

# Christ Church CofE (C) First School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124293
<b>Local Authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	328100
<b>Inspection date</b>	14 May 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	109
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Elly Reeve
<b>Headteacher</b>	Suzanne (Lynn) Croxall
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 May 2009
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Northesk Street Stone ST15 8EP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01785 354125
<b>Fax number</b>	01785 354126

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<b>Age group</b>	4–9
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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:

- provision and progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the progress pupils currently in Years 1 to 4 are making, and how successful the school has been at improving reading in Years 1 and 2 and mathematics in Years 3 and 4
- whether the school is using its leading mathematics teacher as well as it could to improve teaching and learning in mathematics
- pupils' attendance, because it had declined in the past year.

Evidence was gathered from visits to lessons, sampling pupils' work, observing pupils at work and at play, discussions with them, with staff and with a governor, 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 small school has more boys than girls. Its Early Years Foundation Stage consists of 24 Reception-aged children. All year groups are taught in single-age classes. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average, and particularly high in Year 3. A significant proportion of pupils join the school after the start of each school year, especially in Years 3 and 4. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. A small proportion of pupils come from minority ethnic groups or have English as an additional language. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 were out of school on a residential visit during the inspection, but a small group of Year 4 pupils returned with their teacher to talk to inspectors at lunchtime.

## 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. Parents recognise it as such, commenting, for example, on its 'excellent family values' and saying it 'strives for the best' and 'genuinely cares' for each one of its pupils. Overall, the care, guidance and support provided for pupils are good.

Progress is good in all age groups and for all groups of pupils, from the least to the most able. Standards are significantly above average in Year 2 and above average in Year 4. The difference in standards is caused by the considerably large numbers of pupils joining the school in Years 3 and 4, often with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, that changes the make-up of the year groups. The school tracks all pupils' progress very carefully from whatever point they start, and puts in place a range of strategies to help them improve, particularly if their progress falters. The recent introduction of computerised systems for assessment, and the more astute use of assessment information, is enabling the school to come closer to meeting its aim of ensuring every pupil has their own effective learning programme.

The school has successfully tackled the issues of lower standards in reading in Year 2, and mathematics in Year 4, in 2008, and pupils currently in the school are on track to reach higher standards this year. Good use has been made of the expertise available in the school to do this. Improvement points identified in the rigorous checks made on teaching and learning underpin the school's drive to encourage pupils to think more deeply and to find things out for themselves. The topic work that pupils in Year 4 undertake as part of the rich and well-planned curriculum illustrates this well. It highlights the school's success in addressing the issue identified at the previous inspection, of encouraging more independent learning. Further good examples were seen in the extensive preparations pupils undertake when they lead acts of collective worship. This work makes an excellent contribution to their overall good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as they research, for example, homelessness, friendship and trust, and the environment.

Pupils enjoy learning and they achieve well. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, fit and healthy, and they participate wholeheartedly in the daily 'Leap into Life' sessions. When asked what they felt were the best things about the school, they readily responded that their teachers cared for each one of them and that they felt safe because of this. They added that 'teachers help us when we're stuck', appreciating that this 'helps us to learn more'. Pupils very much value the trust placed in them as school councillors and 'Gold Star' holders, recalling with pride their contributions to school improvement, to helping other pupils and to raising money for different charities.

Behaviour is good. Pupils acknowledge that there is a 'little bullying, mostly name calling' in the school but that staff deal with it promptly and effectively. They are very confident that staff will always help them should they have any concerns. Pupils are polite, friendly and at ease with themselves, with each other and with adults, and relationships throughout the school are good. Effective links with parents, external agencies and other schools contribute well to pupils' learning and their overall good personal development and well-being. Despite all of this, pupils' attendance, while satisfactory overall, is slightly below the national average. This is because a small but significant minority of parents do not ensure their children's regular attendance, or they bring them to school after registers have been closed. The school has satisfactory systems in place to monitor attendance but they are not leading to the desired

improvement, and the incidence of persistent absence and lateness has risen considerably in the past year.

The quality of teaching is good. Teachers plan pupils' work well, mindful of the clear guidance from senior managers that 'children must know what they are learning, not just what they are doing', if they are to succeed. Effective assessment systems, in which pupils are involved, underpin this philosophy and are supported well by some good practice in marking, especially in writing. However, marking is not consistent throughout the school, within each class or in different subjects because it does not always show pupils how to improve their work. Pupils' ability to evaluate their own and each other's work is promoted successfully through the innovative use of video conferencing and emailing. This enables pupils to share and exchange work, and to check their learning, with pupils at another school.

Pupils contribute well to the school and local community. The school is successfully raising their awareness of cultural diversity in and beyond the United Kingdom. Links with schools in, for example, Turkey and Poland, which includes the use of internet blogs, add to this. As a result, pupils are becoming increasingly able to make links between the cultures in different countries abroad and those in Britain today. For example, they effectively link Islam in Turkey with Muslims following Islam here. All of this underpins the good contribution the school makes to promoting community cohesion.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a heavy teaching commitment that has enabled the school to maintain single-age classes during a period when the number on roll fell slightly. Although this imposes a heavy burden on the headteacher, it is successfully sustaining the good progress seen throughout the school. It is possible also because of the effective teamwork between teachers, skilled support staff and governors. Governors hold the school to account well, checking outcomes for the pupils and contributing effectively to overall strategic planning. The school's evaluation of itself is accurate and well founded, and it has improved since the previous inspection. All of this, together with the collective focus on ensuring all pupils have every opportunity to achieve their best, gives it good capacity for further improvement. Pupils leave this school well prepared for their future.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

In most years, children start school with the skills and abilities expected for their age. They enjoy the many interesting activities prepared for them because staff take good account of each child's stage of learning and plan work to suit. As a result, all children make good progress and reach above average standards at the end of Reception. Occasionally, however, the work given to more able children is not well enough adapted to provide them with the additional challenge they need to keep moving forward. This year, a small number of children started school with no knowledge of English. They have made particularly good progress in learning the language, enabling them to make good progress overall.

Good leadership and management ensure the curriculum for this age group is planned well with an effective balance between adult-led activities and those the children select for themselves. This includes learning that takes place in and out of the classroom and there is a good flow between the two. Children's welfare and personal development are promoted well. As a result, children feel safe and secure, and settle well into school routines. Parents welcome the efforts the school makes to involve them in their children's learning. A typical comment, echoed by

several Reception parents, is that, 'The school has an open, happy family feel to it and all staff are very approachable.'

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Achieve consistency in the quality of marking so that pupils can always see and refer to what they need to do to improve.
- Work with parents to reduce persistent lateness and absence so that attendance and their children's progress can improve.



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

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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

<sup>1</sup>Grade 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

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	2

## The quality of provision

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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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**

15 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Christ Church CofE (C) First School, Stone, ST15 8EP

Thank you very much for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We would like to say a very special thank you to those of you who came back from your residential visit to talk to us.

You all clearly enjoy school very much and try hard to do your best. You and your parents are right in thinking you go to a good school where you are well cared for and make good progress. You told us how much you value the trust your teachers place in you as Gold Star holders and school councillors. They can do this because you behave well, respect each other and adults, and clearly think carefully about how to make your school better.

Those who lead and manage the school do a good job because they track your progress well and make sure you get help, as you put it, 'when we're stuck'. Your teachers and the support staff help you in this, sometimes making helpful comments when they mark your work to remind you what you need to do to improve. We have asked them to do this more often so you are never left in any doubt as to how you can make a piece of work better, no matter what subject you are studying. You can help by paying heed to the comments and referring back to them so you don't forget what it is you have to work on.

Most of you attend school regularly and take a full part in everything it has to offer. However, overall attendance is satisfactory, and has been identified as an area for improvement, because a small number of parents do not ensure their children come to school regularly enough or on time. We have asked the school to work with those parents because not attending school regularly and on time means children miss important learning.

Once again, thank you for talking to us and sharing your work with us. We hope you will continue to enjoy learning for the rest of your lives, as much as you do now. Yours faithfully

Doris Bell Lead inspector