

# Christ Church CofE (VA) Primary School and Nursery, Ware

New Road, Ware, SG12 7BT

**Inspection dates** 27–28 November 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
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

- Progress in mathematics has not been good enough to raise standards for the past three years.
- The pace of some lessons is too slow, often because teachers talk for too long. This means that pupils do not have enough time to develop and practise the skills that they are learning.
- Some teachers are not always clear about the next steps needed to move on in mathematics, so they are not able to explain these clearly enough to pupils.
- Work in some lessons is too easy and so more-able pupils do not do as well as they could.
- Additional adults in the classroom are not always used well enough to support pupils' learning.
- The leadership team and subject leaders are inexperienced and so have not all had the opportunity to develop the skills they need to check progress and raise standards.
- The checking of how well pupils are doing has not always been accurate so some school data from the past are unreliable.

### The school has the following strengths

- Standards in English are rising steadily.
- Most pupils have made good progress in English and mathematics this term.
- The school uses its good teachers and teachers from other schools to support more inexperienced staff, helping them develop their teaching skills.
- Pupils behave well in and around school.
- The senior leaders of the school have a good understanding of what they need to do to improve the school.
- The headteacher and governing body have made staffing changes to ensure that the quality of teaching is improving.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of pupils is a strength.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 33 lessons or parts of lessons, of which seven were joint observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with three groups of pupils, three governors, school staff including senior and subject leaders, and a representative of the local authority. Informal discussions were held with parents.
- The inspectors took account of the 51 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), individual communications from parents and 16 staff questionnaires.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at: information from the school’s checks on its performance; school improvement plans; analysis and tracking of pupils’ progress; leaders’ records of classroom observations; safeguarding arrangements; and minutes of governing body meetings. They also sampled pupils’ work, listened to pupils read and checked information on pupils’ attendance.

## Inspection team

Susan Hughes, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Fatiha Maitland

Additional Inspector

Ken Parry

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is a larger-than-average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding to help particular pupils who need it) is below average.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and of those who speak English as an additional language are both lower than average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported through school action is above average, but the proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The headteacher took up post in September 2010 and the deputy headteacher was appointed in January 2012. The senior leadership team was formed in January 2012 and the mathematics subject leader was appointed in April 2012.
- The current Chair of the Governing Body was elected two years ago and 12 new governors have joined the governing body since then.
- 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?

- Improve teaching and pupils' progress, especially in mathematics, through ensuring:
  - all teachers have good subject knowledge so that they can give pupils clear guidance to the next steps in their learning, and that pupils are given time to act on this
  - lessons are well paced so that pupils have plenty of opportunity to practise the skills they are learning
  - pupils of all abilities have work set at the right level from the start of every lesson
  - all adults supporting in the classroom are well briefed and that their skills are matched to the needs of the pupils.
- Strengthen leadership and management through ensuring:
  - all members of the senior leadership team and subject leaders have opportunities to develop their skills of checking progress data and making judgements about the quality of teaching
  - assessment of how well pupils are doing is accurate and used well in planning.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Standards in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2 have remained the same for three years. Progress in the past has been mixed and some pupils have not made enough progress. School data show that progress has improved this year for all groups of pupils.
- Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills expected for their age. Pupils make no more than expected progress throughout the school and leave school with average standards in English and mathematics.
- Progress in reading and writing has improved over the last two years. Standards in reading and writing are broadly average by the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2, but are improving. The results of the national screening check on phonics (the sounds letters make) for Year 1 pupils reflect this.
- Since September, progress has improved. The majority of pupils have made good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils in the school, as do pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language.
- Pupils who are eligible for additional funding, such as the pupil premium, have made good progress and some pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 have made outstanding progress. This is because the money has been spent on specific learning programmes and extra adults for individual or small group teaching for these pupils.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- In some lessons pupils do not make the progress they are capable of. This is because the teacher spends too much time talking and explaining activities to the whole class, so there is too little time for pupils to practise or develop their learning.
- Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can do. There is good support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, but other pupils often start with similar work, which is too easy for some of them. In the best lessons, more-able pupils are given work that is well matched to their abilities right at the start of the lesson while the teacher explains the tasks to other groups of pupils.
- Marking of literacy work is good in most classes. Teachers give pupils guidance to the next steps in learning, and in the best cases pupils are given time to respond to this. In mathematics books, marking is generally limited to correcting mistakes. This is because not all teachers are clear about exactly what pupils need to do to progress to the next stage.
- Pupils who are at risk of not doing well are generally well supported by additional adults. In some classes, however, adults sit with the pupils and listen to the teacher when they could be better used in well-focused group work or checking the progress that pupils are making.
- The teaching of phonics is good for most groups of pupils. Occasionally, however, the sounds the letters make are not clearly spoken by the adult leading the group. This means that some

less-confident readers have difficulty putting the sounds together to read words that are unfamiliar to them.

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are given a range of activities to develop their skills and love for learning. For example, they were fascinated by the changes in dough mix as water was added. The teacher's questions made them think hard about what might happen before they saw for themselves.
- Opportunities for outdoor learning are limited. The Reception outdoor area is small and windswept, making opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills outside difficult in poor weather. In the Nursery, the whole class went outside together, providing no opportunity for children to make choices about whether to play and learn outside or indoors.
- Homework is set regularly. Pupils say that they feel it is generally the right amount of work and always linked closely to what they are doing in lessons. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 enjoy the online mathematics tasks they are set.
- In all lessons, teachers set pupils good examples of how to behave as mature and responsible people. They encourage pupils to be equally responsible and develop good social and moral skills and understanding. Pupils respond well and show consideration and respect for each other, demonstrated through the concern expressed by Year 5 and 6 pupils when one of them fell in a games lesson.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils behave well in class and around school. They feel that behaviour in school is good and older pupils see it as their responsibility to be good role models and sort out any minor behavioural incidents on the playground.
  - School captains in Year 6 are held in high regard. They are appointed by their 'Family Forum' and help organise fund-raising activities. They also collect pupils' views on how the school can be improved, such as the development of the wild-life area and purchasing equipment for 'Golden Time'.
  - Pupils have a very clear understanding of what bullying is. They talked to inspectors about different kinds of bullying including cyber-bullying and racism. All pupils spoken to said that bullying is very rare in the school. They are confident that the adults in school deal with any incidents quickly and effectively.
  - Most parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire say their children feel safe in school, and the pupils agree. They can talk about internet safety, road safety involving cycles and scooters, and visitors to school such as the police. They feel the security of the school has been improved with the new gates.
  - Pupils throughout the school are encouraged to take on a role of responsibility. For example, all pupils in Key Stage 2 have the opportunity to be 'Reading Buddies' to the younger pupils. During the inspection, some Year 3 pupils read to their allocated children in the Nursery. They helped the younger children choose books and then read stories and talked about the pictures with them in a very mature way.
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**The leadership and management requires improvement**

- The senior leaders are very clear about what the school needs to do to improve. As the team is relatively inexperienced, some of the leaders have not yet had the opportunity to develop a good understanding of analysing and ensuring the accuracy of school data or of making judgements about the quality of teaching.
  - The topics planned by teachers offer pupils exciting activities to engage them in learning. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils experienced a Tudor day when they were able to investigate Tudor life through art, technology and the study of realistic and authentic artefacts.
  - The development of literacy and numeracy skills across other subjects is not yet embedded. Although teachers plan to build on key skills, in some classes, too much use is made of prepared work-sheets which limit opportunities for pupils to develop their writing.
  - Teachers' performance is checked against how much progress their pupils make and how well they fulfil their different roles in the school. Targets for teachers are used to measure whether promotion up the pay scale is justified by the results achieved. Appropriate steps have been taken by the headteacher and governing body to ensure that there is no inadequate teaching in the school.
  - The school has strong links with the church and pupils are given opportunities to reflect and pray in assemblies. Each classroom has a focus area, often developed by the pupils, where they can reflect or talk about any worries. In the best lessons, teachers encourage pupils to think deeply about the world. For example, Year 1 and 2 pupils were fascinated and concerned by the fate of such endangered Australian species as the great bilby and the numbat.
  - The school has a strong sense of respect for other cultures and encourages pupils in school to share their own experiences. In lessons pupils learn about other religions and visit different places of worship. The close links with a predominantly Muslim school in The Gambia gives pupils first-hand experiences of people in another part of the world with different beliefs but many similar values.
  - The local authority has provided effective support for school leaders in developing the new leadership team and for improving teaching and learning. It has also supported the school in developing good working relationships with other schools who can share their good practice and expertise.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - The governing body is relatively new in its current form. The Chair of the Governing Body has undertaken an audit of governors' skills and arranged appropriate training to make sure that everyone is clear about the governors' role. Thorough recording of governors' activities, such as visits to school, show that an effective system is in place to check progress. Governing body minutes give examples of how the governors ask questions to hold the headteacher to account for improvement. Sometimes, however, these questions are not always followed up with further searching questions which would challenge the senior leaders more. The finance committee checks expenditure closely, including the spending of the pupil premium. However, governors are not clear about the difference that this spending has made for the pupils it is intended for. Governors have a good understanding of how managing the performance of teachers affects standards in school. They have recently been fully involved in restructuring
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how support staff are used, to make sure that the pupils receive exactly the right kind of help.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	117473
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	401667

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary Aided School
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	322
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Marcia Walkerdine
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ania Vaughan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	01 February 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01920 462158
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