

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Christ Church CofE First School

Northesk Street, Stone, Staffordshire ST15 8EP

Inspection date:

26 November 2024

Outcome

Christ Church CofE First School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Amy Graham. This school is part of Key Educational Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Chris Wright, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Gill Latos. The executive headteacher, Amy Graham, is responsible for this school and one other.

What is it like to attend this school?

Christ Church First School is a nurturing, close-knit community. All pupils, including those that arrive at different points in the school year, are welcomed in and greeted warmly. Pupils arrive at school with smiles on their faces, happy to see their friends, staff and Rusty, the school dog.

Pupils behave well. They look forward to their weekly 'star assembly' where they can earn awards for positive behaviour and are encouraged to be 'the best that they can be'. Pupils also speak enthusiastically about their roles as worship leaders and playground buddies. Pupils are respectful of differences. They enjoy learning about people who may have different beliefs to their own. This learning is supported through well planned visits to different places of worship.

Pupils look out for one another. Both pupils and staff are mindful of the needs of individuals. This helps pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to feel valued and achieve well. Pupils say they feel safe and that adults are always on hand to help them with any problems they have.

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

Pupils gain a wide body of knowledge from the logically ordered and ambitious curriculum, which runs from the early years to Year 4. In wider curriculum subjects, pupils recall confidently the knowledge and skills they have learned. For example, in music, pupils used previously taught rhythm sections to create a performance piece. In most subjects, pupils progress through the curriculum well and teachers routinely check that pupils understand what has been taught.

Pupils benefit from a strong reading curriculum. Phonics begins as soon as pupils start school. Staff are skilled in the teaching of phonics and books are carefully matched to pupils' abilities. For those pupils who need a little extra help, additional phonics sessions are in place. Pupils' progress in reading is carefully checked to identify any gaps in their understanding. The school uses this information well to adapt teaching. This helps pupils to grow into confident and fluent readers. Developing a love of reading is a high priority for the school. Children in the early years enjoy sharing nursery rhymes and much-loved stories. Older pupils enjoy sharing books from the well-stocked and enticing library. Pupils further benefit from author visits, and some volunteer as 'reading buddies'. These high expectations for academic success mean all pupils, including those with SEND, achieve well in reading.

The mathematics curriculum is at an earlier stage of development than other subjects. There are gaps in pupils' prior knowledge. This is because the school has not considered carefully enough some of the key learning that it wants pupils to know. The school is working to resolve this. Nonetheless, pupils find it difficult to recall their previous learning in mathematics, which makes it hard for them to build new knowledge on previous learning. In addition, the school does not always check closely enough on how well pupils are learning. Where this happens, the school does not have a sufficiently focused view on what is working well and what it needs to improve.

The school is highly inclusive in its approach to supporting pupils with SEND. Their needs are quickly identified, and the school draws on external advice to best meet them. Staff collaborate effectively to make sure pupils' needs are met. This enables pupils with SEND to learn the curriculum well.

The school's work to maintain regular attendance is detailed and thorough. Pupils and many families feel well supported by the provision that the school puts in place to help them. This work means attendance rates remain positive.

The school offers a broad and interesting range of experiences to support pupils' personal development. Online safety is regularly taught in school and reinforced in assemblies. Pupils develop their interests and talents through accessing a wide range of activities, from Kung Fu to cookery. They have the opportunity to contribute to the wider community and enjoy performing for the public at local venues. Pupils have a clear understanding of diversity and fundamental British values and how these relate to their own lives. This prepares them well for life in modern Britain.

Governors have a wide range of skills and experience to support them to carry out their roles. They have a strong understanding of some of the aspects of the school's provision. However, in a few areas they have not challenged the school's evaluations robustly enough. This means that they do not fully understand the impact of the school's actions to improve.

The school and the trustees prioritise staff well-being. They are mindful of staff workload and provide appropriate support, such as giving time to undertake specific tasks. Staff are proud to work at this school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school does not always accurately and robustly check on the impact of its improvement strategies. This means it lacks clarity about what is working well and when additional intervention is required. This sometimes slows the pace of improvement. The school and trust should ensure that improvement strategies are routinely monitored and reported to governors and trustees.
- The school has not defined some of the essential knowledge that pupils need to know well enough in mathematics. As such, teachers do not focus on some of the most useful learning that pupils will need to remember for their future studies. The school should ensure that this key knowledge is better defined in the curriculum so that teachers can further enhance pupils' understanding.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding,

behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in March 2019.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

Further information

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	142421
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10344064
Type of school	First
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	119
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gill Latos
CEO of the trust	Chris Wright
Headteacher	Amy Graham
Website	www.christchurch-stone.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 February 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Christ Church CofE First School joined The Key Educational Trust in April 2016.
- The school does not use any providers of alternative provision.
- As a Church of England school, this school is subject to inspections under section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The school was inspected in June 2019.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- During the inspection, the lead inspector met with the headteacher and the assistant headteacher. They met with the CEO and other leaders from the trust. They also met with members of the local governing body.
- The inspectors focused inspection activity on the following groups of subjects: early English and mathematics, and science, French and music. For each group of subjects, the inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interest first.
- Throughout the inspection, the lead inspector met with groups of staff. There were no responses to the online staff survey.
- The lead inspector met some parents at the beginning of the day and had regard to the views expressed through Ofsted Parent View. There were 35 responses to the online survey for parents.

Inspection team

Josie Leese, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Allyson Brown

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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