



Chrishall Holy Trinity and St Nicholas CE (Aided) Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115195
Local Authority ESSEX
Inspection number 290161
Inspection dates 17–18 January 2007
Reporting inspector Martin Beale

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Palmers Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		Chrishall, Chrishall
Age range of pupils	4–11		Royston, Hertfordshire SG8 8QW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01763 838592
Number on roll (school)	102	Fax number	01763 837049
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs J Rodda
		Headteacher	Mrs L Yates
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4–11	17–18 January 2007	290161

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector over two days.

Description of the school

This is a small Church of England School serving local villages and hamlets in North West Essex. Pupils are also drawn from Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire. The school has a high level of pupil mobility, partly because some parents move their older children into private education. The school is also growing as it becomes more popular. Pupils are taught in four mixed age classes.

Virtually all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is low. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. Children's attainment on entry to school is slightly below expectations generally and is below expectations in literacy and numeracy.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The inspection confirms the school's evaluation of its qualities. This is a good school that has some outstanding features and is good value for money. Outstanding leadership that strives for the highest standards is the main reason for the school's success in recent years. The headteacher provides exceptional direction for the school and is very ably supported by a strong staff team and an extremely well run governing body. All reflect continually on how they might improve. Self-evaluation, based on rigorous monitoring, is accurate and identifies where further improvements are needed. All these features place the school in a strong position to improve further.

Another significant reason for the school's success is the outstanding curriculum. This gives a very wide range of exciting and stimulating experiences for pupils of all ages and abilities. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) in lessons is a strength. The good teaching builds well on the curriculum and the careful assessment of the pupils' progress. Gifted and talented pupils are given much stimulation and are encouraged to think hard. These pupils enjoy their additional activities and are prepared to try new ideas. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are catered for well. Carefully planned programmes ensure that they make good progress towards their targets.

The care, support and guidance of the pupils are good in this happy school. The positive environment encourages pupils to express their ideas because they know their contributions are valued. Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pupils enjoy their work very much and contribute considerably to the life of the school. They understand the importance of exercise and diet for a healthy lifestyle exceptionally well. They take part in many sporting activities and appreciate the new school meals. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They learn to respect the customs and cultures of others and to respect differences.

Provision in Reception has improved considerably since the last inspection. Children now make good progress and most reach the expected learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. The school copes well with the high level of pupil mobility throughout the year. Pupils' achievement is good. Standards are well above average by the end of Year 6. This places pupils in a strong position to be successful at secondary school.

The school has correctly identified two areas for improvement. It judges that more pupils should exceed national expectations in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1, and though pupils are achieving well in reading, their achievement is not as consistently good in writing. The school is working to improve both aspects through more challenging teaching. The inspection also agrees that the school should work with parents of pupils to ensure that they are prepared to take more responsibility for their learning, work independently and learn from their mistakes.

What the school should do to improve further

- Challenge pupils to reach higher standards in writing across the school and in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1.

- Work in partnership with parents to help pupils to become independent learners who show more initiative and learn from their mistakes.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. In the Foundation Stage, children make good progress and most reach the expected learning goals by the end of Reception. Test results in Year 2 have been typically above the national averages but were average in 2006. Pupils are not consistently reaching the high standards of which they are capable at the end of Key Stage 1 in mathematics.

It has been a pattern for some time that pupils reach the standards expected nationally by the end of Year 6 in most subjects. Many pupils exceed not only national expectations but also the challenging targets the school sets for them, although they do so less consistently in writing. They make slower progress in writing and fewer exceed national expectations across the school. Reading standards are high and resulted in very high English results in 2006. Last year pupils also gained very high results in science. Pupils that are more able and those who find learning difficult achieve equally well given their different starting points.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and participate in all that it offers. They are confident, polite, behave outstandingly well and genuinely care for each other. Attendance has remained well above average for many years and the school ensures that it stays so exceptionally vigilantly. Pupils develop into mature young people. As Year 6 pupils recognise, they are ready to move on to the next stage of their education when the time comes. Pupils work together well and develop teamwork and other skills that prepare them very well for the next stage of their learning. Many older pupils thrive on the challenges presented by the school. They take their responsibilities seriously and have a developing voice in the school through the school council. They understand how to stay safe and learn how to deal with risks, both in and out of school well.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Most teaching is good and some has outstanding attributes that move the pupils' learning forward quickly. One very effective feature is the way in which the subject strengths of individual teachers are shared to provide, for example, expert teaching across the school in ICT. Extensive and creative use is made of interactive whiteboards and laptop computers to make lessons interesting. Teachers use accurate assessment

information carefully to plan lessons that match closely the different ages and abilities of the pupils in their classes. Pupils respond well to their teachers who usually have high expectations of their work and behaviour. The improvement of pupils' writing skills is a school wide target. The learning of younger pupils, such as in mathematics, slows at times because they are not consistently challenged, or asked to work more independently of adults. Teaching assistants and parent helpers in school make a significant contribution to the learning of groups and individuals.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school meets its aim to develop pupils academically and personally through its rich, varied and interesting curriculum. In conjunction with other schools, programmes to extend the experiences of gifted and talented pupils are a major strength and are much enjoyed by the pupils involved. Specific activities, such as the 'Car Race Programme', challenge older pupils to think and plan carefully as they solve a variety of problems. The school provides a very comprehensive range of extra curricular activities that pupils appreciate greatly. Music plays a significant role in the life of the school and French has been introduced creatively. Basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT are developed across many subjects. The school exploits links with local secondary schools well to extend the pupils' experiences, particularly in languages and sport.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Parents justifiably feel confident that their children are safe and well cared for at school. Adults rigorously implement arrangements to provide for their safety and well-being. Consequently, pupils report that they feel safe and secure. Child protection procedures are clear and widely understood. There are very thorough systems for tracking the progress of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and the gifted and talented. This information is generally used well to guide pupils towards their targets. Marking is constructive and helps pupils to improve their work. Most pupils know how well they are doing and the steps they need to take to improve, but these are not always specific enough for the younger pupils from Reception to Year 2. The school is working with parents to develop pupils' independent learning skills.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The school is highly successful in ensuring that all pupils achieve much of their potential, both academically and personally. Very effective structures are in place to improve the performance of staff, who share expertise and work together when planning new developments. There is a very clear and shared understanding of the school's strengths and how it is to improve, but the school does not always identify clearly how its actions benefit pupils' development. The highly effective governing

body has made great progress in extending its role since the last inspection. It is fully involved in strategic planning and challenges the school to achieve higher standards. Funding is very carefully deployed to meet the main priority of having a high ratio of adults to pupils while providing a high level of resources and new technology for teachers to use.

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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	2
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	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
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?	1
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?	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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
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

18 January 2007

Dear Pupils

Chrishall Holy Trinity and St Nicholas CE (Aided) Primary School, Palmers Lane, Chrishall, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 8QW

I am writing to thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school. You are a credit to yourselves and the school. You were all very kind, polite, helpful and showed how proud you are of your school. I enjoyed talking with you and your teachers and watching you learn, particularly when older pupils took part in the 'Car Race Programme'. Many aspects of your school are good. You, your parents and teachers are right in thinking that you go to a good school.

You make good progress during your time at school. Most of you achieve, and many of you exceed, the standards expected by the time you move on to secondary school. You thoroughly enjoy school, attend regularly, work hard and behave sensibly. The care and support you receive is good, particularly when you find learning difficult. Teachers provide you with a very interesting range of activities in lessons and after school. You are learning the importance of diet and exercise for a healthy lifestyle. You take your responsibilities very seriously and make a considerable contribution to the life of the school.

Your teachers and governors are trying hard to make the school even better. There are some areas where improvements could be made. Younger pupils need to be challenged more consistently in mathematics. They also need to become independent learners who show more initiative and learn from their mistakes. You all need to strive for higher standards in writing. I feel sure you and your teachers will work hard to make all this happen.

I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Martin Beale

Lead inspector