

Inspection of Christ Church CofE Primary School

Albert Street, Oldbury, West Midlands B69 4DE

Inspection dates:	19 and 20 November 2024
The quality of education	Inadequate
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Inadequate
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at this school do not receive an acceptable standard of education. The school does not have high enough expectations of pupils' achievement. It has not ensured that the curriculum supports pupils to achieve well enough. In addition, pupils are not supported to become independent learners. They are not well prepared for their next stage of education. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These pupils often do not get the right support that they need to succeed.

Most pupils are happy in school, and many say that they feel safe. The school has recently set out much clearer expectations for behaviour. Many pupils meet these expectations. In lessons, most pupils behave well. When behaviour is less positive, it is usually because the activities that pupils complete do not match their needs.

Pupils enjoy attending 'film club', but they do not have opportunities to develop talents and interests outside of lessons. Many parents and carers, and pupils, would appreciate it if this were to improve. Pupils are proud to be school councillors. However, the school does not do enough to ensure pupils benefit from these experiences.

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

The school has undergone a turbulent time recently. This includes many changes to leadership. This has limited the school's ability to bring about the swift improvements that are necessary to ensure that pupils receive a high-quality education. Governors do not have a realistic view of how well the school is performing. This is because the information they receive is not accurate enough. The school has started to address some of its shortcomings. However, it is not checking to see if these changes are making a positive difference. Currently, the school does not have the capacity that it needs to resolve the issues that it faces.

The teaching of phonics is not good enough. Staff do not pronounce the sounds that letters represent accurately. Pupils then copy these incorrect sounds. This hinders their ability to blend sounds together to read new words fluently. Staff do not routinely identify the precise gaps that pupils have in their reading knowledge. Staff do not have the necessary skills to teach pupils who struggle to read. The support that pupils receive to help them catch up is often ineffective. Pupils have too few opportunities to read books that match their phonics knowledge. This further hampers their progress in learning to read. The weaknesses that pupils have in reading limits their ability to access other curriculum areas. This is particularly true for pupils with SEND.

The curriculums in many subjects lack structure and cohesion. They do not enable pupils to develop their knowledge in a logical way. This means that pupils cannot build successfully on their prior learning. Teachers have not received the guidance and support that they need to develop their subject knowledge or their expertise. This hampers their ability to deliver the curriculum effectively. Teachers' checks on pupils' learning do not identify and address any gaps or misconceptions in their learning. This limits pupils' progress through the curriculum.

Recently, the school has started to introduce changes to the curriculum in a few subjects. For example, in mathematics, staff know what to teach and when to teach subject content. As a result, in these subjects, pupils can remember more of what they have been taught. However, these changes are too new to make up for the gaps that have developed in pupils' knowledge over time. Many pupils do not reach the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the time that they leave Year 6.

The curriculum in the early years is stronger than in key stages 1 and 2. However, inconsistencies remain in how well the curriculum is delivered. Staff do not tailor their teaching to address children's individual needs well enough. Opportunities to develop and enhance children's language are variable. This means that some children do not develop their communication skills as well as they should.

There is a lack of ambition for those pupils who attend the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND (specially resourced provision). They do not get the same equality of opportunity as other pupils in the school. For example, getting the opportunity to spend time with their peers in the mainstream classes or attend trips that are available to other pupils. The school has not ensured that the staff who work with these pupils are suitably trained, understand pupils' needs or have the skills to support them. The support that pupils with SEND in the mainstream classes receive is variable. It does not help these pupils to achieve as well as they should. Pupils with SEND rely too heavily on adults modelling or completing work for them. This limits their ability to develop into independent, successful learners.

Behaviour has improved for most pupils. However, many pupils with SEND struggle to manage their behaviour. This is because their needs have not been identified well enough. This is the same for attendance. The school now looks more closely for patterns in absence to identify the groups that are absent most frequently. However, this is not resulting in a marked improvement in how regularly some pupils, including vulnerable pupils, attend school.

The school has adopted a structured programme to teach pupils about keeping themselves safe. They have started to teach pupils that it is not acceptable to treat people differently because of the way they live their lives or the different beliefs that they hold. The school also has a structured series of assemblies that teach pupils about world events. These are beginning to help pupils learn about the difficulties that some people face in different parts of the world. However, pupils find it difficult to recall some of the essential information that they need in readiness for life in modern Britain.

Most staff feel well supported. However, some of the staff, who spoke to inspectors, said they would value more guidance and opportunities for professional development. Most parents and carers are complimentary about the care, support and guidance that their children receive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum in many subjects is not well designed to enable pupils to build their knowledge over time. As a result, pupils do not learn the knowledge and skills that they need in sufficient depth. They are not prepared for their next stage of education. The school must ensure the curriculum enables pupils to achieve well.
- The school has not ensured that staff use assessment information effectively to identify where pupils have gaps in their knowledge. This means that gaps and misconceptions are not addressed. This limits pupils' progress through the curriculum. The school should ensure that all staff accurately identify and then address gaps in pupils' learning.
- The delivery of the phonics programme is not effective. The school has not ensured that pupils who find reading difficult catch up quickly enough. Often, the books that pupils read are not well matched to the sounds that they know. Staff do not model sounds accurately. As a result, pupils do not learn to read well enough to help them access the curriculum. The school must ensure that staff receive the support that they need to teach the phonics programme effectively.
- The school has not ensured that staff receive the guidance that they need to meet the needs of pupils with SEND in the mainstream classes and in the specially resourced provision. This includes understanding why some pupils with SEND behave as they do. The lack of effective support means that these pupils do not access the curriculum as well as they should, which limits their progress. The school must ensure that staff have the knowledge and expertise that they need, so that pupils with SEND thrive academically and are included in all aspects of school life.
- The school's actions to improve the quality of education have been too slow. Recent changes are not checked sufficiently well to make sure that they are making a positive difference. The school has not provided staff with the guidance that they need to help pupils learn. As a result, pupils do not achieve well. The school must ensure that it builds capacity to tackle its weaknesses so that changes are sustained over time.
- Members of the governing body have not provided effective support and challenge to improve the quality of education on offer to all pupils. This has led to pupils making weak gains in their knowledge over time. Governors must ensure that they have the expertise that they need to hold the school to account for its work.
- Children in the early years do not develop their basic communication and language in a systematic way. This creates gaps in children's language acquisition and does not prepare them well for key stage 1 and beyond. The school should carefully consider its approach to early language development and ensure that there is a sharp focus on all children developing early communication and vocabulary.

The school may not appoint early career teachers before the next monitoring inspection. The position regarding the appointment of early career teachers will be considered again during any monitoring inspection we carry out.

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	103997
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10343783
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	369
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jennifer Tomlinson
Headteacher	Fleur Rowlands
Website	www.christchurchsandwell.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	11 and 12 October 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has specially resourced provision for 15 pupils that is commissioned by the local authority. All pupils have a diagnosis of autism.
- The interim headteacher was appointed in May 2024.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school provides before- and after-school provision.
- This Church of England school is part of the Diocese of Birmingham. The last section 48 inspection took place in January 2024. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place in the 2028/2029 academic year.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form

provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and subject leaders.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at samples of pupils' work in a range of other subjects.
- The lead inspector spoke with three governors, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, at different times of the day and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They spoke formally with groups of pupils, as well as talking to pupils in lessons and around the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors 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' interests first.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and for pupils. They also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

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