', 'excuse me' and 'thank you' are words that pupils use without any prompting because they are respectful and courteous.
- Behaviour around school is also good. Pupils' positive response to whole-school assemblies and their joyous singing is an absolute delight to witness. However, pupils can sometimes become a bit too bubbly when they are out of the classroom. This means lunchtime is a little too lively for everyone to enjoy their food in comfort.
- Pupils say behaviour is pretty good, but not always perfect. School records show their views are spot on. Nonetheless, there is clear proof that the whole-school behaviour policy is working well. The numbers of minor incidents are reducing markedly over time. The vast majority of the parents who shared their views agree that pupils behave well and that they are safe in school.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Since the last inspection, older pupils have continued to make similar progress to others nationally in most subjects. However, the standards they gain at the end of Year 6 have dipped slightly. They are broadly average overall. This is mostly due to the gentle decline in attainment at the end of Year 2. Consequently, pupils have been entering key stage 2 with lower starting points than in the past.
- Leaders have tackled these weaknesses well and with success. Standards by the end of Year 2 were above average in reading, writing and mathematics in 2016. This is because pupils made good progress across key stage 1. This is setting a firm platform for pupils to go beyond what is expected for their age by the time they leave Christ Church.
- Assessment information and the work in pupils' books show that pupils in most classes and subjects are achieving well. For example, in history they are using timelines and studying artefacts to gain historical skills alongside knowledge. Science books show that pupils are using scientific vocabulary and tools, such as decision trees, to learn about the world around them.

- Disadvantaged pupils have fared as well as other pupils nationally in recent years. Their strong progress means that they reached the standards expected for their age, especially in reading and writing. This continues to be the case for those disadvantaged pupils currently at Christ Church. Their achievement often outstrips that of others.
- The proportion of the most able pupils gaining the higher levels in reading and writing is close to the national average. There is a similar picture for the most able disadvantaged pupils. Their progress and standards compare favourably in reading and are improving strongly in writing. Typically, the most able pupils do less well in mathematics. However, in 2016, the number reaching the higher score outstripped other most able pupils in the country.
- Current data shows a positive picture for the most able pupils, including the small number who are disadvantaged. They are making strong gains in their learning and working at a deeper level. Pupils are responding to higher teacher expectations with enthusiasm. They show a willingness to wrestle with difficult problems, to explain their thoughts and to take feedback on board. They are resilient learners.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making the same progress as others in the school due to the support they receive in class and through small-group teaching sessions.
- Pupils' achievement in reading stands out as a real strength. From the earliest age, books are part of their learning experiences. The Year 1 phonics check is consistently above average for all pupils, including those pupils who are disadvantaged. Pupils read with confidence and use their phonics knowledge well to tackle new words. Those pupils who need to catch up with their reading skills do so quickly because they practise reading often, using good quality texts pitched at the right level.
- The most able pupils are competent readers. Younger pupils do not need to rely on sounding out words because their phonics knowledge is embedded. They are skilled enough to use other clues in the text when they come across trickier words. This is the same for the older most able pupils. They read a range of texts with interest and understanding. This accounts for their rich and varied vocabulary when they speak and write.
- Achievement in writing is improving each year; standards rose further in 2016. They compare positively to the national average. Pupils bring lovely ideas and lively phrases to their writing so it is a pleasure to read. For example, 'I got tossed and turned like clothes in a tumble drier...' is the sort of sentence which peppers pupils' work. They enjoy the process of writing and playing with words. However, their skills in using accurate punctuation and grammar lag behind their writing talent. Even the most able writers make basic mistakes, which they should be well beyond, given their capabilities.
- Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, have fared less well in mathematics in the past. Typically, progress has been slower in this subject. However, there are signs of improvement because pupils are gaining a secure grasp of basic skills, such as place value, number bonds and calculations. They talk about mathematical ideas confidently and their thinking is extended because teachers expect them to explain their work. However, they are less skilled in tackling problems which require deeper thinking, logic and reasoning.

- The 2016 results for Year 6 were below average in mathematics and reading. Pupils made slower progress in these two subjects against the new national curriculum tests. This year group suffered the most during the challenging period of staff illness and absence last year. Their teaching was disrupted in the autumn term and they were unable to gain enough ground by the time the tests came around. Inspection evidence confirms a much rosier picture for the pupils who are currently at Christ Church.

Early years provision

Good

- The skills and knowledge that children bring when they enter the Nursery vary each year. Some years, most children are ready to access their learning without too much support. At other times, more children need extra help to catch up. As a general rule, the majority of children have the skills they should for their age by the time they start school.
- The progress children make from this point has also been varied over time. They make steady, and sometimes better, progress so that the proportion reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception mirrors the national average. Nonetheless, the 2015 outcomes for the early years declined. In particular, too few boys were ready to make a swift start in Year 1.
- The new early years leader, with strong support from senior leaders, has halted this inequality effectively. Opportunities for the early years leader to visit other settings and to work with external consultants have been instrumental in bringing about change. Adults' planning, the activities on offer to children and the systems for assessing progress have all been overhauled and changed for the better. Training for adults means that everyone knows their role and all work seamlessly to support children's learning.
- This work has borne fruit. In 2016, the number of children leaving Reception with a good level of development was higher than that found nationally. Almost all of the boys reached this measure, meaning they were as well prepared as girls to become successful learners. Disadvantaged pupils continued to flourish in 2016 because of the extra help they receive through additional funding. They are not hampered by weak starting points into key stage 1. The most able children make the progress they should, but too few exceed the goals expected for their age.
- Observation in the early years confirms that the positive turn-around last year is being maintained. Well-planned activities, which capture children's interest, fill both the Nursery and Reception classrooms and the lively outdoor area. Following their autumn walk, children's curiosity remained aroused in class as they explored leaves, constructed their own farm buildings and produced collages of the animals that they had met.
- Adults intervene well in children's learning. They follow children's interests while asking questions that help children to make sense of their surroundings. Good attention is given to developing basic skills. For example, the youngest children happily use computer programs to practise forming letters in line with the school policy. A group of older boys were engrossed in building structures, while exploring numbers up to 20. Nonetheless, some of the activities on offer do not go far enough in helping the most able pupils to move forward more quickly.

- Children thoroughly enjoy their time in the early years. Adults are calm and caring. This underpins the happy relationships and sense of nurture evident to anyone entering the area. Children are safe and all welfare requirements are met.
- Adults model positive behaviours, which the children follow closely. Consequently, even the youngest children are content to work with others, sharing their resources and chatting as they work. Children behave well. They settle quickly and follow well-established routines. Despite the excitement of the autumn walk, the children returned to school and got on with their learning without fuss or interruption.
- Relationships with parent are positive. Parents are invited to visit classrooms to see their children at work. They are also encouraged to contribute to the ongoing assessment of children's achievement through the online assessment system.

School details

Unique reference number	105324
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	10002925

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	269
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Max Varnom
Headteacher	Mr David Gerrard
Telephone number	01204 527 484
Website	www.christchurchainsworthcofe.co.uk
Email address	d.gerrard@bury.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	February 2012

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- There are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. Almost all of the pupils who attend this school are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.
- The number of pupils who receive support through the pupil premium funding is below the national average.

- The school meets the government's floor standards. These are the minimum standards and rate of progress expected in reading, writing and mathematics of pupils in key stage 2.
- The school has a breakfast club which is managed by the governing body.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited each classroom to observe teaching and pupils' learning.
- They observed and spoke to pupils during lessons and at play. Inspectors met formally with four groups of pupils and heard pupils read.
- Meetings were held with staff, middle leaders and members of the governing body.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including arrangements for safeguarding. They took account of school information about pupils' outcomes and scrutinised pupils' books.
- Inspectors spoke informally to a small group of parents at the start of each school day. They also considered the 112 responses to Parent View (the online questionnaire), including 78 free text comments. The inspectors took account of the 15 responses to the staff questionnaire. They also considered 82 responses from the pupils' online survey.

Inspection team

Jo Olsson, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Doreen Davenport	Ofsted Inspector
Pritiben Patel	Ofsted Inspector
Linda Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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