

Christ The King Catholic Primary School, Thornbury

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109267
Local Authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	324936
Inspection date	10 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Caroline McKee

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	120
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	Alex McAllister
Headteacher	Carol Lawler
Date of previous school inspection	17 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Easton Hill Road Thornbury Thornbury BS35 1AW
Telephone number	01454 866680

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	10 June 2009
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Fax number

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school with Early Years Foundation Stage provision. There is also on-site childcare provision which is not managed by the governing body and an after-school club which is managed by the governing body. The great majority of pupils are White British and the percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than average. The school caters for children from Traveller families and an increasing number of pupils at the early stages of learning English. The school gives priority to Catholic families but accepts pupils from any religion. Continual staff changes have now been stabilised and for the first time in many years, the school will have the same class teachers for two years running.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Christ the King Catholic Primary School provides a satisfactory standard of education. It is a happy and exceptionally caring school and pupils feel safe and very well supported because of the high quality of personal care provided. This is particularly evident in the school's good links with the local community and with agencies such as the Traveller service that help pupils to quickly settle and become part of the school and its special identity. The parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the headteacher, who, after considerable staffing changes, has managed to gain stability and ensure that the decline in the pupils' progress has been arrested so that this is now satisfactory. Good support from local authority consultants, including clear guidance on how to improve teaching and learning, is now having a positive impact on standards, particularly in mathematics. Teaching is satisfactory and improving. The teachers have a much better focus on using past information of what the pupils know to plan future lessons. However, the next steps in learning and the exact levels they are working towards are not always readily available to the pupils and planning does not always focus on their individual learning needs. Pupils make the most progress when they use their own initiative to accelerate their learning but this is not successfully encouraged in all classes. Pupils achieve consistently well in the Early Years Foundation Stage in all areas of learning from a starting point that is below the national average. Much effort at the start of the year goes into ensuring that children feel confident in their new environment. Many parents of pupils who arrive at different stages of the school felt that this welcome and care was paramount to how quickly their child settled. Progress, which was inadequate as measured by national tests and assessments at the ends of Years 2 and 6 in 2008, is now satisfactory. Pupils make the fastest gains in mathematics because of consistently better planning from the Early Years Foundation Stage upwards, the use of additional support and the involvement of parents to help their child's learning. Standards are broadly average in both key stages, although too few pupils reach the higher levels. The pupils have a good knowledge of how to live healthily. They know how to stay safe and who to talk to if they have a problem. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good and they are particularly caring towards each other. They say that they enjoy school and the many additional activities provided. The school council plays an active role in the school's decision-making processes. It was also involved, for example, in having a say in how the local town develops. Pupils regularly help to raise funds for charities and have some links with the wider world, but the school recognises that this needs to be further developed to help increase their knowledge of other cultures. The school provides a good curriculum, with the added provision of French. It has adopted a creative and thematic approach, which the pupils really enjoy. Additional activities such as residential visits, music and sports clubs ensure that the pupils have a rich diet of experiences. There is a good emphasis on the importance of celebrating the fact that each person is different but equally valued. This has a major influence on how they react and support each other in lessons and in play. There is good provision for the growing number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, enabling them to make good progress in their all-round development. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The caring school environment has been maintained, and the school has recently made satisfactory progress in raising standards since the previous inspection. Governors are supportive and increasingly well informed about how to ask searching questions. They and the school have devised increasingly rigorous plans to bring about improvement. Now, with greater staff stability, the school is in a satisfactory position to build on gains made this year and improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The children start school with skills that are below average for their age but reach average standards by the time they enter Year 1. Good relationships with staff and/or with their peers, care from the staff and the quality of information received before they arrive ensure that the children settle quickly. The children feel safe, confident and happy at school. They play and behave well. The staff plan how to develop the children's learning effectively, both inside and in the outside learning area. They capture their interest and assess their needs accurately, including very early identification of learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In group activities, the children are well supported by adults to guide their learning but there is also a good balance of child-initiated activities. All areas of learning are covered. A particular focus in calculation has resulted in rapid improvement in the children's skills. There is less emphasis on the children's knowledge and understanding of the world. The accommodation is good, with a well-used conservatory and outside learning area, including a woodland garden, which the children enjoy. Leadership and management are good, ensuring that staff work well together. All these factors result in the children making good progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Fully embed successful strategies for problem solving and investigation in the teaching and learning of mathematics, to secure the improving trend in the subject.
- Improve the quality of feedback and use of assessment information to involve pupils more in understanding what they need to do to improve and to ensure greater challenge to reach the higher levels in Year 2 and Year 6.
- Ensure that lessons are planned in a way that meets the individual learning needs of each pupil, and which enables measurement of their progress in reaching nationally expected standards.

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

National tests in 2008 showed standards reached by Year 6 pupils were broadly average in English, with a greater number of pupils gaining the higher levels when compared to national averages. Pupils achieved satisfactorily in English and in science. However, standards reached by Year 6 pupils in mathematics were below average and there was significant underachievement. Pupils' overall achievement has been on a declining trend for the last three years. Standards reached in mathematics in Year 2 were also below average but were broadly average in reading and writing. This year, the school has benefited from a more stable teaching staff and local authority support and hence better use has been made of past data for planning lessons and target setting. As a result, pupils are making faster progress, currently reaching standards that are broadly average in all subjects at both key stages. Teacher assessments have been verified and parents comment on the positive effect of strategies used such as 'rapid maths' and parent mathematics classes, which enable them to help their children at home. Good links to everyday life skills help the pupils to understand where and how they can use their mathematical skills.

Traveller pupils and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress academically, but better progress overall because of their social development within a caring and supportive environment.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' understanding of healthy living is good. They participate enthusiastically in a good range of extra-curricular sporting activities. The school council has a strong voice and ensures that the school is friendly and safe. The pupils' knowledge of how to stay safe is reflected in their good behaviour in lessons and at break times. Their positive attitudes and relationships with adults and with each other show their enjoyment of school and they know who to talk to if they have any worries. Their attendance has improved and is now average. Pupils support each other well and are considerate of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The pupils have satisfactory skills in literacy and numeracy, and their entrepreneurial skills help to prepare them for their future education and the later world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and improving. There are, however, variations from class to class. In some lessons, teachers do not fully challenge the higher attaining pupils or provide pupils with enough information around the classroom to enable them to find out what they need to do next if they have achieved a certain skill. In some lessons, pupils are well challenged so that they work effectively and consolidate their knowledge with tasks that are exciting, developing team-building and problem-solving skills. In the best instances, pupils are effectively involved in setting their own targets and use the teachers' marking comments well to improve their work. This is not yet consistent across all classes and teachers do not link planning with specific attainment levels or share these with the pupils. Teaching assistants work well with the teachers, both in planning and in supporting the pupils, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Information and communication technology is used well by the teachers and pupils use increasingly developed skills in their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Children in the Foundation Stage benefit from a good range of learning experiences which mean that they love coming to school. Pupils find that the thematic approach to learning is more fun and they learn more because they are interested. More emphasis on their mathematical skills has led to a faster rate of progress and standards rising. The curriculum contributes well to the pupils' personal development, particularly through the good range of visits, trips and clubs which are available to all children no matter how far away they live. This fosters greater interest and depth of knowledge as well as social and cultural skills. Spiritual and moral development are promoted effectively through religious education and assemblies. As a result, pupils respond to and care for each other well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides a caring and supportive family atmosphere where all pupils feel very safe and secure. This enables them to enjoy their activities and make good progress in their personal development and satisfactory but improving progress academically. The school meets all statutory requirements in relation to child protection and risk assessment. It is at the forefront of working with local agencies to ensure that all of the pupils, whatever their walk of life, receive the very best care available. As one parent wrote, 'The school is a real community where the children's differences in culture and background are highly valued.' The school is proactive in creating new links and making sure that pupils move to their secondary schools as smoothly as possible. Individual academic targets are set and reviewed with parents, teachers and pupils but these are not always referred to in lessons. The new marking scheme is starting to have a positive impact but does not always refer to the pupils' targets or tell them what they need to improve next.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has overwhelming support from the parents and she has ensured that the school continues to provide a caring and supportive environment for the varied make-up of pupils during a period of rapid changes in staffing. However, standards and the progress that the pupils made over the last three years to 2008 fell, particularly in mathematics. The strategies used to arrest the decline are now, in 2009, starting to have a positive impact and pupils are responding well to more challenging targets. This, together with a stable teaching staff, looks set to ensure sustainable progress, but it is early days. The governing body have been supportive and are now better equipped to act as critical friends and to ask challenging questions to oversee this improvement. The school is proactive in the local community and has a well-formed plan with other schools in their educational cluster that has analysed what needs to be done to ensure greater community cohesion. This link with the other schools is not used as well as it could be for the sharing of best practice. Financial management is sound and staff are carefully deployed to ensure consistency for the pupils. The headteacher knows her staff and their capabilities well, but has not yet formalised the process for the monitoring of teaching.

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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?	2
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?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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	2

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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which 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 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

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	2
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**

11 June 2009

Dear Children and Pupils

Inspection of Christ the King Catholic Primary School, Thornbury BS35 1AW

Thank you very much for welcoming us to your school. We were impressed with the way you behaved and patiently helped each other if needed, in lessons and play.

We have judged your school to be a satisfactory one. You love coming to school and feel very well cared for and supported. You develop good personal skills and think highly of your teachers. In most subjects, including English and science, you make satisfactory progress and reach average standards, but in mathematics your progress has been slower. Satisfactory and improving guidance for your work is starting to speed up your learning. The teachers and you have worked hard this year and your progress and the teaching are now satisfactory, including in mathematics. We think that you have a good and exciting curriculum and you told us how much you like learning about different topics such as the Romans, across a whole range of subjects. We were impressed with how good you were at working in teams and solving problems and how so many of you take part in additional activities after school. We found that you make good progress in all areas in the Early Years Foundation Stage, or Year Reception as you call it, with a good range of activities, good care and good teaching.

The headteacher, staff and governors have worked hard to keep your school happy and safe and to ensure that you are now able to make better progress. So far, they have made the right changes and have also given your parents the information to help you too. We have asked the school to:

- Build on the better progress you have made, especially in mathematics.
- Give you more information so that you can help yourselves to improve and reach higher levels in Year 2 and Year 6.
- Plan the lessons in a way that makes sure that everyone is able to make the best possible progress.

In order to do this we ask you to play your part and talk to your teachers about how you can improve the work.

Yours faithfully

Caroline McKee Lead Inspector