

# Christchurch Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131847
<b>Local Authority</b>	Redbridge
<b>Inspection number</b>	315879
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30–31 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Bradley Simmons HMI

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	768
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Ray Wood
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Kevin Baskill
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 October 2004
<b>School address</b>	Wellesley Road Ilford IG1 4LQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8478 5560
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8478 7289

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors, accompanied by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Christchurch is one of the largest primary schools in the country. The school serves the Seven Kings area of north-east London, and is reducing from four forms to three forms of entry. The percentage of pupils entitled to a free school meal is higher than the national average. Just over ten percent of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities, a percentage which is lower than average for a primary school. The great majority of pupils are from a number of minority ethnic backgrounds. Eight out of ten pupils speak English as an additional language. The school is housed in a Victorian three-decker building, with some classes located in the adjacent teacher's centre. The school is oversubscribed.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

'In my view', wrote one parent to inspectors, 'Christchurch is truly outstanding'. It is not difficult to understand why parents are so desperate to send their children to Christchurch Primary. It is outstanding. The passion that staff feel for their work is almost tangible. They are, quite simply, highly committed and totally dedicated to ensuring that pupils get the best possible education whilst they are at Christchurch.

As a result of the very clear vision and direction provided by the headteacher and senior leaders, staff display an intense focus on getting things right. The result is that pupils do extraordinarily well. When they start school, they have skills and abilities that are below those normally expected. In virtually every area, pupils make much more progress than the national average to attain exceptionally high standards by the time they leave the school at eleven years of age. A couple of parents were concerned that high attaining pupils are not stretched enough. Inspectors found little evidence to support this view. Indeed, in 2007, the percentages of Year 6 pupils attaining the highest test level in English, mathematics and science was significantly above the national average. The school does recognise that, throughout, pupils do not make as much progress as they should in handwriting; this is generally neat and tidy, but too few pupils use a fluent cursive style.

The bulk of lessons observed during this inspection were outstanding. Senior leaders have created the conditions in which teachers and teaching assistants constantly strive to improve their work, and receive help and training to do so. Most lessons are marked by the outstanding progress made by girls and boys, regardless of their ethnicity or social background. Teachers use a wide variety of strategies to motivate pupils and keep them engaged in their learning. They pay very close attention to ensuring that their lessons build on the pupils' prior learning, so tasks are always well matched to the differing needs and abilities of pupils. Teaching assistants display initiative when supporting groups or individual pupils. Their work complements that of teachers to ensure that pupils with learning difficulties or special needs make the progress they should.

Pupils enjoy their learning immensely because of the innovatively designed curriculum. Excellent links are made between subjects. For example, Year 2 pupils were observed writing a letter to a friend from the perspective of a child living through the plague in London in 1665. The historical element of this work did not simply provide an excellent vehicle for pupils to improve their letter writing skills, but close questioning of pupils revealed a clear understanding of the cause and effects of the plague. The curriculum is further enhanced by the use of specialists to teach subjects such as drama and French. One parent was correct to voice concerns about lack of time for physical education (PE). For those pupils who do not participate in after school sports clubs or swimming, the time allotted for physical activity is below that recommended. In this respect, pupils' opportunities to lead a healthy lifestyle are limited.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. This is because the school provides very strong care, guidance and support. Behaviour is consistently exemplary during lessons. No examples of poor behaviour or bullying were seen in the well-supervised playground. Pupils say that, on the rare occasions on which bullying does occur, that it is dealt with rigorously, and that, as a result, they feel safe and secure at school. However, the speed with which a few older pupils descend staircases displays a slight lack of awareness of their own safety and of that of others. Attendance has improved over the past few years and is now satisfactory.

The headteacher's excellent leadership has created amongst all governors and staff the realisation that, together, they can materially improve the life chances of every child. The proof of Christchurch's success is that pupils leave the school particularly well prepared academically and socially for the next phase in their lives.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

The Foundation Stage provides a good start to children's education. From the earliest age, they have opportunities to develop their language through structured play. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is engaging and provides children with good opportunities to acquire essential skills and independence. Much has been done in a short time to improve Nursery provision, and children now make satisfactory progress. In Reception, progress increases so that, by the time they enter Year 1, most children have achieved the goals expected of them. The very positive attitudes instilled in the early years form a firm foundation on which to build learning in future years. The curriculum provides children with a stimulating range of activities to support all areas of learning, both indoors and outside. Outdoor areas have improved significantly and now provide a good level of challenge and motivation. Teachers recognise the need to assess progress and set targets in a systematic way to ensure children do as well as they can. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is highly effective in bringing about improvements.

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

- Ensure systematic assessment systems are in place throughout the Foundation Stage which inform next steps in children's learning.
- Increase the amount of PE time available for each class by making full use of outdoor, as well as indoor space.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

When children start at Christchurch, their skills and abilities are below those normally expected. In addition, many join the school with little spoken English. They make a good start in the Foundation Stage, meeting most of the goals expected for them by the time they leave the Reception year.

Across the remainder of the school, pupils make outstanding progress and attain very high standards in all areas. The vast majority of Year 6 pupils, regardless of ethnicity, who left the school in 2007 made outstanding progress during their time at the school and reached standards significantly higher than the national average. There was very little difference between the performance of girls and boys. Over the past few years, the school has generally sustained such high standards at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. This is with the exception of those Year 6 pupils who left the school in 2006, who made less progress during their Key Stage 2 years than might be expected, although these pupils' attainment was nonetheless in line with national averages. In an otherwise very strong showing, pupils' comparatively weak attainment in handwriting is marked; too few pupils are consistently using a cursive style.

Pupils with learning difficulties make outstanding progress. The small number of looked after children make excellent progress and attain high standards.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being is outstanding. Excellent relationships exist between staff and pupils. Pupils take good account of guidance given on bullying and are able to deal effectively with issues that arise. The School Council has a strong voice within the school. Members' views are treated seriously. The redesigning of the school uniform is but one example of pupils' influence. Pupils have a good understanding of global and citizenship issues through the developing global curriculum, which includes opportunities for conflict resolution and discussions about human rights. Pupils are aware of the need to live healthy lifestyles and have access to fruit and water during the day. However, many are not given sufficient time each week to be physically active; the allocated time for PE is below that recommended. Diverse resources and the positive role models provided by the staff reinforce pupils' strong sense of their own heritage whilst underlining the importance of playing a part in British society. The excellent basic skills that pupils acquire at Christchurch, together with a sense of teamwork and participation, are laying very secure foundations for them to do well at secondary school and become economically active in later life.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 1

The consistently high quality of teaching and learning provided by the school underpins the sustained and outstanding progress made by pupils. The enthusiasm and commitment of both pupils and adults was evident in all lessons observed across the key stages. Most of the teaching observed during the inspection was outstanding. Lessons were both challenging and thoroughly enjoyable for the pupils. All teachers have high expectations matched by very good subject knowledge and an enthusiasm for learning. This results in highly motivated pupils who are keen to do well. This was very evident in a Year 6 mathematics lesson where the teacher's virtuoso performance was equally matched by the verve and enthusiasm of her pupils. A key to the success of the lessons was the admirable use of praise and encouragement and the quality of relationships within the classrooms. The exceptional quality of teaching and learning is strengthened by a culture of personal development amongst the adults in the school. Individual programmes are devised for teachers and teaching assistants to enhance their professional development. Teaching assistants, some of whom have successfully completed teacher training courses to become members of the teaching staff of the school, provide outstanding support to pupils in their care and work successfully in collaboration with the teachers to enhance the quality of lessons.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 1

The outstanding curriculum has a broad range of interesting and exciting learning experiences for the pupils. There is a rigorous system of curriculum review in place; this ensures the school delivers a curriculum that meets the pupils' many different needs. Links with schools in India and China play an important part in the school's development of a global curriculum. The school promotes a culture of enrichment and creativity that enables all pupils to enjoy and excel in all aspects of school life. The pupils' learning experiences are enhanced by visits out of school and the wide variety of visitors to the school. The deployment of specialist teachers also enriches

the pupils' learning, particularly the programme provided by the drama teacher whose lessons are both vibrant and thoroughly enjoyable.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

All adults who work in the school have an outstanding commitment to the care, support and guidance of pupils. The majority of parents praised the positive ethos within the school and the commitment of the staff and the headteacher. A very small minority of parents felt concerned about bullying. No evidence was found to support such concerns during this inspection and procedures for dealing with bullying are good. There are good arrangements for safeguarding and child protection. The school works in partnership with outside agencies to ensure vulnerable pupils play a full and active part in the life of the school. There are excellent arrangements in place for the induction of pupils. There is an excellent parent support adviser in post, who is well qualified to carry out her role. She supports parents in developing their own role as well as helping them to support their children in their own learning.

Overall, academic guidance is good; much marking is outstanding with pupils given positive feedback and clear guidance on next steps to improve their work, but such quality is not consistent.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Leadership and management are outstanding at all levels. The headteacher and senior team provide exemplary vision and direction for the school which filters very effectively throughout the staff. The result is that the entire staff are committed to improving the life chances of every pupil.

The school's self-evaluation is excellent. All areas of school life are kept under review effectively, although processes for analysing the progress of pupils, although accurate, lack a sharp, analytical annual summary that can easily be shared with governors. Similarly, although challenging targets are set for every child, targets for the expected annual progress of each cohort of pupils in English, mathematics and science are not as accessible for governors as they could be.

The school has worked to excellent effect to build capacity. Many staff are developing their leadership skills by undertaking external training, others are being supported by the school to develop their potential as teachers and teaching assistants. Culturally and ethnically, the staff reflect their local community, and it is good that, in comparison with many primary schools, there are a greater proportion of men on the staff.

Governors share the school's very clear vision. They hold the school to account very effectively, meeting key staff for progress updates. Minutes of meetings demonstrate that they are prepared to challenge the school, and to have their queries answered, and expect action to result if necessary.

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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?	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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
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	1

### 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

<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>	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	1
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	1
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

08 February 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Christchurch Primary School, Ilford, IG1 4LQ

Thank you so much for the splendid welcome you gave to me and my colleagues when we came to inspect your school recently. Thank you also to those of you who spent time talking to us and telling us about your views.

I am writing to tell you what we found out. Firstly, we judge that your school is outstanding. You probably know this already because so many of your parents think this as well. Importantly, though, when inspectors say that a school is outstanding, we mean that it is one of the best schools in the country. Well done!

Your school is so good because your headteacher is an excellent leader. He has made sure all the staff and governors work as one huge team to try always to make sure that you get the very best deal. The teamwork of all the adults in the school is one of the main reasons that you are making such excellent progress at school, and reaching such very high standards in English, mathematics and science by the time you leave. (You could all be working harder on your handwriting, though!).

Your behaviour is outstanding, although a few of you need to slow down on the stairs at breaks and lunchtimes so you do not hurt yourselves or other children.

We do think that you need to have more time for PE, so you should find yourselves going out into the playground once a week as well as going into the hall.

I hope that you continue to work as hard as when we saw you. Your teachers are excellent, and really want you to do well. They, and you, get fantastic support from all the teaching assistants.

I want to finish by saying how much I enjoyed hearing the choir sing. It is not often that I hear such good, clear and tuneful singers! Oh, and the 'speed stacking' was truly awesome!

With best wishes

Bradley Simmons

Her Majesty's Inspector