

Christ Church CofE Controlled Primary School and Nursery

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103397
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	308306
Inspection dates	20–21 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Marion Thompson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	216
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Catherine Ray
Headteacher	Teresita Moriani
Date of previous school inspection	15 September 2003
School address	Claremont Road Sparkbrook Birmingham B11 1LF
Telephone number	01217 725121
Fax number	01217 739372

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized primary and nursery school, where the majority of pupils come from British Pakistani backgrounds. A number of other minority ethnic groups are also represented. Most pupils speak English as an additional language and a large number of pupils are at the early stages of learning English. Children's levels of skills on entry to Nursery and the Reception class are low, especially in language and communication skills. The number of pupils leaving or joining the school at times other than the usual is high. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties is well above average. Over the last two years, there have been severe and prolonged staffing difficulties, including recruitment problems and very high turnover of staff.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory, but rapidly improving school. Pupils' achievement, which has been unsatisfactory for the past two years, is improving and is now satisfactory. Standards, however, remain exceptionally low because of the legacy of underachievement. The headteacher and senior staff have worked determinedly and creatively to resolve acute staffing difficulties and the school is now in a sound position to continue to improve. Provision and leadership in the Foundation Stage are good and children make good progress. The school has a very strong partnership with parents, especially in the Foundation Stage, and is highly valued by the local community. As one parent correctly wrote, 'In this inner city school, where the children are coming and going because the families move around, the school is working hard and successfully to meet the needs of all the pupils.'

Parents value the high quality care which the school, in conjunction with a wide range of other agencies, provides for all pupils, but particularly for the large number with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Consequently, pupils enjoy school, behave well, attend regularly and are soundly prepared for the future. They treat each other with respect and pay excellent attention to safety. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and pupils develop an appreciation of the diverse faiths and cultures represented within the school. They also know how to stay healthy. An impressive number of pupils and their parents enjoy regular early morning exercise in the school hall. Most pupils make a good contribution to the school and wider community, taking their responsibilities seriously.

Achievement in science, mathematics and reading has improved rapidly. Standards in writing are still not as good as they should be. Expectations of the presentation and content of written work are too low. Work is generally matched to pupils' needs and the satisfactory curriculum motivates pupils to learn. A small minority of lessons are good or excellent and pupils make rapid progress. Teachers work hard to maintain the pace of lessons. However, sometimes this results in writing which is rushed and of poor quality. Occasionally, lower and middle ability pupils make insufficient progress, because they are not given enough time to consolidate their learning. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Pupils' work is marked regularly, but it does not always provide clear guidance to pupils on the steps they need to take to achieve their targets.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and planning provides a sound basis for improvement. The headteacher and senior team provide strong and effective leadership for the school in extremely challenging circumstances. Excellent coaching of staff has resulted in rapidly improved teaching. Reorganisation of roles and well organised support help less experienced and temporary subject coordinators to carry out their responsibilities satisfactorily. Governors provide good support to the school, but as yet all do not have the experience to provide robust challenge.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in most areas of learning, although by the end of the Reception Year their attainment is still well below the expectations for their age. Literacy skills, particularly writing, are well below average. Children enjoy the good range of activities provided and their social skills develop very well as they play and work together.

Teaching is good and pupils' personal development is promoted well. Teachers and other adults are sensitive to children's needs and adults provide good individual support and guidance for children. Children's learning needs are carefully identified, although there is insufficient focus on developing children's writing skills.

Children make a very good start to school because the relationships between Foundation Stage staff and homes are outstanding. Parents are strongly encouraged to come into school on a regular basis and many do. They work very effectively with staff to settle children.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards and pupils' achievement in writing by raising teachers' and pupils' expectations of the quality of work expected.
- Improve the achievement of middle and lower ability pupils by ensuring they have sufficient time to consolidate their learning.
- Ensure that marking consistently provides pupils with a clear understanding of the steps they need to take to reach their targets.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Improved teaching and more settled staffing have begun to reverse previous underachievement. Standards are exceptionally low, but represent satisfactory progress from pupils' low starting points. Pupils with learning difficulties and those at the early stages of learning English also make satisfactory progress. Progress in science is good, because there is a sharp focus on practical investigations and good attention is given to developing specialist language. The strategies the school has introduced have improved achievement in reading and numeracy, and it is now satisfactory. Pupils do not make enough progress in writing, because expectations of pupils' work are too low. A small minority of lower and middle ability pupils do not make as much progress as they should. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, where teaching is often good or better, frequently make rapid progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and most behave well, responding enthusiastically to lessons and other activities. They work well independently and in small groups, and at all times behave safely and with due consideration for the welfare of others. Pupils have a thorough understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles and most eat healthily and take part in physical activities. Attendance is satisfactory and improving, although a small number of parents still take their children away for holidays in term-time. Pupils make a good contribution to the community. They willingly take on responsibilities. For example, pupils engage in taking decisions through the school council; others are buddies, supporting younger pupils joining the school. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for their future lives. They develop good social skills, racial tolerance and respect for each other's beliefs and values. However, their basic literacy and numeracy skills are still weak.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The teaching is characterised by good relationships, ensuring pupils enjoy their work. Because their ideas are valued, pupils are prepared to contribute to class discussion, even when their language skills are limited. Behaviour is managed very well, and pupils work with commitment. The teaching of writing is unsatisfactory. Expectations of the presentation of work are frequently too low, and pupils are not given enough time to produce work of quality. Lessons are conducted at a good pace and pupils respond well, especially in the minority of good and excellent lessons, when work presents a high level of challenge. However, in some lessons, middle and lower ability pupils are not given enough time to consolidate their learning. Marking is regular and occasionally provides pupils with clear guidance on how to improve. However, this practice is not consistent enough across the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is broad and balanced and is enlivened by a good range of visits, visitors, activities and links with business, that make it relevant to pupils' lives. It is well organised to support pupils with a wide range of learning, social and behavioural difficulties, and also those pupils who do not have English as a first language. The range of out-of-school activities is satisfactory, with particularly good sports activities. While the curriculum has many strengths, especially in developing pupils' speaking and listening skills, opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills are not planned well enough.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides extremely good personal support and guidance for pupils, especially for those arriving during the school year. The support for pupils' social and emotional development is very good. The partnership between parents and the wide range of agencies the school works with is exceptionally good, especially for children entering the Foundation Stage. Efforts to improve attendance are effective and attendance has improved. Arrangements for safeguarding children are robust.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. Pupils are aware of their academic targets, which are well matched to their learning needs. However, they are not sure what they need to do to reach them, or how to apply them to their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher, ably supported by the senior team, provides clear direction for the school. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is good. Issues related to high staff turnover, whilst inevitably having a negative impact, have been managed as effectively as possible. For example, extremely effective coaching has rapidly improved the quality of teaching. This, in turn, has resulted in improved achievement. Subject coordinators in key roles, many of whom are less

experienced or are providing temporary cover, are growing into their roles quickly as a result of good support. Monitoring of teaching and subject leadership are improving rapidly. Planning is sound and based on an accurate evaluation of the work of the school. Challenging targets have raised expectations about what pupils can achieve, except in writing, where expectations and achievement are too low. Governors provide good support for the school, but more limited challenge. The school has made satisfactory progress since the previous inspection.

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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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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

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.

Annex A

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 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

23 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Christ Church C of E Controlled Primary School, Birmingham B11 1LF

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. You were all very proud of your school, so you will not be surprised to find that the school provides you with a sound education. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good.

These are the main things we found out about your school.

- You make good progress in the Nursery and the Reception class because provision is well matched to your needs; your parents help, too, by working with staff to make sure you settle in well.
- Standards in school are rising and you make satisfactory progress.
- A lot of this improvement is due to your positive attitudes to learning and good behaviour; you work hard because you enjoy your work, especially when it is challenging.
- You respect each other, and almost always work and play safely, taking really good care of each other.
- Teaching is improving and in a small number of lessons is good or excellent.
- You enjoy the programme of work the school has planned for you.
- The adults in school take very good care of you, especially when you have problems; they work extremely well with lots of other people to make sure your needs are met; they make sure the school is safe.
- The headteacher and staff are working really hard to ensure the school keeps getting better; they are keen to involve your parents as much as they can.

To improve things further, we have asked the school to:

- help you improve your writing, by making sure you understand that you can do a lot better and expecting better work from you
- improve the work of some pupils in middle and lower groups by making sure work is not too rushed
- make sure that marking provides you with a clear understanding of the steps you need to take to reach your targets.

You can help by taking greater care with your writing. You will be surprised how well you can do!

Best wishes Marion Thompson Lead inspector