

# St Christopher's Catholic Primary School

Tarbock Road, Liverpool, Merseyside, L24 0SN

**Inspection dates** 13–14 November 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
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 has serious weaknesses.

- Pupils' achievement from starting the school is inadequate in reading, writing and mathematics. At the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment was significantly below average in 2013.
- From 2010 to 2013, attainment by the end of Year 2 was significantly below average. Pupils' achievement overtime is inadequate in Key Stage 1.
- The quality of teaching in Reception Year requires improvement. Too many activities are over-directed by adults and so children do not learn to be sufficiently independent.
- The quality of teaching over time is inadequate. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve and the tasks pupils are given are often not well matched to their needs and do not challenge pupils to achieve their best.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 do not have enough opportunities to write longer pieces of work in different subjects.
- Teachers do not always check carefully enough on pupils' grammar, spelling and punctuation and the marking of these is inconsistent.
- Reading skills are not taught effectively in Reception Year or Key Stage 1.
- Teachers do not plan activities in mathematics that offer sufficient challenge to pupils.
- Leaders do not ensure that teaching in Reception Year or in Key Stage 1 is of good quality.
- Some parents do not support their children or the school well enough with regard to punctuality and attendance. The school is not effective enough in promoting better punctuality.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors have ensured that the quality of the teaching is now improving in Key Stage 2.
- Pupils feel safe and behave well around school. They enjoy all the school offers.
- Governors have an accurate view of the school. They understand where there are weaknesses still to be tackled.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 21 part-lessons. A joint observation took place with the headteacher. Inspectors also made a number of short visits to lessons and listened to pupils read in Years 2 and 6. Observations were made of the teaching of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) in Reception Year and in Year 1. Inspectors reviewed the work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders, teaching and support staff, two groups of pupils, members of the governing body and two representatives from the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation including national assessment data, school assessments and the school's evaluation of its own effectiveness, the school development plan, local authority reports, curriculum information and safeguarding documents. Attendance and punctuality records were checked by the inspectors. They also looked at minutes of meetings of the governing body and the headteacher's reports to the governing body.
- There were not enough responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) for inspectors to review. Inspectors took account of parents' responses to the school's questionnaire. Inspection questionnaires representing the views of 28 members of staff were also analysed.

## Inspection team

Jean Tarry, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Pamela Davenport	Additional Inspector
Terry Bond	Additional Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005 (amended), Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.*

### Information about this school

- St Christopher's is a larger than average-sized primary school situated in the Speke area of Liverpool.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by pupil premium funding is well above the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding provided for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards that set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- There have been some changes in the senior leadership team from September 2013.
- A breakfast club is provided for a small charge which operates on the school site and is managed by the governing body.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least consistently good and all pupils achieve well by ensuring that:
  - all tasks are well matched to pupils' needs to ensure maximum progress for all learners in their reading, writing and mathematics over time
  - all teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve in linking letters and sounds and that those struggling with their reading are given reading books at the appropriate level
  - pupils have work that really challenges them to achieve as much as possible, especially in their writing and mathematics tasks and particularly for the boys.
- Raise standards and accelerate the rate of progress for pupils in reading, writing and mathematics by:
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their reading, writing and mathematical skills across the curriculum
  - giving pupils more opportunity and real purpose to write longer pieces of work, especially in Key Stage 1
  - enabling pupils to develop a love of reading across different curriculum areas
  - ensuring grammar, punctuation and spelling and the consistent marking of these, has a high

priority to impact on pupils' writing

- planning more challenging activities to develop pupils' skills in mathematics in Key Stage 1.

■ Improve leadership and management by:

- developing further the current approaches to improve attendance and, in particular, punctuality, including those that involve the support of parents
- ensuring more robust leadership of teaching leads to consistently good and better teaching.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is inadequate

- Children's skills and knowledge when they join Nursery are significantly below those expected for their age. Many get off to a good start in Nursery and make good progress. However, in Reception Year, the progress children make slows down because there are often missed learning opportunities for children to link letters and the sounds they make. Consequently, children's progress by the end of Reception Year requires improvement and they enter Year 1 with skills, knowledge and understanding that are below average.
- Progress made in Key Stage 1 is inadequate in reading, writing and mathematics over time. From 2010 to 2013, attainment by the end of Year 2 was significantly below the national average; this is too low given their individual starting points. In 2013, boys' writing was also significantly below the national average.
- Pupils' achievement overall by the end of Year 6 in 2012 was inadequate. In 2013 the achievement made by Year 6 pupils from starting Key Stage 2 improved considerably compared to those in 2012. However, pupils overall still make inadequate progress given their starting points on entry to the school as they make too little progress in Reception and Key Stage 1. Consequently pupils are not prepared well enough for their learning in Key Stage 2.
- In Key Stage 2, progress accelerates because teaching has, in recent times, improved. However, while some teaching is good, it is not yet consistently so. Despite the strong improvements in pupils' progress achievement is inadequate overall because attainment in English and mathematics was too low in 2013. This improved and often good teaching has not yet filled in all the gaps in pupils' learning due to their previous underachievement.
- In lower Key Stage 2, progress has been inadequate in the past, especially in mathematics, due to weak teaching. However, this is no longer the case. The headteacher has quickly identified underachievement in lower Key Stage 2 and set upon addressing this; consequently pupils are now making faster rates of progress due to the consistently good teaching they experience.
- The school's current assessment data, inspection evidence and work in pupils' books indicates positive improvements are taking place and shows pupils are now making faster progress in Key Stage 2.
- The outcomes of the Year 1 phonics screening check were significantly below the national average in both 2012 and 2013. However, the Year 2 phonics checks show that pupils' skills are closer to the national average. Even so, the linking of letters and sounds continues to be an issue for many pupils across the school. The headteacher has ensured that high-quality provision is in place for all groups who do not have these first steps to successful reading. The school can now demonstrate better progress with pupils linking sounds and letters with greater accuracy.
- Overall, the achievement of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is similar to other pupils at the school. Sometimes, their progress in reading is better because of focused support from teaching assistants or from teachers who specialise in reading recovery.
- The attainment of pupils supported through the pupil premium improved in 2013. The previous gaps between the attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and other pupils in the school have closed rapidly and both groups of pupils' attainment in English and mathematics in 2013 were broadly similar. However, the attainment of these two groups was still too low and so they underachieved considerably.

### The quality of teaching is inadequate

- There is too much teaching in Reception Year, Year 1 and Year 2 that requires improvement. Teaching in these year groups is inadequate because it is not consistently good enough to overcome previous weak teaching over time; consequently it is inadequate over time. There has been a history of weak teaching in lower Key Stage 2, particularly in mathematics, which the school has now addressed. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is now consistently good.

- Teachers do not always ensure that writing tasks give pupils an opportunity to write longer pieces of work, especially in Key Stage 1. Sometimes reading books are not always well matched to pupils' needs in Year 2. Often pupils need help in developing a love of reading. In Year 1, teachers' expectations of pupils' phonics learning and development are not high enough. Sometimes, pupils do not have work that really challenges them to achieve, more especially in their writing or mathematical tasks. The opportunities for pupils to practise these skills across the curriculum are often not in place or not well matched to their need in order that they can make rapid progress.
- The quality of teaching in Nursery is good and children develop their independence and settle well into the learning environment where routines are well established. Good relationships and well-planned activities ensure children are effectively prepared for learning.
- The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is consistently good and is still improving, particularly in mathematics. For example, in a good lesson in Year 4, the teacher asked pupils to discuss and share their work about how they solved problems using grams and kilogrammes. There were high expectations and good questioning by the teacher and this resulted in good progress for all the pupils in the lesson. However, on occasion, some teachers' marking in Key Stage 2 is not always of the highest quality when addressing issues of grammar, spelling and punctuation and their impact on pupils' writing.
- Some staff have improved greatly the way they rigorously match learning activities to pupils' needs and challenge their thinking to achieve more. This is resulting in pupils in Key Stage 2 making faster progress in reading, writing and mathematics. For example, in a Year 3 class, pupils made good progress as they had to complete a note-taking exercise and present their findings to a group.
- Teaching assistants work well to support groups in most need of help. They are deployed well and make a positive difference to pupils' learning. For example, the reading support programmes now in place and which they help to deliver are making a significant impact on pupils' progress in these groups.

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

### **requires improvement**

- Attendance is still an issue and over time it is below the national average. There are systems in place to check and promote regular attendance and they have resulted in improvements this term. Pupils say they really do enjoy coming to school. However, some parents do not help to support the school by improving their children's punctuality. During the inspection, there were more than 30 pupils late for school at the start of the day. This means these pupils regularly miss vital aspects of their learning, particularly in the phonics or reading tasks which are usually timetabled for the start of the day.
- Where teaching is weak, as is too often the case in Reception Year and Key Stage 1; when work is too easy and pupils finish quickly or tasks do not match their individual need, some pupils become inattentive and restless. As a result, pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning overall requires improvement.
- The behaviour of many pupils is good. Most are friendly, polite and considerate and they enjoy school and, even when not excited by their learning, most try their best. Pupils' behaviour around the school and outside in the playground is generally positive and most pupils are well mannered. The lunchtime monitors help to organise the outdoor provision and look after the younger pupils.
- Parents and staff believe that pupils feel safe and happy in the school and the pupils agree. Pupils can identify name-calling and physical bullying and say that these seldom occur. They know who to talk to if this happens. They know how to keep themselves safe and talk sensibly about the dangers of inappropriate use of the internet.
- The headteacher places a high priority on keeping pupils' safe. The learning mentors, welfare officer and special educational needs leader all work closely to help and support pupils and families and to assure their personal well-being and academic success.

## The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders have not fully addressed the proportion of teaching which still requires improvement. Teaching across the school, particularly in Reception and Key Stage 1 is not yet of a consistently good enough quality to make up for pupils' previous underachievement and so raise standards further. The headteacher is working with a new leadership team to address the priority areas to ensure rapid progress in all year groups. Strong teamwork is resulting in better progress. The headteacher correctly identified weaknesses in teaching.
- Improvement in the school's more recent performance shows that senior leaders are capable of continuing to improve further the effectiveness of the school. The environment is bright and welcoming and this helps to ensure a pleasant working environment and to raise expectations. Children want to come to school and the leaders are working hard to encourage better attendance.
- The improved leadership of teaching by senior and middle leaders is helping to strengthen the quality of teaching, particularly in Key Stage 2 and in mathematics. The now established routines for checking teachers' effectiveness are resulting in better provision and outcomes in many classes. This is not yet the case in Reception and Years 1 and 2, where leaders need to do more.
- Due to the headteacher's strong leadership, staff now share a common understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school and know what must be done to improve the school's effectiveness. All teachers know that they are accountable for pupils' progress and this is checked regularly. The outcomes of performance management for teachers determine whether they will receive an increase in salary.
- The school's survey of parents' views indicates that parents believe the school supports their children well and is a safe and happy place. The primary school sports funding is used by leaders to provide pupils with a range of opportunities that promotes their physical and social development, health and well-being.
- The local authority has provided a range of support to improve the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage. More recently, at the request of the headteacher, there has been help in developing the teaching of reading and the marking of pupils' writing.

### ■ The governance of the school:

- In the last two years, there has been a drive by the headteacher to ensure that the governors renew their commitment and expertise in driving up standards and accelerating progress. They now have the necessary knowledge and skills to hold leaders and managers to account for the school's performance. Governors now have an accurate view of pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. This is because they have questioned the accuracy of the information they have received from leaders regarding pupils' achievement and teachers' performance. Governors now ensure that leaders are addressing the weaknesses in teaching with some urgency and are checking that performance management is implemented effectively. They know that there is still some underperformance. Governors ensure that the pupil premium funding is allocated to support the learning of those pupils for whom it is intended and that it is having the intended impact.
- The governing body is highly committed to improving the school. Governors share the headteacher's drive to improve standards and recognise she has a positive impact within the school and local community. Governors ensure that the school's arrangements for safeguarding are in place, that statutory requirements are met, and that financial management is sound.

## 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>	133615
<b>Local authority</b>	Liverpool
<b>Inspection number</b>	426303

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
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	335
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Fran Stoddart
<b>Headteacher</b>	Collette Denby
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 October 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 4862835
<b>Fax number</b>	0151 4480778
<b>Email address</b>	christophersj-ht@st-christophers-jun.liverpool.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)  
[Store St](#)  
[Manchester](#)  
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2013

