

Christ Church CofE (A) Middle School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124457
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	314937
Inspection date	2 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Rashida Sharif HMI

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

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	9–13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	432
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elaine Philpott
Headteacher	Christopher Waghorn
Date of previous school inspection	10 May 2004
School address	Old Road Stone ST15 8JD
Telephone number	01785 354049
Fax number	01785 354055

Age group	9–13
Inspection date	2 July 2008
Inspection number	314937

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the achievement of the current Years 5 and 6, particularly in science, and the extent to which the quality of teaching and learning is strengthened by the use of targets in lessons and by pupils' understanding of how to move on in their learning. Evidence was gathered from observing lessons and quality of work produced, scrutinising school documentation and records of pupils' achievement and progress, and discussions with pupils, and with staff who have specific responsibilities. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Christ Church C of E Middle School is an oversubscribed school which is relatively small. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who are learning English as an additional language is lower than that found elsewhere. Attainment on entry is broadly average, with a small minority of pupils coming below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with statements of special educational needs, is below average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The school has been awarded the Sports Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. Over 170 parents responded to the Ofsted parental questionnaire and an overwhelming majority were positive. As one parent wrote, 'Mr Waghorn goes that extra mile to ensure that pupils and parents get the most out of their time at school.' Pupils also commented on this being the school where 'everyone matters'. They speak highly of their teachers who they say care for them and help them to do their best. The school prepares pupils very well for the next stage of their education. The school knows itself well and is rightly proud of its success. The school has outstanding capacity to improve.

The secret of the school's success is the highly committed headteacher who works tirelessly to ensure that every child receives the best that the school can offer. He demands the very best for pupils at all times and is supported by an extremely competent senior leadership team who share his vision. The excellent teamwork of the leadership and management team throughout the school ensures that pupils receive outstanding care, guidance and support in all aspects of school life. The school pays good attention to pupils' safety and has secure procedures to ensure their well-being. The school focuses on creating a calm and orderly environment for pupils' learning.

Pupils' standards when they join the school in Year 5 are average. By the end of Key Stage 2, they have made good progress and their standards are just above average. When they leave at the end of Year 8, a significant majority of the pupils are performing well above the average in mathematics and science and average in English. This is evident not only in their internal test results but also in the outstanding progress they make in lessons due to the excellent quality of teaching. This is because teachers know their subjects and plan their lessons thoroughly to ensure that the needs of individual pupils are met. The best lessons have a brisk pace, and a range of strategies are used to engage pupils' interest by, for example, effective questioning and group work. In some of the outstanding lessons, teachers used a variety of strategies that enable pupils to take greater responsibility for their own learning.

Pupils say that they particularly enjoy lessons when they are actively involved and work with each other as 'critical friends'. For example, in science pupils used scientific methods to solve a crime. They worked confidently and boldly in teams to produce evidence as to who might have committed the murder. Pupils show a tremendous enthusiasm for learning and are eager to learn as much as they possibly can. Pupils know their targets and what they need to do to improve their work further. There are some very good examples of pupils assessing each other's work. They particularly enjoy playing an active role in their own learning and are not shy in asking challenging questions. There are a few occasions, however, when pupils are passive and do not make as much progress as they could. This is because of too much teacher talk.

The school has established good quality systems for tracking the progress of each pupil throughout their journey in the school. However, the recording of the data is sometimes complex and not always readily accessible to staff and governors. The school is aware that it needs to simplify the collection and recording of data so that everybody, including governors, is able to access and use it more effectively.

The curriculum is excellent and ensures that the pupils are taught in a manner that helps them make links between different subjects. One parent wrote, 'the school focuses on a wide range of activities from sport to music and not just on SATs'. Pupils contribute with real confidence to their school and local community. The range of cultural and sporting extra-curricular

opportunities is particularly impressive. Imaginative and relevant provision for personal, social and healthy education means that pupils know how to keep safe. Pupils spoke with excitement about their recent musical performance at Victoria Hall in Stoke-on-Trent.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Their knowledge of other cultures is well developed through international themes and excellent performance in music and art events. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their lessons and have very positive attitudes to learning, as demonstrated through their exemplary behaviour. They have excellent relationships with each other and all the adults in the school. Pupils enjoy all aspects of their life in the school and speak with excitement about the contribution they make to the school at all levels. Older pupils particularly enjoy being mentors to younger pupils, showing visitors around the school and telling them about the exciting things they are involved in. Members of the school council are also very active. They organise and run their own meetings and work hard and with enthusiasm to raise funds for various charities. All the pupils are valued. The school is proud of having an inclusive approach to identifying and nurturing pupils who have particular gifts, talents or other learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A detailed record is kept and reviewed regularly which identifies and evaluates the needs of every pupil in the school. The tracking and monitoring of students' academic progress are very good; marking in books is consistent and tells the pupils what they need to do to improve their work further. There are regular celebrations of the work that pupils do and their good attendance. Pupils spoke highly about the recognition of those pupils who are 'never absent and never late'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Share examples of the most exciting and interesting teaching amongst all teaching staff so that learning consistently captivates and motivates pupils of all abilities.
- Provide clear and easy access to assessment information for all staff and governors.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

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	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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?	1
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?	1

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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
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	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

3 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Christ Church C of E Middle School, Stone ST15 8JD

Thank you for making me feel so welcome in your school when I visited you on 2 July and for being so friendly and helpful. I particularly want to thank the members of the school council who gave up their lunchtime to speak with me and for sharing your many ideas and your work with me. You also told me about all the things that you enjoy about your school and what you would like to see improved even more. I really enjoyed talking to you all and visiting your school.

You are model pupils who are very polite and helpful and I can see why so many of you like coming to your outstanding school. I was very pleased to see how well you got on with each other, in lessons and on the playground. I was particularly impressed with the help you gave to each other through your work as mentors and the amount of money that you raise for the various charities. You also get on very well with the adults who look after you. Your school does many good things for you, such as teaching you exceptionally well, keeping you safe and giving you lots of after-school clubs to enjoy. All these help you to make outstanding progress in mathematics and science and good progress in English by the time you leave school.

I have asked Mr Waghorn and the governors to help you to make greater progress by sharing the exciting and interesting teaching amongst all teachers so that all lessons capture your interest and motivate you even more. The school has also been asked to make the assessment information simpler for all your staff and governors so they can use it more easily.

You can help by continuing to attend school regularly and by telling the teachers when you do not understand any of the work. It was a pleasure to visit your school and I look forward to hearing about your future success.

Thank you again for being so welcoming and friendly.

Yours sincerely

Rashida Sharif Her Majesty's Inspector