

Christ Church CofE First School

Feltham Lane, Frome, Somerset BA11 5AJ

Inspection dates

13–14 June 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Over time, there has been instability in staffing resulting in a lack of impetus to school improvement. Leaders' recent efforts to improve the quality of teaching have not yet had sufficient impact.
- Teaching is not consistently good enough to hasten pupils' progress, particularly in mathematics. Pupils who joined school with a low starting point are not catching up quickly.
- The work set for pupils is, on occasions, too easy or too hard. Teachers do not check quickly enough whether pupils know what to do or whether they have finished tasks early.
- Teachers do not expect pupils' presentation of their work to be of a high enough quality. This limits pupils' personal development.
- Teachers are not developing pupils' skills of scientific enquiry systematically.
- Leaders do not target additional funding for disadvantaged pupils precisely enough for those with a low starting point to catch up.
- Leaders do not follow up checks on the quality of teaching sharply enough to ensure that improvements happen quickly.
- Leaders' evaluations of assessment information do not clearly pinpoint which strategies are leading to improvements.
- Governors' checks on the school's work are not systematic enough for governors to have an accurate picture of the school's effectiveness.
- In the early years, teachers do not develop children's language skills quickly enough.
- A lack of continuity between the Nursery and Reception classes limits the progress children make over their time in the early years.

The school has the following strengths

- The school's commitment to keeping pupils safe is exceptional. The headteacher leads by example and all staff are highly vigilant.
- Attainment is rising as school improvement strategies are beginning to have an impact.
- Most-able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make good progress.
- Pupils' behaviour has improved and is now good. The school is orderly and pupils are polite and friendly.
- The teaching of writing is good in key stages 1 and 2. Pupils are making stronger progress and are catching up to reach the standards expected.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils who have not made good progress in the past catch up more quickly, by:
 - teachers planning tasks that are closely matched to pupils' next steps in learning and offer a greater level of challenge
 - teachers identifying more quickly when pupils are struggling or are ready to move on
 - strengthening the teaching in mathematics and providing teachers with training and support to help pupils to develop their mathematical thinking
 - teachers developing pupils' skills of scientific enquiry.
- Improve leadership and management through:
 - ensuring that strategic decisions are based more precisely on the evaluation of the impact of provision on pupils' progress, particularly in respect of how additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used
 - sharpening the monitoring of teaching so that identified areas for improvement are remedied more quickly
 - governors securing a stronger strategic oversight of the school's effectiveness.
- Improve pupils' personal development by:
 - ensuring that teachers set high expectations of pupils' presentation of their work
 - strengthening pupils' ability to think about, discuss and improve their work.
- Improve the early years provision so that children make faster progress, by ensuring that:
 - there is continuity and progression in skills, routines and expectations across the Nursery and Reception classes and all staff have high expectations of what children can achieve
 - teachers more precisely identify children's next steps, particularly in language development, and plan activities which actively promote children's speaking skills
 - all staff model clear and accurate spoken and written language, including when teaching phonics.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have not secured consistently good teaching and, consequently, pupils' progress is not yet good. Leaders have redefined expectations of teachers through a new teaching and learning policy, but this is not fully followed. In part, the difficulty in embedding the new policy has come about from instability in the teaching workforce over a number of years.
- Since taking up his post in September 2015, the headteacher has taken a rigorous approach to developing teaching through improved staff training and performance management. Leaders have tackled weak teaching robustly. They make frequent checks on teaching, but, when necessary improvements have been identified, they are not followed up quickly enough to ensure that changes are made.
- The additional funding for disadvantaged pupils through the pupil premium has not been used effectively. It is not sufficiently focused on the large number of disadvantaged pupils who need to catch up when they are in the early years or key stage 1. Consequently, the drive to raise attainment for younger pupils has been slower. Although leaders have gathered information about the progress of disadvantaged pupils, the level of evaluation has not resulted in actions to improve disadvantaged pupils' progress.
- Leaders collect, discuss and collate a large amount of assessment information. They do not, however, analyse it sufficiently well to pinpoint which strategies are having the best effect.
- Aspects of the mathematics and science curriculum are not effective yet and so pupils are not acquiring the full range of skills they need to make progress. The new curriculum for writing is, however, very effective and leads to pupils making stronger progress across key stages 1 and 2. Curriculum maps for each of the mixed-age classes have been conscientiously planned to ensure breadth of content. The school enhances the curriculum particularly well with outdoor education on the school site.
- Leaders are now driving school improvement more effectively and the impact can be seen in pupils' improved attainment this year. The school development plan is fit for purpose and leaders have accurately identified the key priorities for improvement. Leaders check the progress of the plan against detailed milestones and so have a clearer picture of the school's effectiveness. They recognise that, although improving, outcomes and the effectiveness of the early years provision are not good enough yet.
- The headteacher correctly identified improving pupils' behaviour, the systems for safeguarding and site security as his key priorities when he took up post. These aspects of the school are now significantly stronger. The leaders have made the development of teachers' assessment skills a priority and this has also been effective.
- The school has a large senior leadership team that shares responsibility for the school's key priorities. Senior leaders work effectively with the headteacher and share his drive for improvement. They have taken a lead role in recent improvements, particularly in improving teachers' skills of assessment and in developing the teaching of phonics and writing.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and is enhanced by the strong Christian tradition of the school. The school's values, closely linked to traditional British values, underpin the new behaviour policy. When asked by an inspector, pupils described cultural differences as 'about diversity', and all pupils who replied to the pupils' online questionnaire agreed that they are well taught about respect.
- The school has set targets for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils' achievement. The improved attendance and improving achievement of this group of pupils is evidence of the school's effective commitment to equality.
- The school's work to engage parents is good and celebrates the heritage of the different communities whose children attend the school. Recently, the school has appointed a Traveller education worker to develop links with the Gypsy, Roma, Traveller parents. A high number of parents take advantage of the free breakfast club, which gives their children a good start to the day.
- The additional funding to support pupils' engagement in sport is planned and used well. Funding is particularly well used to support pupils' play at lunchtime. Through this grant, pupils have increased opportunities to take part in local festivals of sport and competitive activities.
- Special educational needs funding is used appropriately. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive additional support and intervention programmes matched to their needs.
- The local authority has recently increased the frequency of support it is giving to school leaders. However, its support has not yet resulted in improvement.

Governance of the school

- Governors have high aspirations for pupils' progress and share the headteacher's drive to improve the quality of teaching. The clear reports from the headteacher have strengthened governors' understanding of priorities for improvement. They now regularly review assessment information and meet with subject leaders. Governors make regular and well-recorded visits to school to check on the progress the school is making, but these are not always focused on the school's priorities. This limits governors' understanding of how well improvements are progressing.
- Governors are ambitious for the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and regularly question and challenge leaders about the progress that disadvantaged pupils are making. The school has a priority for many disadvantaged pupils to make early accelerated progress when they first join the school. The school's use of additional funding is only tenuously linked to this priority. However, the impact of funding can be seen in improvements in the attendance of disadvantaged pupils.
- Governors ensure that they receive the training they need to fulfil their statutory responsibilities, including for safeguarding. They have supported the headteacher well in embedding performance management as a key driver for improvement.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Strong policies and procedures guide its work to keep pupils safe. The main strength lies, however, in the exceptional

commitment of all staff to raising concerns and reporting them promptly. Staff are well trained and astute in noticing small changes in pupils' circumstances which could indicate that a pupil is at risk of harm.

- The school supports an exceptionally high number of pupils who are vulnerable and who need the vigilance of staff to ensure that they stay safe. The headteacher leads this work and has been instrumental in coordinating close working relationships with other services to provide strong support networks for families.
- The school is equally rigorous in following up pupils' absence from school. Leaders ensure that pupils are safe. They challenge parents whose children do not attend well.
- The school carries out pre-employment checks to ensure that adults working with pupils are safe to do so. Visitors are stringently checked when they arrive at the school and issued with clear guidance about working safely within school. Governors and leaders have worked tirelessly to ensure that the site is safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Over time, teaching has not been consistently good. Recent improvements are beginning to have an impact; however, where weaker teaching remains, pupils who have low starting points do not made good progress. Teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of what some pupils can achieve.
- Teachers and teaching assistants do not always challenge pupils to practise work independently or give them time to think through a problem. In small group work, staff are too quick to give pupils the answer or they step in to finish the task for them. Also, staff do not have high enough expectations of pupils' standards of presentation. They do not teach pupils the skills required for them to talk about their work. This has a negative impact on pupils' resilience as learners.
- Teachers now make accurate assessments of what pupils know and can do, but they do not routinely use the information to plan tasks which systematically build pupils' skills. Pupils' workbooks show that tasks are sometimes too easy or have been set at a level which pupils cannot access. In lessons, teachers do not spot this quickly enough to make sure that pupils' time is well used.
- The teaching of mathematics is not helping pupils to make good progress. Pupils lack skill in solving problems because they have insufficient ability to reason and explain their mathematical thinking.
- Pupils enjoy science and finding out about the world. However, pupils do not sufficiently develop skills of scientific enquiry, particularly in key stage 2. Pupils do, however, have frequent opportunities to apply their scientific knowledge in their writing.
- Recent staff training has improved the teaching of phonics, and standards are rising. Younger pupils now use their knowledge of the relationship between sounds and letters to help them in reading and spelling. Rising standards show that reading is increasingly well taught. For many pupils, however, the standard of their spoken language is weak and this limits their skills of comprehension.
- The teaching of writing has improved greatly this year and is now good. Pupils'

workbooks show that now the most able, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have benefited from the stronger curriculum and the more structured approach to teaching. Pupils are given good guidance on how to be successful in their work. They are given time to review and improve their writing to ensure that they have done their best. For example, pupils' writing on Beowulf in key stage 2 and the writing about dragons in key stage 1 showed that pupils are now adding interest to their writing with good use of vocabulary and an increasingly wide range of sentence styles.

- The higher expectations for writing within the curriculum are supporting pupils' ability to edit and make improvements to their writing. Pupils are willing learners and when this level of challenge is presented to them they show they can rise to it.
- Teachers regularly discuss with leaders what pupils know and can do. Discussions are now routinely leading to additional help being planned for pupils who need to catch up. Teachers are checking assessments more regularly with teachers from other schools, and this has helped the school to gain a more accurate picture of what pupils need to know at different ages.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development requires improvement. This is because teachers do not routinely encourage pupils to take pride in the presentation of their work. They do not give pupils guidance or help them acquire skills to set out their work consistently well, including in mathematics books. The quality of pupils' presentation varies from book to book and in some cases from day to day.
- Pupils are not sufficiently developing the ability to review the quality of their work. Although they are clearly interested in their learning, they struggle to express an opinion based on the feedback from their teachers or to explain why they think their work is good.
- Social development is good, and pupils are keen to involve themselves in school. They take responsibility seriously and enjoy contributing to the school's act of worship. Pupils were seen responsibly dispensing drinks on the playground. A high proportion of them take part in the many clubs which are on offer after school.
- The school is a very diverse community. Those pupils spoken to and those who replied to the online questionnaire agreed that they are taught to respect people from other backgrounds. They are proud that they help new pupils settle into school.
- Pupils feel safe in school. One pupil said, reflecting the opinions of all spoken to, 'Our teachers make sure we are OK.' Pupils are confident that, while friends may fall out, bullying is very rare and any concerns quickly dealt with.
- Pupils value the guidance they are given about road safety. They are taught how to stay safe online and they know not to share any personal information on the internet.
- Almost all parents agree that their children are safe in school, behaviour is well managed and any bullying is dealt with effectively. A small minority of parents raised

some concerns, but pupils were emphatic that they felt safe.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school is orderly and pupils are polite to adults and visitors.
- Pupils fully understand the current behaviour policy and believe it is fair. They can explain how good behaviour will mean you are 'on the sun'. They are also pleased that classmates who are put 'onto a cloud' have a chance to take responsibility for improving their behaviour.
- In the playground, pupils take part energetically in the games that are set up for them, but also respect the choices of other children who may, for instance, sit and quietly read. In lessons, a few pupils were seen to struggle to maintain attention when the pace of the teaching waned. The vast majority, however, behaved well.
- Historically, the school has dealt with a relatively high number of pupils who have shown challenging behaviour and, in the past, exclusions were frequent. This academic year, however, as a result of leaders' clearer expectations, behaviour is much improved and there have been no exclusions.
- Attendance remains a little below the national average. This year there has been a significant improvement in the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Their attendance is now in line with that of other pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Attainment at the end of the Reception Year, Year 2 and in the phonics check in Year 1 has been too variable and usually below national levels. Although there have been some years when standards have risen, there has not been a trend of improvement over time.
- Teaching, especially in the early years and Year 1, has not been consistently strong enough for pupils to make good progress. Consequently, although pupils have made better progress in Years 2, 3 and 4, they do not, overall, attain as well as they could be expected to do.
- At least half of pupils start school with lower levels of skills and knowledge than is usual for their age and, lacking consistent progress from their starting points, fall further behind. A high proportion of these pupils are disadvantaged. Disadvantaged pupils historically have not made consistently good progress and, consequently, their attainment has been very low.
- Progress across subjects and year groups is variable. Although attainment has risen at the end of Year 2, pupils' workbooks and current assessments from across the school show that pupils are not yet making good progress in mathematics. They are not confident in explaining their thinking and developing their mathematical reasoning skills. Consequently, they are not able to apply their arithmetical skills systematically to solving problems.

- Pupils are developing scientific knowledge and display this in their writing based on science lessons. They do not, however, make sufficiently strong progress in gaining the skills of scientific enquiry.
- Teachers' assessments show that, this year, current pupils have made good progress across key stage 1 and 2 in reading and the percentage of those reading at the expected level for their age has risen. A higher proportion of pupils have attained the expected level in the phonics check. Younger readers are beginning to apply their phonic skills to reading and writing.
- Progress has improved in writing and is now good. This has been brought about through improved staff training and the full implementation of the new curriculum. More pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are now working at a level closer to that expected for their age. Workbooks show that pupils write frequently and at length. They have stronger skills of punctuation and expressive vocabulary.
- Current progress information and pupils' workbooks show that those pupils who start Year 1 having achieved at the expected level in the Reception class make good progress across the school in reading, writing and mathematics. The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are increasingly working at greater depth.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is much higher than the national average. There have been timely improvements to the support they receive in special support programmes and their progress through these is good. Their workbooks show that they continue this progress in their class.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Teaching across both the Nursery and the Reception classes is not consistently strong enough. Historically, this has led to a far lower proportion of children than nationally, including disadvantaged children, reaching a good level of development at the end of Reception. Leaders identify in their self-evaluation that, despite radical restructuring of the early years provision, increased staff training and recent improvements to outcomes, there is still work to do.
- Currently there is a lack of a clear progression in the skills taught across Nursery and Reception. Staff do not have consistent expectations of routines for children's self-help, independence or how the environment is used across the provision. This limits children's achievement, whether they join school in the Nursery at two years old or start in the Reception classes aged four.
- Teachers accurately assess that many children join the early years with weak communication skills. Assessments are not always precise enough, particularly for two-year-olds. As a result, planned activities do not develop children's communication skills well.
- The statutory checks of two-year-olds are carried out and parents are informed of their children's stage of development. The quality of the reports is, however, variable, with some reports not giving parents clear guidance on how they could support their child's language development.
- Not all staff model accurate grammar or the pronunciation of sounds that letters represent. As a result, although children's phonic skills are improving, progress is not

as rapid as it could be.

- This year a higher proportion of children have reached a good level of development. However, children's work shows that they are not secure in their skills of writing letters and numerals accurately. Teachers are not challenging children's errors. This reduces children's ability to tackle the curriculum for writing and mathematics when they join Year 1.
- Children's welfare is given high priority and staff are vigilant in keeping children safe. The key worker system, recently introduced, has supported this by ensuring that staff are particularly vigilant for their assigned group of children. All staff have warm relationships with children. Children's welfare, including that for two-year-olds, is well supported. Staff recognise that two-year-olds still have individual routines and they liaise well with parents to ensure that the children's needs are met.
- Children enjoy their time in both Nursery and the Reception classes. They behave well. They are proud when they have achieved something new. For example, children building a large outdoor castle from bricks were keen to show their teachers how they had done this. Children promptly follow instructions from staff and in this way are keeping themselves safe.
- Parents are very positive about the time children spend in Nursery and in the Reception classes and have great confidence in the care their children receive.

School details

Unique reference number	123757
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10033286

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	2 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	233
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Price
Headteacher	Mr Rupert Kaye
Telephone number	01373 463781
Website	www.christchurchschoolfrome.org.uk
Email address	Sch.152@education.somerset.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	October 2012

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Since the previous inspection, the services which were provided through a children's centre are no longer managed by the school. The Nursery classes are now managed by the governing body. Children usually join the school at either two or three years old in Nursery. Some, however, join later directly into the mixed Reception and Year 1 classes. All classes are organised as mixed-age classes.
- The school is an average-sized primary school and the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is above average.
- The majority of pupils are from a White British background. An increasing proportion are from a Romany or Gypsy background.
- The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is very

much higher than the national average. The number with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is broadly in line with national levels.

- The school operates a breakfast club which is available to pupils on a drop-in basis.
- The school is a member of the Frome Learning Partnership.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in lessons and parts of lessons. Some of these were observed jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors scrutinised the pupils' work during lessons and work produced over time in their books. A small group of pupils from the Reception class, Year 1 and Year 2 were heard to read.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders and governors. The lead inspector also met with a representative of the local authority. An inspector attended the school's act of worship.
- Safeguarding information held by the school, including the single central record, was reviewed with the school business manager and the headteacher. The security of the site was surveyed with the headteacher. Account was taken of current attendance information and the registers for the day were reviewed.
- Inspectors spoke informally to pupils in lessons, during breaks and at lunchtimes. They also spoke to a representative group of pupils to gain their views of the school. Members of the school council took an inspector for a tour of the school.
- Inspectors looked at the latest school performance information, including information about the current progress of pupils in school. Other documentation scrutinised included the school's own self-evaluation. The school development plan was reviewed and discussed with senior leaders.
- On both days of the inspection, inspectors met with parents at the start of the school day. They also took account of the 10 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the two free-text responses from parents. The views of six members of staff and 11 pupils were also gathered through the online questionnaire.

Inspection team

Wendy Marriott, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Paula Marsh	Ofsted Inspector
Maddy Kent	Ofsted Inspector

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