

Church Hill School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101266
Local Authority	Barnet
Inspection number	323433
Inspection dates	9–10 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Ruth McFarlane

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	207
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Andrew Colman
Headteacher	Mrs Rebecca Mottershead
Date of previous school inspection	15 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Burlington Rise East Barnet EN4 8NN
Telephone number	020 8368 3431
Fax number	020 8368 1602

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller-than-average school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, but an increasing number, and a higher proportion than is usual, come from other ethnicities, mainly mixed or Other White heritages. Few are at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language. A higher proportion of pupils than average have statements of special educational need, though the number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities overall is below average. Pupils' difficulties mainly relate to speech, language and communication, or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The governors manage a breakfast club and several after school activities, some of which link with other schools. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a 30-place Reception class.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Church Hill Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The headteacher and staff create a nurturing ethos in which pupils achieve satisfactorily. In 2008, by the end of Year 6 standards in national tests were average in mathematics and science and they were below average in English. Fewer pupils than average gained the higher levels in their work. There are three key reasons for this. Teaching, although satisfactory, sometimes does not provide enough challenge for the most able pupils. Secondly, teachers' use of assessment information and the guidance given about pupils' next steps of learning are too variable in quality. Finally, as a result of a lack of clarity in leaders' and managers' roles, there is an insufficient emphasis on improving the quality and consistency of teaching and learning.

The most usual teaching approach in the school involves the teacher directing much of the work. As a result, opportunities for pupils to extend their learning and develop their own thinking and creativity to the full are sometimes limited. Lesson-planning is sometimes good but occasionally fails to provide a suitably clear framework for lessons. When planning is at its best, lessons are characterised by brisk pace and challenging tasks, engaging the sustained interest of each learner. The way in which teachers mark pupils' work is sometimes good but not always sufficiently useful to help pupils to know how to improve.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Academic guidance is underpinned by a good range of information. Nevertheless, pupils' individual targets, to move learning on, are sometimes too broad for pupils to understand how to make step-by-step progress to the next level of skills. This is one reason why some Year 6 pupils did not make the progress that was expected of them last year.

The majority of parents praise the pastoral care in the school, although some parents, and pupils, are rightly concerned about occasional lapses in the quality of pupils' behaviour, also noticed by inspectors. Most pupils enjoy coming to school and say they feel happy and safe. Their attendance rate is average. The breakfast club helps provide a satisfactory start to the day. Pupils have a reasonable understanding of how to stay healthy, for instance by taking part in daily exercise sessions. Spiritual and cultural development is good, underpinned by some exciting cultural events. For example, a professional opera group presented extracts from Puccini's *Tosca* for pupils from this and other local schools during the inspection. These events enrich the curriculum and leaders are keenly working to review the curriculum so that more work links across subjects to make learning more meaningful and exciting to pupils. Pupils enjoy mixing with pupils from other schools during after school clubs. Links with a nearby secondary school and pupils' progress in basic skills prepare them satisfactorily for the next stage of their education.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Good systems are in place to track pupils' progress, and the school works usefully together with parents and outside agencies. Leaders' and managers' roles are not clear enough. As a result, leaders are not able to work in the very best way to improve pupils' achievement and their personal development. For instance, separate subject leadership is not designated to a particular manager. Governors provide appropriate support overall. School leaders know the school's strengths and weaknesses and take some appropriate action, resulting in satisfactory progress. Taking this into account, the school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children enter the school with the skill and ability levels expected for their age. In 2008 the majority made satisfactory progress and entered Year 1 with standards that were broadly in line with expectations overall, though creative development and boys' writing were less successful. Inspection evidence shows acceleration in progress in 2009 as children begin to benefit from efforts to deal with these shortcomings. Children develop steadily in their personal and academic skills because suitably caring and satisfactory teaching reinforces learning in relevant and meaningful ways, through an appropriate variety of indoor and outdoor activities. For instance, during the inspection children showed fascination and delight examining the scales and fins of fish. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is in the hands of the headteacher and is satisfactory. Day-to-day management of the setting is smooth, largely due to the commitment and expertise of the Early Years Foundation Stage staff. The school pays appropriate attention to children's welfare, and is beginning to develop the key person role as a point of contact for individual children and their parents. Staff help children understand how to keep safe and develop healthy habits. As a result, children enjoy their happy environment.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate pupils' progress, especially that of the most able pupils, by providing more good teaching and learning and ensuring that assessment information is used well to guide pupils in how to improve their learning.
- Ensure pupils' behaviour is consistently good.
- Establish clear roles for all leaders so that they can consistently promote high standards of teaching, learning and achievement.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory overall. From children's starting points they make satisfactory progress. Standards in 2008 were average by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. In Year 6 standards were also average, except in English where they were below that expected, as too few higher levels were achieved. This is because of a lack of rigour in monitoring the quality of teaching and in the imprecise use of assessment information. The school is dealing with these issues. Meanwhile, inspection evidence shows the positive impact of the work to improve standards in writing through curricular adjustments, allowing smaller group work geared to ability. Pupils are now making satisfactory progress in all subjects, regardless of gender or background. Those who speak English as an additional language make the same rates of progress as their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Although pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory overall, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good and are a strength of the school. Special events such as links with a primary school in China raise pupils' cultural awareness and are also reflected in

artwork. Pupils show a sound knowledge of healthy eating and how to keep fit, and they take part in an appropriate range of physical activities, which includes regular swimming. Attendance has declined since the last inspection. Behaviour is satisfactory overall. When pupils are well supervised, behaviour is good. Nonetheless, around the school pupils do not always behave as well as they should and this remains an important area for improvement. The school council is effective and members have helped make decisions leading to improvements in the school environment. Pupils make a good contribution to the community through their charitable fund-raising and their involvement in events such as music festivals and competitive sports. Their confidence and social skills develop well through curricular activities such as residential visits. This, together with their sound progress in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), prepares them satisfactorily for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Inspection evidence endorses the school's view that teaching is satisfactory. Teachers provide support and encouragement which develops pupils' confidence. The best teaching, such as in a Year 5 ICT lesson, offers good planning and subject knowledge, brisk pace and a variety of challenging tasks to encourage learning, helping pupils to make progress. In most lessons good use is made of available resources, including teaching assistants who are used effectively to support the learning of individuals and small groups. In some lessons pupils are required to listen for too long, having little opportunity to explore and discuss their own ideas. In these lessons attention drifts and progress slows, especially for the more-able. Planning varies and lacks consistency. Some helpful and thorough marking identifies what pupils are doing well and clear guidance on what to do to improve, but not all marking is sufficiently detailed or evaluative to enable pupils to make quicker progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

All the required subjects are currently included and the curriculum responds adequately to pupils' needs. For instance, inspection evidence shows that the reorganisation of literacy lessons to improve writing standards by teaching in ability groups is already beginning to have a positive impact. ICT skills develop satisfactorily and support some of the learning in other subjects. Pupils are introduced to modern foreign languages and enjoy Spanish lessons on the timetable. French and Chinese feature in the good range of clubs, visits and visitors that supports pupils' personal development, as well as their academic achievement. The Healthy School and Activemark awards have invigorated provision for physical education. Appropriate personal, social and health education helps prepare pupils for making informed choices about their own safety and well-being.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Staff ensure that all pupils, including the small number with English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, receive satisfactory support which enables them to progress in line with their peers. Satisfactory procedures for safeguarding pupils are

in place. Pupils say they feel looked after; however, some lapses in pupil supervision were observed during the inspection, in corridors and the outside areas. Some parents and pupils report that there are instances of unkind or boisterous behaviour, and that these are not always tackled swiftly and effectively. Inspectors agree. Some strategies to improve attendance are in place but response has been slow. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Some older pupils are not always clear about their standard of their work or how to move to the next level. Although a sophisticated system for analysing assessment data and tracking pupils' progress is now in place, the information derived is not used well enough to inform teachers' planning or for setting challenging enough targets for pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The impact of leadership and management can be seen in the satisfactory progress that most pupils make during their time at the school and their satisfactory personal development. Some improvement in pupils' achievement is beginning to be noticed. Nonetheless, leaders' influence on learning has been sluggish because some roles overlap and a lack of clarity exists; for example, some job descriptions do not contain any reference to raising standards or improving the quality of teaching. Subject leadership is not clearly designated. As a result, no clear responsibility for the consistency of subject-specific teaching advice is apportioned, formally or informally. This affects the quality of teaching and pupils' progress and means that some managers are overburdened. Whole-school target-setting is adequate, but is not yet as ambitious as it could be to raise overall standards more quickly. Leaders are fully aware of the school's main strengths and weaknesses, and inspection evidence shows their action on the priorities for improvement is having a positive effect, for instance in accelerating boys' writing progress. Overall, school self-evaluation is satisfactory, but it does not fully focus on the impact on pupils and because of this can be over-positive about the effectiveness of the school. Leaders have made a satisfactory start in promoting community cohesion through effective links with the local and other communities. School leaders make sure everyone is included in all that is offered, particularly supporting all those pupils who wish to join the annual residential visits for Years 3-6. Governors provide satisfactory support to the school, but minutes of their meetings show insufficient attention being given to challenging the school about how to accelerate pupils' progress and standards.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	3
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

21 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Church Hill School, East Barnet, EN4 8NN

The inspectors who visited your school recently want to thank all of you for your friendly welcome. We really enjoyed the two days that we spent with you.

You go to a satisfactory school. You told us you are pleased with the way all the adults in your school look after you. We especially liked the way most of you concentrate well in lessons. We noticed that most of you get on with each other and with the adults. You are proud of the Healthy School and Activemark awards your school has won. Well done for raising money for charity, and taking part in events outside school, such as music festivals. You are making a good contribution to the community.

You have a sensible attitude to school and to your work, but a few of you do not behave well enough at playtime. Try hard to improve this, because some parents and other pupils are worried about it. Running down the corridors is not safe because you might fall or injure someone else. Most of you behave well, pay attention in class and try hard. All of this is helping you to make progress. All of you are making satisfactory progress, so that most of you do as well as pupils in the rest of the country by the time you leave. The teachers play their part. They give you help and encouragement. The work they give you is helping all of you to learn. You enjoy the after school clubs that help you learn still more and let you get plenty of exercise.

We have suggested some ways in which the school could be even better. We have asked teachers to make sure all your lessons are planned well and have lots of challenges to interest you, and that teachers and managers make better checks, more often, to see how much progress you are all making. We have asked the school to help you to make as much progress as possible in your lessons. Ways they can do this are by helping you to know what you need to do to improve, and by giving those of you who find learning easy some harder tasks to make you think a bit more.

Your school's leaders and managers are working hard and we have asked them to think about how their jobs can point the way a bit more clearly to helping you to do as well as you can in your learning.

I hope you will play your part by continuing to try your hardest, so that you do as well as you possibly can.

Yours faithfully

Ruth McFarlane

Lead Inspector