

# Christ The King Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110005
<b>Local Authority</b>	Reading
<b>Inspection number</b>	288561
<b>Inspection dates</b>	29–30 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Malcolm Johnstone

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	364
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Marguerite Crockford
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr John Cosgrove
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 December 2002
<b>School address</b>	Lulworth Road Reading RG2 8LX
<b>Telephone number</b>	0118 901 5434
<b>Fax number</b>	0118 901 5435

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is larger than most other primary schools. It is located in an area with features of socio-economic disadvantage. A much larger than average proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above average. There is a wide variety represented with the largest groups from White and Black Caribbean and Black or Black British African backgrounds. An average proportion of these pupils have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and those who have a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. Pupil and staff mobility has been high over the past two years.

## 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 provides a satisfactory and improving quality of education with some good features. Pupils enjoy learning, are proud of their achievements and most behave well. This is because relationships are strong and pupils know what is expected of them. They have a reasonable understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and good knowledge of how to keep safe. Personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development are good. Pastoral care is good and academic support and guidance is satisfactory. There is good provision for pupils who have learning difficulties and for pupils at the early stages of English language acquisition. These pupils make satisfactory progress overall, although when they receive individual and small group support they make faster progress.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. During the past two years, there has been a large increase in pupil numbers, high staff turnover and changes in the leadership and management of the school. These significant changes have led to some disruption in pupils' learning and pressure on accommodation and resources. A new headteacher was appointed in July 2007. He has quickly helped to stabilise this situation and identified the right priorities for development. His leadership is very good and he has quickly won the confidence and support of staff, governors, parents and pupils. As one parent commented, 'the new headteacher seems to have achieved a great deal in a short time'.

Standards are broadly average, although there are variations between subjects. Reading is the weaker aspect in English since the teaching of letter sounds has lacked rigour and consistency of approach. In mathematics, there has been a lack of challenge in some of the work for the more able particularly and they have not achieved as well as they should. Pupils achieve well in science and standards are above the national average. The curriculum is satisfactory and improving.

In terms of its impact over time, teaching and learning are satisfactory and this mirrors pupils' achievements over their time in school. Teaching is improving and most of the teaching seen during the inspection was good and some outstanding. This is now ensuring that pupils make mostly good progress in lessons. There is still some satisfactory teaching and in these lessons, progress is not as rapid as it should be. Assessment is satisfactory. However, in some classes, including the nursery and reception, assessment information is not used well enough to match work to the different needs of the pupils. As a result, some work is either too easy or too difficult and pupils do not progress at a fast enough rate in these lessons.

Analysis of performance data is good. It has helped the school to set targets that are more realistic and challenging. Evidence from lesson observations and school tracking data shows that these targets are likely to be met. The school's self-evaluation is satisfactory and improving because it is based on a more secure and reliable evidence base. The capacity for improvement is satisfactory since many of the promising new initiatives are not firmly established.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Standards on entry to the Foundation Stage are generally below average with the full range of ability represented. Children make steady progress. By the time they enter Year 1, most attain the standards expected of children of this age. Teaching is satisfactory with good elements. There is good teaching in adult-led activities but teachers do not provide enough

opportunities for children to develop greater independence in child-initiated activities. Strong relationships underpin children's learning and help them gain confidence. Behaviour is excellent and children enjoy learning. Classroom assistants have a good understanding of children's needs and support teachers well. The school encourages close links with parents and involves them well in their children's learning. The curriculum is satisfactory and covers all the areas of learning. The assessment of children's progress is not thorough enough and this makes it more difficult to plan activities that meet individual needs.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards and pupils' achievements in reading and mathematics.
- Ensure that teachers, including in the Foundation Stage, make consistent and effective use of day-to-day assessment so that all work meets the needs of all groups of pupils and enables them to make consistently good progress.
- Ensure that the new initiatives to improve standards, teaching and tracking of pupils' progress are firmly established and regularly evaluated.

A small proportion of 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**

Boys and girls of all abilities and backgrounds achieve satisfactorily. For pupils at the end of Year 2, standards fell to well below the national average in the 2006 national assessments. This was due to a larger proportion of pupils who had learning difficulties. Standards picked up well in 2007, and in writing and mathematics, they are now below, but much closer to the national average. Standards in reading are below average but improving. Standards are broadly average by the end of Year 6. They have risen steadily since 2004. Mathematics is the weaker subject. Standards fell in mathematics in 2007 because some of the teaching did not challenge the more able pupils effectively enough. Reading is the weaker aspect in English. The school has recognised that it needs a more structured and consistent approach to the teaching of letter sounds throughout the school. Teachers are beginning to address this weakness with some success. The school is on course to achieve the challenging targets it has set for 2008.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils enjoy school and their positive attitudes are shown by their regular attendance. Relationships are good between pupils and with adults. Racial harmony is strong, pupils have a good sense of what is right and what is wrong and good empathy for the needs of others. They say that they feel safe and secure and know what precautions to take to keep themselves protected. Most pupils behave well and successful behaviour strategies help a small minority to comply with teachers' expectations. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy physical exercise and after-school sports clubs are popular. Currently, pupils are taking part in an initiative, which encourages them to walk to school and this strengthens their understanding of how to keep healthy. The school council are working to improve facilities at lunchtime and know that their views will be valued. Recently, they participated in a community project by making suggestions for the development of local parkland. Pupils are developing satisfactory skills for their future well-being.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

The school is beginning to improve weaknesses identified in the headteachers' monitoring of lessons and pupils' work. Teachers say that there is greater teamwork, morale and shared commitment to improvement. At all stages, relationships are good and pupils are eager to succeed. All teachers explain lesson objectives clearly and pupils have a good understanding of their improvement targets in literacy and numeracy. The good and excellent lessons observed during the inspection were characterised by high teacher expectations and brisk, lively teaching. At these times, pupils make good progress. Interactive whiteboards are used as an effective tool to widen pupils' experiences and consolidate understanding. Teachers use questioning well. This ensures that pupils have good opportunities to develop their thinking skills and explain their ideas. In some lessons, there is a lack of attention given to matching learning tasks to the needs of pupils and they find work either too easy or too hard. At these times, their progress is not as rapid as it should be. There are examples of good marking that show pupils how they might develop but this is not consistent across all classes. Teachers do not use computers enough to support work across subjects.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

Pupils enjoy an interesting curriculum that meets their needs satisfactorily. The school has rightly prioritised the development of basic skills in reading, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). However, some subjects such as physical education, history and geography have not received adequate coverage and there have been few extra-curricular activities. Special projects extend the curriculum well and increase pupils' appreciation of the wide range of ethnic backgrounds represented within the school community. Visitors enrich these projects through their specialist skills. During a recent book week, for example, a poet and storyteller motivated pupils to read a wider range of literature. There is effective support for pupils identified with learning difficulties and disabilities and pupils who have English as an additional language. It is only since the start of this term that teachers are undergoing training in order to introduce National strategies to boost pupils' performance in literacy and numeracy.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. Pupils know who to approach if they need help. Assemblies celebrating pupils' successes reinforce good examples of how pupils care for each other and for adults. The school works closely with outside agencies in support of vulnerable children and their families. The learning mentor and link worker are particularly successful in supporting these pupils and their families. There are good child protection procedures and arrangements for ensuring health and safety. Academic guidance is satisfactory, although there are weaknesses in the use that is made of day-to-day assessment and marking.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The headteacher is giving clear direction and the necessary momentum to take the school forward. More focused self-evaluation, monitoring of teaching and learning and use of performance data has given a clear idea of the priorities for development and how further improvements can be achieved. In consultation with staff, governors, parents and pupils, he has produced a very good school improvement plan that points a clear and achievable way forward. Almost all the parents who responded are happy with all aspects of the school's work and are impressed with the recent improvements. Senior leaders have a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses in their areas of responsibility and all say how much they are valued and empowered by the new headteacher. Some of these improvements in the work of the school are relatively new and lack the necessary consistency to have had any significant impact on the school's overall performance. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive and have a reasonable understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They do not have sufficiently robust systems to check on the school's progress.

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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	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	3

### 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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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?	3

<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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

10 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Christ The King Catholic Primary School, Reading, RG2 8LX

I am writing to thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. You were very polite and well behaved. You tell us there is always someone you can go to if you have any worries. We were pleased to see that you know about healthy eating, keeping fit and how to keep safe. We saw many interesting lessons, in which you all worked hard. You were clearly enjoying these lessons and were eager to take part in the discussions that took place. You get on well together and it was great to see how well you helped each other in lessons when working in pairs and groups. All the adults who work in school care for you and are supportive and interested in all that you do. They really want you to do the best that you can and make sure that everyone is included in all that takes place.

We have said that your school is giving you a satisfactory education that is improving at a good rate. Your new headteacher is bringing in many good ideas that are helping the school to improve. You have done well in science and your writing is good. We think you could do even better with your reading and mathematics and have asked the teachers to help you improve in these subjects. We have also asked the teachers to make sure that the work they give you in all subjects is neither too easy nor too hard. Your headteacher knows that it is important to make sure that all the new ideas continue to develop because in that way they will make your school even better.

Mr M. Johnstone

Lead Inspector