

Christ Church CofE (C) First School

Northesk Street, , Stone, ST15 8EP

Inspection dates 5–6 February 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make consistently good progress. They start school with skills and knowledge which are typical for their age. By the end of Year 4 many are reaching standards above those expected for their age.
- Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds do well. Where there are gaps between some groups of pupils compared to others these are closing quickly.
- Pupils behave well and often speak of the kindness of others. Relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils are good so that the atmosphere in school is calm and purposeful.
- Work in books is neat, tidy and well presented. Pupils are proud of what they do and what they achieve.
- The headteacher makes sure that teaching is almost always good or better. Teachers know their subjects well and communicate their enthusiasm so that pupils are motivated to learn.
- She has created a strong staff team who make a significant contribution to leading and managing the school.
- Governors are well informed and have a good understanding of the schools strengths and areas for development. They are closely involved with the work of the school and have a clear view of what they want the school to be.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding. Pupils do not have many opportunities to use their skills and knowledge to solve problems or apply these in different situations.
- Advice given to pupils about how to improve their work is not as consistent or effective in mathematics as it is in English.
- The effectiveness of plans for developing the work of the school is not always linked to a measurable improvement in the standards that pupils reach.

Information about this inspection

- The headteacher was absent during the inspection.
- There is some movement in and out of school which changes the make up of cohorts from year to year. This was particularly noticeable in the 2013 Year 2 cohort where there had been a 20% change from the end of Reception.
- The inspector observed seven lessons and made short visits to two other lessons.
- The inspector listened to pupils read in both Year 1 and Year 2 and talked to pupils in Y4 about the books that they were reading.
- Meetings were held with members of the senior management team and subject co-ordinators, representatives of the governing body including the Chair of Governors, parents and pupils. There was also a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took account of 33 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and spoke with parents informally before the start of school.
- There were 16 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents including the school's own evaluation of its performance and plans for improvement, information relating to pupils progress in each year group, recent and previous national assessment results, and examples of pupils' work. Documents relating to safeguarding were also checked as were behaviour and attendance records.

Inspection team

Christine Merrick, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British origin and have English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is smaller than average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is broadly average. The majority of those supported at school action plus have speech, language and communication needs.
- A smaller-than-average proportion of pupils are eligible for pupil premium funding (additional funding for pupils looked after by the local authority, known to be eligible for free school meals or whose parents are in the armed forces).

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching from good to outstanding and as a result further raise pupils' achievement by:
 - increasing the opportunities for pupils to practise and apply their skills and knowledge in problem solving activities and practical contexts in all areas of the curriculum, especially mathematics
 - making sure that the quality of written feedback in mathematics is as good as that seen in English so that pupils know what they need to do in order to improve their work.
- Make sure that actions planned for the development of the school identify clearly the impact they will have on the progress pupils' make and the standards that they reach.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils join Reception with skills, knowledge and understanding which are typical for their age although this can vary from year to year. They all make good progress in Reception because they settle quickly and enjoy learning through play-based activities designed to promote all areas of learning.
- By the end of Reception a large majority of children are above the levels expected or, where they have started from lower points, they have caught up and meet expectations. The change to Key Stage 1 is made as smooth as possible so that pupils continue to make good progress.
- Progress in all classes is good which means that pupils are on track to reach standards well above their age related expectations by the end of Year 4. For example, in the current year 4 there are already nearly half the pupils working close to the average level expected of a Year 6 pupil. Their transfer to the middle school is well catered for so that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils at all levels enjoy reading. They begin to learn the relationships between letters and sounds (phonics) in Reception and pupils in Year 1 are able to sound out the letters in words so that they are able to read simple texts accurately. They read well by the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time they are in Year 4 they read a wide range of material from non-fiction books about World War 2 to the 'Wolves of Willoughby Chase' and 'Horrible Science' books. They talk enthusiastically about reading, and those who are 'reading champions' are proud to help in the library book club and support others.
- Writing has been a consistently strong area and pupils have often been above their national peers by the end of Year 2. This is because teachers provide effective models and give pupils time to work together to develop vocabulary and ideas before they write, as well as expecting high standards of presentation and handwriting.
- Many pupils mention mathematics when asked what they enjoy in school. In number fewer children than nationally reached the expected level at the end of Reception in 2013, though progress is now being accelerated and they are closer to expectations. The most able pupils across school are given harder work, which challenges them well, but pupils do not always have opportunities to learn which skills they could use when faced with different kinds of problems.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. The school works well with outside agencies so that every child has the support they need and other adults provide one-to-one help where necessary. As a result all pupils succeed well.
- The gap between the performance of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding and other pupils closes as they move through Reception and Key Stage 1. In 2013 they were less than a term behind their peers in most areas and the gap had closed in writing. However, the school has identified that the gap is more persistent in mathematics and is still evident as they begin Key Stage 2. As a result the school has ensured additional interventions are in place to accelerate progress in Year 3.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and ensures pupils' good progress in reading, writing and maths. For instance,

in Reception, teachers provide opportunities for pupils to learn in many different ways. In one lesson, one group of children worked together to generate addition sums, whilst another group played a maths game with an adult. Meanwhile two boys played skittles outside, recording the numbers that they had knocked down. All were totally engrossed in their activities and persevered for a considerable period.

- Relationships are excellent. In every classroom the atmosphere is orderly, pupils respond well to their teachers and are confident to ask questions if they are unsure or need clarification. Other adults, including teaching assistants, offer good support and their interactions with the teachers provide good role models for the pupils.
- The teachers are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the subjects being taught and this motivates and enthuses the pupils so that they are eager to learn. Displays in the classrooms show that pupils' work is valued and celebrated. They also provide information and prompts so that pupils can work things out for themselves when they get stuck.
- The school has looked in detail at the quality of questioning in order to improve the ability of staff to probe understandings and extend pupils' thinking. This has been successful in raising the quality of conversations so that interactions between pupils and adults always support learning.
- Although there is some evidence of the pupils using their literacy and mathematical skills and knowledge in topic work, pupils do not often have the opportunity to apply these in problem solving activities or in practical contexts. This means that pupils can complete tasks set by the teacher but they do not develop an understanding about which skills and knowledge they need to use in different contexts.
- Teachers provide pupils with good written feedback in English so that pupils know what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. This is not consistently the case in mathematics where books often contain vague comments such as 'well done'. This does not provide sufficient information for pupils to work on.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. This is because in lessons they are attentive and respectful, in the playground they are friendly and usually play together well, and in the dining hall they queue patiently and sensibly.
- The school feels a harmonious and happy place because the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is nurtured. There is a strong philosophy of equality and inclusion that fosters tolerance.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive. They try hard and ensure that their work is presented well so that many of their books are a pleasure to look through. This is because teachers' have high expectations. They do not tolerate messy work, and emphasise the need for clear, precise writing.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The pupils are aware of how to keep themselves safe. They know that this is why they have fire practices and why they need to take care when they are using computers and other devices. The 'walking bus' not only contributes to their punctuality but teaches them how to stay safe on the roads.

- Pupils say that there is no bullying and are able to discuss maturely what does and does not constitute bullying. They are confident that behaviour is usually good and any misdemeanour would be dealt with instantly. They know who to go to for help. Although a large majority of parents agree that behaviour is good, there is a small minority of parents who disagree and as a result behaviour over time cannot be judged outstanding.
- Attendance has risen in recent years and is above average so far this year. The school carefully tracks each child's attendance and punctuality so that this can be addressed but pupils also enjoy being in school, as one boy said 'School is cool.'

The leadership and management are good

- During the inspection the headteacher was absent. However, the senior staff and office administrative support ensure that the school runs smoothly very smoothly and efficiently while she is away. The school is very well organised, information is readily available and management systems are effective.
- Subject co-ordinators and those with additional responsibilities such as leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage have a good understanding of their role. They check on pupils' achievement regularly and support other staff to ensure that interventions are put in place in a timely manner when issues are identified.
- As part of the process for managing teachers' performance pupils' progress is discussed and teachers' targets are set related to this. Teachers report that the process is well embedded and provides both support and challenge to them. The headteacher's observations of teaching identify areas for improvement and where common elements are identified, such as the quality of questioning, this is addressed with the whole staff.
- The co-ordinator responsible for developing the school's approach to the new national curriculum has worked with staff to design topics and themes that the pupils find interesting and engaging. As a result pupils are keen to learn and have positive attitudes to their work. Pupils enjoy enrichment activities such as the choir and sports clubs after school, the library club at lunchtime and the residential trip for older pupils.
- The primary school sports funding has been used to provide specialist teaching in gymnastics and support for other staff when teaching physical education. The impact of this can be seen in the agility shown by pupils in the daily PE lessons and their enthusiasm for after school clubs such as dance.
- Pupil premium funding enabled the school to provide and maintain additional classroom support in every year group. Pupils have benefited from targeted, specialist intervention programmes, one-to-one and small group support that means pupils learning is accelerated.
- Staff feel that the school is well led and managed and a large majority of parents agree. A small minority of parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire disagree and feel that the school does not provide them with sufficient information. However, copies of letters are available in the entrance hall, text messages are used to inform parents regularly and parents have information such as the calculation policy so that they can help their children at home. One parent commented in a letter to the inspector that 'Communication is excellent' and 'the school works closely in partnership with parents'.
- The school's own self evaluation is accurate. The senior staff contribute to the school's

development plan which is succinct and well constructed with responsibilities for monitoring its implementation clearly outlined. Although there is some reference to the impact of actions on learning this is not always evident, and development is considered in terms of actions to be completed rather than gains in pupils' learning.

- The local authority provides support through an annual visit and through more general support as required. For instance, there has been support for staff in Reception to make sure their understanding of children's learning is accurate.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and a clear view of what they want the school to be. They have an excellent knowledge of the work of the school, for instance they have been closely involved with the development of the new curriculum and value relationships with the middle school. They are able to interpret the data that is produced and refer to the relentless monitoring of both pupils' progress and the teaching improvements that have been introduced. They have been proactive in decisions relating to the use of pupil premium funding and have a good understanding of the systems for checking on teachers' performance including discussions with the headteacher about decisions relating to teachers' pay. They have ensured the financial security of the school. They ensure that safeguarding systems are in place.

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	124293
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	431514

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

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	137
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elly Handy
Headteacher	Lynne Croxall
Date of previous school inspection	14 May 2009
Telephone number	01785 354125
Fax number	N/A
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