

Christ Church CofE Primary School, Pennington

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106512
Local Authority	Wigan
Inspection number	287533
Inspection dates	21–22 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Gordon Allison

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	190
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Peter Watt
Headteacher	Mrs Diane Martindale
Date of previous school inspection	11 February 2003
School address	West Bridgewater Street Pennington Leigh Lancashire WN7 4HB
Telephone number	01942 673667
Fax number	01942 680757

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	21–22 May 2007
Inspection number	287533

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

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.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This slightly below average sized school serves an area where the socio-economic circumstances are below average. Most pupils are of a White British heritage. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below that found in most schools. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is above average, and the number claiming free school meals is well above average. The school has Healthy School status. Planning and negotiation for a new school building are currently taking place.

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 which fully succeeds in meeting its aim of fostering a happy, caring and loving environment. Pupils flourish in the safe and supportive atmosphere that stems from the headteacher's clear vision for the school. This success has been achieved in spite of its restricted site within an industrial complex. It provides good value for money.

Pupils develop well in their time at the school because of the good teaching and extensive curriculum opportunities both inside and outside school. As a result, most pupils enjoy school and understand the importance of how to live a healthy lifestyle. They are encouraged to help others and to take responsibility for their own lives. Politeness and good behaviour are the norm. Pupils give much back to the community through, for instance, their fund-raising for charity. Pupils' understanding of cultures different to their own is not well developed.

Pupils achieve well because of the good teaching they receive. In addition, their progress is well tracked and teachers are well aware of what each pupil needs to do to improve. Pupils come to the school with below average standards overall. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage because of the effective teaching and the good classroom support they receive. Standards at the end of Year 2 have been improving as a result of the measures put in place by the school. By the time pupils leave Year 6, standards overall are broadly average which represents good progress overall. Standards in English, and especially in writing, are below average. The school is aware of this and has brought in measures which are beginning to show improved progress in writing, especially for boys. The good progress made, and the positive attitudes of the pupils, mean that the vast majority are well prepared for future schooling and later life.

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers are enthusiastic and committed to doing their best for all the pupils. Therefore, pupils are confident in their teachers and they respond well to the thoroughly prepared lessons. Teachers and learning assistants give good support to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which enables them to make good progress. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is often good in terms of the helpful, specific comments they give on how it could be improved. However, pupils are not always sure about their targets and the specific steps they should take to reach higher levels.

The well-structured curriculum is the basis for the good progress, both academically and personally, that pupils make. It is well planned to build up basic skills, to meet the needs of all pupils. Recently, greater links have been developed between subjects which is improving pupils' motivation and interest still further.

Teachers know pupils very well. Pupils appreciate their friendliness and the help they provide. Relationships with outside agencies are strong. Through these, together with the school's own resources, pupils have every opportunity to learn because of the good care, guidance and support provided.

Leadership and management are good. At the core of the school is the belief, held by all staff, that every child should have the best opportunities to succeed. The headteacher's vision has been instrumental in developing this common ethos. She gives strong, calm leadership and is well supported by a well-informed governing body who are actively involved in the school. Self-evaluation is accurate but the evaluation of initiatives against measurable targets is not always sharp enough.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make more consistent use of assessments and individual targets so that pupils know what they should achieve and what they need to do to improve.
- Provide more planned opportunities for pupils to develop a greater understanding of other cultures.
- Sharpen the monitoring of initiatives so that they are evaluated more effectively against measurable targets.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter the Foundation Stage with skills which are below those expected of children of their age overall and well below in writing. Children settle in quickly and make good progress. As a result, many enter Year 1 having reached the goals set for their learning, although writing skills are not as strong. Test results at the end of Year 2 are broadly average and improved in 2006, especially in writing. Inspection evidence confirms the improved progress in writing throughout the school due to the effective measures that the school has introduced. The overall standards reached by pupils at the end of Year 6 are broadly average. This has been the case for several years. Mathematics and science standards are average, with English being below average in 2006 but above in 2005. The wealth of information provided by the school through its monitoring of pupils' attainment clearly shows that pupils make good progress between Year 2 and Year 6 in all subjects. School data indicate that targets are likely to be met this year. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress because of the effective support they receive. Their progress is also well monitored so that appropriate intervention is put into place.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. Pupils participate enthusiastically in the acts of daily worship. They develop good moral awareness and a sense of responsibility through the consistent approach and example set by adults in the school. As a result, behaviour and movement around the school are good. Pupils play sensibly in the restricted playgrounds and most pupils help others willingly. Good provision has ensured pupils know how to live healthy lives and stay safe. For example, they talk about road safety, how diet and exercise keeps you healthy and the damage that smoking can inflict. The good programme of visits and visitors greatly improves the pupils' understanding of their own culture but their awareness of other cultures is not as strong. Pupils demonstrate good citizenship skills through the work of the school council and a willingness to accept responsibility in roles such as play leaders and prefects. Opportunities such as these help to prepare pupils for the future in that they help develop negotiation skills and team working, and show how their work can benefit others. A relatively weaker element is the development of enterprise skills. Attendance is now in line with the national average after being an issue at the last inspection. Pupils enjoy their education as the strong, caring, family ethos enables them to feel secure and valued.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Effective teaching is characterised by good planning that is clearly directed towards the needs of groups of pupils and individuals. Teachers check effectively that pupils understand the tasks set in the lessons so classrooms are usually areas of concentration when pupils are engaged in their own work. As a result, behaviour is invariably good because teachers expect high standards and the pupils respond well. The few incidents of poor behaviour are dealt with effectively without interfering with the flow of the lesson. Teaching assistants are often very effective here and in supporting pupils with learning difficulties. Their support is a significant reason why these pupils make good progress. Teachers use a wide variety of activities that maintains pupils' interest. As one pupil said, and many agreed, 'lessons are fun'. Teachers are able to support pupils well because they have good subject knowledge, with music being a particular strength. In the Foundation Stage, pupils make good progress because of the rigorous yet enjoyable methods used by the teachers. Review sessions to reinforce learning are not always used as consistently as they could be.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum makes a good contribution to the good progress pupils make and to their personal development as it is broad, balanced, well planned and allows for the steady build-up of skills. Improved provision for writing - through 'Big Writing', for instance, has begun to see standards improve. Extra-curricular provision is strong with a good range of activities on offer before and after school. Sport is promoted particularly well as is music. Some good links have been made between subjects to make learning more meaningful and enjoyable. For example, out of school visits have stimulated good extended writing by many pupils. A good range of additional strategies is in place to support pupils who find learning more difficult and has enabled them to make good progress. Indoor provision is good in the Foundation Stage but the lack of a covered external area restricts opportunities for outdoor activity.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care is strong and contributes significantly to the good progress pupils make. As one pupil said, 'teachers try their best to help you'. Child protection and health and safety requirements are all in place. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are clearly identified and have appropriate individual plans that are regularly monitored. Links with outside agencies are strong and have a good impact, for example, on the improvement in attendance. The learning mentor and youth worker are effective in combating barriers to learning and in improving pupils' self-confidence. Parental approval of the work of the school is strong which reflects the importance that the school attaches to links with parents. The school provides a range of incentives to motivate pupils to attend school regularly and arrive punctually. Although some pupils are aware of their national curriculum targets, the active use of these to enable pupils to know what they need to do to improve is inconsistent.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection. As the headteacher and all staff are committed to moving the school forward there is good capacity to improve still further. The headteacher is well supported by an effective deputy headteacher and senior leadership team. All staff work well as a team to ensure that pupils are safe and well supported. Teaching and learning are monitored through regular analysis of assessment data and accurate lesson observations. Good support is provided to all staff to improve their teaching skills. There is a relatively high budget surplus which is to be used in the expected new school. Current pupils have not been disadvantaged by this as they have access to good resources. The governors are well informed and supportive but also questioning of the headteacher. Self-evaluation processes are well established and have enabled the school to accurately identify areas for improvement and to take action to meet these. However, the relative success or otherwise of initiatives are not always evaluated carefully enough against measurable targets. For example, the success criteria in the school improvement plan are, in some cases, too generalised and do not give measurable indicators of success.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
--	-----------------------

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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of Christ Church Church of England Primary School

Mr Aitken and I are most grateful for the kindness, cooperation and welcome we received when we visited your good school. We enjoyed talking to you about your work, listening to what you thought of the school and seeing you work hard and enjoy your lessons. I have made a list below of the main things we found out about your school.

What we really liked about your school

- The good progress you all make as you move through the school.
- Your politeness, how you help others and your good behaviour.
- The way you learn to play safely and know how to keep fit and healthy.
- The way you help other people through what you do for charity.
- How you take responsibility and make a good contribution to the running of the school.
- The good teaching.
- The strong leadership and management of the headteacher.

There are some improvements that need to be made and these will be achieved if all the pupils give their full support to them. I have asked your teachers to make sure that all of you get to know more about how people from different cultures live. Also, to make sure they find out if any changes they make in the school are successful. You can help your teachers by listening carefully to what they tell you about how you can improve your work in order to reach your targets.

Good luck for the future