

# Christ Church CofE VA Junior School, Sowerby Bridge

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	107554
<b>Local Authority</b>	Calderdale
<b>Inspection number</b>	287852
<b>Inspection dates</b>	27–28 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Colin Smith

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	148
School	
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr P Mansley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Steven Green
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 November 2002
<b>School address</b>	Park Road Sowerby Bridge West Yorkshire HX6 2BJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01422 832454
<b>Fax number</b>	01422 831947

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<b>Age group</b>	7–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

The school is smaller than average in size. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is broadly average, although there is some social disadvantage in the area served by the school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The vast majority of the pupils are of White British heritage. A very small number are of other white, Asian or mixed backgrounds and all of the pupils speak English.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school's overall effectiveness and the value for money it provides are satisfactory. The school has a number of good features and is correct in judging that it offers good levels of care, support and guidance. This ensures that pupils are safeguarded and those who experience learning or emotional difficulties are helped to overcome them. As a result they grow in confidence and achieve their targets. These factors, together with the provision of a good, rich and diverse curriculum make a significant contribution to pupils' personal development, which is outstanding, as the school correctly assesses it to be. Pupils display a high level of social maturity. Their behaviour is excellent and they are eager to learn. Consequently, they are in a strong position to become good citizens of the future and make the most of their educational opportunities. Parents are highly satisfied with all aspects of the school's work. 'The school is welcoming and children are happy because of the strong sense of community.' typifies the view of the vast majority of parents.

Standards are below average overall by the end of Year 6. However, pupils' achievement is satisfactory, given their starting points. Achievement in English is good and standards are at the levels expected. Achievement in mathematics, although satisfactory, is held back to some extent because pupils' problem-solving skills are insufficiently developed. In science, pupils are not achieving as well as they should be because investigation skills are not taught systematically. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Where teaching is good, pupils make the most progress and their interest in and enthusiasm for learning shine through clearly.

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. Senior leaders have created a school in which pupils are self-disciplined, safe and happy. School leaders realise that they have been optimistic in judging most aspects of the school's work to be good when they are, in fact, satisfactory. School self-evaluation is satisfactory in identifying the main strengths and weaknesses accurately. However, it is not as rigorous as it could be in measuring the extent to which school targets have been achieved or improving the quality of teaching and learning. That said, the school has made satisfactory improvements since the previous inspection. Standards are higher in English, broadly similar in mathematics and science, and information and communication technology (ICT) has improved. This shows that the school has a satisfactory capacity for improvement.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' skills of investigation to raise achievement in science.
- Improve pupils problem-solving skills to raise achievement in mathematics.
- Increase the rigour in monitoring and evaluation to raise the quality of teaching and pupils' learning from satisfactory to good levels across the school.

A small proportion of those schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Pupils' attainment is assessed accurately as they enter school to identify their starting points, which are below average overall. Their progress is then measured carefully as they move through

school, which shows that their achievement in mathematics is satisfactory. Pupils' calculation skills are secure, but their capacity to solve mathematical problems less so. Pupils achieve well in reading and writing because of the attention given to phonic and writing skills. Pupils' investigation skills in science are very limited, making it harder for them to understand scientific ideas. By the end of Year 6 standards are average in English, below average in mathematics and below average, by a greater margin, in science. The school sets challenging targets, although in recent years some of the more able pupils have not reached them. To remedy this, more demanding tasks are being set for them in English and mathematics lessons and their achievement is increasing as a result. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well, personally and academically. The progress made by the very small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds compares well to that of others.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They follow a clear moral code and their heightened social awareness and concern for others creates a very happy family atmosphere. Pupils' cultural development is excellent, not least because highly productive links have been forged with schools abroad. As one pupil commented, 'We learn to understand how it feels to be different.' Pupils' behaviour is exemplary in lessons and around school. Above average attendance and good punctuality reflects their enjoyment of school. Pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles and awareness of how to keep safe from dangers such as drugs, smoking and alcohol is exceptionally good. As one pupil explained in response to considering possible temptations, 'Your health is more important than being popular.' A very strong sense of community pervades the school. Pupils' opinions and feelings matter and they relish opportunities to share in decision making and take responsibility for each other, as 'befrienders', play leaders and school councillors. Pupils develop secure reading and writing skills and learn to work well independently and collaboratively. These factors prepare them well for the future, despite their difficulties with problem-solving.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Teaching is not always successful in capturing pupils' interests and firing their enthusiasm for learning, particularly in writing. There are good features in some classes. The good teaching of reading skills, such as phonics, provides a firm foundation for pupils' progress in English. Where lessons are vibrant and challenging, they move along at a good pace and pupils of all abilities learn successfully. Playing competitive mathematics games, for example, makes learning fun. Pupils are managed well in all classes. Consequently, they concentrate and give of their best, which is evident in the well presented accurate work in their books. Pupils' learning in English and mathematics is thoroughly assessed. The information is used constructively to provide tasks that are well matched to their different learning needs. This is largely why achievement in English is good and is gradually improving in mathematics. However, pupils' different learning needs are not met to the same degree in science. Very effective support from teaching assistants enables pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to learn effectively.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

Opportunities for pupils to develop investigation and problem-solving skills are insufficient. However, the curriculum has many good features, for which the school has gained several awards, including one for ICT. The curriculum is particularly well adapted to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Adjustments to the curriculum are being made to nurture the skills and talents of the most able pupils. The school makes considerable efforts to enrich pupils' learning, yet school leaders judge the curriculum as only satisfactory because the re-planning of a two-year cycle of topics is not completed in detail. The topics already in place involve stimulating visits to places of interest and valuable opportunities for pupils to meet visitors from very different cultural backgrounds. These experiences significantly enhance pupils' understanding of the wider world. A strong health education programme, along with a good range of extra-curricular activities, contribute significantly to pupils' excellent personal development and enjoyment of school.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

A high level of care is provided, including secure procedures to ensure pupils' well-being. The difficulties experienced by the most vulnerable pupils are well understood. The school has built strong links with health professionals to ensure that barriers to learning, such as low self-esteem and emotional difficulties, are successfully removed. Pupils' personal development is particularly well nurtured. Year 6 pupils each have an adult mentor of their own choosing and strong and trusting relationships between all members of the school community ensure that any anxieties are shared and lessened. The academic guidance that pupils receive is satisfactory and improving with the introduction of individual targets. Pupils are now much clearer in knowing what they need to do to improve in reading, writing and mathematics, although these measures have not yet had time to impact upon their achievement in mathematics. The marking of pupils' work is particularly good in English, but less informative in mathematics and science.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

School leaders are very successful in providing high quality care, which promotes pupils' exceptionally good personal development. It has proved more difficult for leaders to raise pupils' achievement beyond satisfactory levels in mathematics and science, although this has been achieved in English. In recognition of the need to increase pupils' achievement, the school has intensified the way in which their progress is measured. Teachers and support staff are becoming increasingly successful in identifying where additional support is needed and intervening to rejuvenate any faltering progress. However, the potential to use the information gathered from measuring pupils' progress in order to evaluate and improve the performance of teachers has not yet been fully realised. A range of strategies to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning are in place. Plans are examined and lessons are observed. Pupils' work in their books and folders is checked, although not regularly. Strengths and weaknesses in teaching and pupils' achievements are shared and incorporated into the school improvement plan. However, the actions required to bring about improvements are not sufficiently specific. This is partly why the quality of teaching and pupils' overall achievement remain satisfactory.

Governors provide good support, do their best to hold the school to account and ensure that all pupils have equal and full access to a very wide and rich curriculum.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

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

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of Christ Church Church of England Voluntary Aided Junior School, Sowerby Bridge, HX6 2BJ

Thank you for welcoming me to your school. I thoroughly enjoyed talking to you because you were so polite, friendly and helpful. Now, I would like to share my findings with you. Your school is satisfactory overall. However, there are many good and some outstanding features.

Most of you achieve well in English because your reading skills are good and you are confident writers. In mathematics, your calculation skills are mainly good but some of you need more help to solve mathematical problems. Your progress in science could be better if you learnt how to think scientifically, investigate and find out more for yourselves.

Teaching is mainly satisfactory, but good in some classes. You had to think hard when you played those mathematical games and they made learning fun. Teachers make a good job of teaching reading skills that will help you in later years. Teachers make your learning interesting by arranging visits, visitors and after school activities. I think this is why you enjoy school. Watching you at work and at play, I was very impressed by your excellent behaviour and the concern you show for others. You know how to keep yourselves safe and many of you have special school responsibilities, which you carry out exceptionally well.

Your headteacher and staff run the school satisfactorily and do everything possible to take good care of you. However, your school is improving and I want this to continue so I have asked your headteacher and staff to:

- teach you to think scientifically and help you to plan and carry out your own investigations to increase your achievement in science
- work on your problem-solving skills to increase your achievement in mathematics
- check carefully that the changes they make are working so that teaching continues to improve and achievement is good throughout the school.