

Corpus Christi RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105718
Local Authority	Oldham
Inspection number	287312
Inspection date	27 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Robert Robinson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	296
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr Dermott Heakin
Headteacher	Mr Andrew Sowerby
Date of previous school inspection	16 September 2002
School address	Stanley Road Chadderton Oldham Lancashire OL9 7HA
Telephone number	0161 6521275
Fax number	0161 6526100

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school. Most pupils are of White British background with an increasing number of pupils from Asian or Asian British backgrounds. A small proportion of pupils are learning English as an additional language. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The socio-economic circumstances of the area are below average. The school has gained the National Healthy School and Activemark awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Corpus Christi is a good school with outstanding features in pupils' personal development, its care, guidance and support of pupils and in leadership and management. It serves its community very well and provides good value for money. Parents appreciate the education and care provided for their children. Parents' typical comments include 'A fantastic school', 'Staff have genuine concern about every child' and 'a happy, well run school'.

As you walk around the school the high quality of displays and well organised resources help one to appreciate the rich learning environment. Children enter Nursery enthusiastically and are keen to participate in the wide range of learning activities available both indoors and outdoors. This joy in learning helps children to make brisk progress. Good teaching continues in Reception, although these children do not have direct access to an outdoor area. This limits their learning opportunities.

In Years 1 to 6 pupils achieve well because of good teaching and a good curriculum. Rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning together with recent successful initiatives to check pupils' progress has resulted in improvements in standards, particularly by the end of Year 2. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 build well on their prior attainment. As a result, standards in most years since the last inspection have been above average. However, in English standards in reading are much higher than in writing, particularly at the higher level.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered extremely well. Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning and show great care for one another. Behaviour both within classrooms and around the school is exemplary. Pupils get on very well with each other irrespective of gender or cultural background. They have an understanding of the cultural diversity of the local area through visits and visitors and studies of major world faiths. Pupils enjoy school and achieve well within safe surroundings and a caring atmosphere. They gain a good awareness of how to stay healthy and are well prepared for future learning.

The present strengths at the school result from outstanding leadership and management. The headteacher and governors have built up a very effective leadership team through astute appointments and the professional development of staff. The school has improved a great deal since its last inspection and has outstanding capacity to continue to do so. Since the last inspection, provision in the Foundation Stage and teaching throughout the school have improved significantly. Initiatives put in place by the leadership, such as the thorough tracking of individuals' progress, have impacted most positively on pupils' learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing by the end of Year 6 to match those attained in reading.
- Improve outdoor learning opportunities for children in Reception.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Overall, attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) is below average. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage. Changes of organisation and staffing of the Foundation Stage have successfully raised standards, which are now close to average. Children learning English as an additional language make particularly good progress in the Foundation Stage because of the help they receive from teachers and

teaching assistants. Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, continue to make overall good progress in Years 1 to 6. In the Year 6 national tests in 2006 standards in mathematics were above average. English standards were average but much higher in reading than writing. Standards of the present group of pupils at the end of Year 6 are similar to those in 2006. In writing, a much greater proportion of pupils are on course to reach the level expected of their age, though few are expected to achieve the higher level. In comparison, almost half of the pupils are at the higher level in reading.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children love this school and join in enthusiastically in the varied range of interesting activities provided for them. Their attendance is in line with the national average. It has declined recently because some parents do not appreciate the effect on their children's education of holidays in term time. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in classrooms and around the school are outstanding. Children enter Nursery and quickly settle into the school's routines, making fast progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Increasingly, pupils develop good self-confidence as they move through school. Bullying is rare and school councillors say that if it occurs, 'it is dealt with quickly'. Pupils understand the importance of keeping safe and healthy. They take on responsibilities willingly, such as answering the telephone efficiently at lunchtime. Pupils gain a very good understanding of the needs of others and those less fortunate than themselves through fundraising for worthy causes. In addition to the strong links with the local parish Catholic Church, pupils gain an insight into other faiths represented in the local community through visits and religious education lessons. For example, pupils have studied major world faiths and visited a local mosque and Sikh temple. The school's clear focus on the teaching of basic skills helps pupils to develop a very secure foundation for future learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good, resulting in pupils achieving well in their learning. Lessons are planned well to help all groups of pupils to make good progress. Capable, well trained teaching assistants work alongside teachers to provide valuable support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language. Resources such as interactive whiteboards add interest to learning and spur on pupils' progress. Behaviour management of pupils is a strength, with superb relationships between staff and pupils. Teachers' questioning skills are good, but occasionally questions do not encourage pupils to answer in phrases or sentences. The marking of pupils' work is consistently of a high standard. Teachers' comments celebrate pupils' successes, and 'tips' help pupils to appreciate what they must do to improve. Target cards in English and mathematics help pupils to see how well they are doing and what is the next step of learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum matches the interests of all pupils well and fully meets requirements. Particularly strong emphasis is placed on developing pupils' skills in English and mathematics. However, the handwriting of many older pupils is too variable. Teachers plan well to develop pupils' skills

in literacy in other subjects. Information and communication technology is used effectively to assist learning. Visitors and visits, including a residential experience for older pupils, provide an extra dimension to learning. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good but opportunities for outdoor learning for Reception children are limited. Personal, social, health and citizenship education is well established. Plans are well advanced to provide opportunities for pupils to learn a modern foreign language. Pupils and parents appreciate the extensive extra-curricular opportunities available.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Child safeguarding procedures are fully in place. Health and safety and risk assessment procedures promote a safe environment. Parents and pupils agree that children are looked after extremely well. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language are supported well, which helps them to make good progress. The tracking of pupils' progress is very thorough and is used very well to assist pupils to make good progress in their learning. It is also used very effectively to identify individuals and groups of pupils who need extra help to speed up their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher, with the support of governors, has restructured the leadership team since the last inspection. As a result, all staff can have a voice in the running of the school. Senior staff have clearly defined roles to lead and manage change with the care, guidance and supervision of the senior leadership team. The impact of the new organisation and shared leadership is seen in the success of recent initiatives. Weaknesses in teaching have been resolved by rigorous monitoring of pupils' learning in all age groups. A focus on developing the Foundation Stage has resulted in much improved teaching and learning than was previously reported. Standards at the end of Year 2 have shot up this academic year because of a greater emphasis on pupils' learning and the tracking of pupils' progress from Nursery to the end of Year 2. In Years 3 to 6 pupils' progress has been improved. It has been identified as consistently above average since 2003 in the national tests. The school has a very clear and accurate view of itself, although some of its judgements are rather modest. The school improvement plan is very detailed and demanding. Governors play their part in the success of the school. At times they can be extremely challenging as well as very supportive of staff. They make every effort to appoint high calibre staff and to support the professional development of all.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of Corpus Christi RC Primary School, Chadderton, Oldham OL9 7HA.

Thank you for welcoming me to your school. I enjoyed the day I spent with you and our discussions. Your school is a good school with some outstanding features. This is because it is led and managed extremely well by the headteacher, other staff and governors.

I was very impressed by your outstanding behaviour and interest in lessons. Staff look after you extremely well and I was pleased that you get on so well together. The standard of your work by the time you leave the school is generally above average. This is because you are taught well and make good progress. However, I have asked the school to challenge those of you who reach Level 5 in reading at the end of Year 6 to achieve also Level 5 in writing. I am sure you will work hard with your teachers to accomplish this target. In addition, I was pleased to see how well the Foundation Stage has improved since the last inspection. However, I want the school to improve outdoor learning opportunities for children in Reception.

I appreciated talking to you about your work and watching you learn. I trust that you will continue to work with the headteacher and other staff to help them to continue to improve the school. I wish you well for the future.