

**New Christ Church C.E. (VA) Primary School
Milman Road
Reading
Berks
RG2 0AY**

Assessment Date: July 15th 2008.

Summary

New Christ Church Church of England School is a truly inclusive school, because the Christian values which suffuse every aspect of the school's work and which underpin the motivation of every member of staff would not allow it to be otherwise. By "Christian" we can also understand "moral and spiritual", because many members of non-Christian faiths are also very much at home here: this is Christianity which is "lived out" every day in a small school which is described, by all who know it, as a family.

The school's Headteacher feels the school's best symbol is the unfired clay rainbow in her office, made for her and painted by Year 6 pupils. It is fragile and has been broken several times by distressed pupils, but always glued back together. She keeps it as a reminder to pupils that their sudden anger cannot destroy the school's work on their behalf, or its commitment to finding God's love in everyone.

Every pupil in this school is known well by the staff, and their learning and pastoral needs are carefully monitored. Adjustments to individual and group intervention programmes are made frequently, according to careful assessment. Parents speak highly of the school's flexibility and patience in helping individual pupils. Governors are at one with the senior leadership team in appointing staff who will promote the school's ethos, and in directing resources towards meeting the school's Mission Statement.

The school has developed from being in danger of closure eight years ago to celebrating its best SATs results ever this summer.

I am of the opinion that the school fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark. There are only minor areas requiring development and the school is aware of these.

Assessor: Barbara Curry

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark Ltd:

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**Joe McCann MBA NPQH
Executive Head
Inclusion Quality Mark**



Assessment Report Inclusion Quality Mark

Name of School:	New Christ Church C.E. (VA) Primary School
Headteacher:	Ms Maria Soulsby
Date of assessment:	15.07.08
Final assessor/s:	Barbara Curry
Successful:	Yes

Context of the school and sources of data. e.g PANDA, SEF, Ofsted report

The school serves a densely-populated and culturally diverse urban area close to the centre of Reading. 55% of its pupils are from ethnic minorities. It occupies Victorian buildings which are attractively maintained but nearing the end of their useful life for a 21st century school. It was established, following threat of closure and vigorous local representation, as a Fresh Start School in the year 2000.

It is a small school of 131 pupils aged from 4-11, with high pupil mobility (ranging between 11% and 35% in the last two years) children speaking 19 different languages at home (“more than 2x the national average of EAL pupils”: Ofsted), and 27% having SEN. The size of the school means that classes are currently mixed- year-group, but the school roll is expected to expand, enabling year-group classes in the next few years and a Reception class of 30 this September.

Standards have remained a concern, and the school has received much-appreciated and intensive support from the Local Authority. On the day of the assessment, however, the 2008 (as yet unvalidated) SATs results arrived, and these suggest that the school’s very hard work is beginning to show results. It looks as though English KS2 has risen from 80% level 4+ in 2007 to 84% this year, with 89% for reading, Maths from 65% in 2007 to 74% this year, and Science from 75% in 2007 to 84% this year, with a particularly pleasing result from one SEN child who was W at KS1 and has now attained level 4 English and level 3 Maths.

The school was inspected by Ofsted in April 2007, with an overall verdict of “satisfactory”. The school has already made good progress in addressing identified weaknesses, but the report also commented on “...strengths, mostly relating to pastoral care and welfare and pupils’ development and well-being.” The school is quick to pick up on results analysis, which showed underachievement by white girls in last year’s RaiseOnline and is now being addressed with small-group work.

The School Profile shows the school performing within the expected range for CVA, with better English results than average for the Local Authority, and a lower absence rate than both local and national averages.



Portfolio and other supporting evidence

Interviews

- Headteacher
- SLT team (HT, DHT, Inclusion Manager)
- Two teachers from Standards Team
- 3 parents formally
- 3 governors formally
- WEC Learning Mentor
- Art therapist
- NQT
- EMAG teacher
- 3 lunchtime supervisors, formally and informally
- 10 children informally
- 4 teachers informally
- 3 welfare assistants/TAs informally

Documentation

- Ofsted report 2007
- School Profile
- Pupil records
- Teacher's planning
- Inclusion Manager's file

Observations

- Lessons in all classrooms
 - Lunchtime in dining hall and outdoors
 - Small group work with EMAG teacher
 - Lunchtime "Massage Club" and football training
 - Displays in classrooms and hall
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Pupil Progress

Strengths:

- The school is committed to raising standards for all pupils and works hard to achieve this. An example of this is the statement in the School Profile that “We want all our children to love reading and learn to read quickly”, supported by the commitment to give each pupil one hour every day of “Miskin” sessions (Read Write Inc) or Literacy lessons in small differentiated groups.
- Underachieving groups are identified and given separate teaching: for example, this year, selected white girls have made good progress in small groups without boys present.
- The new SATS results for 2008 (not yet validated) suggest that KS2 results for level 4+ have gone up in each core subject.
- English results are better than other schools with a similarly high proportion of EAL pupils.
- Some SEN pupils make outstanding progress: for example one child who scored W in all KS1 subjects has now gained level 3 Maths and level 4 English. One child with ADHD and dyspraxia has learned to read and “really blossomed”, according to her mother. A girl with Fragile X now reads fluently and enjoys writing, although her behaviour is still often challenging.
- Children supported by a welfare assistant or TA are not allowed to become dependent: independent skills are encouraged and there are plenty of whole-class opportunities for supported children to contribute.
- The school praises pupils in specific terms for good work and progress (e.g. in the way work is marked or displayed to the class for constructive comment using the classroom IWB.) Pupils learn to be “critical friends”.
- Pupil targets are shown clearly in front of pupils’ workplaces and also contributed to by pupils: this is not yet consistent, however.
- Newcomers to the school are quickly assessed by the Inclusion Manager or EMAG teacher so that they can be given appropriate support, quickly.
- 30% of pupils receive help from the EMAG teacher and make rapid progress with English, which they learn through carefully-planned activity (such as sandwich making to reinforce class work on “instructions”). The EMAG teacher liaises with classteachers to ensure that children are prepared for some of the more difficult conceptual English such as “more than” and “less than” before they meet it in the classroom.
- Teachers moderate work together to ensure consistency in levelling.
- Pupil records are updated termly so that new allocations to support groups can be made.
- Parents are pleased with the information provided with the school, and are happy with the type and amount of homework given.
- Parents appreciate that new teachers bring different strengths and qualities as their child progresses through the school.
- Attendance is good because pupils enjoy coming to school and because parents support the purposes of the school.



Areas for development:

- The school knows exactly how to target its resources towards identified developments and already has a clear plan of what to do next.

Leadership & Management

Strengths:

- The Headteacher is liked and admired by children, parents, governors and staff.
- The whole school shares a loving and caring ethos which informs every aspect of school life.
- The SLT maintains a clear focus on the school's Mission Statement and agreed priorities, and manages the budget well to ensure that staff and pupils are well supported.
- The school sets itself high standards and challenging goals: for example this academic year it has achieved not only Basic Skills and IiP re-accreditation but also, now, IQM. Next year the school aims for Arts Mark and the Healthy Schools Award. Staff enjoy the Headteacher's "competitiveness" on behalf of the school.
- Staffing is now stable after a period of rapid staff changes, so that new training can embed, and policies and procedures can become consistent.
- New staff members wish to stay at the school, and experienced staff are happy and stay for longer than they had originally intended.
- Support staff are fully involved in the life of the school and are kept well-informed.
- The NQT has been very well-supported, and is looking forward to continuing at the school. Her mentor has gone well beyond basic expectations for her role, and has provided both coaching and team-teaching and the NQT describes her as "just brilliant".
- The Inclusion Manager is experienced and knowledgeable, and fulfils her role very effectively.
- A new tier of middle managers is emerging, being given appropriate training and responsibility (e.g. for performance management), and beginning to make an impact.
- The fact that the school has been re-awarded "Investors in People" only 3 months ago is proof of a caring and professional management culture.
- Governors are highly committed and conscientious. They take seriously the need to attend training, they share responsibilities, and they are completely in tune about the purpose and direction of the school. One way in which governors make a strong impact is in the appointment of new staff, who are always asked at interview about their "take" on the school's Mission Statement and whether or not they would be prepared to take assembly. This ensures the very noticeable consistency in staff values.



Areas for development:

- The fact that the three core subjects do not have allocated, named subject leaders, could result in some aspects of subjects “slipping through the net”. For example, there may be a danger that recent work on Science AT1 needs further embedding and does not have an individual allocated to ensuring this happens.

Staffing system & organisation

Strengths:

- Good deployment of teaching and support staff ensures pupils are well cared for and make good progress.
- The school’s recent re-accreditation for “Investors in People” affirms its commitment to the development and well-being of all staff.
- Relationships between members of staff are harmonious and productive: TAs and WAs feel like members of the teaching team.
- Support staff members feel valued and included.
- Peripatetic specialist teachers feel involved in the life of the school, are able to communicate easily with relevant members of staff, and feel professionally valued.
- The school is committed to a high level of training for all members of staff: for example, lunchtime supervisors were involved in writing the policy for lunchtimes and are included in the performance review cycle.
- Staff members are given freedom to develop new ideas: lunchtime supervisors accidentally found that an autistic child loves blue hula-hoops, and now routinely allow the child to choose a friend to roll it with.
- There is a strong learning culture which comes from the top: lunchtime supervisors commented that the Headteacher shared behaviour management ideas with them in a way that made them feel she also learns from mistakes.
- There is a strong commitment to performance management as a tool for developing potential long-term as well as for short-term raising of standards.
- At staff meetings, “every opinion is valued”.
- From a situation in which there was a high turnover of staff, staff members now say they don’t want to leave.

Areas for development:

- **There are no significant areas for development.**



The Learning Environment

Strengths:

- The school buildings are elderly and provide some challenges, especially in terms of the need for small teaching and meeting spaces, but every possibility has been imaginatively exploited.
- The buildings are attractively decorated, especially outdoors, where bright murals and placards proclaim the school's positive and spiritual ethos.
- Play resources outdoors are very good, offering a large field for energetic games, a wild area for scientific study, plenty of climbing equipment for younger pupils, a raised bed for herbs, a quiet shaded seating area and many toys such as skipping ropes and balls.
- Indoors, the Reception area is welcoming and bright, displays are carefully placed and reflect the school's values, and books and equipment are well stored for easy access.
- In the hall, the central spiritual values of the school are shown in beautiful art work and children's writing. A display by the EMAG teacher, of the Buddhist Bhodi tree, shows on each leaf a thoughtful and philosophical question asked by a child: for example, "Why are people not honest with each other?" and "Why is everybody not healthy?".
- Classrooms offer space for creative group work and physical movement as well as quiet individual study, and there is also good use of the large floor area of the hall for creative work.

Areas for development:

- The dining hall is very noisy and echoing at lunchtimes: if there are plans for a new building, thought might be given to the minimisation of noise by use of softer floor coverings, lower ceiling and fixed seating rather than loose chairs.
- Lunchtime supervisors say there is only just enough hard play area in winter: if the school roll increases very much, this could lead to health and safety problems on this site, with KS1 and KS2 children mixed together, which may mean playtimes have to be "staggered".

Teaching & Learning

Strengths:

- The quality of teaching is becoming more consistent, with a more stable staff now established and staying on. The training received by the Standards team on Shirley Clarke's techniques has been disseminated and is now consistently practised.
- Children's behaviour is generally well-managed in the classroom.
- Assessment is very well used to inform further teaching: each individual is carefully tracked and given suitable intervention programmes when needed. Pupil progress meetings are well-established and lead to effective personalisation.



- Some pupils are familiar with their individual targets, which have been set by teachers and also by themselves.
- Intervention programmes are carefully targeted and their effectiveness frequently monitored.
- Planning includes careful differentiation for individuals, so that the existence of two year-groups in one classroom is not seen as a problem.
- Pupil progress meetings result in careful tracking of progress and appropriate measures to pick up any underachievement.
- The introduction of Friday afternoon
- A new development from September, in admitting children in the year in which they will be five, presents an opportunity to develop language through play for some children who will only just be 4 on entering YR. The EY manager is well aware of strengths and weaknesses in existing provision.
- Teachers are strongly aware of the kinaesthetic and visual learning needs of their pupils, so that there is plenty of large and small movement, and good use of visual aids.
- The Friday afternoon “Big Brain Academy”, mostly for KS2, allows every child to develop their own best thinking skills: children are allocated groups in philosophy, logic or physical activity. Children enjoy the challenges and like “playing to their strengths”.

Areas for development:

- Behaviour management is generally effective, but children do sometimes disrupt each other’s learning and concentration when they are restless, and there is further work to do on expectations of behaviour especially when the teacher is talking.
- Good practice such as the setting of individual targets for children to share and add their own, should be shared and made consistent.
- The new large Reception class could be an opportunity to make FS provision and recording more consistent at an earlier stage.

Resources & ICT

Strengths:

- The school is well resourced for learning, with attractive reading materials, a well-organised library, a class set of laptops which are well used, and generally good ICT provision.
- IWBs are well used and a new development, the “Visualiser”, which can show a child’s work instantly on the classroom screen, is very effective in teaching children to be critical friends to peers, identifying areas for development as well as strengths, and matching work to lesson objectives.
- The school is well-resourced for multicultural and multi-lingual materials: one beautifully illustrated book in Polish told stories from India, Greece and other lands.



Areas for development:

- **There are no significant areas for development.**

Parents & Carers

Strengths:

- Parents are happy with the school's teaching and care for their children.
- They feel well-informed about their children's progress, and approve of the homework policy.
- A newly-formed group, "Friends of Christ Church" has organised effective and popular fundraising activities and is run by a core group of 10-15 parents.
- The Headteacher takes time and trouble to ensure that all new parents are given a thorough introduction to the school, "to immerse them in the ethos, because every parent needs to "buy in" to this". Parents of new children are allowed to stay as long as they like, until the child is settled.
- Pre-school provision is varied and children arrive at the school from 7 or 8 different settings. The EY leader has worked in pre-school settings and this is an advantage in integrating different interpretations of the FS profile. The school conducts home visits.
- Governors comment on the very high attendance of parents at school events. This is monitored informally.

Areas for development:

- There are no significant areas for development.

Governors, External Partners & Local Authority

Strengths:

- Governors are fully in tune with the SLT in terms of school priorities and ethos. They see the school first and foremost as "putting worth into the community".
- Governors are well-organised and creative: they have recently adopted a new structure for their committees, which include "Pupil Matters" (to broaden the curriculum remit to include pupil welfare) and "Strategy and Finance" (to link budget planning firmly to the Mission Statement and SDP).
- Governors recognise their responsibility to be accountable but not to intrude on the work and skills of professionals in the school.
- Governors involve themselves in all staff appointments and ensure that new staff members are committed to the school's ethos.
- Religion is not seen as a curriculum subject but as a set of beliefs which are lived out: there is a unity of purpose in all that the governors say about this, and all that the school actually does.



- Governors such as the SEN Governor regularly meet staff members who are responsible for “their” area.
- Governors are proud of the inclusivity of the school and comment that all children are included in all activities, such as the school play.
- The school leadership much appreciates the help and support provided by the local authority in the last few years.

Areas for development:

- There are no significant areas for development.

The Community

Strengths:

- The school and the church are at the heart of their community and are much valued within it.
- The school and the church work well together for the benefit of local families.
- The school makes good use of the support available through the Whittleby Excellence Cluster and the many peripatetic professionals available through the LA.
- Lunchtime and after-school activities provide good curriculum extension and are appreciated by parents.
- The local fire brigade had visited the school on the day before the IQM assessment and good educational use was being made of this visit.
- The fact that vandalism is now almost non-existent is testimony to the school’s good relationship with its community.

Areas for development:

- **There are no significant areas for development.**