

Christ Church CE First School

Feltham Lane, Frome, Somerset, BA11 5AJ

Inspection dates 2–3 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Over the last year, pupils have made rapid progress and as a result their attainment is rising. By the time they leave the school in Year 4 many are reaching levels above those expected for their age.
- Teaching and learning are good across the school and some teaching is outstanding. Teachers plan interesting lessons that engage and motivate pupils.
- Reading is taught well so that most pupils make strong progress. Any pupils who fall behind are helped to catch up quickly.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning and enjoy lessons. They behave well and feel safe because the school provides a secure learning environment.
- The curriculum is organised well so that pupils who need extra help with their learning receive exceptionally good support.
- Senior leaders and governors have taken firm steps to address the weaknesses in teaching. The strong focus on pupils' achievement has helped to raise expectations and improve rates of progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are a few lessons where teachers do not extend some pupils' thinking to the full.
- Targets and timescales in improvement plans are not precise enough to make it easy for leaders and managers to judge how successful they have been.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed eighteen lessons, of which two were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, the team made a number of other short visits to lessons. Inspectors heard pupils read, talked to them in lessons and evaluated samples of their work.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, the school's evaluation partner, and the school's staff including senior and middle leaders.
- Inspectors took account of the 17 responses to the on-line questionnaire Parent View as well as consulting informally with parents and carers before and after school.
- They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents including the school's own data on pupils' attainment and progress, planning and monitoring information, as well as records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Sandra Woodman, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

George Long

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Christ Church CE First School is of average size and the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is above average.
- The majority of pupils are White British and come from the local area. A significant proportion of pupils are of Gypsy and Roma heritage.
- The proportions of pupils supported through school action, school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs are well above the national average.
- A children's centre, managed by the headteacher, shares the school site. The centre and the nursery class, which is based there, were not included in this inspection.
- The school is a member of the Frome Community Learning Partnership.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - tailoring activities to become even more precise in extending the thinking of some pupils
 - improving the use of assessment throughout lessons so that tasks can be adjusted and reshaped in order to maximise pupils' learning.
- Improve strategic planning by:
 - making targets for improvement sharper so that leaders and managers can monitor and judge the success of the plans more easily
 - including timescales and milestones for success so that plans can be tracked more effectively throughout the year.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Attainment levels have been low, but they are rising quickly and are coming closer in line with the national averages at the end of Key Stage 1. By the time pupils leave the school in Year 4 many are attaining above the expected levels for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Since the previous inspection the unevenness in rates of progress has been addressed and a consistent rise in attainment is apparent in all year groups. Children start school with lower than expected rates of development in key areas of their learning but especially language and communication. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly in their knowledge of letters and sounds. They respond well to the array of exciting learning opportunities presented to them to explore and find things out for themselves.
- Over the last year rates of progress have accelerated in all subjects and this is consistent across the school. Most groups of pupils are making better than the expected progress, including those of Gypsy and Roma heritage. This is due to the way teachers are tracking progress robustly so that they can move pupils on more quickly. Well-targeted support, funded through pupil premium, ensures pupils known to be eligible for free school meals progress as well as their peers.
- The large majority of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are making at least the expected progress from their starting points and most make better than this, especially in reading and mathematics. This is because their learning is tracked very precisely and activities are tailored specifically to help them learn, no matter how complex their learning needs.
- Learning in lessons is good and pupils are attentive and motivated. They engage readily and persevere with their tasks particularly when they are learning in an active way, using computers or working towards their individual 'sticky' targets. However, occasionally they are limited in how far they can develop their learning as some tasks do not provide enough opportunities to extend and deepen pupils' thinking.
- Levels of attainment in reading are improving and the very large majority of Year 1 pupils passed the screening check for letters and sounds. Children get off to a good start with their reading because the school involves parents and carers very closely in the learning partnership. Over the last year the investment in high-quality books and resources has developed a greater love of reading, but the school acknowledges there is more to do to expand the breadth of pupils' reading.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good across all subjects and there is a small proportion that is outstanding. Teaching has improved over the last year due to the more robust monitoring of teaching standards and this has ensured that rates of progress have accelerated across the school.
- In most lessons teachers plan carefully to target pupils of all abilities and match the learning activities well, although sometimes they are not sufficiently precise in the way they do this. They have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and these are communicated to pupils through their group and individual targets. Teachers give pupils clear criteria to be successful so that both teachers and pupils can keep checking on how well they are doing.
- In the best lessons teachers use imaginative ways of engaging pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding. For example, in one good reading lesson, pupils had to make up their own ways of remembering the spellings of words with the same sound which involved them researching meanings using a thesaurus and then devising their own rhymes and actions.
- Reading, writing, communication and mathematics skills are taught effectively, but there are not yet enough opportunities for pupils to apply all of these skills in other subjects.
- Teachers respond thoughtfully to pupils and give them good feedback about their learning,

identifying what is going well and how to improve their work. Generally, marking in books is helpful and teachers regularly provide time for pupils to make any improvements. Occasionally, teachers miss the opportunity to extend the learning further in lessons, especially when pupils complete their tasks easily.

- Until the last year teachers did not always use the information from assessments sharply enough to ensure that there were high expectations of what pupils could achieve. Now, as rates of progress accelerate, teachers systematically raise pupils' targets and this is helping to improve levels of attainment.
- The teaching of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good, often providing specialised activities to help the neediest. Consequently some parents from outside the local catchment area choose this school for their children if they have such needs. Pupils who fall behind and need extra help with their reading are taught very effectively so that they catch up quickly.
- The school has an extensive range of high-quality resources that teachers use to good effect in lessons, such as information technology. Overall, teaching assistants give good support, often leading specific learning activities to help targeted pupils catch up with their reading, writing and mathematics.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils say that they are proud of their school and enjoy learning because the school supports them well. Parents and carers endorse these views. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school despite the noise and constraints on space with the extensive building work taking place on the school site.
- Relationships are very positive and this leads to a harmonious atmosphere. Adults demonstrate how to be kind and respectful so that pupils care for each other and work well together, whatever their cultural background or special needs.
- Pupils report that they feel safe in school; they feel free from bullying, but if individuals do fall out then they have confidence that the adults will sort it out promptly and effectively. They say that any concerns they have are heard and the school responds well. They know about keeping themselves safe in other ways, for example, they know about internet safety through the training they receive in lessons.
- Behaviour is managed very skilfully by staff so that there is seldom any disruption in lessons. There are clear and consistent systems in place to promote good behaviour and address any lapses. Effective support plans are in place for pupils who find behaving well more difficult and these are helping to reduce incidents and so exclusion rates are low.
- Attendance was in line with the national average last year and shows further improvement this year, with persistent absence below the norm due to a rigorous monitoring system. The school works closely with external agencies to support families where attendance is a concern and, as a consequence, absence rates are reducing.
- There are opportunities for pupils to contribute to the life of the school by being councillors and monitors, but these chances are limited, and the school does not always do enough to develop pupils' confidence and development as responsible members of the school community.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and her staff share the same high ambition and determination to provide pupils with the best possible learning experiences so that they reach their full potential. The school's mantra that pupils should strive 'to be the best that they can be' permeates all its work.
- Good support that the school has commissioned over the last year has helped senior leaders gain an accurate view of the school's performance. The regular meetings with teachers to talk

about pupils' achievement and plan support where needed, have helped to accelerate progress and ensure accountability.

- The monitoring of teaching has become more robust over the last year, with focused lesson observations clearly linked to professional standards. The effective management of teachers' performance has eliminated the weaknesses in the teaching. This demonstrates the good capacity of leaders and managers to sustain improvement.
 - Effective changes to the way reading is taught across the school, including involving parents and carers more fully and the improved range of reading materials to engage the interest of boys, are leading to better attainment.
 - The ever-evolving curriculum themes are designed to provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils to develop their basic skills, especially in language and communication. The curriculum is particularly effective in supporting the needs of pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs so that they do well. However, leaders are aware that they are not yet extending sufficient opportunities for all pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills across other subjects.
 - Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted through a variety of experiences which enable pupils to be curious about themselves and the world where they live. Events, such as the recent visit of an Olympic medallist to raise aspirations and the residential visit for Year 4 which includes a range of adventurous activities, help to broaden pupils' horizons.
 - Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and feel well informed about events as well as their children's progress. They appreciate the way the school involves them in their children's learning through the planning of curriculum topics and by giving them information about how they can help with their children's reading.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - the governing body is well organised and knows the school well because of the good quality of the information received from the headteacher. Increasingly, members are finding out for themselves about the progress of development plans by visiting the school and meeting with senior and middle leaders. However, due to the lack of sharpness in planning targets, it is not easy for them to judge how successfully the school is making progress towards its targets or if change is happening quickly enough
 - the governing body has received effective training from their local authority in carrying out its role. There is a good grasp of financial management, including the pupil premium funding and robust monitoring of pupils' progress against attainment targets to judge the value for money
 - the governing body is rigorous in ensuring that pupils are safe in school and all statutory requirements for safeguarding are met.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	123757
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	402196

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

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	182
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Greg Wright
Headteacher	Sarah Bullmore
Date of previous school inspection	15–16 March 2010
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Fax number	01373 463781
Email address	sebullmore@educ.somerset.gov.uk

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