

Christ Church Cof E (VA) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103997
Local Authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	308479
Inspection dates	18–19 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Sarah Conway

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	227
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Barnet
Headteacher	Michaela Long
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Albert Street Oldbury B69 4DE
Telephone number	0121 552 3625

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	18–19 November 2008
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Fax number

0121 552 0891

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Christ Church Church of England (Voluntary Aided) Primary School is a school of average size serving an increasingly disadvantaged area. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. Most pupils have minority ethnic backgrounds with a high proportion being from Indian or Pakistani backgrounds. The number of pupils learning English as an additional language is significantly higher than in other schools of a similar size. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. When children join the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in the Nursery, their level of skills and knowledge is exceptionally low, especially in their language and personal, social and emotional development. The school has received the platinum Healthy Schools award and provides a breakfast club for pupils at the start of each school day.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school that it provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. The school has suffered over recent years from considerable instability of staffing at all levels. Over a period of two years, the school had five different headteachers before the current headteacher took up the position in 2006. During the past year, she has taken robust action to strengthen the quality of teaching and learning across the school so that underachievement is being tackled successfully. The school now has a stable and effective staff and is ready to move forward. From the moment the children join the Nursery, a high priority is given to developing their personal, social and language skills. By the time they start in Year 1, children have made good progress because they are taught well, but they are still behind in all areas of learning. During Years 1 to 6, progress is satisfactory so that by Year 6 standards are just below average. The school is correctly targeting writing and mathematics as areas for improvement. The curriculum and the quality of teaching are satisfactory but they are not always adapted sufficiently for pupils learning English as an additional language. Teachers do not always expect enough, particularly of more able pupils, which limits the progress pupils can make. The atmosphere around the school and the climate for learning are good. The school works effectively with other schools and organisations. The number of responses to parent questionnaires was exceptionally low, demonstrating the school's struggle to engage parents in the life of the school. Pupils are well cared for, they behave well and they feel safe, all of which contributes to their good personal development. Their attendance is good and they enjoy their education. Their understanding of how to keep healthy is outstanding and is evident on a daily basis. Their preparation for future life is satisfactory. Child protection procedures are thorough. Regular health and safety checks are made and careful risk assessments are undertaken when needed. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Senior leaders have a clear understanding of what the school needs to do to improve. Governors play an active part in the life of the school and are beginning to offer appropriate challenge. The school has a wealth of data about pupils' progress and the standards they achieve, but this information is not used sufficiently well to improve all pupils' achievements. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection. The school development plan is focused on the right areas for improvement and the school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The children enjoy the range of facilities and different indoor spaces where they learn and play well. The outdoor space is a real asset but is not used to its best potential to support the curriculum. Children are happy and settle well because of the care taken by adults to address their individual needs and the focus given to their social development. Good leadership means that effective assessment procedures are in place and adults know the children well. Children have a wide variety of opportunities to learn in a practical way. There is a good balance between adult-led and child-selected activities, but there is room to guide and challenge the children a little more when they choose their own activities. Adults work well together and good teaching ensures children progress well from very low starting points so that they enter Year 1 having achieved well, but with standards below those expected for children of this age.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make better use of information about the achievements of pupils in order to raise expectations and focus teaching on maximising the learning of all groups.
- Ensure that teaching and the curriculum are better adapted to meet the needs of pupils learning English as an additional language to improve their rates of progress.
- Ensure that teaching provides greater challenge to more able pupils so that they achieve as well as they can.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The achievement of some pupils across the school has suffered in recent years because of the instability in leadership and poor quality teaching. Children enter the Nursery with very low levels of skills and knowledge for their age. By the end of the EYFS, well-targeted and skilful teaching ensures children make good progress so that they enter Key Stage 1 with standards below the expected level. Very few children exceed the goals expected for children of this age. In 2008, standards were particularly low in reading. The school is addressing this in Year 1 through an intensive programme for those children with particularly low standards in reading.

Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and enter Key Stage 2 with below average standards. Achievement in writing and mathematics was particularly low in 2008. The school is successfully addressing these weaknesses through the introduction of 'Big write' and 'Big mathematics' materials and strategies to help pupils to catch up.

In 2006 and 2007, standards in Key Stage 2 improved so that they were just below national averages. The education of last year's Year 6 pupils was particularly disrupted while in Years 2 and 3 and this, combined with further unexpected disruption in Year 6, led to low test results, most notably in mathematics. The decisive action taken by the headteacher to address inadequate teaching and to introduce systems to monitor their progress means that pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are currently making the progress they should across all years.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. The school is a harmonious community with a very strong spiritual dimension to its work. Pupils participate enthusiastically in assemblies. Pupils from different backgrounds mix well. They display a good understanding of the diversity present in their local community and within Britain. They have an outstanding commitment to adopting healthy lifestyles with regard to both what they eat and how they participate in sport and other physical activities. Pupils say they feel safe and are confident in approaching adults with any concerns they have. They show care and consideration for each other, for example when someone is upset or unwell. Attendance has improved and is good due to the school's effective action. Pupils have a strong sense of social and community responsibility taking on a range of responsibilities within the school such as sitting on the school council, acting as an extra friend as a playground buddy, or being a house captain. They

are proud of their very strong contribution to the local community through their links with the church and other local organisations. Pupils' good personal and social development, and ability to work well together contribute to preparing them for the future, but their lack of wider experience combined with their current rate of progress in acquiring basic skills means that this area is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Some teaching is good, especially in the EYFS and in other year groups, but the quality is not consistent. In all classes, relationships are good and teachers have high expectations about behaviour so that pupils are keen to learn and try hard. Teaching assistants are effective and perform a valuable role especially in supporting pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Teachers' subject knowledge and planning are satisfactory. Teaching is most effective when there is a fast pace to learning and tasks are well matched to pupils' needs. In one English lesson, pupils made good progress because the teacher was clear in helping pupils to know how they would achieve their targets. Opportunities are sometimes missed to push learning on during whole-class activities and expectations are not always high enough especially in the case of more able pupils. There is not enough use made of talk or group work to develop language and communication skills.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. Provision for pupils' personal development is a key strength across the school. Themed weeks to support pupils' development have included health and anti-bullying. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are closely involved in planning the additional support they need to make progress. The curriculum is enhanced by very good opportunities to learn a musical instrument and to study a modern foreign language. A wide range of educational visits, visitors and clubs, which are greatly enjoyed by pupils, enriches the curriculum. The improvements to information and communication technology (ICT) provision have contributed to pupils' overall enjoyment of lessons and improved ICT skills. Resources and activities are not always sufficiently well matched to the needs of different groups, especially those learning English as an additional language. The school has acknowledged that in the past the curriculum did not always engage the interest of pupils. It has responded decisively to this through the development of a thematic curriculum, consulting with pupils to identify themes that interest them.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides a safe and attractive environment in which pupils work well together and respect each other, regardless of each other's background. Adults are good role models and pupils are confident in approaching them. Links with outside agencies are strong and their expertise is effectively used to support specific needs of individual pupils. Efforts to engage parents who speak English as an additional language have only been partially successful. Child protection and health and safety procedures are robust. Pupils are involved in their own learning, with systems that enable them to participate in checking whether they have reached their

targets. However, not all pupils understand their targets or what to do to improve. There is good practice in marking, but it is not consistent. The use of information about pupils' academic progress needs to be more robust to make sure that all achieve as well as they should.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The improvements in progress are directly attributable to the strong leadership of the headteacher. She has a clear vision for what the school needs to do to improve. Robust systems for monitoring the quality of teaching are beginning to take effect and teachers' expectations are rising. The use of challenging targets is contributing to a rise in standards but this is not yet consistently good across all areas of the school's work. The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory.

Governors are conscientious and contribute to the daily life of the school. They do not yet play a large enough role in school self-evaluation or focus sufficiently on achievement and standards in holding leaders to account.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

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

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

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

20 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Christ Church Church of England (Voluntary Aided) Primary School, Oldbury, B69 4DE

We enjoyed the two days we spent with you recently and we would like to thank you for your warm welcome and the help you gave us in getting to know you and your school. You told us that you enjoy your learning, particularly the clubs and visits. We think your school is satisfactory. Here are some of the things we found.

- Children in the Nursery and Reception get off to a good start.
- You are taught satisfactorily and your learning is getting better.
- Most of you reach the expected standards in your work.
- The progress you make has recently improved and is satisfactory.
- Your behaviour and your attendance are good.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to live a healthy life.
- Teachers and other adults look after you well.
- Your headteacher knows what to do to improve the school.

We have asked the teachers to find ways to make Christ Church an even better school. We have asked the school to do three things.

- Make better use of information about how well you are learning to help all of you to make as much progress as possible.
- Include activities and equipment in lessons to help those of you who are learning English as an additional language to make better progress.
- Ensure that teachers always expect enough of pupils who find work easy.

I hope that you continue to behave well and try hard in lessons.

With best wishes for the future,

Yours sincerely

Sarah Conway

Lead inspector