



Christ Church CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103838
LEA Dudley
Inspection number 277008
Inspection dates 1 February 2006 to 2 February 2006
Reporting inspector Mary Hamby HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Church Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Bilston
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		West Midlands WV14 8YD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01384 818375
Number on roll	444	Fax number	01384 818376
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Susan Ridney
Date of previous inspection	14 February 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Pat Hazlehurst

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average school. The proportion of children who are entitled to receive free school meals is higher than average as is the proportion of children with learning difficulties or disabilities. Although most of the pupils are from White British backgrounds, there is a small proportion of children from other ethnic heritages, the most significant of this group being from the Caribbean.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that gives good value for money. The pupils achieve well in most respects, but progress in writing is slower than other subjects. Children in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) make good progress but still do not reach average standards by the end of the Reception Year.

Parents are pleased with what the school provides, one of them writing that she was 'over the moon' with her son's progress. The 'we can do it' motto is borne out in the everyday experiences of the pupils, who try hard with their work. The pupils are well behaved, feel secure and happy at school and trust their teachers.

The school is a harmonious community that respects the contributions of all its members. Many of the procedures to care for the pupils are effective, but fire practices are not recorded properly. The curriculum and teaching are good but do not include sufficient opportunities for the pupils to develop their speaking skills in a range of different ways.

Leadership and management are good. There are some good procedures for self-evaluation, including regular quality checks of teaching, and consultation with pupils and parents. The school have rightly identified priorities to improve writing and to develop speaking skills. Although whole school self-evaluation is diligently carried out, some of the school judgements about its provision are more positive than is supported by inspection evidence.

All in all, the school is well placed to continue to improve because the leaders know what needs to be done and have shown that they can tackle and resolve issues in the past.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the pupils' speaking skills in all subjects, particularly by providing opportunities for them to widen their vocabulary and become more confident speakers and for the older pupils to give talks to the whole class
- Improve pupils' progress in writing and further develop opportunities for them to write in a range of contexts, particularly those which demand the use of a widening vocabulary
- Ensure that fire practices are recorded properly.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Inspection evidence supports the school's view that achievement is good. When the children start the school their standards are well below average. In the Foundation Stage, the children make particularly good progress with their personal development; they settle quickly into school routines and become much more confident and independent as time goes by. However, despite this good start, many of the children begin Year 1 with limited literacy and communication skills.

In Year 1 and Year 2, the pupils make good progress with reading and writing even though a third of them do not reach the average benchmark for seven-year-olds. The pupils' progress in mathematics is very good, particularly for those with learning difficulties who grow in confidence and learn well. However, progress with speaking and listening is not as rapid and standards are below the expected level.

From Year 3 to Year 6, the pupils achieve consistently well in most aspects of their education. Achievement in science is exceptional; the school's test results have been very impressive over the last few years. Achievement in mathematics is good, but progress in writing is too slow. The pupils' work shows that they do not have a wide enough vocabulary and this affects the quality of their writing as well as their speaking skills. Although the children are keen to talk and they enjoy discussion times, they lack the skills and confidence to talk in more formal situations. The school has high aspirations for its pupils and sets itself challenging targets. Last year, it met most of these, but fell short of its targets for the higher-attaining pupils, particularly in writing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development of pupils is good. They like coming to school, achieve well, and have good attendance. Their behaviour is good and the pupils know what is expected of them. They are well aware of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and really enjoy numerous opportunities to keep fit. They choose healthy options at lunchtime and know the value of a good diet. They know how to keep themselves safe in school and whom they can turn to if they need help. They make a good contribution to their community and initiate charitable collections for a number of good causes. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are resilient individuals who are developing respect for each other and are very proud of their school. They are prepared to take a stand on certain issues through the School Council, for example, by asking the headteacher to reconsider a ban on the wearing of charity bands. This was successful and helped them gain an understanding of give and take. They are acquiring some of the skills which will help them to become citizens of the future and help them to get a job, for example their skills in mathematics. However, writing is a weaker area, information and communication technology skills are not as strong as mathematics, and the pupils' potential to manage little projects and work effectively in groups are insufficiently developed. Consequently, the pupils' personal development, though good, is not as good as it might be, and this is the reason why inspectors did not concur with the school's view that it is outstanding.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good and so the pupils make good progress. The classrooms are stimulating learning environments where strong emphasis is placed on celebrating

pupils' achievements. The pupils are enthusiastic about their teachers and there is a strong sense of mutual respect. Most lessons are taught in a lively way and at a brisk pace. The teachers work hard to plan a variety of tasks and activities that engage pupils of all abilities and help them to progress. However, they do not plan to develop speaking skills well enough and so some opportunities in lessons are lost. Consequently the pupils do not learn skills, such as talking in front of others, debating, presenting an argument, and giving full answers to questions.

The teachers review pupils' progress regularly and evaluate the effectiveness of their lessons well. The pupils are regularly encouraged to take responsibility for their learning and are aware of their learning targets. However, the teachers do not make enough reference to targets in their marking, particularly about writing. Consequently, the pupils are not as clear as they might be about how well they are doing or what they need to learn next. The recently adopted methods to teach the pupils to recognise sounds are good but have yet to show impact on raising standards.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school curriculum is good. Provision is seen as a 'learning journey' and themes that help pupils make connections with previous experiences are explored well. However, links across the curriculum to develop speaking and writing skills in a range of different contexts, such as giving instructions or recalling an event in the past, are not sufficiently explicit.

The many and varied school clubs effectively contribute to the pupils' enjoyment of the curriculum and are well attended. Many visits and a variety of visitors enhance pupils' awareness of the wider world and their cultural understanding, particularly in the arts. These really help the pupils to appreciate the richness of the world around them. However, opportunities for them to learn about the multicultural nature of British society are less evident in the curriculum and through displays around the school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school guides and supports the pupils well. The arrangements for induction into school and transfer to secondary school are effective. Pupils feel safe at school, and trust the adults who work with them. Procedures for child protection are well established, and are fully understood by staff. The school works well with a range of other professionals to ensure pupils have access to suitable support. Parents appreciate this and think that their children are well cared for. The caring and supportive environment nurtures a climate of openness where pupils have complete trust in the staff and have opportunities to share their concerns, however minor. They receive good guidance to promote their own safety outside school. Although the school carries out fire drills, there is no written evidence to show when these took place or how effective they were; there is also no log of bell tests.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher shows great commitment to her school and is assisted by a well-motivated senior team. They pull together well, value the contributions of all in the school community, and promote a caring atmosphere. There is a strong focus on achievement, with high aspirations for the success of all the pupils. This has had a positive impact on raising standards in mathematics and science but has yet to have a discernible impact on writing, which was an area needing improvement at the last inspection. Other issues from the last inspection have been largely resolved.

The school is keen to improve even further and has the capacity to do so. The teaching is regularly and accurately reviewed and evaluations point out its strengths how it can be improved. The leadership team have a thoughtful approach to self-evaluation and have identified a number of areas for future improvement, including speaking, listening and writing. However, their plans do not contain enough information to guide the initiatives, particularly with regard to how their progress will be checked or their impact evaluated. In this regard, inspection evidence does not support the school's view in that leadership and management are outstanding.

Parents and the pupils themselves are consulted and their views taken seriously. Regular questionnaires capture their views, and there are also other effective avenues of communication which help to shape the way that the school develops. Governors are keenly supportive of the school and have a businesslike approach to their meetings. They are frequent visitors to the school and offer the senior team a good level of critical challenge. However, they are not doing enough to ensure that they monitor procedures for fire practices.

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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	2	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	2	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	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	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

I am writing to you all about the visit that I made to your school with my colleagues. We really enjoyed talking to you, thought you were very friendly and appreciated the time that you gave up to talk to us.

There were lots of good things that we will remember about your school

- Mrs Hazlehurst and all the staff want you to get on well and succeed.
- Your teachers work hard and they teach you well.
- You all make good progress with most of your work.
- You are kind to each other and you behave well.
- You enjoy school and your attendance is better than in lots of other schools.
- You are learning to become healthy and active young people.
- The school provides you with interesting things to learn about in school and on takes you on exciting visits.

We are suggesting three things for the school to do to make itself even better

- Someone in the school should write down when fire practices take place and whether they need to do things differently next time.
- You need to improve your writing, especially by using exciting and unusual words and making sure that it is as good as it can be.
- You need more opportunities to talk at class times so that you feel confident about speaking to an audience and you can develop what you want to say more easily. Try to use complete sentences when you answer in class.
- Please remember to try your hardest all the time and continue to enjoy your school days.