

# New Christ Church C of E Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	132109
<b>Local Authority</b>	Reading Borough Council
<b>Inspection number</b>	341289
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–5 March 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Keith Sadler

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	162
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Judith Thurlow
<b>Headteacher</b>	Maria Soulsby
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23–24 April 2007
<b>School address</b>	Milman Road Reading Berkshire RG2 0AY
<b>Telephone number</b>	0118 9015437
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed teaching by all 10 teachers and spent almost half of their days in school observing learning, visiting 16 lessons. The inspectors held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, which included the school's analysis of pupils' progress, teachers' lesson plans, the school's improvement plan and also pupils' work. In addition, 90 questionnaires from parents and carers were analysed and their responses taken into account.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the strength of pupils' progress and learning in mathematics
- how well teachers meet the needs of the more able pupils
- the quality of provision for pupils who are at an early stage of learning English
- the extent to which teachers with responsibilities play a role in the school's monitoring and evaluation procedures.

## Information about the school

New Christ Church is smaller than most primary schools and is heavily over-subscribed. Most pupils live close to the school, although an increasing number of pupils come from the wider area. About a third of the pupils are of White British heritage and there are some from a very wide range of ethnic backgrounds. Pupils have over 20 different home languages and there are 20 who are currently at an early stage of learning English. An average proportion of pupils are entitled to free school meals. An above average number have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Most of these pupils have either behavioural, emotional and social difficulties or speech, language and communication problems. Many more pupils enter or leave the school during the school year than is typically found. The school expanded in the previous school year to provide for 30 children in the Reception year rather than 22 in the past. The school has been accredited with a wide number of awards, including Investors in People and ArtsMark (Gold).

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

2

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

2

### Main findings

This good and improving school is ambitious to be even better. Clear-sighted and determined leadership by the headteacher, with strong support from an effective staff, has ensured that all aspects of provision have been improved. There are rigorous and accurate checks of pupils' progress and comprehensive systems for monitoring teaching. These are carried out by all the teaching staff, who play a good and important role in the school's evaluation procedures. This results in the successful and accurate identification of the key priorities for improvement. The good attention to the points for development raised at the last inspection and the transformation of this school from being satisfactory to good clearly demonstrate a good capacity for further improvement.

Pupils are happy in school and feel very safe. They make good progress because they are enthused and they engage well in their learning no matter what their age or ability. Those in Years 5 and 6 are making gains at an accelerated rate, particularly in mathematics. This is because staff have embarked on a good range of initiatives to boost progress in mathematics. In the past, there has been some underachievement which led to significantly below average attainment in Year 6 tests. However, the focus on strengthening pupils' calculation skills and their ability to apply their knowledge in practical situations means that now progress is good in all year groups and current Year 6 pupils are already attaining the standard expected at the end of Year 6. The school's aspiration to ensure that attainment is regularly above average is well-founded; however, there is still some way to go to achieve this.

Teaching is good and supports pupils' good progress. It is much improved since the previous inspection because of good staff training and a strong focus on making sure that learning activities are challenging and well matched to pupils' needs. Inconsistencies in teachers' marking and in ensuring that their questioning probes for understanding limit the quality of teaching and prevent pupil progress being even better.

There is an overwhelming ethos of support and care that pervades the whole school and this enables pupils to flourish in their personal development. They thoroughly enjoy school and learning and this is reflected in their attendance which is well above average. Behaviour is excellent both in lessons and around the school. Because relationships are highly positive and pupils are cared for and supported exceptionally well, their social and moral skills are highly developed. By the time that they leave the school, pupils are mature and thoughtful young people who have high self-esteem and genuinely care for each other. They make an excellent contribution to the school and the local community. Their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is the result of excellent care and the careful fostering of the

school's Christian ethos linked to the many opportunities to celebrate the diverse ethnic groups present in the school. It is also evident in the enthusiastic way they participate in the arts, and the highly positive racial harmony in the school. The deep commitment from all the adults to ensure that all are included in everything that the school has to offer ensures that the best possible support is given to those who have behavioural or emotional difficulties and these pupils thrive as well as their classmates.

Improvements in leadership and management have been the cornerstone of the improvements in provision and outcomes. In the past there has been a significant turnover of staff but this has now settled and the staff work closely as a team; morale is high and a deep commitment to further improvement is evident at all levels. Governors support the school well but, at present, they are over-reliant on the headteacher for information about the school's provision. The recently introduced programme for more systematic monitoring of provision is well founded.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Further raise levels of attainment in English, mathematics and science so that they are regularly above average by:
  - making sure written comments in pupils' books pinpoint areas for improvement
  - ensuring that teachers' questioning consistently probes to elicit pupils' understanding in order to set future tasks.
- Ensure that governors' understanding of the school's provision is strengthened by implementing the planned programme of visits to the school.

### **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

<b>2</b>
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Throughout the school, pupils thoroughly enjoy lessons and they benefit from a wide range of opportunities for them to learn collaboratively and individually. During the inspection, pupils were seen making good progress and achieving well in almost all lessons. For example, in mathematics, Year 5 pupils relished the challenge when identifying the features of a wide range of two-dimensional shapes. Here pupils enjoyed discussing methods for solving problems and they checked each other's answers to see if they were using the correct vocabulary.

Attainment at the end of Year 2 shows an upward trend because of consistently good teaching. In the past there has been some underachievement in Years 3 and 4, particularly in mathematics. This is not the case now due to some vibrant teaching and improved assessment procedures which have lifted the degree of challenge. Attainment is set to be raised and the consistently average standards attained in English at the end of Year 6 for the past three years are improving. The progress of higher-ability pupils was limited at the previous inspection. Good improvement projects centering on specific activities for these pupils and the move to having single-age teaching in Years 3 to 6 now enable these pupils achieve well. The progress of all groups is now good. Pupils who speak English as an additional

language benefit from very good support both in class and also from specialist staff. This enables these pupils to progress well in English, mathematics and science.

Pupils say that they feel very safe in school. They contribute exceptionally well to the life of the school and the local community through a range of activities such as supporting charities and the recently introduced 'community afternoon' in which pupils become involved in community activities. The very influential school council is developing a children's rights charter on behalf of all the schools in the local cluster.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Pupils' enjoyment of learning is evident from the myriad of positive comments made in response to the questionnaires they completed. One pupil wrote, 'We learn lots at our school because our teachers give us courage to try.' Lessons are characterised by a calm and purposeful atmosphere in which positive relationships provide the bedrock for the strong sense of purpose in all classes. The recent move towards having single-age teaching across the three junior classes has helped to boost progress because teachers plan work that is well matched to pupils' needs. Assessment information is used well to ensure that future work is challenging and also to ensure that pupils know their learning targets. While books are regularly marked and contain encouraging comments, there is inconsistent emphasis given to providing written points for improvement. The work of the support staff is of high quality both for those that work with groups of pupils and also those that provide dedicated support for the pupils who have a statement of special educational needs. There are cases where the skill of these staff has enabled pupils to remain in mainstream education.

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

The curriculum has improved since the previous inspection. There is now a much stronger focus on providing for gifted and talented pupils with dedicated sessions as part of the school day as well as during lunchtimes and after school. Work is made relevant and interesting by a new emphasis on topics that interest the pupils, for example the Africa focus, while special days and topics on the Greeks allow for sampling of food and drama work. However, the school recognises that there is more to be done to ensure that all planning meets that of the best. There is a strong emphasis on the promotion of the arts which is recognised in the ArtsMark Gold award. This is particularly evident in enrichment activities. There is a large range of clubs and activities, and almost a third of the pupils learn to play instruments.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The ambition and drive of the headteacher and her high aspirations for the pupils, shared by all the staff, are pivotal to the school's success. There is close monitoring of the school's provision and pupils' progress by all teachers and the information gained is used well to set future priorities. There is a deep commitment to the continuing professional development of staff and this is recognised in the school gaining the Investors in People award. Every effort is made to ensure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed. Great care is taken to ensure that pupils are protected and their health and safety assured. All regulations for safeguarding pupils are met in full. The impact of the school's good work on community cohesion is felt positively in the school which runs as a harmonious and respectful community and respects different faiths and customs. Global links have been aided by the link with an orphanage in Southern India which has led to pupils exchanging letters and photographs.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and</b>	<b>2</b>

<b>tackles discrimination</b>	
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

A recent upturn in the level of skills and abilities of children entering the Reception class means that they are now similar to those typically found. Because provision is of good quality and there are careful induction arrangements, children thrive in their learning and quickly become confident and secure. Good progress is made in all areas of learning and children are now on course to attain the expected goals. A small minority already meet them, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. The curriculum is carefully tailored to meet the children’s needs. It has improved considerably since the last inspection under the good leadership of the new leader. The curriculum now centres well on learning through play. A good balance is provided between activities directed by the adults and those that the children choose for themselves. Particularly good use is made of the outdoor learning space. Although very compact, all areas of learning are planned for and children delight in the wide range of activities provided. The whole area is very well resourced and children enjoy the exciting and varied activities on offer.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority are happy with their children’s experiences at the school. In particular, they are unanimous in saying that their children enjoy school, that teaching is good and the school is well led and managed. A small number express some concerns about their children’s progress and also that the school does not take sufficient account of parents’ suggestions or concerns. The inspectors found that while progress has been satisfactory in the past, it is now good throughout the school. The school’s procedures for taking account of suggestions and concerns were investigated and it was found that these are at least as good as in most other schools and, in some respects, particularly relating to the surveying of parents by questionnaires, rather stronger.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at New Christ Church Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 90 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 162 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	66	73	24	27	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	62	69	27	30	0	0	1	1
The school informs me about my child’s progress	48	53	37	41	3	3	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	47	52	36	40	6	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	48	53	40	44	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	47	52	40	44	2	2	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	43	48	44	49	1	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	34	38	44	49	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	44	49	42	47	4	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	43	48	44	49	0	0	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	40	44	40	44	7	8	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	56	62	31	34	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	55	61	33	37	1	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## 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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.

**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.**

8 March 2010



Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of New Christ Church C of E Primary School, Reading RG2 0AY**

We really enjoyed meeting you and listening to what you had to say about your school. We enjoyed listening to all your positive comments about your school. We were all really impressed by the way in which you were so calm and well behaved when the fire alarm went off and with your singing practice on the school field!

Yours is a good school and this letter is to tell you what we found when we visited.

- We can understand why both you and your parents and carers told us that you really enjoy school and learning, because all the adults look after you exceptionally well and make sure that you are happy and safe and enjoy your time at school. Your attendance is excellent!
- Your headteacher is doing an excellent job and, together with the staff, she makes sure that your school runs smoothly and well.
- You work hard, behave outstandingly well, and your teachers make sure that you make good progress by making lessons interesting. Teachers also give you a good range of things to learn and do.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and a good understanding of what you need to do to be healthy.

Even in a good school like yours, there are things which could be improved. We have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to do two things. First, we have asked them to make sure that they let you know how close you are to meeting your targets when they mark your work and also for them to question you so that it really makes you think and explain what you know. This is to help you to attain above average standards in English, mathematics and science. Second, we have asked your governors to visit you in school more often so that they can find out for themselves how well you are doing.

Yours sincerely

Keith Sadler  
Lead Inspector

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