

Christ Church Church of England Primary Academy

Brockman Road, Folkestone, Kent CT20 1DJ

Inspection dates 14–15 October 2015

Overall effectiveness **Good**

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have secured important improvements in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. As a result, teaching is consistently good across all classes and groups.
- Pupils' progress has accelerated over the past three years, and attainment has steadily improved at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The teaching of phonics skills (the sounds that letters make) is well established and effective in the early years and Key Stage 1. This ensures pupils are equipped with the basic literacy skills they need to achieve well in English during Key Stage 2.
- Teachers plan lively, interesting lessons which engage and enthuse pupils.
- Children make rapid progress during the early years. They enjoy playing and learning with their classmates and quickly grow in confidence.
- Pupils get on well with each other and respect adults. They behave well and know that adults will keep them safe in school. Pupils are punctual and attend regularly.
- Leaders use sports premium funding effectively to improve pupils' fitness and enhance their enjoyment of sport.
- The governing body plays a valuable role in the school's leadership. They have a thorough and accurate understanding of the school's work and share leaders' ambitions for its future.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A few teachers lack the confidence to adapt planned mathematics activities during lessons to match pupils' abilities. This means that, occasionally, a few pupils, particularly the most able, complete their work too easily and their progress slows.
- Not all subject leaders are analysing pupils' progress closely enough to enable them to check and improve aspects of teaching in their areas of responsibility.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teachers confidently adapt activities during mathematics lessons, so that all pupils, especially the most able, are given work which makes them think hard and make the best possible progress.
- Make sure that all subject leaders analyse and use information about pupils' progress rigorously to secure further improvements in the quality of teaching.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Christ Church is an inclusive and harmonious community in which all pupils are valued. Leaders and teachers expect everyone to do their best. Staff work positively together to provide a good quality education for pupils.
- Parents recognise improvements in the school since the previous inspection, including in pupils' behaviour. Most parents feel the school is well led and would recommend it to another parent.
- The headteacher and governors have made some astute appointments in the past year. The two recently appointed deputy headteachers, for example, make a strong contribution to the school's leadership. They share the headteacher's ambition for the school and have further strengthened its capacity to improve.
- Leaders have higher expectations of teachers' performance than at the time of the previous inspection and manage the performance of staff well. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved. Leaders frequently check the quality of teaching by visiting lessons, looking at pupils' books and meeting with teachers to discuss pupils' progress. They provide training that helps teachers to develop their practice. Last year, leaders robustly challenged and eradicated a small amount of weak teaching, which was slowing the progress of some of the most-able pupils in Year 6. No weak teaching remains in the school.
- Pupils learn about a range of world religions and speak about different faiths with interest and respect. Themed days, assemblies, traditions and celebrations add to pupils' enjoyment of school and contribute to their understanding of religions and cultures. Teachers regularly give them time to think about their own values and beliefs in the light of their learning.
- British values are promoted well and woven throughout the school's curriculum and its daily activities. For example, the youngest children in the school learn about fair play and are encouraged to take turns when playing games, while older pupils stand for election to the school council. A Year 6 councillor explained how she had made a speech during the school council election campaign and, once elected, had learnt how to represent other pupils' ideas during meetings. Activities such as these develop pupils' appreciation of British values such as tolerance, free speech and democracy.
- The whole school community has worked together over the past year to redesign the curriculum so that it is exciting. Topics are planned with care to ensure pupils study a broad and balanced range of subjects. High-quality books and texts are used to good effect to capture pupils' interest throughout their learning, and successfully promote their excitement about reading. Pupils enjoy the wide range of clubs, which enable them to develop personal interests.
- Leaders have introduced a new mathematics curriculum, which has secured much better consistency and progression in pupils' learning across the school. However, this has taken a little while to get right. For example, occasionally a few teachers are too concerned to adhere to planned lessons instead of making changes when pupils find the tasks too easy. Leaders have rightly identified this aspect as a priority for development.
- Leaders use pupil premium funding well to help disadvantaged pupils with specific difficulties. For example, pupils benefit from short courses to improve literacy and numeracy skills, including individual tuition where appropriate. As a result, this group make good progress across the school. Leaders and governors are determined to close the remaining small gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally.
- Subject leaders play an active role in the school's work. They have a good understanding of their subjects and know which aspects of teaching need to be improved. However, some are more closely involved in checking pupils' progress than others. For example, the English leader rigorously checks information about pupils' learning in phonics, using this to ensure teaching meets pupils' needs. However, this aspect of the subject leaders' role is less well developed in others, such as writing and mathematics.
- The special needs coordinator keeps a close check on how well disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are learning. She regularly observes individual pupils working in classrooms and provides good quality advice for teachers and teaching assistants about how they can best support their pupils.
- Sports premium funding is put to good use to raise the profile of sport. Coaches have worked alongside teachers to improve the quality of physical education teaching substantially. Teachers confidently teach a wider range of sports than previously and pupils make better progress as a result. Increasing numbers of pupils participate in sports clubs.
- Pupils regularly use the school pool so that they become competent swimmers, with individual support for

those who are less confident in the water. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 swim at a larger local pool so that they are able to develop the strength and stamina needed to swim longer distances.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors play a much more effective role in the school than at the time of the previous inspection. They ask challenging questions during governors’ meetings and are fully involved in decisions about developments in the school. The minutes of governors’ meetings show that they are always keen to learn how developments are improving pupils’ achievement. For example, they regularly check that leaders are making good use of funds, including pupil premium, to support learning. Disadvantaged pupils’ achievement is a regular agenda item at governors’ meetings, so they know the difference funds are making to pupils’ progress. Governors routinely check how well the school is performing in relation to other schools nationally.
- Governors know what leaders do to make sure teaching is effective. For example, they were involved in robust discussions with leaders about the impact an element of weaker teaching had on some pupils’ achievement last year and know what was done to rectify this issue.
- Governors have specific responsibilities, which are linked to current school priorities. For example, last year the vice-chair closely monitored the introduction of the revised mathematics curriculum, looking at pupils’ learning in lessons, talking with pupils and staff about their views and working with leaders to make further improvements in mathematics teaching.
- The chair of governors attends meetings with leaders and teachers about pupils’ progress. This ensures she is well informed about pupils’ achievement and about the effectiveness of teaching. In addition, governors regularly consider and discuss information about pupils’ achievement during committee meetings.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff and governors are well qualified and knowledgeable about safeguarding procedures. They work well with parents to ensure pupils are safe. All parents who responded to the online questionnaire consider pupils to be well looked after. The business manager makes sure that recruitment checks are complete and meet statutory requirements. The school site is well maintained and secure. Teachers routinely remind pupils about safety rules during swimming lessons in the school’s pool.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers inspire pupils to do their best and to find out more about the subjects studied. For example, some older pupils commented that their teacher’s enthusiasm, ‘makes us excited about learning’.
- Teachers routinely reflect on their own practice, thinking about aspects that they could improve to help pupils to make even better progress. They work very effectively with teaching assistants so that all are clear about how they can support pupils’ learning.
- Teachers and teaching assistants make sure that all pupils feel confident about reading so that they are willing to have a go at more difficult texts. One younger reader said, ‘If I get stuck I try, and I try, and I keep trying’. Teachers use high-quality texts to successfully ignite pupils’ love of books. For example, pupils in Year 2 speak excitedly about the Roald Dahl stories read to them by their teacher.
- Children in Reception and pupils in Key Stage 1 learn how to use fundamental literacy skills efficiently to help them to read and write successfully. The benefits of these secure foundations in pupils’ learning are reflected in rising achievement in reading and writing at the end of Year 2.
- Daily spelling practice ensures pupils are equipped with fundamental writing skills. Pupils say that they find these practices helpful, while the work in their books indicates the good progress they make.
- Teachers have embraced recent changes to the way subjects are taught, including in the new mathematics curriculum. The work in pupils’ books shows that mathematics teaching builds firmly on pupils’ knowledge and understanding. However, while most teachers set work that challenges and extends pupils’ understanding well, particularly in English lessons, a few are not quite as confident about making similar changes to mathematics activities when pupils find the work too easy.
- Teaching assistants provide skilled support for pupils who find learning more difficult. Adults use practical resources effectively to illustrate learning and help pupils to develop understanding in literacy and mathematics. For example, the younger pupils learn how to use ‘sound mats’ in phonics lessons to read new words successfully.
- Teachers give pupils frequent opportunities to explain and clarify their thinking during lessons so that they have a more secure understanding of learning. They regularly mark pupils’ work and give them

advice about how they can improve. Some Year 6 pupils commented on the valuable help they have received from teachers during their time in school.

- All parents who completed the online questionnaire feel pupils are taught well and make good progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are proud of the way the school welcomes and includes pupils from a wide range of backgrounds, cultures and beliefs.
- Pupils enjoy swimming and participate enthusiastically in many sports, including football, dodgeball, cycling and basketball. This contributes well to their fitness levels and helps them to develop healthy lifestyles.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They trust teachers to keep them safe and say adults act quickly if they have any concerns. They also understand the part they can play in making sure they are secure. For example, they know how to use the internet safely and what to do if anything worries them. Regular swimming lessons ensure pupils learn about water safety and are equipped with fundamental swimming skills.
- Pupils arrive punctually for school and move swiftly between lessons so that no learning time is lost. Attendance has improved and is above the national average. Leaders work well with parents and agencies to ensure pupils attend school regularly.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils of all ages are polite and courteous. They behave respectfully towards all adults and listen carefully during lessons. Pupils are interested in visitors and happy to talk about their school.
- All teachers and adults follow the school's behaviour management policy consistently. This ensures pupils are clear about expectations.
- Parents who spoke with inspectors said that behaviour has improved over the past few years. There are very few concerns about bullying. However, records show that leaders are quick to follow up any issues appropriately.
- Most pupils behave sensibly when moving around the school and during playtimes. Just occasionally, however, the boisterous behaviour of a few pupils detracts from the otherwise pleasant and positive atmosphere of playtimes.
- The well-organised breakfast club gives those pupils who attend a relaxed and happy start to the school day. Pupils enjoy choosing from a range of healthy breakfast options.
- All parents who completed the online questionnaire feel pupils are happy, safe and well behaved.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- There has been a steady trend of improvement at the end of Key Stage 2 over the past three years. In 2014, attainment at the end of Year 6 rose to average levels in reading, writing and mathematics, reflecting the good progress pupils in this group made from their different starting points.
- In the past, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 has been below average. However, improved teaching and higher expectations meant that attainment increased substantially in 2015 in reading, writing and mathematics to levels in line with the 2014 national averages. Higher attainment at the end of Year 2 means pupils currently in Year 3 are better equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to achieve well at the end of Year 6.
- In 2015, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in reading and mathematics was slightly lower than 2014. This was due to a number of factors, including a higher proportion of pupils with complex additional needs. In addition, an unusually large number of pupils joined the school partway through Year 6, some of whom had gaps in their learning.
- Pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to achieve well at the end of the key stage. They made very rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics while in Year 5, and have got off to a good start in their learning this year. The work in their books is of a high quality and builds well on the gains they made last year.

- Most pupils make good progress in mathematics across the school. Pupils develop a firm mathematical understanding so that they can complete calculations competently. For example, younger pupils know that addition is the inverse operation to subtraction and use their knowledge to choose the most efficient method to solve number problems. Meanwhile, pupils in Key Stage 2 develop a confident understanding of the link between fractions and decimals, and are able to explain their thinking clearly when tackling problems.
- In 2015, pupils' attainment in mathematics improved markedly at the end of Year 2, including a considerable increase in the proportion attaining the higher levels (level 3). While attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 dipped a little in mathematics, the work in pupils' books shows that those currently in Year 6 are making good progress.
- While the most-able pupils make good progress overall, some could make even better progress, particularly in mathematics. Improvements in teaching since the previous inspection have secured a steady increase in the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels at the end of Year 6. Similarly, more pupils attained level 3 in mathematics at the end of Year 2 in 2015 than the previous year, taking levels closer to the national average. In reading and writing, however, the number of pupils attaining level 3 were similar in each of the two last years. Better teaching means that the progress made by the most-able pupils is accelerating across the school, although these improvements have not yet transferred fully to end-of-key-stage results.
- Disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to their classmates in school and to their peers nationally. In 2014, the gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and others narrowed in reading, writing and mathematics. Those in Year 6 last year made good progress from their individual starting points.
- Significant improvements in the teaching of phonics skills have secured a dramatic increase in the results of the Year 1 phonics check over the past three years. In 2014, results were in line with the national average, with a further substantial increase in 2015.
- Improvements in pupils' attainment in writing in 2014 at the end of Key Stage 2 were sustained in 2015. Pupils in Year 6 produce powerful and emotive writing. They use a variety of sentence openers and sophisticated punctuation and are keen to get their ideas down on paper during writing lessons.
- Pupils of all ages are excited about books. For example, pupils in Year 2 spoke excitedly about Roald Dahl stories, while an older pupil commented, 'One of the reasons I like Harry Potter books is that on one page you can think one thing and on the next everything changes!' Younger readers confidently use a combination of techniques, including phonics, to help them to read, while those in Year 6 read fluently and with expression.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The school has been particularly successful in making sure that pupils who join Key Stage 1 with gaps in their literacy skills, including pupils for whom English is an additional language, catch up with their classmates. In 2015, for example, a large group of pupils reached expected levels of attainment in the national tests at the end of Year 2 in reading and writing, despite being behind their classmates when they joined the school in Year 1.

Early years provision

is good

- Consistently good leadership and effective teaching ensure children make rapid progress during their first year in school. Children like their teachers and want to do their best. They behave well, listen carefully and try hard. Parents say they are pleased with the way their children have settled into school.
- Teachers have the same high expectations of all children. They make sure that all groups, including disadvantaged children, make rapid progress.
- Most children join Reception with knowledge and skills which are much lower than those typical of their age. By the end of the year they are well prepared for the next stage of their learning. The proportion achieving a good level of development has steadily increased over the past three years to above average levels in 2014, with a further increase in 2015.
- Adults regularly praise and reassure children so that they quickly grow in self-esteem. Sensitive support helps children to concentrate and persevere when tasks are tricky. For example, during the inspection a group of children concentrated very hard to ensure they were holding their pencils correctly while writing. They were very excited when awarded stickers for their hard work.
- Teachers carefully plan activities so that children learn a balanced range of subjects. They use a range of high quality books to promote children's enjoyment of reading and to help them learn how stories work.

- Classrooms are bright, tidy and stimulating. Teachers provide an equally attractive and stimulating range of activities in the outdoor areas as well as in the classroom. This ensures children make the same good progress wherever they are learning.
- Teachers give children regular opportunities to choose activities, skilfully supporting those who are unsure. This helps all children to learn to make confident choices.
- The early years leaders have a thorough and confident understanding of children's needs during Reception. They are effective practitioners who lead their team of colleagues by example and ensure that all adults are well qualified in safeguarding.
- Teachers accurately assess children's needs at the start of Reception and lose no time in developing children's knowledge and skills. Adults focus appropriately on children's personal and social skills when they first join Reception, such as helping them to share toys with others, put their coats on and washing their hands after using the toilet. This helps children to settle quickly and to feel secure. Adults work very well as a team, so that each is well informed about individual children's needs.
- There are a few small differences in the quality of adults' questioning when working with the children. For example, some less experienced adults are not yet as skilful as their colleagues in the use of questions to move children's learning on. Leaders are working alongside additional adults to ensure all use questioning effectively.

School details

Unique reference number	139309
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10005780

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	410
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Maeve Renard
Headteacher	Jim Kreiselmeier
Telephone number	01303 253645
Website	www.christchurchfolkestone.com
Email address	headteacher@christ-church-folkestone.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27–28 June 2013

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is well above that found in most schools. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has two classes in each year group. The school provides full-time early years provision in two reception classes.
- The school manages a breakfast club on site, which was included in this inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 20 lessons or part lessons, including 14 with the headteacher or deputy headteachers.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers, members of staff, parents and pupils. A meeting was also held with a group of governors.
- Inspectors took account of 28 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as 51 staff questionnaires. In addition, they considered the views expressed by parents who spoke with them informally at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and considered a range of documents and policies, including the school's improvement plan, information about pupils' progress, attendance records and safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Inspectors looked at a sample of pupils' work provided by the school, as well as looking at pupils' work in lessons. They listened to pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 reading.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
John Bosley	Ofsted Inspector
Lynda Welham	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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