

St Christopher Primary School

Allesley Old Road, Coventry, CV5 9JG

Inspection dates 17–18 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher has been highly effective in leading changes that have resulted in rapid improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement since the previous inspection.
- She is ably assisted by the interim leadership team. Together they have managed the school successfully during a period of transition, with many staff changes. They are strongly supported by a knowledgeable and highly effective governing body.
- Staff and pupils share a strong belief in the values of their school. They are proud to be part of it.
- Parent and carers are highly positive about the support their children receive and the continuing improvements at the school.
- Pupils' attainment is above average in Year 6, and an increasing number are working at the higher Levels 5 and 6 in English and mathematics.
- Most pupils, including those who are most able, are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils benefit from teaching that is typically good, with an increasing proportion that is outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour is good, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils feel extremely safe in school and are nurtured well.
- The school provides pupils with an interesting range of subjects, topics and experiences which ensure that they enjoy school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The proportion of outstanding teaching is not yet high enough to ensure all pupils' progress is rapid and sustained across all year groups.
- Until recently, pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 has been inconsistent, with few pupils reaching the higher levels.
- Some subject leaders are new to their roles and have not been fully involved in checking the quality of teaching or pupils' attainment and progress over time.
- Some teachers' comments in marking do not always show pupils how they can improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 23 lessons involving 16 teachers and two assemblies; three lessons were observed jointly with school leaders.
- The inspectors held discussions with school leaders, staff, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at documentation including improvement plans, the systems for tracking pupils’ progress, the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and samples of pupils’ work. They heard groups of pupils reading and spoke with others about behaviour and safety arrangements at the school.
- Account was taken of the 42 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the views expressed by those parents and carers who spoke with inspectors at the start of the school day or wrote letters.

Inspection team

Michael Bartleman, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Stephen Cox

Additional Inspector

Carol Worthington

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils come from a White British background. Increasing proportions come from minority ethnic groups, the largest of which are from Indian and Pakistani heritages.
- Around one pupil in 20 is disabled or has special educational needs supported through school action. This is below average. A similar ratio of pupils is supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, which is also below average.
- Around one in six pupils is supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for specific groups of pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals), which is below average.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is made up of two full-time Reception classes and a part-time Nursery class with morning and afternoon sessions.
- The school shares its site with St Christopher Playgroup, a private provider. After-school care called Kool Kids Club is also managed privately. Both are subject to separate inspecting and reporting arrangements.
- There have been many staff changes since the previous inspection. The headteacher was appointed in September 2010, the acting deputy headteacher in September 2012 as assistant headteacher, and the acting assistant headteacher was appointed in September 2013.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make more teaching outstanding so all pupils make rapid and sustained progress, particularly in mathematics in Key Stage 1 and in writing in Years 3 and 5, by ensuring that:
 - the outstanding practice already in the school is shared more widely
 - teachers always match activities in lessons precisely to pupils' different abilities and needs so that learning moves at a consistently rapid pace
 - teachers' comments in marking show pupils clearly how they can improve their work
 - all pupils know their learning targets and are fully involved in assessing their own learning.
- Further develop the roles of subject leaders, by:
 - giving them more opportunities to check on teaching and learning
 - involving them fully in data analysis, tracking pupils' progress and monitoring school improvements.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the Nursery and Reception classes with skills below those typical for their age, particularly in communication and language. They are well taught and make good progress. The 2013 school data show that the vast majority of children are at expected levels when they start Year 1.
- Since the last inspection, pupils' attainment as measured by national tests at the end of Year 6 has improved rapidly. In 2012 the proportion of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 in English and mathematics was above average, although fewer pupils attained the higher Level 5 in English and writing.
- The school's own data for 2013 show that attainment has improved at the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics. An increasing number of pupils made more than the expected progress to reach Levels 5 and 6 in English and mathematics. This meant that the progress made by all groups of pupils, including those who are more able, was good. However, this good academic progress is not reflected in whole-school data because of pupils' previous underachievement.
- Increasing numbers of pupils in Year 2, including those supported by the pupil premium, are now making better progress and exceeding expected standards in reading and writing.
- Attainment in English and mathematics for all groups of pupils, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds, has seen a rapid rise over the past two years. Previous underachievement has been addressed, gaps between groups are closing rapidly and more pupils are working at levels above those expected for their age.
- Pupils' progress in writing is rapidly accelerating due to improved teaching, a faster pace of learning and good opportunities to write at length in a range of subjects, although there are still gaps between the attainment of boys and girls writing in some year groups. Writing tasks are well structured and supported so that all pupils can achieve well. They often start with a considerable amount of discussion and visual stimuli which develop vocabulary well.
- The school has worked to improve the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) by using well-trained teachers and teaching assistants to run small-group sessions. Results in the national phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 in 2012 and 2013 were above average for all groups of pupils.
- Attainment in reading is currently above expected levels in Year 2 and in Year 6. This reflects the improved opportunities pupils have to read for a variety of purposes.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make accelerated progress. The additional support provided for them is well organised by the leader responsible for special educational needs and the learning mentor, so it precisely meets their needs.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide a learning mentor, small group and individual support as well as enrichment opportunities. School data show that the attainment of Year 6 pupils supported by the pupil premium in 2013 was on average one term behind their classmates in English and in mathematics, reflecting good progress for these particular pupils.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is typically good and there are elements of outstanding practice. This is particularly the case in Year 6 and in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where teachers plan for pupils' next steps in learning especially well.
- Teachers plan imaginative activities that excite and motivate pupils to succeed. For example, during the inspection Year 1 pupils recorded videos of themselves on tablet computers to reinforce initial word sounds before writing.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium receive well-managed help which enables them to progress as well as their classmates. The focus on individual needs also ensures that disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are supported effectively and progress well.
- Reading is promoted well. Pupils read regularly to adults and particularly enjoy reading to the volunteers from the community and governors who often come in to listen to the pupils read.
- The proportion of good and outstanding teaching is increasing well but it not yet consistently strong enough to fully overcome slower progress, particularly in Years 3 and 5 in writing and in mathematics at Key Stage 1.
- In the better lessons, relationships are strong and teachers and teaching assistants question pupils effectively securing good understanding. Good links are made with previous work and other subjects. Pupils have good opportunities to discuss and share their ideas with each other. In Year 6 pupils are fully involved in assessing their own learning and matching it to their personal targets, although this strategy is not yet consistently used in all classes. Not all pupils fully understand their targets for improvement.
- Where teaching is occasionally less strong, teachers underestimate what pupils can achieve and do not use assessment information to plan tasks which challenge all pupils sufficiently. This means that tasks do not move pupils' learning forward rapidly and time is not used effectively.
- Although marking is regular, teachers' comments do not always help pupils to improve their work, particularly in mathematics.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is consistently good, and at times outstanding. Pupils have a great desire to learn, and this contributes greatly to their good achievement as they get involved quickly in the learning activities.
- There is a calm and purposeful learning atmosphere in the school, and all groups of pupils get on well together.
- School records confirm that pupils' behaviour is good on a daily basis although it is not yet exemplary because a few pupils find it difficult to manage their own behaviour, particularly when teaching is less effective and learning slows. All pupils respond well to the school's reward systems and the celebration assemblies.
- Parents have great confidence in the care that the school provides, and pupils agree that they feel happy and safe in school. Virtually all parents and carers who responded to the online

questionnaire, or spoke to inspectors, judged behaviour to be good and their children to be safe in school.

- Discussions with pupils showed that they understand about different types of bullying. They said that although squabbles may sometimes arise there is no bullying in school, and if it were to occur, staff would deal with it immediately.
- Pupils play an active role in ensuring a happy, well-organised school. Older pupils manage games at playtimes as play leaders and man the school office during lunchtimes. These opportunities, as well as being school councillors, have an extremely positive impact on their personal development.
- The school has close working relationships with a number of outside agencies to support pupils and their families whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. Many parents spoke of the good support they have received from the learning mentor. Attendance is consistently above the national average.
- Through a well-planned range of activities pupils are helped to develop strategies so that they are able to manage everyday risks for themselves, such as those associated with the internet, personal safety, roads and fire.

The leadership and management are good

- Improvements since the previous inspection have been rapid and effective. The strong leadership and drive of the headteacher has been the catalyst to improve teaching and to raise achievement. The headteacher actively promotes high expectations. She has managed the pace of change and the number of staff changes very effectively, ensuring a common sense of purpose and high staff morale.
- The headteacher's accurate evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses and its record of improvement show the school has strong capacity to improve further.
- Regular lesson observations followed by detailed feedback to teachers and a successful training programme have ensured that virtually all teaching is good, with an increasing proportion that is outstanding. The school's policy of 'even better if' is used well to develop teachers' skills.
- The headteacher manages the performance of teachers effectively, with clear links between the salary that teachers receive and pupils' good progress. Teachers are set precise targets linked to pupils' progress, thus promoting good or better teaching. Newly qualified teachers are supported well. 'Learning hubs' and innovative use of information and communication technology help to develop teachers' skills, although not all teachers have had the chance yet to observe outstanding practice within the school.
- Leaders who are responsible for particular areas of the school, some of whom are relatively new to their posts, are knowledgeable and enthusiastic, and are having an increasingly positive effect on the quality of teaching in the areas for which they are responsible. However, the newer leaders have not had the opportunity to analyse data in detail and to monitor school improvements.
- Rigorous checks are made to find out how well pupils achieve. Staff routinely check that all pupils are on track to make good progress from their various starting points. The results are checked by other staff and schools within the local partnership to ensure that they are accurate.

- The school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination well, and this is reflected in the good achievement of all groups of pupils. There are no recorded incidents of harassment. Pupil premium funding is managed well so that eligible pupils make good progress.
- Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. Partnerships with parents and carers are developed effectively and start with well-managed transition arrangements and the many workshops for parents and carers which introduce them to the school's teaching methods and ways of working.
- Topics bring together different subjects in a way that the pupils describe as 'fun'. Visits, including residential visits and a good range of after-school clubs add further enhancement. Pupils have good opportunities to learn to play musical instruments, for example through whole-class ukulele and keyboard tuition, and to take part in singing events.
- Pupils also take part in a good variety of sporting activities, and are highly enthusiastic about the 'Olympic hour' led by a sports coach and funded by the national sports funding. Leaders have drawn up detailed and appropriate plans for the use of the additional sport premium funding and how they will measure its impact.
- The local authority provides regular support for school leaders and governors which has helped them to evaluate the school's performance accurately and to develop a clear strategy to improve it further. The school works effectively with a range of others in the local area for teachers' training and for checking the accuracy of assessments.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The well-trained governing body supports and monitors the work of the school effectively. Governors understand the school's performance information well and how the school has improved. They provide good support to leaders because they are able to ask the difficult questions about how decisions will have an impact on pupils' learning. The governing body is kept informed about how teaching is improving. Governors visit the school regularly to check on performance. This has led to good decisions being made on the rewards that teachers receive, the allocation of the school's finances and the pupil premium, which it monitors effectively. The governing body carries out its statutory duties effectively, ensuring, for example, that procedures for safeguarding pupils are well managed, regularly reviewed and fully meet national requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	103652
Local authority	Coventry
Inspection number	426936

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	457
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anke Brooker-Davis
Headteacher	Clair Robinson
Date of previous school inspection	28 November 2011
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