

Corpus Christi RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111713
Local Authority	Middlesbrough
Inspection number	325441
Inspection dates	29–30 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Alastair Younger

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	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	239
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	Mr Peter Carey
Headteacher	Mrs Carolyn Baker
Date of previous school inspection	9 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Cargo Fleet Lane Middlesbrough TS3 8NL
Telephone number	01642 211597
Fax number	01642 231916

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school serving a predominantly White British population. Numbers on roll have been rising for several years. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above average, reflecting the greater than average degree of social and economic disadvantage of the area. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average and none have a statement of special educational need. There have been many changes in staffing and roles since the last inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection and there is satisfactory scope to improve further. Pupils achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage and enter Key Stage 1 at a broadly average level. From then on, progress slows and most pupils leave Key Stage 2 at the same, broadly average, level. The school enjoys the support of the vast majority of parents but some express concerns about what they perceive to be bullying. No such incidents were witnessed during the inspection and behaviour, in class and the playground, is good. This contributes significantly to pupils' enjoyment of school. Every pupil spoken to during the inspection about the atmosphere in the school confirmed that this is a happy school in which they feel safe and free from intimidation.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. It is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and satisfactory in the rest of the school. This is reflected in the progress pupils make. There is very little evidence of inadequate teaching, but nor is there much that is good or better. Teachers relate well to pupils and take care to plan carefully to meet the needs of individuals, allowing those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to achieve in line with all other pupils. Few pupils attain the higher levels in assessments at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, but good initiatives have been introduced this year to add greater challenge for the most able. Standards are broadly average but very variable. Occasionally, boys in Key Stage 1 perform less well than girls but this is not consistent whereas boys and girls in Key Stage 2 achieve equally. Two years ago standards in English rose considerably while they fell in mathematics, but this year more Key Stage 2 pupils are expected to meet their targets in mathematics than in English.

The curriculum is good; it meets all requirements and is laced with many activities which add variety and enjoyment to pupils' learning. There is a good, appropriate emphasis on promoting pupils' personal development and encouraging them to lead safe, healthy lives. With good personal development and sound basic skills, pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education. The care, guidance and support of pupils are good, with all necessary steps to safeguard and protect them being taken. The assessment of pupils' progress is good and this is helping teachers to plan effectively to ensure that all pupils are equally challenged. Leadership, management and governance are satisfactory. Staff and pupils are happy and a good atmosphere prevails. The school works closely with many other professionals and agencies and has good, productive relationships with several other schools. The school has close ties with the church and is increasingly effective in pulling together different strands of the community. Leadership and management over recent years have been made more difficult by unavoidable staff changes, which have resulted in a change in role of many teachers. Self-evaluation is accurate. Areas in need of improvement are accurately identified but not correctly prioritised to ensure that the main ones are dealt with first and that all subjects receive an equal amount of attention.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Parents speak highly of the contact the school has with them, especially about the recently implemented arrangements for the daily exchange of information. Children's skills on entry to Nursery, particularly their communication, language and mathematical skills, are well below those typical for their age. Their personal development is also below the level typical for their age. Children make good progress and

achieve well. By the end of Reception they reach levels which are broadly average in their personal development and all areas of learning. The school has recently introduced new daily arrangements for helping children to recognise and use letters and sounds and, in turn, their progress in communication and language is improving well. Diligent arrangements for ensuring children's welfare ensure they quickly gain in confidence because adults show high levels of care and attention. Children settle quickly and follow classroom routines well. Their behaviour is good. Good teaching, effective adult support and exciting activities capture children's attention, encourage their concentration, make learning fun and lead to good progress. Carefully planned arrangements strike a good balance between children's choice of activities and those directed by teachers. Children have extensive opportunities to use the interesting and exciting facilities, especially out-of-doors, where they learn well by working together or independently and practising new skills. Sound procedures for assessing children's progress are well established and enable adults to match learning to children's specific needs. Good leadership and a strong team spirit result in a united approach to ensure children develop and learn well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards by increasing the incidence of good or better teaching.
- Prioritise areas for improvement more precisely.
- Ensure that improvements in one subject do not detract from the maintenance of standards in another.

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

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 at an average level and leave Key Stage 2 in a similar position. In recent years, standards have fallen in mathematics but, following some good initiatives to remedy this, most Year 6 pupils are on course to achieve their targets this year. In the past, pupils have tended to make better progress in English than in mathematics but, on the most recent data available, fewer pupils are likely to meet their reading and writing targets than those for numeracy. Achievement is variable, reflecting the range of teaching, but overall there is little difference in the achievement of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils. Similarly, there is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls or different groups of pupils. In recent years, few pupils have attained the higher levels in Key Stages 1 or 2 but some good initiatives, including cooperative work with a local secondary school, are helping to remedy this.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their well-being is secure and pupils say they feel safe in school. Records show that there are occasional instances of bullying but they are dealt with quickly and effectively and pupils voice no concerns about their safety, well-being or enjoyment of school. Playtimes and lessons are characterised by pupils trying hard, behaving well and enjoying themselves, sure pointers to their good moral and social development. The few minority ethnic pupils integrate well so there is a good sense of racial harmony in school. Pupils gain a good understanding of other cultures and communities helped,

for instance, by their support for a school in Nepal. Attendance is in line with the national average. This has not always been the case, but effective work with parents and the local authority has led to improvements. Pupils show a good understanding of the benefits of living healthy lives and clearly recognise how they can contribute to keeping the school a safe place by behaving sensibly and being considerate. Pupils relate well to one another and to adults, and this contributes well to creating a community in which they feel valued and influential. Pupils' good personal development and satisfactory academic progress provide sound preparation for their future well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There is little evidence of inadequate teaching, but not enough of it is good or outstanding. Most teachers plan lessons which include a good variety of interesting activities and accommodate the preferred learning styles of different pupils. Pupils demonstrate a good attitude to learning and work hard to achieve success. Teachers show a good understanding of the subjects they are teaching and manage their classrooms well. A few tend to be over-sensitive to minor indiscretions, such as pupils chattering about their work, and their interventions sometimes interrupt the flow of pupils' learning and diminish the pace of lessons. Teachers take suitable note of pupils' prior learning and frequently check that pupils are remembering what they have been taught. Work is always marked but the quality of marking to help pupils improve on their efforts is variable. Occasionally, teachers have a tendency to let their own contribution overflow to the point where not enough time is left for pupils to take the initiative and work with increasing independence either individually or in small groups. Teaching assistants offer good support to pupils when they are given the opportunity, but are frequently under-deployed in the earlier stages of lessons when teachers are conducting lengthy introductions.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils are well served by a good curriculum. It meets all requirements and includes many opportunities which add interest, relevance and enjoyment to pupils' learning. The good focus on promoting pupils' personal development strongly supports their social needs. Education for safety and health are good. A good amount of time is allocated to the basic skills of numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology but not at the expense of other subjects which inspire and motivate individuals. For example, a wealth of high quality art work greatly enhances classroom and corridor displays. Events such as Taiko Drumming (a Japanese art form) help broaden pupils' cultural horizons. Involvement in sporting activities, such as football tournaments and swimming galas not only helps promote an awareness of healthy lifestyles but also promotes pupils' self esteem. Other activities, including the Christmas Fair and the annual Education Mass help pupils to appreciate how they can contribute to the community through involvement and fundraising for those worse off than themselves.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The pastoral care of pupils is good. Requirements for ensuring the safety and protection of pupils are met. The quality of care, support and guidance is clearly reflected in pupils' good personal development. The school has been very effective in reducing absence, fully recognising that it can only improve pupils' lives if they attend regularly. In line with this, there is virtually no recourse to exclusion. The checking of pupils' progress is good. Since the last inspection, assessment procedures have improved, by following the lead set in English. Pupils who are struggling with their work are given good support by skilled teaching assistants and this helps them to achieve in line with other pupils. The school encourages parents to actively support their children's learning through frequent parents' evenings and by taking account of their views in developing the school. Good links exist between the school and the secondary school that most pupils transfer to.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership, management and governance are satisfactory. The school is winning the struggle to recruit governors with the necessary expertise and commitment to challenge and support the school. Governors are provided with good information about pupil outcomes by the headteacher, but could do more formal monitoring and evaluation of the school's work. The senior leadership team is well established. Satisfactory subject leadership has been hampered by the many changes in personnel, resulting in changes to the roles and responsibilities of other staff. These changes have also led to wide fluctuations in achievement and standards, making it difficult for the school to prioritise areas for improvement. Leaders and managers perceptively identify areas in need of improvement, but the many identified priorities for development tend to cloud the overall picture of how the school intends to improve. Good management decisions have resulted in improvements in standards in mathematics and better provision for potentially higher attaining pupils. Many of these changes have been facilitated through good links with other partners and agencies, which have also served to promote a strong sense of equality and inclusion. While maintaining its role as a predominantly Catholic Church school the school retains its central role as a focus for the whole community. Leaders and managers show a good awareness of the major issues faced by the local community and the ways in which the school can reach out to help.

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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	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	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**

2 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Corpus Christi RC Primary School, Middlesbrough, TS3 8NL

You may remember that we inspected your school the other day. Our job is to visit schools on a regular basis to see how you are getting on, and to talk to staff and yourselves about what could be done to make the school as good as possible.

Your school is satisfactory. You get off to a really good start when you first come to school but then your progress slows a bit as you get older. We think that some of you could learn faster if teaching was good more of the time. One thing that does not change is that you remain cheerful and happy. We are sure that a lot of this comes from the good help and support you are given by staff and the good behaviour of most of you. We can see why you are keen to come to school; a lot of the activities you take part in look to be fun and you seem to enjoy them. We think that you have good personal qualities. Your good behaviour and hard work make everyone feel comfortable and secure. You understand about healthy lifestyles and take responsibility for yourselves and raise funds for others, showing that you are preparing to be good citizens of the future.

These are the things we have suggested to help you reach higher standards and to help your school improve:

- Increase the amount of good or better teaching
- That staff and governors decide which are the most important things to improve to help you reach higher standards
- That staff and governors work on the most important areas to improve first, until there is some improvement

Thanks to all of you who spent some of your precious playtime talking to us. Your views are very important so we listened very carefully.

Good luck for the future, and keep working hard.

Yours faithfully

Alastair Younger

Lead inspector