



Christ Church C of E (VC) First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124293
LEA Staffordshire
Inspection number 281682
Inspection dates 27 June 2006 to 27 June 2006
Reporting inspector Anthony Dobell AI

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

Type of school	First	School address	Northesk Street
School category	Community		Stone
Age range of pupils	4 to 9		Staffordshire ST15 8EP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01785 354125
Number on roll	120	Fax number	01785 354126
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs I Bowden
Date of previous inspection	4 October 1999	Headteacher	Mrs L Croxall

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4 to 9	27 June 2006 - 27 June 2006	281682

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Christ Church is a small first school. Children join Reception with levels of understanding and learning skills which are below those usually found. Virtually all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The turnover of pupils during the year is higher than in most schools.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is an effective school giving good value for money. Its evaluation of its own effectiveness matches inspection judgements. Pupils achieve well and standards are average overall when they leave the school. The provision in the Reception Year is good and children make good progress. Teaching and learning are good and pupils benefit from effective lesson planning which links learning in different subjects so that literacy and numeracy skills develop well. The school has an outstanding commitment to equality and all pupils are valued for what they can offer. Good levels of care help pupils to develop into confident and articulate young people and their personal development is good. Rightly, they and their parents are proud of their school.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and her colleagues are united in their successful efforts to realise the school's vision for all pupils. While pupils make good progress overall, they have too few opportunities to organise their own work and to record their findings independently; too often, their recording is constrained by worksheets. Work is marked regularly but there is scope for marking to be used more consistently to help pupils to improve their work. The school has improved well since its last inspection and has a good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Create more opportunities for pupils to organise their own work and to record their findings by themselves.
- Use marking more consistently to show pupils how to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children achieve well in Reception and reach the standards expected by the time that they join Year 1. Pupils go on to make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and, for the last five years, standards in the national tests at the end of Year 2 have been slightly above average. The school's assessment systems show that results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2006 are likely to improve, with more pupils achieving the higher Level 3, particularly in mathematics.

Standards cover a wide range when pupils leave the school. Higher-attaining pupils achieve well and reach impressive standards. However, the school's deserved reputation for successfully meeting the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities means that many parents choose this school for children with particular needs. For example, in the current Year 4, the proportion of pupils with some form of learning difficulty is almost 40%, many of whom joined the school after Reception. Two pupils in this year group have statements of special educational needs. These pupils make good progress, especially in gaining confidence and self-esteem. Throughout the school, pupils are set challenging but realistic targets so that they can build successfully on their existing levels of understanding.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. They learn the value of prayer and reflection in spiritual assemblies. They have good social skills and support each other well. They have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. Their effectively developed literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills will be valuable in their future lives. However, too often pupils work with pre-typed worksheets which organise their responses into a particular form. They do not have enough practice in devising their own ways of working and recording their conclusions. Cultural awareness is developed well by 'themed weeks,' visits and visitors, and links with other countries, for example, Poland. Pupils have an awareness of the needs of the less fortunate because of their fund-raising and charity work.

Pupils say that they feel safe in the school and they do not see bullying as a concern. Increasing opportunities for responsibility; for example, as monitors as they get older, enhance their personal development and they accept looking after each other as a normal part of life. They talk knowledgeably about the need to eat healthy food and to exercise regularly.

Pupils enjoy school and attendance is average. Behaviour is good in and out of class and relationships are good. By the time that they leave the school, pupils are mature and confident. Indeed, five Year 4 pupils asked to talk to inspectors about their clubs and activities and said how much they valued school. One parent wrote that her child with learning difficulties joined the school believing that he could do nothing. He is now confident and enjoying learning. Pupils are well prepared to join their next school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. Learning activities are varied, although pupils have too few opportunities to manage their own learning and to record their findings in their own way. An exception to this is where the school has succeeded in providing more investigative work in science since the last inspection. Marking is satisfactory, work is regularly and supportively marked. The school has begun to develop its marking strategies, it recognises that there is further scope to help pupils to improve their work.

Effective teaching is rooted in the good system of lesson planning which enables learning in one subject to support learning in another. This is particularly effective in developing the skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT to support pupils in their future lives.

Learning activities are interesting and carefully targeted to pupils at different stages of learning so that all pupils build on their existing levels of understanding. In class,

pupils work with good levels of interest and understanding and are happy to discuss and explain their work. Teachers and teaching assistants work very effectively together to support pupils with learning difficulties so that they work confidently and make good progress.

There are examples of good, imaginative teaching promoting learning very effectively. In a Year 3 lesson, for instance, a video link with another school helped to explain a mathematics problem. All pupils were very well motivated and keen to solve the problem 'before they do.'

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum which is well matched to the needs of all pupils. It is planned to reflect current events to make learning more relevant. For example, pupils have produced an advertising campaign for the soccer World Cup as a literacy exercise. Pupils say that they enjoy using computers and the school uses ICT in innovative ways to enhance learning. There are good links between subjects which make learning more meaningful. The curriculum in Reception has improved well since the last inspection. There is a greater range of resources and children have more varied activities, although some of these are still too structured so that children do not develop independence by 'finding out for themselves.'

Learning is enriched by a wide range of visits and visitors and there are good examples of these being used as a basis for imaginative work. For example, pupils have done some good quality writing based on their visit to Snibston Discovery Centre. Pupils enjoy the good range of clubs and activities provided for them. They value their French club and have good opportunities for creative activities, for example, in music and art and design.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Parents appreciate the good care and support provided for their children and the warm and friendly learning environment. Pupils feel safe and are confident to talk to an adult about any concerns, knowing that they will be listened to sensitively. Arrangements for child protection, first aid and safety procedures are secure and well understood. Good systems exist for assessing pupils' standards and tracking their progress. These include systematic tracking to monitor pupils' progress. The information from these systems is then used to plan their future learning. Opportunities are being developed for the oldest pupils to reflect on the quality of their work and how to improve it. This good practice has not yet been extended to younger pupils. Older pupils enjoy responsibilities and care well for younger ones. Good relationships mean that all pupils feel well cared for.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is led and managed well. The headteacher is committed to the well-being and progress of all pupils and the school's provision for equality of access and opportunity is outstanding. There is very good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the school has a deserved reputation with parents from outside the school's immediate area for helping these pupils to become confident and make progress. The school accepts that the next step is to give pupils more opportunities to organise their own learning and to record their work individually.

There is a clear unity of purpose among all adults in helping the headteacher to realise the vision for the school. Essentially, this is to enable all pupils to make progress in a stimulating and secure learning environment. In achieving this vision, teachers and teaching assistants are fully valued and encouraged to develop their skills so that they contribute effectively to learning. The school has robust systems for evaluating its performance and planning further improvement.

The school makes effective use of parents and the local community to support learning. An enthusiastic Parent-Teacher Association raises useful extra funds to enhance learning. There are very good links with the church and parents and others feel that the school consults them effectively and acts on their ideas where possible.

Governors are effective and are valued in the school. They have a good appreciation of the school's strengths and areas for development because many of them visit the school regularly and so have first-hand experience of its work. Their leadership, together with that of the headteacher, has helped the school to improve well since its last inspection. Good teamwork means that it has a good capacity to improve further.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for welcoming us into your school, being so friendly and polite to us, and talking to us about your learning and your lives in the school. We think that yours is a good school in many ways.

- You are well cared for by all adults and you feel confident and happy.
- Your teachers try hard to make your lessons interesting so that you make good progress.
- Relationships and behaviour are good and you take good care of each other.
- You are all treated equally and valued for what you can do.
- You know that it is important to exercise regularly and to eat healthy food.
- Your headteacher leads the school well and plans to make it even better.

All these things mean that you develop into confident young people, happy to say what you think in class and in assemblies.

We think that two things would improve your school further.

- You could have more opportunities to plan your own work and to record your findings.
- Marking could show you more clearly how to improve your work.

We enjoyed our day in your school very much and wish you well for the future.