

# Christow Community School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113193
<b>Local Authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	311144
<b>Inspection date</b>	20 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Anna Sketchley

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 category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	86
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Alex Gibson
<b>Headteacher</b>	David Lamoon
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 April 2003
<b>School address</b>	Dry Lane Christow Exeter EX6 7PE
<b>Telephone number</b>	01647 252542
<b>Fax number</b>	01647 252542

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

In the recent past this small school has had significant staffing difficulties and changes in class organisation. These have now been resolved bringing about more stability to teaching and learning. The school has four classes, three of which have children from two year groups. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. A few pupils are from minority ethnic groups and none of these is in the first stages of learning English as an additional language. There is an independently run pre-school on site.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Christow is a good and improving school. It has been through a period when there were significant staffing and organisational difficulties that led to a dip in standards. This has been successfully tackled and standards have now returned to being well above average. All pupils make consistently good progress. This is being maintained through rigorous monitoring and regular tracking of their progress.

Children's attainment when they join the school is broadly in line with expectations and their personal and social skills are good. They make good progress and most exceed the standards expected by the end of the Reception Year. This is the result of good teaching which continues through the school so that pupils achieve well. The school has recognised that there is scope to extend opportunities for pupils to apply their good literacy and numeracy skills. As a result, the curriculum is currently being revised to make better links between subjects and promote greater creativity in planning and learning. Relationships are very good and pupils really enjoy coming to school. The school has a 'family' atmosphere and pupils are well known to staff and well cared for. This is recognised by a large number of parents who make many positive comments such as, 'I am extremely happy that my children are at a caring, friendly school which inspires them to learn.' Most pupils are given clear targets so that they have a good view of what they need to do to improve. However, although pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress, they have too many targets, some of which are not easy for them to understand. Pupils' personal, moral and social development and their well-being are good. They are respected and listened to and as a result they demonstrate a good attitude to school, are confident and polite and behave well. However, there are insufficient opportunities for them to develop their knowledge and understanding of the diversity of cultures found in modern Britain.

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school, is well organised and along with the staff and governors is fully committed and hard-working. There has been rapid improvement over the last year, largely due to rigorous monitoring of teaching and thorough tracking of pupils' progress. The school has a good capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Links with the pre-school on the site are well established and there are good induction arrangements for reception children. They attend school some mornings in the term before they start, helping them to become familiar with routines and enabling them to settle quickly into school life. Relationships are calm and warm and communication with parents is good. Teaching is good and the curriculum is carefully planned to take account of the needs of all children. Lessons are purposeful but fun. Children clearly enjoyed playing 'sound bingo' with the teacher to reinforce their phonics knowledge. Although the teaching is shared between two teachers across the week, assessments are carefully collected and children's progress is tracked regularly to ensure good progress. The relatively new outside decking area is providing well for all areas of learning through sand and water play. The classroom environment, although well organised, is rather dull and opportunities are missed to stimulate children's interests, for example, through colourful and inviting displays.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that clear and achievable targets are set for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- Plan more opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of the diversity of modern British society.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Standards are generally above average although there was a dip in 2006. Standards rose again to above average levels in 2007. Pupils currently in Year 2 and Year 6 are set to reach similar high standards in national assessments and statutory tests. Effective analysis of data on pupils' attainment has enabled the school to identify some variation in the achievement of boys and girls. More girls than boys attain higher levels in writing and boys do better than girls in mathematics. These issues are being successfully addressed through, for example, focused questions to engage girls actively in mathematics lessons and using more engaging texts to stimulate boys' writing.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' good attitudes and behaviour and their confidence and well developed personal skills are important factors in their good progress. They enjoy school, say that lessons are fun and particularly like the interactive whiteboards because they make learning interesting. They feel safe and well cared for and know who to go to if they are in difficulty, feeling sure that adults will deal quickly with any issues. Keeping fit and healthy is important to pupils and they derive lots of fun and pleasure from the early morning 'Take 10'. Pupils have a good sense of right and wrong. Participating in the newly reformed school council and acting as 'Playground Friends' and play leaders are all opportunities that pupils enjoy. They appreciate the responsibility it gives them within the school community. The skills pupils learn through these activities and their good literacy and numeracy skills are all preparing them well for the future. However, their understanding of the diversity of cultures found in modern Britain is limited.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Good teaching has been effective in addressing the dip in standards and ensuring that all pupils are achieving well. Teachers have high expectations, managing pupil behaviour in a firm but calm and friendly way. In most lessons the pace of learning is sharp and ensures that pupils make good progress. Thorough planning identifies challenging tasks which usually match the needs of pupils well. However, the learning intention for the lesson is not always clear and easy for pupils to understand and this makes it difficult for them to assess how well they have learnt by the end of the lesson. Teachers' questioning skills are good and are beginning to focus on encouraging pupils to think and explain what they know, especially in mathematics. Teaching assistants are used well to support those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, enabling them to make good progress in lessons. Marking is good and pupils said that it really helps them to know what they must do to improve.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The school is currently reviewing and developing a more creative curriculum based on a two year rolling programme that takes full account of mixed age classes. This is beginning to forge better links between subjects but this initiative is at an early stage and it is too soon to judge the impact. New literacy and numeracy plans are in place but are not yet consistently applied in all lessons. Information and communication technology is used well to support learning in other subjects and is a strength of the school. There is a satisfactory range of visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum and pupils value the opportunity to go on a residential visit.

Opportunities are missed to extend pupils' awareness of a range of cultures, for example, through learning about different faiths and festivals celebrated in Britain and around the world. The personal, social and health education programme is contributing well to pupils' social and moral development.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Staff know the pupils well and provide a safe, secure and welcoming environment in which to learn. Adults are good role models and as a result there is a high level of mutual respect between staff and pupils. The school makes every effort to ensure that pupils attend regularly and has been successful in reducing unauthorised absences. Procedures for dealing with unacceptable behaviour have been strengthened and are effective in ensuring good behaviour in both the classroom and playground. Pupils feel well supported in their academic work, know their individual targets and what to do next to improve. However, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, although well supported, are sometimes overburdened with too many different targets that come from both class work and their own individual education plans. Some of these targets are not always easily understood because they are not couched in child friendly language.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher has responded very well to the support provided by the local authority throughout an unsettled period. Good progress and high standards have been restored. Improvement is being maintained because the school now has rigorous systems in place for self-evaluation, identifying priorities and monitoring the impact of its actions. Pupils' progress is tracked regularly and challenging targets are set for performance in national tests. The school is further developing its tracking system so that it can analyse the progress of different groups of learners, such as girls and boys and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Governors know the school well. They ask challenging questions but are supportive and play their part well in the strategic direction of the school. The school has a clear view of its strengths and areas for improvement and good action plans are in place to move it on further.

Currently there are some gaps in the records kept on pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities because staff changes have led to temporary management arrangements. However, the school has very recently been able to resolve this issue and an audit carried out by the local authority is being used to form a good action plan to improve the organisation and management

of pupil records. A very small number of parents were correct in being concerned about this issue, which is being addressed by the school as a matter of urgency.





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

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
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	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?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

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**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you very much for such a friendly welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed spending time with you and talking to you. These are some of the things we found.

- You learn well, make good progress and reach high standards by the time you move on to secondary school.
- You really enjoy coming to school and know how to keep healthy and safe.
- You are taught well and teachers try to make lessons fun and interesting for you.
- Your behaviour is good in lessons and on the playground and if there is a problem you know what to do and who to go to.
- You are well cared for and told us how happy and safe you feel in school.
- Your headteacher, teachers and other adults are making sure that the school is improving every day.

Your school knows what it needs to do next to improve. We have suggested three things to make your learning even better.

- We have asked your teachers to help those of you who find learning difficult to understand your targets and make sure that you do not have too many of them.
- We have also asked your teachers to plan more opportunities for you to learn about the different customs, beliefs and ways of life of people in this country and the wider world.

21 November 2007

Dear Children

**Inspection of Christow Community School, Christow EX6 7PE**

Thank you very much for such a friendly welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed spending time with you and talking to you. These are some of the things we found.

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With best wishes

Anna Sketchley  
Lead inspector