

Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116384
Local Authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	312285
Inspection dates	16–17 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Michael Pye

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	305
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr L Elliott
Headteacher	Mrs E Giltinan
Date of previous school inspection	29 September 2003
School address	Gladys Avenue Portsmouth PO2 9AX
Telephone number	02392 661 818
Fax number	02392 664 780

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average, inner city, primary school. The make-up of pupils entering the school changes year on year; currently the numbers of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is well above average. The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) is well above the national average. There are below the expected numbers of pupils who are entitled to free school meals. The number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD) is above average and there are five pupils with a statement of special educational need. There has been a significant change in staffing in recent times. The school has the Healthy School and International School Awards, and the information and communication technology (ICT) and Basic Skills Mark.

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 provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The good leadership of the headteacher has helped guide the school through a period of staff changes. Effective support for newly qualified teachers has contributed to a recovery in standards and achievement, excellent pastoral care of pupils and the maintenance of good levels of pupils' personal development and well-being. Parents recognise how well the school cares for their children. One wrote, 'My child was finding transition difficult. I spoke to his teacher and that was the last time he cried at school, because they helped him and talked him through what was upsetting him'. Outstanding use is made of a wide range of outside partners. Amongst others, the school has very close links with the church, and makes very good use of expertise to provide training and guidance for staff. It is currently extending its links through the good work of the new community liaison officer, who is extending the range of community, family and adult support.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, but inconsistencies exist across the school. For example in some, but not all, lessons pupils have their learning well reinforced by some effective end-of-lesson reviews. Where teaching is less than good the progress of pupils slows and, as a result achievement levels, over time, have varied. The school's performance in the Year 6 national tests has varied too but there is an improving picture. Currently, standards are average and, from their starting points, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Targets are increasingly challenging. Improvements to the curriculum, for example, the more practical approach in science, has resulted in the improved results in 2007.

Pupils behave well, and react positively to the opportunities presented to them through the good curriculum. The introduction of an approach to learning that emphasises pupils' research and other skills is a good example of how the school is seeking to motivate all pupils.

There have been a number of recent appointments of middle managers, whose actions are positively affecting pupils' performance. In particular, strategies that promote pupils' thinking and self-evaluation have been successfully introduced. However, in many areas, such as in the introduction of phonics work in Reception, it is too early to see the full effect of their reforms. Governors give good support through regular visits to the school. There is a satisfactory capacity to improve the school.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall, with some good features. Children settle well because of some good work by the school to establish early links with parents and pre-school organisations. Children's entry levels vary but are broadly as expected. However, current children have below the expected levels of literacy and communication skills. Satisfactory teaching helps ensure that the children make sound progress overall. Progress in personal development and social skills is good. By the time they leave Reception the majority have met the goals expected of them, with some exceeding them. There is insufficient attention paid in the curriculum, including the external area, to making activities sufficiently challenging and exciting. Whilst the 'Passport to Play' strategy helps to provide some choice for children, there are further missed opportunities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate pupils' progress by providing consistently good teaching.
- Provide more choice, challenge and enjoyment for children in the Foundation Stage and maximise their outdoor learning opportunities.

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

Pupils' achievement levels vary because of the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. In the 2006 national assessments pupils attained standards at the end of Year 2 which were above average. In 2007 the standards in writing, reading and mathematics are average. However, given the starting points for both sets of pupils this reflects satisfactory achievement levels. In 2005 and 2006, the national tests at the end of Year 6 showed standards that were broadly average, but that pupils were underachieving. The impact of changes such as the more practical, problem-solving curriculum, have contributed to a recovery. Provisional results in the 2007 tests are above average, reflecting satisfactory achievement for those pupils.

Work seen during the inspection indicates average standards and satisfactory achievement for current pupils. This includes the academic achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Because of some good-targeted support, most pupils who have English as an additional language make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils settle well because they enjoy school, are keen to learn and relationships across the school are good. They show a good understanding about healthy lifestyles, participating enthusiastically in physical activities in and out of lessons, especially enjoying dance and football. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community through, for example, acting as prefects, and looking after Reception children at playtimes. School councillors take their responsibilities very seriously. Pupils are rightly proud of representing their school through such things as choir performances in the Guildhall, and writing lovely poems and stories for publication. Good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education help ensures that pupils have a clear understanding of moral issues and the spiritual aspects of life. They are thoughtful and respectful of each other's needs and work well together. Pupils have satisfactory knowledge of information and communication technology, and other basic skills. This ensures they are satisfactorily prepared for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Pupils enjoy their lessons because teachers organise and manage them well. A good variety of methods and resources, including interactive whiteboards, along with the use of praise motivates pupils to give of their best. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to children's learning through some well focused, small-group work. These children are fully engaged in

their learning. Teachers' marking helps give good guidance about how well pupils are doing and what they need to do to improve. They also involve pupils well in self-assessment so that they have a better understanding of their strengths and weaknesses. However, in some lessons, the rate of pupils' progress is not as good as it should be. Here, repetitive or over-long tasks limit what pupils can learn and this limits what they can achieve. Some questioning by teachers insufficiently challenges pupils. Teachers do not consistently emphasise the importance of presentation in some pupils' work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils' different learning styles are being increasingly well met by the introduction of a curriculum that emphasises links between subjects and the development of skills. For example, a Year 2 geography project is built around the pupils researching aspects of the local community. This involves pupils in science investigations into habitat, trips into the community, as well as road safety issues. The school acknowledges that there is more to do here. The school also makes very good use of a specialist writing teacher. This work excites pupils who feel that it is one of their favourite activities. Its success is evident in the lovely poetry and writing on the Tudors. The school has successfully introduced modern foreign languages, such as Spanish and French, into the curriculum. Pupils are enthusiastic about music, with many receiving individual instrumental tuition, and singing confidently in assembly. Pupils are well motivated by visits, and visitors, including the residential visit, which contributes well to their personal development. Some other good external links benefit pupils in art and sport. The curriculum supports well the pupils' emotional needs and through activities such as 'Walk to School Week', their knowledge of how to stay safe and healthy.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Guidance and support are good. The school provides excellent levels of pastoral care, and parents spoke highly of the support they receive. One parent wrote, 'the head teacher and class teachers give splendid care to the children, and with a smile.' Pupils say they feel safe and secure. The school uses good well-focused support programmes that promote pupils' social and emotional skills very well. It has recently appointed an 'intervention programme manager' who has introduced some very effective procedures for tracking pupils' progress. These are enabling the school to evaluate the effectiveness of the various strategies used to support pupils who require additional help. The school also gives effective support to those pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and they make good progress towards their personal and social targets.

A good range of assessment data is collected: this helps to track pupils' progress and set targets for pupils, who use them well to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The good leadership of the headteacher, ably assisted by her acting deputy has led to the sharing of a clear vision for school development. Improvements to standards, achievement and teaching have resulted. Behind this impact has been some effective whole school monitoring

and good self-evaluation. In the school's evaluation documentation, very good attention has been paid to identifying the impact of any actions. For example, the effect of teaching assistants in ensuring that pupils' learning is exciting and accessible, was verified by pupils during a maths surgery. The school recognises that the new managers have not yet fully had an impact on their areas of responsibility. Often it is too early to see the full impact of any changes. For example, whilst more problem-solving approaches have been introduced, it is not yet fully established. More attention to identifying starting points is required to help identify the impact of any changes they make. Some subject managers require training in analysing data so that they can more accurately identify trends in achievement levels in their subjects and hence identify areas for development. Governors make regular visits to the school, receive curriculum reports throughout the year, and oversee the views of parents through analysing questionnaires. They have been fully involved in planning for the intended new building. Such involvement allows them to raise relevant and challenging questions of the school.

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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	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	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?	2
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.

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	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	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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

31 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School, Portsmouth, PO2 9AX

We really enjoyed our recent visit. You made us feel welcome and were keen to tell us about your school. Thank you. We believe you go to a school that gives you a satisfactory education, but that it also does some good things.

We really liked the way that you develop as young people. You are well behaved and polite. In lessons and in other areas of the school you get along with each other so well. You told us that you feel safe. You said you feel well cared for and your parents agreed. We believe that the school cares for you in an excellent way. We also felt that you have a good understanding about how to eat and stay safe and healthy. Congratulations on how well you help out in school and your school councillors are rightly proud to have been elected!

Some of your lessons are good, and we have asked that the school look at ways to make sure that all your lessons are good. When this happens, you progress well in your work. You could help your teachers by telling them when you are finding the work too easy or too hard. You obviously enjoy school and like the various activities that it provides for you. We agree that you have a good range of things to help you learn. You said you particularly like music, art, and dance, and many of you said you like lessons because they are fun. We have asked the school to look at the activities that are on offer to Reception children. We feel that these could be more exciting and challenging, and this includes the use of the outdoor area.

The school is well led by your headteacher. She has an excellent range of people from outside that help the school. For example, many of you like the specialist football coaching that you get. The adults are always looking to improve things for you and help you progress more quickly. For example, many of you are now able to talk about the targets you use to help you improve your work. Well done!

We wish you well for the future.

Yours faithfully,

Michael Pye

Lead inspector