

Christ Church C of E Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104220
Local Authority	Walsall
Inspection number	336258
Inspection dates	19–20 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Roger Fry

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	232
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Reverend P Myers
Headteacher	Mrs A M Lowe
Date of previous school inspection	7 May 2007
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Introduction

Three additional inspectors carried out this inspection. The inspectors visited 17 lessons and held meetings, including with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at records of pupils' progress, the school development plan, safeguarding arrangements, pupil and staff questionnaires, and 28 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the patterns in pupils' attainment and progress generally
- girls' attainment and progress
- the key features of the best teaching
- the school's choice of key priorities.

Information about the school

Christ Church, Church of England (C of E) Primary School is of average size and provides an education for pupils from Leamore and more widely across Walsall. The great majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and virtually all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Their difficulties are typically in the areas of speech, language and communication. The school caters for Nursery- and Reception-age children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The school has achieved the Sports Activemark silver and Artsmark gold awards.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Christ Church C of E Primary is a good school. A key strength is the way that the school is led and managed. The staff together evaluate the successes and areas for improvement honestly and rigorously. All the staff work together effectively to make improvements. The leadership has correctly identified that further improvement is required to raise standards in English and mathematics. Through the teachers' careful evaluations of strengths and weaknesses in pupils' progress, staff have put in place additional lessons to boost pupils' capacity to create and express their ideas in writing. Calculation activities feature more strongly in many mathematics lessons, so that pupils have a chance to address this relative weakness. There is consistency between year groups in all that the school provides. Governors make checks on the school's performance, but their understanding of individual subjects is limited because there are few direct contacts between subject leaders and individual governors. Nevertheless, the processes in place and the past record of improvement show that the school has a good capacity to improve further. The school provides good value for money.

Throughout the school, pupils are polite and well behaved and enjoy lessons. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and to pursue a healthy lifestyle. Pupils have a good sense of community, and this shows in the many ideas that come from the school council. There are considerable strengths in the curriculum, such as the emphasis on the expressive arts, extra-curricular activities and sports. The broad curriculum has a great appeal to pupils. Pupils have a good social and moral understanding but their knowledge of different cultures in the West Midlands is limited. Punctuality and attendance have improved considerably. However, attendance remains low.

Evidence of pupils' progress over the last four years shows that it has been good. Children joining the school make a good start. They make good progress from their starting points and join Year 1 with standards below those expected nationally. The good curriculum and consistently good teaching mean that pupils continue their good progress. By the end of Year 6, standards in most years are broadly average. Standards in science have been the highest. They reflect the emphasis in lessons on investigative and experimental work, which pupils find particularly interesting.

The teaching observed was predominantly good, with some that was outstanding. Teachers plan lessons carefully to capture pupils' interests and motivate them. Work is well matched to pupils' abilities, which gives all pupils the opportunity to have success, to join in lessons fully and to enjoy school. Relationships in many classrooms are excellent. Pupils receive good feedback about their work so that they can improve it. They understand their targets and know what they are aiming for, particularly in English

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and mathematics. The care, guidance and support for all pupils is good. Both children on entry to school and pupils in Year 6 on leaving it have the benefit of well-organised arrangements to help make the transitions smooth and stress-free.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on current good practice to improve pupils' standards in English and mathematics by:
 - developing pupils' ideas which they can use in their writing
 - developing pupils' calculation skills
 - involving the governing body more formally in monitoring curriculum developments.
- Improve pupils' cultural awareness by developing greater links with schools and organisations in different parts of Walsall and the West Midlands.
- Raise attendance to at least 94% by July 2010 by building on the existing strategies to reduce absences.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Good learning takes place in productive and purposeful lessons. Pupils build consistently on their knowledge, skills and understanding at a good rate. They are eager to learn and, over the course of the school year, guided by their teachers, their work improves in quantity and quality. The outcomes for girls and for boys are equally good. Typically, by Year 6, pupils reach broadly national average standards in English and mathematics, and often exceed them in science. Standards were lower in 2009, but this was exceptional. Evidence from assessments and pupils' work this year shows that they are on track to reach average standards again. Since 2005, overall, there has been steady improvement in the standards attained by all groups of pupils in reading, writing and numeracy. Staff have correctly identified that the development of pupils' ideas for writing and calculation skills in mathematics are still key areas for improvement.

Pupils are enthusiastic about school life and enjoy so much of what they do. They settle to tasks quickly and listen attentively. They work hard to meet the targets in lessons, and their presentation of work is particularly good. There are high standards in sports and the arts, as reflected in the awards that the school has received.

Pupils contribute much within the school and to the local community. The school council is thoughtful and active. Pupils raise funds for good causes, which reflects the school's Church of England heritage. Pupils have a less well-developed understanding of the multicultural nature of Walsall and of the United Kingdom more widely. During the meeting with the school council, pupils expressed a wish to know more about the lives of others and about economic sustainability.

In spite of the school's strenuous efforts to improve attendance, it remains low. However, the school has had some notable successes in improving it, and punctuality has improved considerably.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Lesson observations showed that the quality of teaching is consistently good in all parts of the school. There is outstanding teaching in Years 5 and 6, where teachers are particularly well organised, clear in their explanations of lesson objectives and expect the highest standards of work from all pupils. All teachers are well aware of the progress of groups in their care. They match the work to pupils' abilities effectively, particularly for older pupils, and this accounts for pupils' good progress with their written work. Girls and boys were observed taking part in lessons equally well. Teachers are expert and interesting and mark pupils' work in detail, in such a way as to encourage pupils at all times, but also to point out where they can do better. Pupils said that they appreciated this attention to their work and they found it helpful. There are occasional moments when teachers take too long to introduce lessons and pupils have difficulty sustaining their concentration.

The individual and small-group support for vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs is well organised. Pupils' needs are diagnosed in detail, and the correct provision is made to help them make good progress. The learning mentoring and

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Every Child Counts initiatives are effective. During whole-class lessons, most teachers are highly skilled in asking questions of the class at different levels of difficulty, so that all can answer and take part. All pupils are welcomed into the school and settle happily to their work. They are cared for well, a fact with which parents agree. The school is using its positive relationships with parents in its good efforts to improve attendance. The school has an extensive curriculum, drawing inspiration from the Activemark silver and Artsmark gold awards. Pupils commented how much they enjoy lessons in these areas. Science teaching is also a key strength, because teachers emphasise investigative and experimental work in many practical lessons. The extensive range of after-school activities, visits and visitors are an important part of the curriculum, which pupils again enjoy very much. They gain good insights into how the world works in these ways.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Consistently good leadership and management are at the heart of the school's success. The school is very well led by the headteacher, who has provided exceptional consistency and has assured that communication is always clear. There is an obvious drive for further improvement and a high degree of agreement about what the school's priorities should be. Everyone then works together to achieve them. Inspectors agree that aspects of pupils' attainment in English and mathematics are the key priorities. Curriculum development is ably led by the deputy headteacher. She provides ideas, ways of teaching and a sense of determination that have benefited the whole school. Each of the subject leaders is expert in their field of work. This is particularly the case in the arts.

Leaders check the school's performance rigorously, relating their findings to the training offered to all staff. The quality of teaching and learning benefits from this close attention to detail. Staff morale is high because of the shared management style. Equal opportunities are fully respected. Pupils receive well-targeted support according to their needs.

The governing body fulfils legal requirements and gives good attention to safeguarding and the welfare of pupils. It holds the school to account for its work during meetings, but there are few formal links between subject leaders and individual governors. Therefore, the governing body is not as well informed about the curriculum as it could be.

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The school promotes community activity well within the school and locally. Parents are very pleased with what the school does for their children, and local groups and industries all have positive relationships with the school. The school is perceived in the local community as a force for good. It has good plans to make links with another school in a contrasting area to give pupils a greater understanding of the lives of others in the UK.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children of all abilities in the Nursery and Reception get off to a good start. Their personal and social development is good. They learn to play together well, take turns, help each other and make sensible comments about what they are doing and what they have learned. From these early experiences, children know what is expected of them in later years. They take responsibility for tasks, such as putting items away. Relationships are good and children want to behave well and to learn as much as they can. Parents are very happy with what the school provides and feel that their children are making good progress.

Children enter the school with knowledge and understanding that are well below what is expected. They make good progress and, by the time they leave Reception, standards are typically below average. They make good progress in speaking, listening, reading, writing and number work. This occurs because teachers assess children's needs carefully and develop their knowledge skilfully, building on what children already know. Teaching sessions are highly organised and effective. However, the teaching does not make the best use of the outdoor area as an integral part of the teaching space. Children are

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allowed choices, but this approach is not as deeply embedded as it might be and children at times depend too much on adults for direction.

The provision is well led. There is good teamwork between the Early Years Foundation Stage staff. They are well organised and know the children well. There is a smooth transition into Year 1, because joint planning activities ensure that this happens. Children's special educational needs are identified quickly and good programmes are put in place to help them learn more quickly.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school. There were few written comments but, where parents did comment, they said that the school keeps their children safe, that they make good progress and that they are kept well informed about their children's progress in lessons. A representative comment was 'It's a friendly school; staff are always helpful.' There were no shared concerns about the school's work.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Christ Church C of E Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 28 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 232 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	19	68	8	29	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	23	82	5	18	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	21	75	7	25	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	75	7	25	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	20	71	8	29	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	57	11	39	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	57	12	43	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	15	54	13	46	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	57	13	46	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	64	10	36	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	50	13	46	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	16	57	12	43	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	19	68	8	29	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



Dear Pupils

Inspection of Christ Church C of E Primary School, Walsall, WS3 1EN

It was good to meet many of you, see you at work and listen to your views when we visited your school. Special thanks go to the council members we met for discussions and to those of you I joined in the dining room at lunchtime. This letter is to give you a clear idea of what is in our full report. Here are some of the best features of your good school.

- You make a good start to school in Nursery and Reception.
- You make good progress with your work and reach average standards by the time you leave.
- Your headteacher, teachers and all the staff organise the school well for your benefit. Everyone has a chance to do well.
- You enjoy school because teachers make lessons interesting.
- You enjoyed raising funds for Children in Need, for example.
- You are growing up as responsible young citizens. The school council is working well.
- You know a lot about keeping safe and follow school rules.
- You work hard in lessons and behave well around the site.

I agree with your teachers that the school needs to:

- improve standards in English and mathematics by helping you even more with creating good ideas to write about in English and with your calculation skills in mathematics; we would like governors to see more of what you are all doing in school too
- improve what you know about how people in different communities live in the West Midlands and Walsall
- improve attendance each day.

You can help by continuing to behave well and working hard, showing interest in your work and coming to school every day that you can.

We wish you all the very best in the future.

Yours sincerely

Roger Fry

Lead Inspector

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