

# Christ Church CofE Aided Infant School, Virginia Water

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	125175
<b>Local Authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	315177
<b>Inspection date</b>	12 May 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Rob Crompton

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>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	101
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Peter Taylor
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Jane Gow
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 October 2003
<b>School address</b>	Christchurch Road Virginia Water Surrey GU25 4PX
<b>Telephone number</b>	01344 842308
<b>Fax number</b>	01344 842015

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The school was visited for one day. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards, particularly in the Foundation Stage and Year 2, pupils' personal development and well-being, academic guidance, and the impact of leadership and management on the school's overall performance. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records, curriculum and planning documents, observation of the school at work, interviews with staff and pupils, and the parents' questionnaires. 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 were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

The school is broadly average in size. Most pupils are White British, with about a quarter coming from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. No pupils are at an early stage of acquiring English. A below average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These include pupils with physical disabilities, those falling behind academically or who find social relationships difficult. Except for the younger Reception class, pupils are taught in mixed age classes; one with Reception and Year 1 pupils, and two with Years 1 and 2.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils grow in confidence, achieve well and reach above average standards. It is popular with parents, who express overwhelmingly positive views, typically referring to Christ Church as 'an exceptional school'. One parent's comment, that, 'The school has a lovely welcoming atmosphere', reflects the views of the vast majority.

Children get off to a good start in Reception and, as they enter Year 1, they have generally exceeded the expected levels. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 so that, by the end of Year 2, standards are above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Indeed, current Year 2 pupils are on course to reach exceptionally high standards in reading and mathematics. More able pupils make good headway across the board, with about half reaching the higher levels in English, mathematics and science.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, and social development is outstanding. They behave very well, playing and working harmoniously together. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to lead safe and healthy lives. They are active, not only through physical education lessons, but also through lively activities they enjoy at playtimes and after school through dance and sports-based clubs. The extensive grounds, including the 'millennium garden' provide an excellent haven for those pupils who wish to pursue less lively activities. Pupils show concern for others; demonstrated by the spontaneous prayers they offer during assemblies. Pupils have a good range of opportunities to take responsibility and contribute to the life of the school. Through their school council, pupils acquire a very good understanding of working together to improve their community. The study of other countries, and visitors from a range of backgrounds, give pupils a good insight into cultural diversity. By the time they leave, pupils have acquired the skills to help them move on very successfully to junior school and beyond.

Care guidance and support are outstanding. Adults know pupils extremely well and arrangements to ensure pupils' welfare are first class. An ethos of calmness and respect runs through the work of the school, of which pupils speak highly. One pupil reflected a typical view when he said, 'School is a really safe and friendly place and the friendship stops in the playground make sure we don't feel lonely'. Pupils have specific targets to guide their learning, aided by frequent discussions with their teachers. Teachers mark work in ways that give pupils a clear idea of how to improve, using easily understood symbols.

Teaching and learning are good, and underpinned by the excellent relationships between staff and pupils. Well-planned lessons take account of the different abilities and stages of development in the mixed age classes. Displays around the school celebrate pupils' work and provide useful prompts about how to improve; for example, guidance on how to structure written work. Sometimes, teachers provide a little too much support rather than encouraging pupils to tackle new work independently and hone their problem solving skills. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, and help ensure that pupils with learning difficulties make good progress. Teachers ensure the focus on key basic skills is not at the expense of other subjects. One of the most popular subjects is religious education, for example.

The curriculum is good. Practical activities and the popular weekly 'creative workshops' motivate pupils and support their learning well. For instance they learn about nutrition and hygiene through cookery, as part of the design and technology curriculum. Such activities promote

pupils' independence well. To improve standards the school has had a focus on teaching and the writing curriculum. Lively stories, sometimes extending over four pages highlight the pupils' good level of writing abilities, reflecting the success of this drive to improve pupils' written work. Pupils develop very good basic skills in numeracy. In the pursuit of even higher standards, staff have set themselves the goal of increasing pupils' confidence in applying these skills to problem-solving. They acknowledge that, in subjects such as science, there is potential for more open-ended tasks in order to further improve pupils' investigative skills.

Significant progress has been made since the last inspection and the school has a good capacity to improve further. Under the excellent leadership of the headteacher, with strong support from the senior teacher, standards have risen and pupil numbers are increasing. As one parent put it, 'The school has gone from strength to strength'. The school deservedly enjoys a good reputation in the parish and the local community. Regular questionnaires and monitoring of lessons contribute to effective self-evaluation and appropriate priorities for improvement are set. Most staff in this relatively small school have several roles in planning for improvement and following through initiatives. The extent to which subjects are regularly reviewed varies and further broadening leadership experience and management expertise is a current priority. Governors are supportive of the school and are aware of its strengths. They have worked hard to create and maintain the superb outdoor facilities. In addition to a sports field and well-equipped playgrounds, these include a large wild area with nature trails, a pond, a swimming pool, and a wide range of climbing apparatus.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. As they start school, children's skills and understanding are above the levels that are typical of the age group. Most reach and many exceed the standards expected by the end of Reception. Children are confident in counting, but are less secure in introductory addition and subtraction. They make a good start in reading, although progress is slower in early writing skills. Children settle in quickly to the routines set for them and parents speak very positively about the smooth start that their children make. One parent's comment, 'I feel my children had a fantastic start to their school lives', illustrates the views of many. Staff provide a caring, supportive atmosphere in which children achieve well. A very good balance between teacher led sessions and activities initiated by the children provides highly effective support across all areas of learning. Indoors and in the well-equipped outdoor area, children have very good opportunities to extend their social, language and numeracy skills. Staff keep careful track of progress. Able children are quickly identified and offered increasingly challenging work. Similarly, those needing extra help are well supported. As a result, children at different stages of development make good progress.

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

- Build on Reception children's good abilities in number and reading to improve their confidence in calculating and in early writing skills.
- Increase opportunities for pupils in Years 1 and 2 to work autonomously and cooperatively to improve their investigative skills.

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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?	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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

### 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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

<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



## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

22 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Christ Church CofE Aided Infant School, Virginia Water, Surrey, GU25 4PX

Thank you for making me so welcome during my visit. I really enjoyed seeing how well you are all working and enjoying school.

Christ Church is a good school. From the good start in Reception, you progress well and reach above average standards. It was good to see how your written work has improved lately. I enjoyed reading your adventure stories and seeing how many of you use speech marks in the correct way. I also saw some good work in numeracy, when children in Years 1 and 2 were learning how to divide using different methods. It was great to see how confident you were in using the computers to increase your speed in solving division sums.

You told me how much you enjoy lessons and I could see that this is because teachers make learning exciting and fun. The square and triangle symbols that teachers use in your books give you a good idea of how you are getting on and how to improve your work.

The school helps you to develop personal qualities that will be useful all through your lives. You have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe and the importance of living healthily. For example, I was impressed that Year 2 pupils knew that some foods are better for you than others. One of the best things you like about the school is its friendliness. You can take much of the credit for the happy atmosphere because you behave so well and take pride in your school. I was pleased to see how much you enjoy singing and found myself joining in with the actions!

All the good things you enjoy do not happen by accident of course. The school is run very well to ensure you get the most out of lessons and the extra activities. I have suggested a couple of things that I believe will make the school even better. One is to help the Reception children improve their number and writing skills. The other is to give older pupils more things to investigate on their own. You can help by continuing to work hard and by helping one another.

Thank you again for such an enjoyable visit.

Yours sincerely,

Rob Crompton

Lead Inspector