

St Christopher Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103652
Local Authority	Coventry
Inspection number	323874
Inspection date	4 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Arnalena (Nina) Bee

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	455
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anke Davis
Headteacher	Lois Thorpe
Date of previous school inspection	6 December 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Allesley Old Road Coventry CV5 9JG
Telephone number	02476 675017
Fax number	02476 675017

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school, including the Early Years Foundation Stage provision, and investigated three main issues:

- whether the judgement of 'Good' for teaching and learning throughout the school could be substantiated, given that recent school data showed satisfactory achievement in Years 1 to 6
- the quality of academic guidance that is offered to pupils in all classes
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels in tracking pupils' progress.

Evidence was gathered from observing pupils from Nursery to Year 6 in lessons and during break times, discussions with staff, governors, parents and pupils, scrutiny of pupils' work and the systems the school uses to track pupils' progress and monitor the quality of teaching and learning. Other school documentation and parents' questionnaires were also examined. Other aspects of the school were not looked at in detail, but the inspectors 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

St Christopher's is bigger than most primary schools. Almost all pupils come from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who are identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school provides for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in a part-time Nursery class and two Reception classes. There is on-site childcare provision which is managed by an external provider. The school has two headteachers who work part-time. One of them has very recently been appointed. There have been a number of recent staff changes.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This welcoming and calm school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The strong focus on pupils' personal development ensures that pupils gain respect for each other as well as the adults who help them. As one parent wrote, 'My child thoroughly enjoys school. This is mainly due to the way the staff provide an atmosphere that cares for and nurtures all children.' Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. During the inspection, older pupils in Year 6 spoke maturely about the different cultures and beliefs found in the world today. They know that a few of their classmates share different beliefs and enthusiastically recall what they have recently learnt about Islam and Hinduism. Teachers reinforce learning well in this area, by finding resources that promote their understanding further. For example, younger children in the Nursery were given small bowls and chopsticks as they learnt about the Chinese culture. Pupils enjoy school and the above average attendance figures reflect this. Apart from a few older boys who sometimes forget how to behave, pupils say that behaviour is good. They are right and as a result, pupils feel safe in school. They know that if they have a problem an adult will help them. Older pupils show a good awareness of the potential dangers outside school and are very clear about important issues such as internet safety. The school is working towards the Healthy School award and pupils show a satisfactory awareness of the need to adopt healthy lifestyles. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community and enthusiastically take on jobs of responsibility, raising money to improve the school facilities or becoming members of the school council. Their contribution to the local community is satisfactory.

The care and personal support that pupils receive is good. Health and safety arrangements meet current requirements. Personal needs are well catered for. By the time pupils leave school in Year 6, they develop good personal and social skills and, academically, are soundly prepared for secondary school. Standards are average at the end of Year 2 and 6. The large majority of parents are supportive of all the school does but a few are concerned that their children are not making enough progress because they have had too many different teachers. Nevertheless, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils who are identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to their classmates. Teaching is satisfactory overall but good in a few classes. Classes are well managed and pupils generally display positive attitudes to learning. Any challenging behaviour, especially amongst older boys, is dealt with well and therefore learning is not disrupted. However, when activities are not accurately matched to pupils' needs and the pace of the lesson slows down, lower attaining pupils show signs of inattentiveness. This happens because teachers do not always use assessment information properly when they plan lessons. It also results in higher attaining pupils not always being sufficiently challenged.

The academic guidance that pupils receive is satisfactory. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked in reading, writing and mathematics. Staff are now aware of the importance of tracking pupils' progress more regularly to make sure progress does not slow down. There are some good examples of where teachers' marking is supportive and informative. But, generally, marking does not give pupils enough guidance to show them what is needed to improve and then reach their learning targets. Too often, marking does not refer to these targets. As a result, targets, especially in writing and mathematics, are not making significant contribution to pupils' learning.

A themed approach to learning which has recently been established to encourage pupils to write in all subjects. Planning for information and communication technology (ICT) has been

improved and is now carefully linked to all subjects. These have yet to impact on achievement and standards. There is a satisfactory amount of time allocated for literacy, numeracy and science. Curriculum planning is satisfactory but does not always take into account pupils' different abilities within classes. Sound links have been developed with the outside world which benefit all pupils and satisfactorily enrich the curriculum, for example, when interesting visitors are invited in and visits out are planned. There is a good range of out-of-school activities which are appreciated and well attended by pupils.

The senior leaders and managers have a good idea of what is needed to improve further. Staff and governors have some involvement in school development planning. Governors are satisfactorily informed and so are able to support and challenge the work of the school. Subject coordinators for English, mathematics and science have a satisfactory idea of what is happening within their areas of responsibility. However, their monitoring role, with regard to how well pupils are doing and how well the school is doing in relation to the national picture, is not fully developed. The school's evaluation of its own performance is satisfactory, although a few judgements are slightly over-generous. Monitoring of teaching is satisfactory but not rigorous enough to bring about sufficient change. As a result, there is too much satisfactory teaching in the school.

The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory. The curriculum is used soundly to increase pupils' awareness of life outside their own neighbourhood and the school has plans to develop this further. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. The school has demonstrated that it has the capacity to improve further, as seen in measures put in place to improve pupils' knowledge of different cultures in modern Britain and establish a system to ensure consistency in managing behaviour.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children join the Nursery class with attainment that is broadly in line with levels expected for their ages, although it is lower for communication, literacy and language. School data show that children do well in this area during their time in the Nursery. This is because adults' expectations are high and language is developed well in all the children do. Progress is satisfactory as children move through the Early Years Foundation Stage and most reach average levels by the time they start in Year 1. Parents say they are pleased with the information they receive from school. They feel confident that any concerns will be sorted out and are happy how quickly their children settle into school life. This is because induction procedures are good. Children come in smiling and ready to start the day. They understand the school's routines and behave well. There are good arrangements to ensure health and safety and children's personal development. Individual needs are well catered for and as a result, children gain confidence and develop positive attitudes to learning. Teaching is satisfactory overall. The outdoor area is secure and used to promote learning in all areas. Classes are soundly managed, although teaching assistants are not always used effectively in Reception to support and extend learning. Children's learning is regularly assessed but at times more guidance is needed for them to improve, especially as they develop basic writing skills in Reception. The Early Years Foundation Stage is soundly led and managed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching, ensuring that higher attaining pupils are sufficiently challenged and lower attaining pupils are given activities that are not too difficult for them.

- Make certain that teachers' marking gives all pupils clear guidance on what they need to do to improve and reach their targets.
- Develop the role of the subject coordinators for English, mathematics and science, so that their monitoring role is focused more sharply on raising achievement and standards.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged as satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	3
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which 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	3
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 learners' needs?	3
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?	3

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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	3
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

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

5 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Christopher's Primary School, Coventry CV5 9JG

We really enjoyed our time in your school when we recently came to visit you. Thank you for making us so welcome. We thoroughly enjoyed talking to you and finding out how well you were doing. We think you go to a satisfactory school which has a number of things that are good.

These are the main things we found out about your school.

- You are all well cared for and looked after, and the people who look after you at home agree with us.
- Almost all of you behave well but a few of the older boys sometimes let the side down.
- Teaching is satisfactory and good in a few classes.
- We know most of you like coming to school because you told us so.
- You obviously enjoy the good selection of extra activities and clubs you are offered because they are well attended.
- The interesting visitors invited into school and visits out make learning more fun.
- By the time you leave in Year 6, you reach standards that are similar to those of most pupils in the country and make satisfactory progress.

We have asked the school to do three things to improve the education you receive.

- Make sure that teaching is checked more carefully, so that you are all given work that suits your needs and then enables you to make good progress.
- Check that when teachers mark your work they give you clear advice on what you need to do to improve and reach your targets.
- Make sure that the leaders and managers for English, mathematics and science check more carefully how well you are doing.

You too can help by always trying hard and doing your best work every day.

Best wishes

Nina Bee

Lead inspector