



Christ Church CE Primary School, Newcastle

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108493
Local Authority Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number 288117
Inspection dates 21–22 September 2006
Reporting inspector Andrew Scott

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Shieldfield Green
School category	Voluntary aided		Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear
Age range of pupils	3–11		NE2 1XA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 2328054
Number on roll (school)	100	Fax number	0191 2331828
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Lynda Wadge
		Headteacher	Mrs Elizabeth Donaldson
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 21–22 September 2006	Inspection number 288117
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small primary school close to the centre of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. It serves an area of considerable social and economic disadvantage. Pupil numbers fluctuate greatly because of high mobility among the population. About one third of pupils do not have English as their first language, and a small number are refugees. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The school has a strong Christian ethos.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

At present, the school's overall effectiveness is inadequate. In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the achievement of pupils by Year 6 and the quality of teaching.

Children have a satisfactory start to their education in the Nursery and Reception classes, although they still have low attainment when they enter Year 1. The school has recently been through a difficult period, during which staff absence has disrupted pupils' learning. This situation is now stable and although the quality of teaching and learning is improving, it remains inadequate. Lessons are orderly and relationships between adults and pupils are good, but teachers do not expect enough from the pupils. As a consequence of this, the pupils' achievement is inadequate and the results of tests taken by 11 year-olds show that standards are low.

The curriculum is satisfactory and enriched by some good activities but it does not give the pupils enough opportunities to exercise independence or to solve problems in subjects such as mathematics. Nevertheless, staff are very sensitive to the needs of pupils in relation to many aspects of their personal development. As a result, pupils behave sensibly for the most part, enjoy learning and feel secure. All pupils are valued equally. The many pupils who do not speak English as their first language and/or pupils who are refugees are fully involved in all class or other activities. Pupils have a good understanding of how to adopt a healthy life-style. Parents are full of praise for the school. One wrote: 'Christ Church has changed my son, in every lesson, even in himself it is an excellent school.' Certainly, the school promotes a great sense of togetherness and harmony, strengthened by Christian values.

There are clear signs that the school has the capacity to improve, despite having made insufficient improvement since the last inspection. The headteacher and governors are well aware of the school's strengths and know the areas that need to develop. Weaknesses in teaching and learning are being remedied through extra training and teachers sharing good practice. The headteacher has been the driving force behind recent improvements, especially in forging vital links with parents, and in improving the staff's teaching skills and the accommodation. She leads by example and often motivates other staff, who are dedicated to the school, by working alongside them in lessons. However, the school does not monitor the impact of its work astutely enough, and so does not draw up plans to improve the school that are finely tuned and rigorously carried out. Governors are very active and supportive but could do more to hold the school to account for its performance.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise expectations of pupils' work in order to improve their achievement in all subjects.

- Improve the curriculum to give pupils more responsibility for their own learning.
- Ensure that the school's development is based on a clear analysis of any weaknesses and that action plans are detailed and rigorously carried out.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Children begin school with skills and abilities that are well below average. They achieve satisfactorily in the Nursery and Reception classes but few reach their expected goals by the end of the Reception year. Children enjoy the many activities in the classroom but their tasks are not always challenging enough.

Because of the small numbers of pupils in each year, it is difficult to compare one year's results with another. Results in tests in Years 2 and 6 have generally been below average in recent years in all subjects. Although they were much improved in 2005 in Year 6, significant disruption to continuity in the teaching led to a sharp fall in standards in 2006 and pupils' achievement was inadequate, particularly by the end of Year 6.

Pupils who enter the school without English as their first language, including refugee pupils, soon learn English well enough to be able to make satisfactory progress. However, these groups, like others in the school, underachieve because not enough is expected of them. This is also the case for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. The pupils are a credit to their school and to their families. They are courteous and well-behaved, for the most part. They are attentive in class and usually enjoy their work, especially the more practical aspects. There is occasional friction but, in general, they look out for one another and are very supportive. There were instinctive murmurs of encouragement for one pupil, for example, as she struggled with a measurement in a Year 1/2 mathematics lesson.

The school enables pupils to be conscious of their own safety through, for example, road safety sessions. Pupils are sensible around school and have due regard for carrying out tasks safely. They know how to eat healthily and enjoy the benefit of exercise, particularly football, despite the absence of an acceptable playing area. Pupils are proud of their school community and are willing helpers when given the opportunity. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, buoyed by the close links with the adjacent church and the constant promotion of self-esteem by staff. Inadequate achievement in English and mathematics weakens the pupils' preparation for future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Although improving in response to training for teachers, the quality of teaching and the learning that results from it are inadequate. There is a positive atmosphere in all classrooms because of a strong rapport between teachers and pupils. Teachers are firm but fair, and pupils respect them for it. Objectives in lessons are clear and well explained, often helped by interesting resources. For instance, a music lesson about Peter and the Wolf was enlivened by animation on an interactive whiteboard. The subject knowledge of teachers is satisfactory, except in information and communication technology (ICT), where it is inadequate but improving.

Strengths in the teaching are undermined by important weaknesses that have a negative effect on the rate at which pupils learn and on their eventual achievement. Most importantly, is the lack of challenge in the work, arising from teachers expecting too little of the pupils. Sometimes in lessons, there is too much teacher and not enough pupil, so that pupils do not have the chance to think for themselves and learn through their own experience.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Teachers ensure that pupils cover all subjects by following nationally agreed guidelines. The curriculum includes a well-chosen emphasis on English and mathematics, although other subjects, notably ICT, are not exploited enough to give the pupils further chances to practise and extend their skills in literacy and numeracy. The school does well to broaden pupils' learning through clubs, visits and other activities.

Teachers include all pupils well in all activities. There is no specialised provision for pupils for whom English is a second language but the close support of all staff ensures that these pupils do exactly the same work as other pupils. The school provides good individual learning plans for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities but these are not always linked closely enough to lesson planning to maximise the progress of the pupils concerned.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school is a very caring place. All staff are very sensitive in their support for pupils; pupils talk warmly of the security and sense of well-being that staff create. The headteacher, well supported by the education welfare officer, works tirelessly and successfully to involve families more in supporting learning at home. Close links with other external agencies help to meet pupils' emotional and physical needs. Systems for safeguarding pupils' security are efficient.

Good tracking systems and analysis of data mean that staff know exactly how well their pupils are doing. The new systems of setting targets for pupils are a useful tool to help raise achievement and a sound start has been made in their implementation. Teachers are good at praising pupils for their efforts but are not always frank in their advice so that pupils fully understand how well they are doing.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher has developed the ethos of the school and has forged partnerships outside the school, so that it is an integral part of the local community. Despite having set a good context for the pupils to learn well and ensured that pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good, the leadership has not had the same success in raising standards and improving pupils' achievement, partly due to extended staff absences. The school's leaders, including the governing body, monitor the work of the school regularly. They are good at recognising the strengths, but do not evaluate the impact of the school's provision sufficiently shrewdly. For example, the quality of teaching is not gauged enough by how much the pupils learn. As a result, the school has a slightly rosy view of itself. Therefore, action plans for improvement are not always accurately based on objective analyses.

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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?	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
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	No

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	3
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?	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

22 September 2006

Christ Church CE Primary School

Shieldfield Green

Newcastle upon Tyne

Tyne and Wear

NE2 1XA

Dear Children,

I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to your school, and meeting you and your teachers. Thank you for all your comments and help around the school.

I was happy to see how much your teachers, and indeed, all staff, care for you and work hard to make sure you are safe and healthy. They are firm but fair with you, and you appreciate that. As a result, you mostly behave well in class and around school and you obviously enjoy lessons, especially when you are doing fun things and hands-on activities. You are right to respect your headteacher as she has worked really hard to improve your school.

I have asked your teachers to give you more challenging work because, at the moment, many of you are not doing as well as you should. You also need more opportunities to do things for yourselves particularly in lessons and you can help by taking more responsibility for your own learning. I have also asked the school to be more thoughtful in making plans for a better school.

Your school will receive a 'Notice to Improve', which means it will be given extra help, and inspectors will return to make sure everything is going to plan.

I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Scott

Lead Inspector