

Christ Church C of E Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112810
Local Authority	DERBYSHIRE LA
Inspection number	311014
Inspection dates	25–26 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Ann Taylor

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	143
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev B Holbrook
Headteacher	Mr P G Brooke
Date of previous school inspection	10 March 2003
School address	Tapton View Road Stonegravels Chesterfield Derbyshire S41 7JU
Telephone number	01246 273569
Fax number	01246 200495

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Christ Church C of E school is smaller than most others, with 143 pupils. It serves families who live nearby and those from further afield, who choose Christ Church because of its Christian ethos. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is higher than the national average. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average, within a wide spread of ability. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need is lower than the national figure. Pupils from minority ethnic groups form 5.7 per cent of the school population which is also low compared to the national average. Numbers of pupils moving into the school mid term are high. The school has achieved the Basic Skills Award for the second time, the DfES 'Active Mark', Health Promoting Schools Initial Award and the School ECO Zones Silver Award. Pupils from Foundation Stage were winners in their age group of the East Midlands regional video competition in July 2006.

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's overall effectiveness is satisfactory. Standards declined over the last two years because of leadership and staffing difficulties, which stifled school improvement. However, recent initiatives to bolster pupils' achievement and ensure standards rise are beginning to bear fruit. Pupils are now making satisfactory progress. Current standards are broadly average, confirming that the school has turned the corner.

Provision and children's achievement in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. From broadly average levels, children make satisfactory progress during their time in the Reception class. The outside area is under-used for learning and a relative weakness within a satisfactory curriculum.

Teaching is satisfactory. Weaknesses are being improved gradually, but there is some way to go before a consistently high quality of teaching can be guaranteed. Teachers do not assess pupils' work on a regular enough basis to allow them to tailor lessons finely enough to meet differing needs. The curriculum is satisfactory with strengths in extra-curricular activities, sports and the varied and imaginative use of information and communication technology (ICT). There is a greater emphasis on overcoming weaknesses in pupils' mental mathematics ability and their knowledge of how letters sound and blend together. These initiatives have started well but it is too soon for them to have made a real difference. Pupils' personal development is good. They develop into well-behaved, polite, friendly young people who enjoy their education. This is because the school places a strong emphasis on their pastoral care and well-being. Parents are extremely supportive of the school, singling out Friday assemblies for special praise. They recognise the strong lead given by the headteacher in ensuring their children's welfare and in supporting families. One said 'I chose this school for its friendly family feel, which you get when you walk through the door'.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. There are some weaknesses in the guidance given to pupils to enable them to reach high academic standards. Good practice exists in the effective way pupils are encouraged to aim for high writing standards. However, pupils are not being helped consistently enough to understand what it is they are learning, to take responsibility for this, and to decide if they have been successful or if more work is needed.

Satisfactory leadership is resulting in staff increasingly being held to account for the performance of pupils in their class, through more rigorous performance management arrangements. Monitoring of teaching is securing improvements, but systems are not yet rigorous enough. The effective working partnership of the headteacher and curriculum coordinator has the capacity to bring about further improvements. Governors are supportive but have been too accepting of declining standards. The school's own view of its performance is unrealistically positive. It provides satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children's attainment on entry to the Reception year broadly matches national expectations for this age group, although the spread of ability is wide. Standards are in line with expectations by the time children reach the end of their Reception year and children make satisfactory progress. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The learning environment is satisfactory but lacks excitement. The outside area is not used well for learning due to a lack of planning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in English, mathematics and science by improving the quality of teaching and making it consistently good.
- Establish regular, systematic assessment procedures, enabling teachers to use this information to build on what pupils already know.
- Involve pupils more in understanding what they are learning, what they need to do to improve and to assess how successful they have been.
- Sharpen monitoring of the school's work so that accurate evaluations produce clear priorities for improvement.

A small proportion of the 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

Recent initiatives to raise teachers' expectations and promote higher standards are starting to show improvements in pupils' performance. There is clear evidence from the school's own tracking data, gathered every term, that pupils are making satisfactory progress once again with good progress leading to average standards in the present Year 6. This is endorsed by inspection findings which confirm the school's view. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are making satisfactory progress towards the targets in their individual educational plans.

In the 2007 assessments, standards by the end of Key Stage 1 were below average, a fall from previous years. The 2007 Key Stage 2 test results showed that standards were below average in English and science and especially low in mathematics. The exception was in writing, where more pupils reached the higher levels than is found nationally as a result of the staff focusing on improving it.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are well behaved, polite, welcoming to visitors and very positive about school. They enjoy learning and taking part in all that the school provides, which helps to explain their good attendance. Bullying is rare, but when it occurs it is dealt with effectively. Pupils' moral and social development is good; their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. However, there are few visits and visitors to help promote wider cultural understanding. Pupils have a good sense of right and wrong and relationships are positive. The school has strong links with the various organisations through which pupils make a positive contribution to community life, for example, through fundraising for charities. This fosters a deep sense of the importance of getting involved and helping others. Pupils understand clearly about keeping safe and healthy. Everyone eats fruit at break and older pupils run a fruit snack shop. Pupils develop satisfactory skills to equip them for the future, especially through their use of ICT.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

There are warm, supportive relationships in all lessons. In the good lessons, pupils are engaged and motivated to learn, especially because ICT is used well by everyone. Teaching is especially successful when time is used efficiently, pupils are given lots of encouragement and set demanding tasks which bring learning to life. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to the quality of pupils' learning. Some work is not matched to pupils' precise needs to enable them to make the best possible progress. This is because daily assessment systems are not sophisticated enough to record the small steps in pupils' learning. Teachers do not always tell pupils what they want them to learn nor check how much they have learnt at the end of lessons. As a result, they cannot always gauge what pupils understand so that they can build accurately on this next time.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

A rich array of extra clubs and sports that staff provide helps broaden pupils' outlook and experiences. There is good and sometimes quite innovative provision for ICT and it is used very well to aid teaching and learning. Pupils enjoy using computers and it generates real enthusiasm. Weaknesses in the mathematics and English curriculum have been correctly identified though these mean that the curriculum is not as good as the school believes. Measures to overcome these deficiencies, such as more opportunities for pupils to work together to solve problems and more chances to explain their thinking, are beginning to make a difference, although it is early days.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

This is a happy school with a friendly atmosphere, providing high quality pastoral care. Support for vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties is well organised and effective. Procedures to ensure pupils' protection, safety and well-being meet requirements. Effective procedures for measuring pupils' progress now provide an accurate termly view of how well they are doing. Teachers set targets for all pupils in English and mathematics. This initiative is contributing to the improved rates of progress made by pupils. For example, targets set for English are generally, clearly defined and help pupils understand how they can improve their work and what to aim for as their next step in their learning. The school recognises the need to refine target setting even more, especially in mathematics, to eliminate some inconsistencies in practice and motivate pupils even more.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

A strength of the leadership is the headteacher's promotion of a caring and supportive ethos. Historically, energies have been absorbed by staffing difficulties which have inhibited consistent school improvement. There is a strong determination to raise standards, shared by governors and senior leaders, now the school is in a more settled position. This determination is confirmed

by the very challenging nature of the targets for pupils' performance in 2008. Whilst many initiatives need to be built upon and developed they indicate that together, the headteacher and effective curriculum co-ordinator have the capacity to improve the school's performance. The school's self-evaluation process is based on a satisfactory analysis of data about performance, but it has not led to a sharp enough focus on priorities to raise standards. Monitoring of lessons, whilst successfully securing gradual improvement in teaching, is not focused on how effective the learning is. Financial procedures are efficient and managed well.

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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 ¹ 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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
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

28 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Christ Church C of E School, Chesterfield, S41 7JU

Mr Pattinson and I would like to thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. I am writing to let you know what we found. One of the most important things we noticed was how polite, friendly and helpful you all are, so well done!

We are pleased you enjoy your school so much. We both agree you work hard and behave well. We were especially impressed with the way you use computers to help you in your learning. I had a look at a video some of you had made about a spider and was very impressed.

Mr Brooke and all the adults who work in the school look after you very well. This is why your school has such a happy feel to it, and why your parents like it so much. To make your school even better we have asked Mr Brooke to work with the teachers to:

- help you make more progress in your English, mathematics and science work
- help you to understand better how you can improve your work
- keep a closer check on how well you are learning so they can give you work at exactly the right level of difficulty
- agree the most important things that will make the school even better and write them down clearly.

We send you all our best wishes

Mrs Taylor (with Mr Pattinson) Lead Inspector