



# Christ Church CofE Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 114572  
**Local Authority** East Sussex  
**Inspection number** 289975  
**Inspection dates** 15–16 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Selwyn Ward

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 address</b>	Woodland Vale Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		St Leonards-on-Sea
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		TN37 6JJ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01424 422953
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	454	<b>Fax number</b>	01424 720707
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Clifford Smith
		<b>Headteacher</b>	A Hanney
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 July 2002		

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

This large school serves a socially disadvantaged area. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. Around a quarter of the pupils come from a wide range of different ethnic backgrounds and an above average proportion of pupils are at an early stage of learning English. Mobility in the area is high, with many children joining the school part-way through their primary education.

## **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 with a number of exceptional features. Parents and pupils greatly appreciate all that the school does for them. As one parent put it, 'The school fosters a caring and inclusive approach in the way it influences the children's learning and behaviour.' Care, guidance and support are outstanding, with every child's individual needs exceedingly well catered for. As a result, their personal development is exceptional. All pupils know how well they are doing academically and know precisely what they need to do to improve their work. By the time they leave school, they are confident young people who are eager to do well. Pupils of all abilities achieve well. Children enter Nursery with a lower than expected level of skills but they get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes and they make good progress as they move through the school. They attain standards by the end of Year 6 that are a little above the national average.

All this has been achieved through outstanding leadership and management. The headteacher, leadership team, staff and governors have a shared vision of a school that genuinely lives up to its motto of 'Learning to live together; together living to learn'. They have together created what a parent describes as 'a bright, smooth-running environment that encourages and involves the children in all aspects of their learning'. Classrooms and corridors are vibrant with displays that help to stimulate and motivate pupils as well as celebrating their success. These displays link to an excellent curriculum designed to, as the children put it, 'make learning fun' and to engender what parents describe as 'a community spirit where children are encouraged to think of others'. School leaders carefully monitor pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. They identified, for example, that pupils had been making better progress in Years 5 and 6 than in other year groups. Checks on teaching revealed that pupils lower down the school were not always being set challenging enough work. Very effective action has been taken to remedy this. The result is teaching throughout the school that is now consistently good because it is so well matched to pupils' learning needs. In some lessons, however, teachers take too long with their introductions, leaving pupils to listen passively for quite a long time until some get restless because they are keen to get on with activities. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning but occasionally, they too are too passive at the start of lessons when they could be doing more to support pupils or to record pupils' contribution to discussion.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils do not have to listen passively for too long in lessons.
- Make better use of teaching assistants' time during lesson introductions.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Children in the Nursery and Reception Years make good progress so that, by the time they reach Year 1, standards are close to those expected for their ages. It is principally

their communication skills that remain low. In the past, progress has been satisfactory in Years 1 to 4 and good in Years 5 and 6. This inconsistency in progress has meant that pupils have only reached average standards by the end of Year 6. This situation has improved. With consistently good teaching throughout the school, pupils are now making consistently good progress. Standards are steadily rising with the most recent results representing an improvement on previous years. By the time pupils leave the school, standards are now slightly above average.

Pupils of all abilities achieve well. This includes the more able and the many pupils with additional learning needs, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities and those learning English as an additional language. This is because work is closely matched to pupils' individual needs and because pupils all have a very clear understanding of what they need to do to do better. Those pupils who join the school part-way through their education also do well. One parent stressed how quickly her daughter had settled 'largely due to the care and support received from staff'.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Many children join the school with emotional difficulties and some have low self-esteem but they blossom and grow in confidence as they progress through the school. They get on very well with each other and learn to celebrate each other's many different cultural backgrounds. This helps to make the school a happy and welcoming place to be, including for those children who join part-way through their education who found that 'everyone rushes to make friends with you'.

Pupils really enjoy coming to school. Attitudes to learning and behaviour are exemplary. Pupils are trusted and, in turn, they take very seriously their many responsibilities, such as manning the school office during the lunchtime. These, and other opportunities to learn life skills, prepare pupils well for the future. Pupils feel safe at school. They are confident that any occasional bullying incidents are handled well. They are well informed about healthy eating and exercise and take enthusiastic advantage of the many sporting activities that are arranged for them, enjoying for example football, badminton and cross-country runs. They are very successful in competitive sports despite the lack of a school field. Pupils know their views are valued and, through the school council, they have been instrumental in making beneficial changes, in both the school and the local community. The improvement in attendance since the last inspection has been impressive because the school works hard to minimise avoidable absence. Attendance is satisfactory. It is not better because its attendance figures are depressed by a few pupils who are recorded as absent when their families move home without telling the school.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good and some is outstanding. The consistency in the quality of teaching is a marked improvement since the last inspection and the key to the school's growing success. Teachers' have high expectations of work and behaviour and this, combined with the sustained, brisk pace of lessons, results in pupils' eager participation in activities. Teachers have good subject knowledge and their planning is thorough. They set interesting tasks that carefully match pupils' differing needs. Whilst teachers explain clearly to pupils what they are expected to learn, sometimes too much time is spent giving overlong introductions. Throughout the school, teaching assistants work in close co-operation with teachers and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. However, their time is not always used well, particularly in the whole-class introduction to lessons. Too often they are listening to the teaching when they could be assessing pupils' understanding or reinforcing the key teaching points to individual pupils or groups. Pupils and teachers get on very well together. One of the reasons pupils work hard in lessons is because they like their teachers and are keen to please them.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 1

The school's rich curriculum is delivered in an exciting and vibrant learning environment. It provides very well for all learners and is enriched by an impressive range of visits, visitors and out-of-class activities. A strong focus is given to teaching basic skills and to making learning fun. For example, in literacy, what better way for pupils in Year 6 to understand the language of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* than to act out scenes from the play before translating it into modern day dialogue? The enthusiasm with which pupils speak about art, music and sporting activities reflects the school's success in gaining national awards for these subjects. A comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education, together with initiatives leading to Healthy School status, gives pupils a very clear understanding of the need for safety, exercise and healthy eating. To improve the curriculum still further, the school is increasingly making productive links between subjects. Pupils confirm that these ties, for example, linking work in literacy, history and information and communication technology, make learning interesting and enjoyable.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 1

Pupils are very well looked after and made to feel happy, safe and secure. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is outstanding. They achieve well because they benefit from well organised and highly effective support, both from school staff and from outside agencies. The same is true for those pupils who need

extra support because they are at an early stage of learning English. A particular strength is in the exceptional guidance given to pupils on how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Even the youngest pupils know their individual targets, and most pupils from Year 2 upwards know exactly what levels they are working at in English and mathematics. Pupils appreciate and understand the importance of targets. As one pupil explained, 'It's good knowing your targets because it helps you to improve.' Pupils respond with enthusiasm to the school's merit schemes. Younger pupils cheer with excitement at being awarded pasta which, though the etymology is questionable, is used as the currency for pastoral rewards.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

The headteacher provides excellent leadership. With very good support from the leadership team, staff and governors, she has overseen improvements in teaching, assessment, the curriculum and resources which have led to dramatically improved attendance, rising standards, better pupil achievement and pupils' exceptionally strong personal development. The school has a very clear understanding of its many strengths and those areas that could be better. It has demonstrated considerable success in using its evaluation to drive school improvement. In some instances, however, the school's self-evaluation has been too modest about its provision and achievements. The leadership team is highly successful in its quest to ensure the school's fully inclusive nature. To this end, teaching and learning are monitored rigorously and teachers' thorough knowledge of pupils' progress allows the school to set challenging targets for all learners. Governors carry out their duties most effectively. They manage finances well, play a full part in strategic planning and are effective in their role of challenging the school to do its very best.

Led by a headteacher with a passion to ensure pupils have the best provision possible and that all achieve to the best of their capabilities, the school has amply demonstrated that it has excellent capacity for continued improvement.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<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>	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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

<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	3
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	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>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<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.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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**

I am writing to let you know how much we enjoyed our visit to your school. You are rightly very proud of your school and we want to particularly thank those of you who came to speak to us.

Here are the things that we think are best about your school:

- This is a good school where the staff and governors all work together to help you do well.
- You are all learning to become confident young people who are keen to learn and to do as well as you can.
- The school looks after you really well and makes it a happy place for you to be.
- You are given lots of interesting things to do and that helps make lessons fun.
- The teaching is good and your teachers make sure that you know exactly what you need to do to improve your work.

These are the things that we think could be better:

- You should not have to sit listening for so long at the start of some lessons before you are given activities to do.
- Sometimes, teaching assistants could do more to help some of you during lesson introductions.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when we came to see you.