

Christ Church CofE (C) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124257
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	328091
Inspection dates	15–16 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Hemmings

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	408
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	Chris Durrant
Headteacher	Sheila Gaffiney
Date of previous school inspection	7 December 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Christ Church Lane Lichfield WS13 8AY
Telephone number	01543 510661

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average with Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision in a Reception class. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average, as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The number of children attending the school has risen significantly in recent years. There is privately managed after- school provision on site.

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. It provides pupils with a secure and friendly setting in which to learn. The large majority of parents support the school and the variety of experiences it gives their children. Two parental comments are typical of many: 'My daughter is very proud to be part of this school and feels it is like a family' and 'I am pleased with my children's personal and academic development and appreciate the caring and supportive nature of the headteacher and staff.'

Children in the Reception class and pupils throughout the rest of the school make satisfactory progress overall as a result of satisfactory teaching and learning. Consequently, by the end of Year 6 pupils attain standards that are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. This represents satisfactory achievement from when they start school. Pupils perform less well in mathematics than they do in English throughout the school. This stems from weakness in their development of calculation skills and their ability to use these skills to solve problems in different everyday contexts. The main reason that progress is satisfactory rather than at least good is that there are inconsistencies in teaching and learning between classes. This leads to pupils not always being given work that challenges them sufficiently, and this is particularly the case for pupils who are more able. The school's assessment data show that progress is beginning to improve. However, it is uneven throughout the school and, consequently, some pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable, particularly in mathematics.

Satisfactory leadership and management ensure that self-evaluation is accurate and correctly identifies priority areas for development. These include ironing out inconsistencies in teaching and learning so that all pupils make at least good progress. The headteacher and senior leaders provide focused educational direction and a clear vision for school improvement. All those involved in the life of the school share a commitment to taking the school forward and a good team ethos is evident. The responsibility of some subject leaders in monitoring and evaluating provision and the progress pupils make in their subjects is not developed sufficiently. As a result, their role in promoting school improvement is restricted. Leaders have managed the increased numbers of pupils well in recent years, along with the resulting expansion of the building, and to minimise any disruption to pupils' learning.

Pupils' good personal development means they behave well and show enjoyment in coming to school, which is reflected in their above average attendance. They have positive attitudes to school and are keen to learn. Relationships are good and lead to classrooms being calm and friendly places in which to learn. The satisfactory curriculum is extended effectively by a variety of good enrichment activities. These include a wide range of extra-curricular activities and residential visits to Shugborough and France. These experiences make a positive contribution to pupils' personal and social development.

The pastoral care and support of pupils is much appreciated by parents and pupils. The school works well with a variety of other providers, such as social services, to effectively promote the well-being of pupils. Staff are firmly committed to ensuring all pupils are safe while in their care.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children start in the Reception class with levels of skill that are typical for their age. Satisfactory provision enables them to progress and achieve satisfactorily across all areas of learning and they enter Year 1 with average standards. Relationships are good and children work and play well together. They behave well and are keen to learn. Adults know their children well and set them tasks that are usually interesting and linked to their own experiences. However, teaching and learning are only satisfactory because activities are often too adult led and do not give children sufficient opportunities to explore and make choices for themselves. This limits their progress in taking on responsibility for their own learning and hinders their development as independent learners. There is limited use of the outdoor area to promote children's learning through the day. Leadership and management are satisfactory and have set in place suitable procedures for checking the progress that children make. The information collected, however, is not always used to set them work that is sufficiently challenging. The arrangements for introducing children into Reception are good and enable them to quickly settle into everyday routines. The quality of care is good with children's well-being promoted well. Children feel happy and safe, trusting the adults who look after them. The links with parents are good and they are supportive of their children's learning, both in school and at home.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure work always challenges pupils effectively, particularly those who are more able, in order to accelerate progress and raise standards.
- Improve pupils' calculation skills in mathematics and their ability to use these skills to solve problems in everyday situations.
- Involve all subject leaders fully in checking and evaluating provision and the progress pupils make in their subjects.
- Provide more opportunities for children in the EYFS to work independently and use the outdoor area more effectively to promote their learning.

A small proportion of 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

The satisfactory progress of children in the Reception class is maintained throughout the school. As a result, pupils attain standards by the end of Year 2 that are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics and, by the end of Year 6, in English, mathematics and science. This shows pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, though progress is hindered at times by pupils not being challenged sufficiently. Weaker aspects of pupils' performance in mathematics are their calculation skills and their ability to use these skills in new situations. Standards in science are beginning to rise because pupils now have more opportunities to take part in structured, practical investigations. Pupils with learning difficulties enter school with standards that are below average, due to their additional needs. However, from their lower starting points, they make satisfactory progress because of the extra support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Pupils clearly know right from wrong and act responsibly in and around school. They are polite and considerate and respect each other's feelings. Pupils work and play together harmoniously and there is a friendly atmosphere throughout the school. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory, since their awareness of life in a culturally diverse modern Britain is not being as well developed as it could be. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities and making a positive contribution to school life. For example, by being a member of the school council, they enable all pupils to have a voice in how the school develops. They also make a positive contribution to the local community, such as by raising money for local charities and taking part in services at Lichfield Cathedral. Pupils are adopting healthy lifestyles well, knowing the need to take regular exercise and for a balanced diet. They have a good awareness of how to stay safe. Pupils develop literacy, numeracy and other basic skills in a satisfactory way and are prepared soundly for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Pupils show enthusiasm and enjoyment in their activities and concentrate for lengthy periods. They collaborate well in pairs and small groups and are willing to help others when they encounter difficulties. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and so are able to explain new ideas in a clear manner. They use resources well to capture and maintain pupils' interest. Teachers manage lessons effectively so there is a good pace to activities and, as a result, pupils have a good work rate. However, teachers are not always effective in providing work that stretches pupils of different abilities, particularly the more able. Consequently, pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable. Marking is not used consistently to guide pupils to how they might improve their performance. Teaching assistants generally provide valuable support for all pupils, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides pupils with a wide range of extra-curricular activities that include geography, French, hockey and music. They are well attended and parents appreciate the work of staff in running these activities. Visits to places of educational interest, such as Rugeley Power Station, add further interest to the curriculum. The good links with other providers, including professional sports coaches, extend pupils' experiences and further their skills. The school has begun to link subjects so that pupils can use skills learned in one subject to support learning in others. This is at an early stage of development. Curriculum planning is not always effective in providing suitably challenging work for pupils of different abilities. Planning for the use of the outdoor area in the EYFS does not effectively promote children's learning throughout the day. The programme for pupils' personal development is good and makes a significant contribution to the good progress they make in this aspect of their learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school's care and support for pupils underpin their good personal development. This is exemplified in the strategies put into place recently to improve the motivation of some older pupils to do well. These have proved successful and have raised the self-esteem and confidence of these pupils. Rigorous safeguarding procedures include child protection arrangements that are well known by staff, so they are aware of the steps to take if they have concerns about the well-being of a pupil. Secure links with outside agencies ensure extra support is available for individual pupils, as required. The procedures for tracking the progress of pupils have been improved recently and are satisfactory. However, the information gained is not always used effectively by teachers to set work that successfully challenges pupils of different abilities, or to guide them to improve their performance. The guidance given to pupils to evaluate for themselves how well they are doing and how they might improve is at an early stage of development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leaders promote community cohesion in a satisfactory way, particularly within the school. They are now seeking to extend their involvement with the local community. This is important, as a significant minority of parents expressed concern about the level of communication from school. Improvements have been made in recent months but the school acknowledges there is more to do. The recent introduction of a clear system for checking the progress that pupils make has strengthened the ability of leaders to identify and act upon any underachievement at an early stage. Some subject leaders do not play a prominent role in checking and evaluating provision and the progress of pupils in their subjects. Performance management is satisfactory and links individual staff professional training needs with whole-school priorities. Governors support the school well but their role in holding the school to account for its performance is underdeveloped. The school's recent track record shows it has satisfactory capacity for making any necessary changes.

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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?	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	2
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	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?	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**

19 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Christ Church Church of England (VC) Primary School, Lichfield, WS13 8AY

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing the things you do. Yours is a satisfactory school that helps you reach standards by the end of Year 6 that are average in English, mathematics and science. This shows you have made satisfactory progress from when you started school.

What we found out about your school

- It is a friendly place in which to work and play.
- You behave well and work effectively with other pupils in pairs and small groups.
- You are keen to learn and show positive attitudes in lessons.
- Adults take good care of you and make sure you are safe in and around school and on visits.
- You enjoy coming to school and your attendance is above average.
- You are leading healthy lifestyles and show a good understanding of how to stay safe.
- There is a wide range of after-school clubs in which a lot of you take part.
- You make a good contribution to the life of the school, such as being a member of the school council, and to the local community.
- Leaders of the school are working hard to make improvements and help you do better.

What we have asked your school to do now

- Always give you work that makes you think hard, especially those of you who find work easy, to help you make faster progress and reach higher standards.
- Help you to improve your calculation skills in mathematics and your ability to use these skills in solving problems in everyday situations.
- Make sure all teachers who lead subjects are involved fully in checking and evaluating how well you are doing and how their subjects might be improved.
- Provide more opportunities for children in Reception to make choices for themselves and use the outside area more effectively to support their learning.

You can help your school improve further by continuing to try your best in all you do. All my best wishes for the future and I hope you continue to enjoy your learning and being kind to others.

Yours faithfully Melvyn Hemmings Lead inspector