

Christ Church School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	100029
Local authority	Camden
Inspection number	376338
Inspection dates	19–20 January 2012
Lead inspector	Martin Beale

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon Walsh
Headteacher	Paula Aitcheson-Walker
Date of previous school inspection	19 May 2009
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Martin Beale

Additional inspector

Karen Giles

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Over six hours were spent observing lessons taken by seven teachers and holding discussions with pupils about their learning. Inspectors held meetings with staff and the chair of the governing body. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, and scrutinised pupils' books, assessment data and case studies of specific pupils. They also looked at evidence of the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning. The inspection team analysed 132 responses to the questionnaire sent to parents and carers.

Information about the school

The school is average in size. Over three-quarters of the pupils are from ethnic backgrounds other than White British, with the largest groups being of Bangladeshi and Black African heritages. The majority of the pupils speak English as an additional language and a significant proportion are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well-above average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above average. In addition to difficulties with literacy, pupils with special educational needs most commonly have multiple learning or speech, language and communication difficulties. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Nursery and a Reception class. The school has recently achieved Healthy Schools status and is about to renew Investors in People. The school meets the current government floor standard.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- Christ Church is a good school. It is on a path of sustained improvement under the drive, determination and high expectations of the headteacher and has developed several outstanding features. The headteacher is supported very ably in this quest by the deputy headteacher, a well-led governing body, and increasingly effective subject leaders. Morale amongst staff is high and all are committed strongly to identifying and breaking down barriers that might impede the learning of individual pupils.
- Teaching is good overall, with examples of outstanding practice that stimulate the pupils' imaginations, drive learning forward at pace and are the foundation for their good achievement. Attainment is broadly average and rising by the end of Year 6. Progress in reading is particularly rapid, but progress is slightly slower in mathematics and for boys in their writing.
- The pupils are tremendous ambassadors for themselves and the school. Pupils of all backgrounds work and play happily together. They show great respect and interest in other cultures and customs and develop a strong moral code. The pupils' exemplary behaviour around the school makes it a very happy, harmonious and purposeful environment in which to learn and develop. Pupils strongly agree that they feel safe in school and are very clear about how to identify and deal with any risks they might face.
- Every opportunity is taken to promote the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Music plays a very strong part in the life of the school and the various bands and the gospel choir have developed a high reputation locally. Pupils show a deep understanding of the value of faith in their lives and use times of reflection to help shape their own values and feelings. They are able to talk through and resolve equitably any conflicts as they arise.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in mathematics by:
 - planning for pupils to develop their numeracy skills in different subjects
 - making targets for improvement more closely linked to work undertaken and therefore clearer to pupils

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- providing more effective feedback through marking on the steps pupils need to take to meet their targets.
- Raise attainment in writing for boys by:
 - providing interesting and engaging contexts consistently to stimulate writing
 - planning greater structure and clarity of purpose to the development of their writing across subjects.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Considerable improvements since the last inspection in the Early Years Foundation Stage mean children now make good progress in all areas of their learning from skills levels well below those expected for their age on entry. This gives pupils a much firmer footing from which to achieve in the rest of the school, where the good progress continues, enabling them to reach broadly average standards. Attainment in reading is slightly below average by the end of Year 2, but rises to average by the end of Key Stage 2. Year 6 test results were broadly average in 2011 and almost all pupils reached Level 4 in both English and mathematics. This good progress gives pupils a firm foundation for success in secondary school and beyond.

Pupils have high aspirations and are determined to achieve their goals. Their very positive attitudes and the sensible way in which they work together contribute significantly to their good acquisition of knowledge and development of key skills. This was seen to particularly good effect in a Year 6 mathematics lesson when the pupils worked at a good pace when scaling ingredients in recipes for varying numbers of people. The pupils' learning typically benefits greatly when pupils share thoughts on their learning in discussion with others and work together on tasks, as they did throughout this lesson. They participate confidently in discussions because staff and other pupils show how much their contributions are valued.

Skilled and focused support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs enables them to participate fully in lessons and to make good progress. All other groups also make good progress overall, with notably rapid progress made within particular groups. Pupils speaking English as an additional language develop rapidly by being immersed in a language-rich environment from the moment they enter the Nursery. Once their language skills are secure, their progress accelerates and many are amongst the school's highest-attaining pupils. There is no pattern to other variations in attainment as they are specific to each cohort.

Quality of teaching

The inspection confirms the judgement of parents and carers that their children are making good progress because they are taught well and their individual needs are carefully met. Much teaching is lively and pitched carefully at each pupil's needs in

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calm and purposeful classrooms. Interactive whiteboards are used creatively to stimulate the pupils' imaginations. This was seen to particularly good effect when Year 5 pupils were 'transported back' to the Queen's Coronation in 1953 through a video clip to help them to complete a diary entry about post-war life. This excellent lesson enabled the pupils to plan and structure their diary entries, with additional support provided by the teacher modelling quality writing .

The careful balance between activities directed by the adults and those where the children take responsibility for developing their learning are now key features of the good teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes. Adults take every opportunity continually to develop and extend the children's speaking and listening and make observations of the children at work so they can plan the next steps in the children's learning.

The planned curriculum takes into account pupils' different prior attainment and learning needs carefully, including those pupils with particular talents. The emphasis on developing the pupils' speaking and listening is starting to influence and improve the quality of their writing. Although teachers take opportunities across the curriculum to develop writing and numeracy skills, these are not shown consistently in curriculum planning.

The marking of writing helps the pupils to see clearly how to improve their work and meet their targets. However, leaders and managers recognise that they have not always ensured that there is time for the pupils to respond to their teachers' comments and correct their work, particularly their spelling. The process is less effective in mathematics because the pupils' targets are not always immediately relevant to the work being undertaken and marking does not regularly help them to see how to correct mistakes.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Parents and carers strongly agree that high standards of behaviour exist throughout the school. This starts in the Nursery through the strong focus placed on promoting the children's personal and social development. Pupils are very courteous, polite and welcoming. All adults model by their actions how relationships can be built on mutual respect and consideration for the feelings of others. Consistency in this and in managing behaviour, from the headteacher and through all staff, is the key to the school's success. Pupils and their parents and carers strongly agree that, because of this approach, learning is very rarely disrupted by the behaviour of others. Inspection evidence, including pupil records, confirms that the high standards of behaviour seen at the time of the inspection are typical and that behaviour over time is of an equally high standard.

Pupils are very confident that any incidents are dealt with swiftly and that their resolution is fair. They say that bullying and other forms of harassment are extremely rare. Parents and carers support this judgement strongly. Pupils are very thoughtful and considerate towards each other. They take pride in supporting each other as

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playground helpers and caring for the environment through their 'green team'. They strive with great success to ensure that no-one is excluded or unhappy and are very keen to help newcomers to make friends and settle in quickly. Attendance is above average and rising, particularly since the governing body has taken a firm line over term-time holidays and meet with parents and carers making such requests.

Pupils strongly agree that the school provides a safe haven for their development. This view is supported by their parents and carers overwhelmingly. Pupils demonstrate a very strong awareness of how to identify risks and keep themselves safe through the Junior Citizenship Scheme, road safety training, and understanding how to deal with risks associated with new technology and the internet. They learn how to take acceptable risks on visits so that they gain greater awareness of safety for themselves and their group.

Leadership and management

School leaders have developed an environment in which there is a constant drive to raise achievement. The school's direction is very clear and the headteacher's high expectations are reflected in challenging targets and carefully targeted resources and support for their achievement. Self-evaluation is used as effective tool to identify where action is needed, particularly for improving teaching and learning. New teachers become confident practitioners rapidly because of the focus placed on their development, including opportunities for them to work alongside and observe experts. The focus on developing leaders and managers from within the school has been very successful because of the established framework within which they can develop. Key improvements over time, such as in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in attendance, have led to higher standards being achieved and have been possible because leaders and the governing body plan in detail to tackle key priorities. These features underpin the school's strong capacity for improvement.

The effective curriculum provides a wide range of interesting experiences on a daily basis, enriched by additional activities, themed events such as 'mathematics week', and visits linked to topics, as when Reception-Year children visited a city farm. Programmes are adjusted carefully to meet the learning needs of all pupils and extended for those with particular talents through workshops held in partnership with other schools. The school is striving constantly for ways to motivate boys as writers. However, opportunities to develop writing and numeracy in different subjects are not always planned systematically and not all boys find the contexts for developing their writing engaging. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very effectively through assemblies, the texts teachers choose to stimulate the pupils' imaginations, and the school's strong religious ethos. The pupils' national and international awareness is developed through charity collections and their Canadian pen-pals.

The governing body ensures that safeguarding policies are fully implemented and that the pupils are safe at all times. The rigorous analysis of assessment data enables leaders to focus action when underachievement emerges or any pupils fall

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behind their individual targets. This and the very harmonious atmosphere throughout reflect the school's rigorous attention to promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination. Parents and carers are very positive, not just about the quality of leadership, but also about the strength of the partnership between home and school. They value greatly the workshops provided, such as those in mathematics, to enable them to understand how to support their children's learning.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



23 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Christ Church School, London NW1 4BD

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspection team when we visited your school recently. We saw that you work very hard and are proud of the part you play in school life. Inspectors were particularly impressed by your confident answers to their questions. We found that Christ Church is a good and improving school. It has some outstanding features. These are the things we liked most.

- The headteacher, staff and governing body do their utmost to help you all to succeed, to take care of you and make sure you are kept safe.
- Your very positive attitudes to learning and excellent behaviour contribute significantly to making the school calm and happy.
- We agree with you that you are taught well. Teachers use assessment data to support your learning and help you to make good progress.
- The youngest children have a good and much-improved start to school life in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Teachers take every opportunity to promote further the strengths in your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- You have a sharp understanding of how to keep yourselves safe and deal with any risks you might face.
- Those of you who find learning difficult or are new to learning English are given good support so that you can make at least similar progress as others in your classes.

We have asked the school to improve the writing of boys and increase the progress you make in mathematics. You can all play your part in helping the school to get even better by continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Martin Beale
Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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