

Christ Church CofE VA Junior School, Sowerby Bridge

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107554
Local Authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	336909
Inspection dates	4–5 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Andrew Clark

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	125
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Tracey Dinsmore
Headteacher	Mrs Claire Cope
Date of previous school inspection	27 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited six lessons, observed four teachers and spent approximately 40% of inspection time looking at learning including time spent looking at pupils' work. The inspectors held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including policies, the improvement plan and an analysis of the school's records of pupils' progress and attainment. The inspection team received and analysed 67 questionnaires from parents and carers as well as a number of questionnaires completed by pupils.

- pupils' progress in writing
- teaching and learning in science
- how well the leadership team improves the quality of teaching and learning.

Information about the school

This school is smaller than average. The majority of pupils are White British. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The percentage of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The school has received the Activemark and International School Award. It is an Investor in Pupils. Over half the teaching staff, including the headteacher, are new to the school since the last inspection.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory and improving school. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress. Parents and carers, and pupils, appreciate the warm welcome and approachability of the headteacher and other staff. 'My child has made lots of progress and there are some excellent teachers,' is typical of parents' and carers' views.

Pupils leave school with broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science. They work steadily and neatly. However, pupils do not always make the best progress they could because they are not always enthusiastic enough or clear about how to improve their work. Their social skills, including their behaviour, are good. They are sensitive to the needs of others and make a good commitment to the school and wider community. They happily take on a wide range of responsibilities as eco warriors and school councillors. This has a positive impact on the life of the school and the wider community. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and relationships are good. However, some tasks are not very exciting and teachers do not always use marking to help pupils improve more rapidly. Teaching assistants support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities effectively. The school provides many and varied activities to promote pupils' academic and personal development during and after school. Good links are made between subjects to make learning increasingly relevant to pupils. The school works well with parents and carers, and specialist staff provide care and support for all pupils, especially the most vulnerable.

The enthusiastic headteacher has created a forward thinking and reflective senior leadership team which is ambitious for further improvement. Senior leaders analyse pupils' progress from tests and other data well. As a result, the school's self-evaluation is largely accurate. However, procedures for the systematic direct observation and evaluation of teaching and learning are not fully developed nor consistently applied. This limits the impact of planning for future improvement. As a result, there is a satisfactory capacity for future improvement. The school works well with parents and carers and plays an important role in the local community. Procedures for keeping pupils safe are good and a successful priority for the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and use of assessment in order to accelerate pupils' progress by:
 - making certain that all lessons have precise and appropriate learning objectives and clear criteria to achieve success

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- ensuring that all lessons motivate pupils and encourage them to use and apply their skills and knowledge
- providing clear strategies and guidance for pupils to improve their basic skills
- throughout all their work.
- Improve the planning for the school's future improvement by:
 - establishing clear criteria for the best practice in all major areas of the school's work, especially the quality of teaching and learning
 - involving staff at all levels in efficiently and rigorously monitoring and evaluating the school's work in order to achieve the agreed criteria.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils are conscientious and thoughtful workers. They set their work out carefully and persevere in completing tasks. In the best lessons they are enthusiastic and curious to find out more. They work well collaboratively taking on different roles in groups. However, they are not always so fully engaged by the lesson and their progress slows as a result. The results of the school's National Curriculum tests for Year 6 are broadly average over time and there are no significant differences in the achievement of different groups of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make at least expected progress because of the skilled intervention from teaching assistants. Pupils make steady, rather than fast, progress in acquiring basic skills such as spelling and handwriting because procedures to promote them through all subjects are not systematically and consistently applied.

Pupils are well-behaved, thoughtful and considerate towards each other. 'My school is caring, loving and helps me learn a lot,' reflects their considered views. Pupils have a good understanding of issues facing different faiths and cultures because of well-planned work in religious education, and personal and social education. They are proud of their school and enjoy learning. They feel safe and know how they can contribute to their own well-being. Attendance is above average and pupils are punctual which aids their learning. Pupils with emotional and social difficulties grow in confidence because of the caring ethos and specialised support they receive. Pupils make good use of systems such as problem and suggestion boxes to help resolve their worries.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The overall satisfactory quality of teaching observed during the inspection ranged from satisfactory to outstanding. Teachers set clear expectations for pupils' behaviour and pupils respond well. Classrooms are bright and attractive learning environments. However, some opportunities are missed to use good examples of pupils' work to model best practice. In the best lessons teachers generate excitement and interest through practical tasks where pupils solve problems and apply their skills and knowledge imaginatively. For example, in mathematics and science they make-up problems for others to solve and take different responsibilities in a group such as 'writer' or 'timekeeper'. In these lessons the teacher shares clear and precise objectives for pupils to attain and sets out clear criteria for success. However, in some less effective lessons, teachers do not always make it clear enough to pupils what they are expected to achieve during the lesson and how to get there. Teachers make accurate assessments of pupils' progress over time and set achievable targets, although they do not consistently use marking to provide guidance in attaining the targets. The school provides many good opportunities for pupils to develop their personal, social and emotional skills. They learn about the dangers of drugs and alcohol through role play and specialist teaching. The project with schools from Sri Lanka and other countries gives pupils first-hand experiences of the lives of others. The school makes good use of specialist coaching to develop pupils' physical and language skills. A good range of visitors and visits, including residential visits, contribute well to pupils' learning experiences. There are good links between subjects but guidance for pupils to improve their basic skills is not always systematically applied. There are robust systems to ensure

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good attendance and behaviour and to help the most vulnerable pupils learn.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
	3
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?

The headteacher and senior staff are beginning to develop increasingly strong procedures to track and evaluate pupils' progress and gather the views of parents and carers, and pupils. This has already been effective in improving safeguarding procedures and developing pupils' writing. As a consequence, procedures to keep pupils safe are good and their academic progress is satisfactory. However, leaders have not yet established clear criteria for identifying the best practice in all aspects of provision, especially teaching and learning, and ensuring systematic and rigorous first-hand monitoring. As a result, the school's improvement planning is not yet ensuring that pupils' progress is the best it could be. The school is proactive in tackling discrimination and removing barriers to learning, for example in investing in specialist staff and training for pupils with emotional needs and autistic concerns. As a result, the promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. There is a good commitment to all aspects of community cohesion and the school has contributed to improving the lives of older people, for example, through the Silver Friends project and through a wide range of well-planned charity work. The governors are well organised and meet their statutory requirements.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
	3
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3

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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	3

Views of parents and carers

About half of the parents and carers returned questionnaires. Parents and carers are wholly positive in their views and express no significant concerns. They particularly appreciate the care and approachability of the staff. They like the quality of teaching. The inspection team largely agrees with parents' and carers' positive views but judges that pupils could make better progress academically.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Christ Church CofE VA Junior School, Sowerby Bridge 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 68 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 125 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	37	54	30	44	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	43	63	24	35	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	40	59	24	35	4	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	36	53	31	46	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	41	60	26	38	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	51	31	46	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	36	53	31	46	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)	38	56	28	41	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	40	59	26	38	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	36	53	28	41	3	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	30	44	36	53	2	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	35	51	33	49	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	44	65	23	34	1	1	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

I would like to thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspectors when we visited your school. We very much enjoyed talking to you about your school. You are proud of your school. You have a good knowledge of how to live healthily and stay safe. You say you feel very safe and appreciate the care that all adults show to you. You learn a lot from visits and the clubs and societies you belong to. The school council helps to make the school a safer and more interesting place to be.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory education. Your headteacher and other staff work together to help you to learn and to make things better for you. They take good care of you. Your attendance is good and you arrive on time. You make satisfactory progress in English, mathematics and science and the standard of your work is average. Your lessons are satisfactory, although occasionally not exciting enough. We have asked your headteacher and other teachers to help you make even more progress in your lessons and to help you improve your work more quickly by using assessment and success criteria and giving you opportunities to apply your growing skills and knowledge. We have also asked them to make sure the school is the best it can be by improved planning and by checking the school's work thoroughly. You can help by enjoying your work and continuing to try hard.

Yours sincerely

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