



Ellesmere Port Christ Church CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111351
Local Authority Cheshire
Inspection number 288934
Inspection dates 29–30 November 2006
Reporting inspector Mark Madeley

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Deeside
School category	Voluntary aided		Whitby, Ellesmere Port
Age range of pupils	4–11		Merseyside CH65 6TQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0151 3553262
Number on roll (school)	166	Fax number	0151 3557532
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs J Derby
		Headteacher	Mrs Jeanette Herbert
Date of previous school inspection	29 October 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The pupils of this small school are virtually all of White British heritage. They live in a mixture of owner occupied and local authority housing. The parents of approximately one half of them have chosen to bring their children to this school rather than use more local schools. The percentage of children eligible for free school meals is average. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average but five children have statements for additional need, which is exceptionally high. A much higher percentage of children than is usual join the school part way through their education. For instance, 10 of the 19 children in the current Year 6 class have attended at least one other school.

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 a good school, which gives good value for money. Parents commented that the school works very hard at making a caring, stimulating and achieving community. The inspection confirms this view and agrees with the school's evaluation of its effectiveness. Good management has maintained the high standards identified by the last inspection, improved the quality of children's personal development and sorted out the issues for improvement. Management knows the strengths and areas for development of the school because it carefully and regularly checks provision. The governing body works effectively with management to meet the needs of the children. All of the above come together, to demonstrate that the school has good capacity to improve further.

Children join the Reception class with attainment at the expected levels. Satisfactory provision in the Foundation Stage helps children make steady progress. In this class, planning is too general because assessment information on individuals is not used well enough and tends to limit the children's progress. Throughout Years 1 to 6 progress is good and children achieve well because good teaching is effective in meeting their needs. In the national tests Year 6 children have reached above average results for the last three years. Children enjoy learning and present their work very neatly, particularly their topic work. What children will learn during the lesson is consistently shared with them and they are very good at assessing their own learning at the end of a lesson. Teachers in Years 3 to 6 challenge the most able children consistently well but this is less strong in Years 1 and 2 because the teachers' planning to meet the needs of the most able is inconsistent. Small classes containing children of the same age is a positive feature of provision, especially when so many new children arrive at the school during the year and need additional help to settle in.

The curriculum for mathematics and science is based on practical work and enables children to make very good progress. Topic work is a feature of the good curriculum and is taught well and the children's books have high quality content. Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Children greatly enjoy the many trips out and visitors to school. These help to broaden their understanding of the world. Both parents and children like the annual residential visits for all children in Years 3 to 6, which help children become more independent. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Other personal skills are developed in an outstanding way because the school has an extensive programme to promote positive values and takes care of all its pupils. Children behave exceptionally well and are active and eat healthily. They know many ways of staying safe. Charities both in the United Kingdom and abroad are supported enthusiastically. Positive links with the on-site pre-school help children get to know staff and settle quickly into the school's routines. Parents are fully supportive of the school and many of them help in class on a regular basis. Links with the local parish and community are very strong and benefit children's spiritual development greatly.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide greater challenge for more able children in English and mathematics in Years 1 and 2.
- Improve the use of assessment information in the Foundation Stage so as to plan activities that meet the needs of all children.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children start school with a wide range of attainments. Most settle quickly because of the very good links with the on-site private pre-school provision. They make satisfactory progress and start in Year 1 with attainment similar to national expectations. Children's understanding of letter sounds has been weak in the past, but initiatives to improve their knowledge are already having a positive effect on learning. However, there are missed opportunities to plan activities across the curriculum to challenge the children further which tends to hamper their progress.

Through Key Stage 1, children make satisfactory progress. The school has taken action to improve progress, especially of the most able. It is too early to say whether or not there has been a major impact. The results of teacher assessments and tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics have been average, with some slight variations, for five years. The percentage of children reaching the higher Level 3 is consistently below average in all three subjects.

All children make good progress in Key Stage 2 and achieve well. Results from the national tests in English, mathematics and science have been above average for the last three years. Children make very good progress in mathematics and science. The school's actions to improve children's rate of progress in English are in their early stages. The governors set the school challenging targets, which are generally met. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported. Well-taught additional programmes are used to meet their learning needs and they make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.

Children behave really well in class and outside. They say that they love coming to school and this is reflected in the above average attendance levels. Children welcome responsibilities both large and small and carry out their duties conscientiously. The school council is active in voicing children's views and has a governor on the council so the governing body knows children's views too. The children are developing very good social skills as they contribute well to community events and are responsive to charity appeals. Their lunch boxes and the free fruit scheme show that children have taken the message of 'five fruit or vegetables a day' on board and have a very good

understanding of how to stay healthy. Children report that there is little, if any, bullying and that they are well aware of what to do should any problem arise. They know how to handle tools, cross the road and use the Internet safely. They are well prepared for their next school because attitudes are very positive, they work together cooperatively and they make good progress in their basic skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Children behave extremely well and want to learn because teachers make lessons interesting, for instance, through good use of new technology, use praise effectively and value the contribution of every child. Teachers' use of questioning is generally good and in Years 5 and 6 is excellent. Children consolidate their learning because teachers ask questions like, 'how did you work that out?' and give children time to think about their response, for example, through effective use of partner discussion. In most classes tasks are well matched to the needs of the children, though this is not totally consistent in Key Stage 1, especially for the more able. The use of assessment information to help teachers plan the next stage in children's learning is good in Years 1 to 6. Those children who need additional support or further challenge are identified quite quickly and suitable programmes put in place to aid their learning. In the Foundation Stage, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Activities are exciting and good use is made of the outdoor area for exercise and learning. But teachers' planning is too general and does not meet the individual needs of children well enough. Opportunities are missed to find out what individual children know and plan future activities, which build on that understanding.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Although the curriculum is planned well overall, it is not consistently challenging to extend the children in the Foundation Stage and meet the needs of the most able children in English and mathematics in Key Stage 1. The school was one of the first to adopt a 'skills based' curriculum and this is instrumental in helping children see the links between subjects and develop their creativity. The six areas of learning of the Foundation Stage programme are covered satisfactorily. A well-planned programme for personal, social and health education gives children a very good idea of how to stay fit and safe. Children also take up the opportunities to exercise provided by the good range of clubs and team sports. An exceptional aspect of the extra provision is that children in Years 3 to 6 have the chance to go on a residential visit every year. Children report that this helps them learn to work together, solve problems and have fun!

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

'Christ Church is a safe and caring environment,' report parents. They feel that staff look after their children well and know that any concerns will be dealt with promptly. Procedures for safeguarding children are in place. The parents of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are kept fully informed about the additional provision for their child. Each child has his or her own targets. However, global statements like 'follow instructions' are not broken down into smaller steps for the pupils and parents to see progress. Good annual reports keep parents well informed about their child's progress. Many parents help their child at home using information provided by the school. Pupils have a very good understanding of the quality of their work because work partners in lessons make useful comments and teachers' marking is of a consistently good quality.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

All members of staff share a vision for the school, which is based on Christian values. Parents, many of whom have specifically chosen this school, share the school's values and think that their child is 'well cared for by an exceptional staff who are very well led'. Any and every child is welcomed into the school and treated with respect by all. Many children potentially at risk in other schools learn successfully. All staff endeavour to provide the best care and education for each child and there is a joint effort to raise standards further. Senior managers generally make effective use of the good systems for checking on the children's progress, as well as checking on the impact of new initiatives. Teaching is improved by good feedback from lesson observations and reviews of children's books. Financial resources are used very carefully to meet the needs of children. Decisions regarding spending are carefully considered and reviewed for their impact on children's learning. Governance is good. Governors are very supportive, for example, attending half-termly communion, as well as visiting their allotted class quite frequently. They are particularly effective at maintaining a close watch on expenditure.

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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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	2
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?	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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Like you, we think that your school is good. We think this because good teaching helps you achieve well. You are also developing excellent manners, attitudes and cooperative skills. It is the good work of the headteacher and her staff that have done this for you. They make learning interesting for you, through things like visits and the use of the interactive whiteboards.

We listened carefully to what you had to say and took your views into account when making our decisions. You told us that you really liked your school, the headteacher and the staff. You trusted them to care for you and we thought that they did so in a very good way. You told us all about how to stay healthy, including those things to avoid, and we thought that this was outstanding. We also decided that your behaviour, your positive attitude towards lessons and your understanding of how to stay safe were also outstanding. Well done to you and your teachers!!

Even good schools need to continue to improve. We have asked the headteacher to do two things, which will make your school a better place to learn:

- give more able children in Years 1 and 2 harder work
- make sure that activities in the Foundation Stage help individual children to build on what they already know.

You can play your part in improving your school by continuing to have a 'hunger for learning' and maintaining the very high standard of behaviour you all showed us. We thank you very much for all your help and wish you and your school all the best for the future.