

Inspection of a good school: Christ Church C of E Primary and Nursery Academy

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

Inspection dates:

3–4 March 2020

Outcome

Christ Church C of E Primary and Nursery Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders and staff work with determination to ensure that every pupil in this school succeeds. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are vulnerable. They do this by getting to know their pupils well and making sure that they meet their needs.

Pupils feel safe in school. They say that this is because it is a place where people of different backgrounds 'work together, get along together and help each other. No one is left out'.

Pupils behave well. They listen to what their teachers have to say and respond to their instructions. Pupils who have emotional needs value the support of the 'hub'. This is because it provides a safe place for them to be calm and get ready for learning. Pupils recognise that bullying does happen sometimes. They say that leaders are 'really strict' about this and it is sorted out.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of activities that are provided by the school. These help pupils to gain a better understanding of the content they have studied in class. Pupils in Year 6, for example, talked about their visit to the British Museum, which linked to their work on Ancient Egypt.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have a clear vision for what they want pupils to learn. Teachers possess a good understanding of how their teaching fits into the bigger picture. They plan work to build on what has been learned before. This ensures that pupils can remember what they have learned in the past. For example, pupils in year 5 research housing in Tudor times in history. They are able to compare Tudor houses with iron age round houses, drawing on what they remember from Year 3.

Most subjects are well established and carefully sequenced because leaders have strong subject knowledge. However, there are a few subjects where this is not the case. This is because these leaders have not received sufficient training to know the content and skills that pupils need to learn. In these subjects, the curriculum does not always equip pupils with the knowledge they need for their future studies.

Leaders have made sure that reading is a high priority from the start. Children in the early years develop firm foundations in reading because they quickly start to learn and remember letters and the sounds that they make. Children experience three different texts every day, which helps them to develop a positive attitude towards reading. Parents are encouraged to read with their children at home, and the school has carefully selected texts that help children to practise the sounds they have learned and to increase their vocabulary.

The development of reading skills continues into key stage 1. Pupils apply their phonics knowledge well to read unfamiliar words. Adults spot when pupils fall behind and give extra help where pupils need it. Teachers ensure that the texts pupils read increase in difficulty as they move through the school. This ensures that pupils are able to develop more complex skills in reading effectively.

The special educational needs coordinator provides strong leadership and expertise. She makes sure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) get the right support. This ensures that they can learn effectively in all subjects. Pupils with SEND achieve well.

Pupils behaviour in lessons is positive and focused. Pupils are keen to learn and are interested in their lessons. Not all pupils attend school as often as they should. Leaders have worked hard to reduce absence and have tried to engage parents. Improvements have been made, but absence remains higher than it should.

Leaders, governors and the trust want pupils to become caring and responsible citizens. As a result, the school offers a wide range of opportunities for pupils to take up positions of responsibility. Pupils in Year 6 talk enthusiastically about their work as ambassadors. They are motivated by the opportunity to take part in the 'blue T-shirt' challenge through their work in the local community. Pupils feel that these roles prepare them well for moving on to secondary school.

All staff feel well supported by leaders, governors and the trust and are proud to work at this school. They say that leaders have listened to their concerns and have taken appropriate action to reduce their workload. For example, leaders have simplified planning and marking expectations.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school has strong systems and processes in place to ensure the safety of pupils. Governors and leaders ensure that all employment checks are carried out effectively. Staff are aware of the procedures for raising concerns and make sure that they follow them. All staff and governors know that they are all responsible for safeguarding pupils.

Leaders understand the risks that pupils face in the local community. They know that some face difficult and challenging situations at home. Leaders go out of their way to meet the needs of all families. As a result, pupils are safe and flourish in school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have worked hard to develop a curriculum that is well planned and sequenced and meets the needs of all pupils. In a few subjects, the leadership is not as strong as in others. Leaders should continue to provide effective training for subject leaders so that they are able to design and implement a suitable and ambitious curriculum.
- Some pupils do not attend school as often as they should. Leaders should continue their work with parents to reduce absence so that all pupils can take advantage of the good education offered by the school.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Christ Church C of E Primary School, to be good on 11–12 March 2015.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	144521
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10122313
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	465
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Archdeacon Luke Irvine-Capel
Co-headteachers	Russell Thorne Susannah Singh
Website	www.christchurch.academy
Date of previous inspection	11–12 March 2015 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Christ Church C of E Primary and Nursery Academy joined the Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust on 5 May 2017.
- This voluntary controlled school had its last section 48 inspection, to inspect the religious character of the school, on 5 November 2015.
- The school has provision for two-year-old children in its nursery.
- The school operates a breakfast and after-school club.

Information about this inspection

- I did deep dives into these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. This included visiting lessons with leaders and talking to teachers about the curriculum. I also looked at a range of pupils' work. I listened to pupils read and talked to them about their learning.
- I held meetings with the headteachers, other leaders and teachers.

- I spoke to the safeguarding lead and reviewed the school's single central record. I looked at a range of documentation, including a sample of case files and spoke to pupils and staff.
- I met with the chair of governors and had a telephone conversation with two members of the trust.
- I considered the views in 37 responses to the Ofsted's Parent View survey and 32 additional free-text responses. I also considered the views of 59 responses to the pupils' survey and 27 responses to the survey for staff.

Inspection team

Stephanie Scutter, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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