

# St Christopher's

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	134874
<b>Local Authority</b>	Suffolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	341554
<b>Inspection dates</b>	27–28 April 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alan Lemon

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>School category</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–14
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	12
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Simon Whitney
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	31 October 2006
<b>School address</b>	St Christopher's Hall Renfrew Road Ipswich
<b>Telephone number</b>	01473 725115
<b>Fax number</b>	01473 725115
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by an additional inspector. Seven lessons taught by six teachers were observed. Meetings were held with teachers, members of the management committee and pupils. No meetings were held with parents. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at policies relating to safeguarding and assessment records. Nine parental questionnaires were scrutinised.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at the following:

- how close pupils are to making the expected amount of progress in English and mathematics in the two terms spent at St Christopher's
- whether teaching and the use of assessment are effective in promoting good learning and progress
- if leaders give a sufficiently sharp focus to improvement by having high expectations of increasing the outcomes for pupils.

## Information about the school

St Christopher's provides short-term support for pupils who have been excluded, or are at risk of exclusion, from their schools. It admits up to 12 pupils, usually for two terms but this can be extended, with the aim of returning them successfully to school. Most remain on a school roll while attending St Christopher's. There are currently 12 on roll, almost all of who are boys, with equal numbers in Key Stages 2 and 3. The pupils have a history of disrupted education and exhibit behavioural, emotional and social difficulties for which two pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

St Christopher's also provides an outreach service to 53 schools and offers a 12-week programme of support to approximately 300 pupils.

The school has very recently been awarded Healthy School Status and has the Artsmark and Activemark 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

St Christopher's is a good school and it has improved considerably since its last inspection. The leadership and management of the school are much stronger. This is the result of the headteacher's enduring ambition and vision and also further consolidation of leadership and management skills within the whole team. This has increased the capacity for improvement and provides a good pace of development across the whole of the school's work. Impact is seen in the emergence, since the last inspection, of some outstanding provision as well as outcomes for pupils.

Outreach work is supporting neighbouring schools and their pupils well. As a result, exclusions from these schools are being reduced and nearly all pupils attending St Christopher's return successfully to school. A strong partnership with schools has grown out of the expert contribution made by the team of outreach staff. Very strong partnerships have also been developed with other professionals and agencies, ensuring pupils and their families are well supported. This is reflected in the intensive work with parents and carers, which keeps them well informed and actively engaged as partners with the school in helping their children. All of this work contributes positively to community cohesion, which is enhanced considerably by the excellent opportunities pupils have to contribute in school and more widely.

Self-evaluation has strengthened as leaders have developed better measures of performance and more staff are involved in monitoring and evaluating the school's work. However, the tracking of progress and analysis of data, which are still being refined, are at an early stage in helping leaders to raise their expectations even higher. Leaders do not have tracking information to give them a perspective on the long-term impact of the school's work when pupils have left St Christopher's and returned to mainstream schools.

Teaching and assessment have improved substantially since the last inspection, strengthening learning and progress. Assessment is thorough. Recent developments have seen the refinement of measures to quantify progress in aspects of personal development as well as those in academic subjects. Moreover, assessment information is used well to plan challenging work for pupils and identify their targets for improvement. Pupils' achievement is good. Pupils make rapid progress as a result of expert teaching and their positive attitudes to learning. In lessons, pupils settle to work immediately and sustain good concentration and effort. There has been good forward movement in curriculum design and now work and activities are more engaging, enjoyable and substantial in their planning to promote basic skills.

A key strength in relation to pupils' achievement is outstanding care, guidance and

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support. This provision sits at the heart of the school's endeavours and has the highest priority. This produces a very good ethos which pupils enjoy and which promotes their good personal development. Throughout the school day, staff stay very attentive. Their interactions with pupils are warm and welcoming which helps pupils settle and feel safe. Consequently, their attendance is high. Staff are very alert and respond quickly to pupils when firmness or reassurance are needed. Safeguarding knowledge and procedures are extremely well-developed amongst staff, so that any greater concerns are quickly identified and dealt with promptly and appropriately. The impact on pupils' behaviour and outlook is positive. Their friendships are good, they treat each other considerately and all are happy to contribute in school and beyond in whatever way they can. They act on the school's values and advice concerning a healthy lifestyle, and with exceptional enthusiasm they choose healthy foods and taking exercise seriously.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Extend the tracking and analysis of pupils' performance to
  - raise expectations of the progress pupils can make
  - confirm St Christopher's long-term impact on pupils' achievement and well-being.

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

Teacher's assessments, scrutiny of pupils' work in books and their current work in lessons show standards are broadly average in English and mathematics, as well as in other subjects including information and communication technology and physical education. Pupils progress well, making good gains particularly in English and mathematics, keeping up with, and sometimes exceeding, the progress pupils are expected to make in school. In mathematics, Key Stage 3 pupils confidently solve problems involving symmetry and co-ordinates. In English, Key Stage 2 pupils substantially improve their writing using good imagination and a well-developed vocabulary.

The effective support and very good relationships provided by staff improves behaviour, which impacts positively on pupils' feeling safe. Pupils are enthusiastic in adopting a healthy lifestyle and speak both knowledgeably and with animation about a good diet and keeping fit. This is fully reflected in pupils' learning and progress in food technology and in their effort and enjoyment in physical education. Pupils are enthusiastic helpers around school and manage an active school council. Even though pupils stay only a short time, their involvement in raising money for charities is well-established such as Children in Need and Sports Relief. Attendance is high and, with their good progress and the success rate in returning to school, pupils are well prepared for the future.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Lessons are planned well, with care and expertise taken in adapting the curriculum to each pupil's needs and capabilities. Learning is promoted expertly. The links between one lesson and the next are strong. Learning objectives are understood by pupils; their work is clearly explained and illustrated. Pupils gain confidence from the close support they are offered by teachers and classroom assistants. Pupils' attitudes to learning are positively stimulated by lively teaching and their behaviour is sensitively and expertly managed.

Improvements to the curriculum give a sharp focus to promoting literacy and numeracy and to ensuring that pupils' work is closely aligned to expectations in their schools. Clear vision and skilful planning shape the curriculum into a creative, interesting and enjoyable experience for pupils. Substantial enrichment provided through arts, sports, many visits and visitors enhances activities considerably.

Pupils are thoroughly well-supported by a cohesive team of staff. They are constantly alert to pupils' needs and very attentive to each pupil's well-being. When applicable, pupils' vulnerable circumstances are known about; strong links with parents and professionals ensure they are safeguarded and their other needs are met very effectively. Staff make sure pupils and their parents receive the help they need from professionals and by offering support such as through training programmes and the family liaison worker.

<sup>1</sup> 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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*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The staff are a strong team with the experience and expertise to carry out their roles in school and on outreach work. Staff are very effective in safeguarding pupils as a result of the rigorous management of procedures and leaders ensuring all staff are fully trained and highly alert to pupils' safety. They work together expertly in planning and supporting pupils' return to school. This is ensuring pupils attending St Christopher's, and those being helped in their own schools, have equality of opportunity to achieve and enjoy to their potential. Staff work together with a common sense of purpose, which is developed from the clear vision and high expectations of the headteacher and the other leaders. The headteacher gives very clear direction leading to key priorities for improvement. These are embedded in development planning, managed skilfully by the whole team. The management committee form an effective bridge between the school and local authority which, in particular, supports the aims of outreach work with partner schools.

The staff have created real strengths in relationships with parents and in the wide range of partnerships which assist the school in succeeding as well as it does with pupils. Parents are full of praise for the school's work with their children. With the staff's strong encouragement, they are kept closely involved with their children's progress and they are very well supported in school and at home. Advice and training on managing behaviour and setting clear boundaries for their children are greatly appreciated by many parents. Partnerships with schools are highly effective in helping and equipping them in dealing with the difficulties faced by some of their pupils. In St Christopher's area, the level of permanent and temporary exclusions in schools has been falling substantially each year. These strengths contribute enormously to promoting community cohesion. While the scope of St Christopher's to promote community cohesion is restricted by the short stay nature of its provision, it provides very many opportunities for pupils to contribute positively in school and much more widely.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1

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<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Views of parents and carers

The number of parental questionnaires returned is comparatively small but, in relation to the total number of parents, the response is high. Parents agree or strongly agree with all of the statements, showing that they hold very positive views of its work and performance. The extent to which the school keeps their children safe has the most favourable response and inspection evidence shows this is a well-founded view. Most parents have a strong opinion that teaching is good, their children's needs are being met, behaviour is managed well and the school is led and managed effectively. On each of these points, inspection evidence confirms parents are accurate in their views of the school.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Christopher's 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 inspector received 10 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 12 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	6	60	4	40	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	9	90	1	10	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	7	70	3	30	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	6	60	4	40	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	8	80	2	20	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	5	50	5	50	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	6	60	4	40	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)	6	60	4	40	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	8	80	2	20	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	80	2	20	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	7	70	3	30	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	8	80	2	20	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	8	80	2	20	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



29 April 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Christopher's, Ipswich, IP4 3HG

Many thanks for your warm welcome, friendliness and helpfulness in an enjoyable visit to your school. A special thanks also to the pupils I met with to discuss their views of the school. I found out that St Christopher's is a good school and some of its work and some of the benefits you receive are outstanding.

The strengths of your school are:

- you make good progress by always working hard and behaving well
- St Christopher's helps you to feel confident and positive about going back to school and teaches you how to manage this successfully
- your attendance is excellent and you willingly contribute in many helpful ways
  - your lessons are lively and challenging because teaching is good
  - the work and activities you do are interesting and enjoyable
  - the outstanding care and support staff give to you helps you feel safe and develop an excellent attitude towards a healthy lifestyle
  - the headteacher and all of the staff are doing an outstanding job of making your school the success it is and making sure you are successful.

The areas for improvement are:

- for the headteacher and staff to use the information they have on your progress to help you to do even better
- for the school to continue monitoring your progress after you have left to find out how successful it is in helping you prepare well for the future.

You can help the school by continuing to attend school every day and working hard to achieve as much as you can. I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Alan Lemon

Lead inspector

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