

Christchurch CE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124229
Local Authority	Stoke-On-Trent
Inspection number	328084
Inspection date	30 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Doris Bell

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 controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	217
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	Colin Parks
Headteacher	paula Scattergood
Date of previous school inspection	16 January 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	William Street Fenton Stoke-on-Trent ST4 2JG
Telephone number	01782 234834
Fax number	01782 236402

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspection evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the impact of the work being done to raise standards at Key Stage 1, and the progress pupils currently in the school are making
- the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation in improving teaching and learning, especially writing
- pupils' understanding of cultural diversity in the United Kingdom and how well the school promotes this.

Evidence was gathered from visits to lessons, sampling pupils' work, discussions with pupils, staff and governors, and analysis of the school's documentation, assessment information and responses to the parent questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspection 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

This average-sized school has a well above average proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals. The school has an Early Years Foundation Stage unit catering for three- and four-year-olds. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage, with only a small number from minority ethnic or mixed ethnic backgrounds. No pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher was on maternity leave and the deputy headteacher was in charge of the school. The headteacher came into school for the inspection, however, and was present throughout.

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. Its upward journey since the previous inspection has included setting up effective systems to measure attainment accurately and to accelerate pupils' progress. It uses assessment information effectively to do this and to set challenging targets for all year groups. As a result, pupils achieve well throughout the school. Having started in the Early Years Foundation Stage unit with skills and experiences well below those expected for their age, they reach average standards by the end of Year 6. The improvement is firmly based on rigorous and accurate monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. It is driven by the clear direction coming from the headteacher, which is shared and is being continued by the deputy headteacher in the headteacher's absence. It is also having a positive effect on achievement and standards in Years 1 and 2, which are rising, particularly in writing. All of this gives the school good capacity for further improvement.

There is great consistency in the way staff track and assess pupils' learning, and in the quality of advice and guidance they give to pupils through perceptive marking that takes learning forward step by step. Pupils appreciate and make good use of the checklists set up for each piece of work to enable them to assess their own and each other's progress. Thus, they are becoming more independent in their learning and more knowledgeable about what they need to do to improve. Teachers transmit their passion and enthusiasm for learning to the pupils in the same way that the headteacher and deputy headteacher drive the school forward with theirs. The other very new senior managers are due imminently to undertake training to enable them to fulfil their roles equally effectively.

Teaching is reflective, with activities adapted to suit pupils' individual needs. A good example of this is the in-depth analysis of the reasons for weaknesses in writing, which led to the introduction of specific initiatives to improve punctuation, sentence structure and the way pupils organise text. More remains to be done in these areas to ensure that all pupils reach the highest possible standards in their writing. However, the strong emphasis on promoting basic skills at all times and in all subjects is beginning to have a noticeable effect on the quality of pupils' writing.

Classrooms and corridors provide colourful, interesting environments for the pupils, enhancing and celebrating their learning and personal development. Behaviour is excellent. A magical ingredient is the excellent relationships throughout the school that serve to create the happy, united place described by some parents as 'demonstrating traditional family values'. Safeguarding procedures are very robust and staff work very closely together to ensure pupils' welfare and well-being alongside their learning. The excellent care, guidance and support they provide help pupils feel safe and valued. Pupils say this is because 'teachers are always looking after you' and that, although bullying does occasionally happen, it is always sorted out quickly. They recognise the effective ways in which they are taught, saying, for example, that they 'enjoy acting out in lessons', 'my teacher is wicked', and 'learning is fun'. They have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe, fit and healthy, and large numbers participate in the wide range of extra-curricular sporting activities available to them.

Pupils value the school council and understand its role in making the school a better place for them. They carry out a wide range of responsibilities with enthusiasm, contributing greatly to the school and local community. The innovative approach to homework is successfully involving more parents in their children's learning, further cementing the good links the school already

has with parents. Excellent links with external agencies have helped to improve attendance rates, which are now good. Much well-targeted additional support is provided for pupils who find learning difficult, for whatever reason. A good example of this is the nurture group, which helps to develop pupils' social and emotional skills.

The exciting, innovative curriculum is precisely matched to pupils' needs. The school successfully combines subjects, using useful features from national and commercial guidance alongside those it knows to be necessary to promote its own pupils' learning, welfare and well-being. This work is relatively recent and, although there are clear signs that pupils are benefiting from it, it is too soon to be able to evaluate fully the impact it is having on their overall achievement. The curriculum allows for a gradual transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Year 1, ensuring that learning is continuous and matched to the pupils' different stages of development.

A good range of visits and visitors considerably enriches the curriculum and promotes pupils' understanding of different cultures and traditions in the United Kingdom. For example, pupils learn at first hand what it means to be a Muslim when a Muslim parent comes to talk to them. The school is especially proud of its success in teaching pupils to speak French, and of its links with a school in France, and before that, in Canada. Overall, the school promotes community cohesion well. This, together with their good progress in basic skills and excellent personal development, ensures pupils leave the school as well-rounded young people who are well prepared for their future.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Nursery and Reception children work and play alongside each other extremely well in the relatively new Early Years Foundation Stage unit. They share equipment, wait their turn to speak or to try a new activity, indoors or out. The outdoor area is used well to promote learning. Good leadership and management ensure that all children's needs are met in a well-planned curriculum that provides a good balance of teacher-directed and child-initiated activities. Children's learning is assessed, recorded and tracked daily and the information used effectively in planning. This also enables staff to pick up any learning difficulties as early as possible and take action to overcome them.

Children throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage thoroughly enjoy learning. For example, Reception children link sounds and letters to form words, thoroughly enjoying 'tricking' the teacher as they use the interactive whiteboard to check whether their reading of a word is accurate. Nursery children also have fun learning, for example sequencing the days of the week while engaging in a sequence of physical activities to help them remember. Support staff contribute really well to the children's learning, helping different individuals as the need arises.

Good induction procedures enable staff to get to know and form a strong bond with the children and their parents, which benefits the children's learning. While attainment at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage is average overall, girls do considerably better than boys in all areas of learning. The school has rightly prioritised the need to tackle this and the green shoots of improvement are evident in the boys' work seen during the inspection. The outstanding provision for children's welfare and the vibrant learning environment in the Early Years Foundation Stage, which promotes literacy, numeracy and personal development skills well, means that, overall, children make good progress in their learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Fully embed the work on sentence structure, text organisation and punctuation throughout the school to help all pupils reach even higher standards in writing.

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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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which 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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

2 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Christ Church CE Primary School, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 2JG

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school last week. It was good to hear how much you enjoy school and to see how polite and well behaved you are. We found that you go to a good school where staff care deeply for each one of you and are very keen to help you achieve as much as possible.

You make good progress because you are taught well and because you work hard and want to do well. You listen carefully to your teachers and follow the good guidance they give you to help you improve your work. Your teachers give you lots of exciting activities to help you enjoy learning and this helps your progress. Those responsible for leading and managing the school keep a close eye on how well you are being taught and how well each one of you is doing. They make sure that, should your learning falter for whatever reason, you quickly receive the help you need to get it back on track.

You have an excellent understanding of how to keep yourselves safe, fit and healthy, and clearly enjoy all the extra sporting activities the school provides for you. The curriculum helps you learn all sorts of interesting things through the topic work you do in and out of school, including for homework. This extends your learning considerably.

We noted how your writing is improving as a result of the work the school has done to improve your use of punctuation and your understanding of how to structure sentences and organise text. We have asked the school to strengthen this work even more to accelerate your progress further and enable you to reach even higher standards in your work. You can help by continuing to work hard and by checking your writing very carefully to make sure it includes all the things outlined in the checklists you have to help you assess your own and each other's progress. We hope you will continue to enjoy learning as much as you do now, for the rest of your lives.

Yours sincerely

Doris Bell

Lead inspector