

Christ Church CofE Primary School

William Street, Fenton, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST4 2JG

Inspection dates 22–23 January 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' progress from their individual starting points varies too greatly throughout school for pupils to achieve well.
- Standards attained at the end of Year 2 in 2013 were lower than at the time of the previous inspection and lower than the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. At the end of Year 6 in 2013 they were also lower in reading, writing and mathematics than the national average.
- A few teachers do not always provide enough challenge for pupils in lessons. The most able pupils find the tasks they are asked to undertake too easy to complete so do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- A small number of teachers are unable to manage the behaviour of a few pupils who disrupt learning in lessons.
- Not all lessons start on time. In a minority of lessons learning time is wasted by pupils as they collect equipment or sharpen their pencils when they could be learning.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are unable to improve teaching well because they are overburdened with responsibility as they try to cover for colleagues who are not currently in school.
- Teachers responsible for managing improvement in literacy and numeracy do not have enough opportunities to check frequently, or well enough, on what other teachers are doing to improve pupils' skills in mathematics and writing.
- Those responsible for leading and managing the school, including governors, have not improved it as much as they could have done since the last inspection. The school is not currently improving.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and Chair of the Governing Body have a very clear understanding of what needs to be improved in school to make this a good school.
- Gaps in knowledge between pupils supported through the pupil premium and all pupils in school narrowed rapidly in 2013 because funds to improve their achievement were spent well.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons or part lessons, two of which were jointly observed with the headteacher. In addition, the inspectors listened to pupils read and observed a number of teaching assistants working with pupils, both in and out of lessons.
- Meetings were held with pupils, parents and teachers, three members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority as well as a telephone interview with the Chair of the Governing Body.
- In the course of the inspection, inspectors took account of the 36 responses made by parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and considered an analysis of the 19 responses to a staff questionnaire designed and circulated by the school.
- The inspectors observed the work of the school and scrutinised plans for improvement as well as documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance. A broad range of other evidence was also scrutinised, including current pupils' work in books from all classes and the school's own data and monitoring records of how well pupils progress in their learning.

Inspection team

Declan McCauley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Maria McGarry

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- An above-average proportion of pupils are supported through school action. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is well above the national average. (The pupil premium is additional government funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families, and those children that are looked after by the local authority).
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- Two pupils attend Herron Cross Primary School three days per week and were not in school during the inspection.
- Since the previous inspection many teachers, including the deputy headteacher, are new to the school and two members of the senior leadership team are currently absent from school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching to at least good in all lessons so pupils' progress is consistently strong and standards rise by:
 - challenging all pupils appropriately, particularly the most able, through giving pupils learning tasks which are not too easy or too difficult for them to complete
 - ensuring all teachers have appropriately high expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - eradicating wasted learning time through improving teachers' awareness of when pupils are not learning
 - making learning interesting and exciting for all pupils.
- Strengthen the impact school leaders, including governors, have on improving the school by:
 - making sure the headteacher and deputy headteacher are not overburdened by taking on too many responsibilities
 - ensuring those responsible for improving literacy and numeracy check the impact teaching is having on learning more frequently and rigorously
 - more effectively supporting weaker teachers
 - developing plans for improvement where successes or failures can be measured clearly
 - enabling governors to have a clearer understanding of how they can ask the right questions of school leaders to be sure all teachers are teaching well in all lessons.
- Improve pupils' behaviour in lessons so no learning is disrupted by:
 - ensuring pupils always listen fully to teachers
 - making sure all pupils respond rapidly to teachers' instructions
 - helping the few teachers to whom it applies to more effectively manage the challenging behaviour exhibited by pupils in a small number of lessons.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because the standards attained by pupils in reading, writing and mathematics are below the national average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The widest gap, compared to all pupils nationally, was in mathematics at the end of Year 2 in 2013 with pupils being nearly two terms behind the national average.
- When beginning school children start with knowledge and skills which are well below typical expectations of their age. As they progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage they make good progress in their learning and begin Year 1 a little below the levels expected for their age. From this point on in school the progress made in reading, writing and mathematics varies widely between classes which hampers pupils' learning.
- In year groups where teaching is more effective pupils make faster progress in their learning. School tracking data show in the autumn term 2013 pupils made most progress in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 1 but much slower progress in writing in Year 6, Year 5 and Year 2.
- In Year 1, pupils' knowledge and use of the sounds letters make (phonics) is broadly in line with other pupils nationally because it has been taught well by teachers.
- Attainment improved in reading by the end of Year 6 in 2013 following a dip the previous year because teachers and other adults encourage pupils successfully to read for pleasure in school and many speak about their love of reading.
- Pupils known to be eligible for support from the pupil premium attained well last school year. The attainment gap for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals compared to those pupils not eligible closed dramatically in reading where there is no difference in their attainment compared to other pupils. In writing and mathematics they remain about one term behind other pupils. This rapid improvement in attainment has been brought about through careful use of the pupil premium funding to provide effective additional support for their learning.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and those who are most able is similar to other pupils in that it is too variable for them to achieve well. Pupils do not have equal opportunities to learn well in school because of the variable teaching in lessons.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because currently and over time it varies too greatly to help pupils to achieve well in their learning in reading, writing and mathematics. Teaching varies in school from inadequate to good but is not strong enough to help pupils make fast progress in lessons.
- Many teachers do not give pupils tasks which match their learning ability, consequently many pupils find the tasks either too easy or too hard. Pupils in a Key Stage 1 mathematics lesson were unable to complete their addition sums correctly because they were far too hard for them. The most able pupils are not challenged well in lessons and do not make enough progress. They find the tasks they are given too easy and consequently they lose interest in their work.
- Lessons do not always start on time. Pupils waste time in lessons when teachers do not keep a careful enough watch on what pupils are doing when they are sitting working slowly on learning tasks. A few teachers are not aware of the impact poor behaviour has in a minority of lessons or how to manage it appropriately, which again hampers pupils' learning.
- A few teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve in lessons. Other teachers accept completed work from pupils that is scant, untidy and contains incorrect spellings which are not corrected. A few teachers also mark mathematical calculations correct when they are incorrect which does not help pupils to improve. Teachers' marking does not always identify what pupils should do to improve their work.
- Displays around school are vibrant, stimulating and exciting. They support pupils' learning very

well. The classroom and display in the Early Years Foundation Stage is dull, jaded and uninspiring in contrast; it is not a stimulating and exciting place for children to develop their knowledge and skills well even though they make good progress.

- In Year 6, pupils currently working on a topic around Hogwarts complete their learning excitedly and display a thirst for learning because the teacher plans carefully so they are interested and enjoying learning. This is not the case in a few of the other classes in school.
- A few teachers very skilfully question pupils about what they have learned which helps the teachers to understand how well their teaching is promoting learning and what more they can do to speed up the rate at which pupils learn.
- Teaching assistants support learning well in many classes, particularly for those pupils who are disabled and those with special education needs.
- Homework is used well by teachers to improve pupils' basic skills. It is set regularly and parents are rightly expected to play their part by working with their children to support them in their learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement because in a few lessons pupils' challenging behaviour is not managed well by teachers and the speed at which other pupils in the class learn is slowed dramatically. A few pupils do not do what teachers ask of them and other pupils then see this sort of behaviour as acceptable.
- In an upper Key Stage 2 literacy lesson, a pupil was observed flying a paper aeroplane around the room instead of completing his writing about robots while the teacher supported other pupils; she finally challenged him about his behaviour and then he returned to his seat. Pupils in Key Stage 1, also disrupt the learning of others in their lessons. Pupils were observed carrying on with their learning tasks or misbehaving for a number of minutes after being instructed by their teacher to stop and move to the carpet to sit down.
- A few parents express some concerns, rightly, about behaviour in school. Even so the challenging behaviour is confined to a minority of lessons. Parents also identified a few concerns over bullying in school but inspectors could find no evidence to substantiate the concerns.
- In corridors and on the playground pupils are polite, courteous and enjoy each other's company. They play well together on the playground and proudly report there is no bullying in school only some pupils who fall out now and again. In discussion pupils went on to illustrate their understanding of bullying and the dangers they could encounter both in school and in the community by talking about their awareness of drugs and alcohol abuse and keeping safe when using the internet.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe in school. They enjoy attending school and their attendance this school year has improved on the previous year when it was below the national average. One reason attendance has improved is because the home school link worker diligently works with parents to ensure they are aware of the importance of their children attending school every day.
- The school works very closely with staff from Heron Cross Primary School to successfully ensure the two pupils who are educated there three days per week are kept safe and learning well. There is good regular contact between teachers responsible for the pupils' education.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have allowed the variable quality of teaching to go unchecked for too long which has resulted in variable achievement for pupils which is why leadership and management requires improvement.
- With the current absence of two members of the senior leadership team, the headteacher and deputy headteacher (the latter who has only been in post for the past eighteen months) have

each taken on additional overall responsibilities for managing the Early Years Foundation Stage and special educational needs. Due to this additional workload they have been and are still unable to concentrate as well as they might on improving the school.

- Senior and middle leaders have few opportunities to check the impact which teaching has on improving pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics well enough. The leadership of teaching is therefore not strong enough. When weaker teaching has been identified the teachers concerned have not been supported well enough to improve their teaching.
- Plans for improvement lack any means for those responsible for leading and managing the school to check if improvements have successfully improved achievement or teaching.
- Senior leaders have a clear understanding of the weaknesses within school. In the past year they have successfully worked with teachers to rapidly improve the standards reached by those pupils supported through pupil premium and increase the number of pupils who reach the expected standard in the phonics test at the end of Year 1.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have successfully created a caring and nurturing learning environment where pupils say they feel safe and secure. Procedures for keeping pupils safe meet statutory requirements.
- Since the previous inspection the local authority has provided light touch support for the school and is agrees it has been ineffective in improving the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The Chair of the Governing Body is very well informed about school through his weekly meetings with the headteacher. He has a very clear understanding of what the school does well and which areas need to be improved. This clear awareness is not shared by other members of the governing body who are not as aware of how well teachers teach in lessons for example. Not all governors know how well pupils are achieving in their learning and have an over-generous view. There is an over reliance on accepting what the headteacher tells members of the governing body, instead of knowing when and how to ask the right questions to check on how well teaching is improving pupils' achievement. This means they are currently incapable of making sure weaker teaching is eradicated in school. Governors understand the performance management of teachers and know good teaching is rewarded although currently they lack ways of checking this fully. Likewise they know the additional Primary School Sport funding is being spent on improving the quality of physical education in school but have no means of measuring if it is bringing about improvement.

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	124229
Local authority	Stoke-On-Trent
Inspection number	440457

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	222
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Colin Parkes
Headteacher	Paula Scattergood
Date of previous school inspection	13 September 2011
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