



Christ Church CE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124229
LEA Stoke-On-Trent
Inspection number 281665
Inspection dates 16 January 2006 to 17 January 2006
Reporting inspector Lois Furness AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	William Street
School category	Voluntary controlled		Fenton
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST4 2JG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01782 234834
Number on roll	206	Fax number	01782 236402
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Chris Stokes
Date of previous inspection	17 January 2000	Headteacher	Mr Eric Tunstall

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is similar in size to most primary schools. It serves a community with recognised socio-economic difficulties. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above the national average. The children's attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage in the Nursery is well below that expected for their age, particularly in their use of language. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage, although eight other ethnic backgrounds are represented in the school. There are a small number of refugees and asylum seekers, but there are no pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school evaluates effectiveness as good and inspectors agree. Although standards are low when children start school in the Nursery, by the time they leave in Year 6, standards are broadly average in reading, mathematics and science. Achievement is good. Standards in writing are much lower than those of reading throughout the school. In the past, progress has been unsatisfactory. As a result of rigorous monitoring and evaluation, effective strategies have been recently implemented which are now raising standards. Although there is improvement, pupils have insufficient opportunities to use their literacy skills in all subjects and few pupils have a confident joined up handwriting style. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers use a range of good strategies to help pupils learn more effectively. However, the strategies are new and not all teachers use them sufficiently well. The Foundation Stage is satisfactory. In Reception, however, the curriculum is not always appropriate for the needs of the children. The leadership of this key stage does not provide sufficient guidance to rectify this. Pupils enjoy school and find learning interesting. They feel safe and are well cared for. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, supported very well by the able deputy headteacher, provides a clear steer to the work of the school. Governance is good and governors provide good support and challenge. The school has responded well to the issues identified in the previous inspection and is well placed to continue to improve. The school gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing by increasing opportunities for pupils to use literacy skills in other subjects and improving handwriting skills.
- Strengthen the leadership and management of the Foundation Stage to ensure that the curriculum is appropriate for the children.
- Establish fully the recently introduced teaching strategies to improve pupils' learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Although children make good progress in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception), they enter Year 1 with skills, in all six areas of learning, below those expected for their age. The pupils make good progress throughout Key Stage 1, and by the end of Year 2, standards are broadly average in reading, mathematics and science. In writing, standards are below average. However, achievement is good overall when considering the standards attained at the start of Year 1. By Year 6, pupils have made good progress and attain standards that are broadly average in reading, mathematics and science. Taking into account their prior attainment in Year 2, their achievement is good. There is evidence of unsatisfactory progress in writing over time. In 2005, the pupils' performance was well below average in this aspect of English. The leadership responded well to the concerns regarding writing and implemented effective strategies. Although the strategies are newly introduced, they are improving pupils'

writing skills. Pupils currently in Year 6 are attaining higher standards in writing than in the previous year and achievement is satisfactory. Challenging targets were achieved in mathematics and science in 2005, but not in English. Different groups of pupils, including those who are gifted and talented and those with learning difficulties or disabilities, are supported well. They make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development of pupils is good. They enjoy lessons and work conscientiously to improve their skills. Attendance is satisfactory. Whilst most pupils attend regularly, a small number have too many absences. Pupils speak highly of the strong relationships between the staff and themselves. A group of pupils was adamant that the best thing about school was the 'brilliant teachers'. Behaviour is good. Pupils are confident that they will not be bullied and feel safe because of this. They have a good understanding of the need to eat healthily and of the importance of regular exercise. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils think deeply about important issues and develop a good sense of right and wrong. They are keen to take responsibility and responsive to the needs of others. Members of the School Council in particular show impressive levels of maturity when making recommendations. The 'Peer Mediation' scheme, which gives older pupils the responsibility for resolving minor playground disputes, works very well. Both pupils and parents say how much it has improved behaviour at playtimes. The pupils' competence in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) prepares them satisfactorily for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers have good knowledge of most subjects and use this well to support pupils' learning. Practical activities are important and this approach has considerable success in developing pupils' scientific understanding. Teachers use resources such as ICT well to make lessons interesting and to demonstrate key learning points. For example, older pupils were very stimulated when competing in a mathematics competition against another school, using a camera link. New strategies such as pupils being more aware of how to achieve success in their work are beginning to raise standards, particularly in writing. Good examples of this are when teachers' marking provides pupils with very clear guidance on how to improve and when they get pupils themselves to evaluate their own work. These strategies, however, are not always used in all classes. Teachers' expectations of pupils' work are generally high but they ask too little of pupils' writing in many subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The quality of the curriculum is good and provides an interesting range of activities that are relevant to the needs of pupils. However, in the Reception class, the curriculum is not planned well enough to meet the needs of young children. For example, they are sometimes expected to sit for long periods and so lose concentration. The school rightly focuses on ensuring pupils' future economic well-being with good provision for basic reading, number, scientific and ICT skills. However, there are too few opportunities in the curriculum for pupils to write in different subjects and this explains why standards in writing are too low. The well planned personal, social, health and citizenship programme plays an important part in helping pupils understand the need to live healthily and stay safe. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of activities at lunchtime and after school. The exciting displays of pupils' work make the school a stimulating place where successes are celebrated. The curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties is good and ensures they are fully included in all activities. Gifted and talented pupils are given good opportunities to develop their skills further, particularly in areas such as sport, music and dance.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support is good. In particular, the special support groups for vulnerable pupils are very well organised. Pupils speak highly of the way these sessions help them become more confident and manage their own behaviour. Induction procedures are satisfactory. Teachers are good at setting pupils achievable targets and providing effective support when they struggle to meet them. For example, one pupil said '...and if you don't get your target the teachers will spend more time with you until you do'. Child protection procedures are rigorous and all staff have pupils' welfare very much at heart. Arrangements for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities ensure that they are fully integrated into the school community. The school's very good partnership with parents contributes enormously to the quality of care, support and guidance. This partnership has particularly helped the school to improve rates of attendance in recent years. Health and safety procedures are good. The school has very good relationships with the local community and other schools that do much to help pupils' progress and prepare them for the future.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management are good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher make a good team and work together well. Monitoring and evaluation are thorough and rigorous. The school has a reliable picture of its strengths and weaknesses and is clear on what needs to be achieved next. Good systems and strategies have been recently implemented to raise standards overall and in writing in particular. However, as yet, these strategies are not fully established in all teachers' work. For example,

there are variations in the way teachers mark books and use pupils to mark each other's work. The school has developed the role of the subject leader well since the last inspection and this is beginning to drive up standards. In particular, the leadership of science is very effective. It has raised standards in science and has improved teachers' confidence in this subject. The leadership of the Foundation Stage, although satisfactory, does not provide sufficient direction to ensure that the curriculum matches the needs of young children. Governance is good. Governors are supportive and knowledgeable about what needs to be done to raise standards. The school works closely with parents and has good links with external agencies. The pupils are also consulted well and through the school council take an important part in improving the school. The key issues of the previous inspection have been rectified well and the school is in a good position to improve further.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for making Mr Elston and myself feel so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed watching you learn and talking to you about your work.

What we like most about your school

- You are making good progress, especially in science.
- Your teachers are doing a good job and use resources such as ICT to make activities interesting.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have good ideas about how to make your school even better.
- You behave well and try hard to do your best.
- Your parents think that the school looks after you very well.

What we have asked the school to do to make it even better

- Sometimes, your written work could be better and we have asked your teachers to give you more opportunities to write in subjects such as history, geography and religious education. We have also asked them to help you to improve your handwriting skills.
- We have asked the teacher in charge of the Nursery and Reception classes to improve the planning of work for the children in the Reception class.
- The headteacher has asked teachers to try new ways of helping you to learn faster. This is happening better in some classes than in others. So we have asked the headteacher to give teachers time to become more confident in using these new ideas.

We all hope that you will carry on enjoying learning and helping your teachers to continue to make your school a good place to learn.