

Churchtown Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104861
Local Authority	Sefton
Inspection number	336378
Inspection dates	1–2 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Clare Henderson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	876
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr M Nelson
Headteacher	Mr D Walker
Date of previous school inspection	8 June 2007
School address	St Cuthbert's Road Churchtown Southport PR9 7NN
Telephone number	01704 508500
Fax number	01704 508501
Email address	dew@churchtown.org.uk

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	1–2 February 2010
Inspection number	336378

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 32 lessons and three assemblies and observed 28 teachers in their classrooms. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils; over 50% of inspection time was spent looking at learning, including time spent looking at pupils' work. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documents relating to safeguarding, the progress and attainment of pupils, the curriculum, the school's development plan and the way the school evaluates its own performance. The views of parents and carers, through 289 returned inspection questionnaires, and the views of staff and pupils, were evaluated and reviewed.

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

- the attainment, progress and learning of all pupils in English and mathematics and, in particular, those from minority ethnic groups and higher-attaining pupils
- the effectiveness of the creative curriculum in extending pupils' literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills
- pupils' involvement in the assessment of their own learning
- the quality of pupils' cultural development and understanding of life in a multicultural, multiracial world
- the quality of provision and outcomes for children within the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

The school is one of the largest primary schools in the country. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A few are from minority ethnic groups. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of Nursery and Reception classes. There is a breakfast club provision provided on site. The school has gained Healthy Schools, Eco lifetime Flag and Artsmark Gold Awards.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

'I think Churchtown is the most outstanding school there is.' This view expressed by one parent is typical of the views of a vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire. Parents and carers say they are 'amazed that such a large school is able to create the illusion that it is not so big and able to retain a friendly, family atmosphere'. Inspection findings agreed with such views at the school's last inspection and, indeed, the school has since then not only maintained but also extended its outstanding status. The driving force in its success is outstanding leadership, at all levels, which provides clear direction and promotes an extremely strong desire from all staff that each pupil can succeed. As a result, from entering the Early Years Foundation Stage with skill levels ranging from broadly in line to below expected and, for a minority, low for their age, all groups of pupils make outstanding progress. As a result, their attainment in English, mathematics and science is consistently high by the time they leave in Year 6. The excellent track record of improvement since the last inspection effectively illustrates leaders' and governors' ambition and drive. The school is aware of its strengths and areas for development and has shown it takes effective action to tackle these issues. This commitment illustrates very well the outstanding capacity that the school has to improve further.

Pupils love school. They say, 'If I am down in the dumps, school can cheer me up.' Exemplary behaviour and pupils' tangible enjoyment of school, reflected in above average levels of attendance, confirm this view. Outstanding teaching engages pupils and the pace of learning is rapid. Similarly, exemplary care, support and guidance contribute to pupils' outstanding achievement and social and emotional development. The recently introduced highly creative curriculum is enriched with excellent features. These include many opportunities for pupils to extend their communication, research, investigation, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills very effectively across all subjects. It also provides a wide range of interesting after-school clubs which provide many opportunities for pupils to excel in art, sport and music. Pupils are able to think deeply about the experiences of others. The school recognises that opportunities for pupils to learn more about, and meet, children from a wider range of religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds could be developed further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend community cohesion by:
 - providing pupils with further opportunities to engage with pupils from different religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds in Britain and the wider world

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

- monitoring the impact on pupils' attitudes of strategies to extend community cohesion.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

In all lessons, pupils are extremely well motivated to learn and the creative curriculum is already paying dividends in firing pupils with a real enthusiasm and desire for learning. For instance, Year 1 pupils diligently carried out research about the planets as preparation for their forthcoming visit to the planetarium. They enthusiastically shared facts such as, 'Earth has precious water on it,' and 'Venus is the hottest planet.' This information had been found through research they had carried out in school and at home. Role-play areas in Years 1 and 2 enable pupils to reinforce their learning through play and represent excellent transition arrangements as children move from Reception into Year 1. Thought-provoking questions and exciting use of resources and time in lessons ensure that learning is accelerated at a rapid pace.

During Key Stage 1, pupils make outstanding progress overall in reading, writing and mathematics to reach standards which are comfortably above average by the end of Year 2. This high rate of learning continues as pupils become increasingly independent, mature and self-confident and, by the end of Year 6, they consistently reach high standards in English, mathematics and science. Such high-quality learning ensures that pupils are very well prepared when they leave for the next stage in their learning.

Pupils are extremely proud of their school. They willingly take on a wide range of responsibilities. They feel adults listen to them and respond positively to their ideas. For instance, as school councillors, they engage in decision making and are especially proud of their part in improving pupils' toilet facilities. Their involvement within the local and wider communities is outstanding. For instance, close links with the local crown green bowling club and botanical gardens enable pupils to contribute positively to their community. The concern pupils show and the money they raise for those less fortunate than themselves is impressive. For instance, two pupils from Year 5 recently raised £400 on a sponsored 12-mile cycle ride for victims of the Haiti earthquake. Photographs of their fundraising were immediately available on the school website for the whole community to see.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding overall, and frequent circle times and meaningful assemblies accelerate pupils' understanding and reflection on right and wrong actions. Pupils have a clear understanding of the need to lead a healthy lifestyle. This is reflected in the high uptake of the wide range of extra-curricular physical activities on offer. A healthy school week and an innovative 'market place' session in which various agencies promote healthy living are highly effective in developing pupils' understanding of the benefits of staying healthy.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

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

How effective is the provision?

Pupils' excellent skills in evaluating their own work ensure that learning proceeds at a lively pace. From the youngest through to those in Year 6, pupils skilfully assess each other's work giving pointers on how to improve. Pupils are clear about each lesson's purpose and articulate their views with maturity in well thought out inspiring activities. Teachers' ongoing review and assessment of pupils' work ensures that pupils have a clear idea of what needs to be done next in order to maintain improvement. Tasks are matched precisely to pupils' ages, interests and varying abilities and time in lessons is used to best effect to ensure that learning is exciting and interesting. This is particularly strong in outstanding lessons, which formed the majority of those visited during the inspection. Those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are expertly managed by the two learning support leaders who have a talented team of learning support assistants. Similarly, the more able are challenged to extend their skills to the maximum. This ensures that the outstanding progress of all groups is equally impressive.

The school is at the forefront of innovative curriculum design. It has enthusiastically grasped the opportunity to develop a curriculum in which pupils' literacy, numeracy, and ICT skills are linked imaginatively with practical investigations, historical and geographical studies and research in topic-based work, chosen by pupils in each year group. Parents, carers and pupils enthuse about these exciting opportunities given to pupils. As the parent of a Year 3 pupil comments: 'She is enthusiastic and engaged, coming home doing her own research and making PowerPoints. She is certainly being encouraged to take control of her learning and thriving as a result.' Residential visits,

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

learning French, an excellent range of after-school activities and opportunities to excel in music, sport and the arts add purpose to pupils' learning and experiences while extending opportunities for them to show initiative. School life is interwoven closely with that of the local community. An example of this is when the school paid for a sculpture of the Churchtown dragon as part of the arts week. Year 2 pupils composed a poem on friendship which has been engraved on the dragon's tail.

'My child loves to attend and never wants a day off,' is a comment typical of the vast majority of parents and carers who replied to the questionnaire. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are expertly supported and early identification of their needs ensures that necessary support is provided, through a wide range of school-based programmes and/or external specialist support. Provision in the breakfast club is outstanding. The activities presented extend pupils' interests very effectively. Transition arrangements are carefully planned through excellent partnerships formed with pre-school nursery groups, local high schools and networking with local schools.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher leads this large school exceptionally well and meticulous organisation and exemplary teamwork are evident. All staff, including subject leaders, senior managers and administrative personnel, share an enthusiasm and commitment to extending their talents and skills for the benefit of pupils. Close attention is paid to the quality of teaching and learning in order to meet the needs of all pupils. Their progress is checked thoroughly and provision astutely adjusted where needed. An example of this is the determination of staff and governors to introduce a curriculum providing all pupils with equal opportunity to reach their full potential through learning which is rooted in pupils' interests. Links with parents and carers are excellent. The school grasps every opportunity, through frequent information meetings for parents and carers and use of the highly effective website, to gauge and respond to their views. Governance is excellent. It is self-critical and reflective and enables governors to challenge and hold the school to account in equal measure. Exemplary safeguarding procedures which are central to all the school does contribute very effectively to pupils feeling extremely safe and enjoying school immensely. The quality of community cohesion is good. The focus the school gives, through excellent partnerships in the local community, to developing pupils' understanding and tolerance of differences in the local area is outstanding.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

However, pupils' experiences and knowledge of cultural and religious differences at national and global levels are less well developed.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

'My daughter only started school in September and skips in every morning. I think that says it all,' sums up parents' views and epitomises the happiness children experience during their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They start in the Nursery with skills that vary within year groups. These range from skills which are broadly in line with to below the levels expected and, for a minority, low for their age, particularly in their speaking, listening and social skills. All children make excellent progress in the Nursery and Reception classes towards the early learning goals. When they move to Year 1, they are working at or above age-related skills in all the areas of learning. This is because teaching is outstanding and staff pay close attention to providing children with time to investigate, explore, enjoy and talk to each other about what they discover. Links with parents, carers and outside agencies ensure that the social, emotional and learning needs of each individual child are attended to meticulously. Well-planned indoor provision and making the best use of all available outdoor learning areas develops children's speaking, listening and social skills well. Children's personal development is excellent and behaviour is outstanding. Learning in all areas is well planned and has imaginative play and children's interests at its heart. For instance, in Reception children learn about pirates 'in days of old'. This topic involves all areas of learning as the children, with great delight, design a pirate ship in each classroom.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. Ongoing observations of children at play are collected by all adults. These are highly reflective and informative and used effectively to plan children's next steps in learning. The welfare and progress of children are carefully monitored and all aspects of safeguarding are in place.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of the parents and carers who replied to the questionnaire are very content with the quality of education and care provided. Comments include: Churchtown has prepared my son for his transition to secondary school; he is a happy confident boy with a thirst for knowledge. The school have encouraged his strengths and given him the confidence to strive to achieve his potential.' The inspectors found no reason to disagree with these views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Churchtown 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 289 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 876 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	206	71	75	26	4	1	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	207	72	75	26	4	1	1	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	139	48	136	47	10	3	1	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	151	52	123	43	9	3	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	174	60	109	38	2	1	1	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	163	56	113	39	7	2	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	159	55	114	39	3	1	4	1
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)	141	49	122	42	4	1	1	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	139	48	128	44	10	3	1	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	134	46	122	42	18	6	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	126	44	137	47	14	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	188	65	89	31	4	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	199	69	80	28	6	2	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 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"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



3 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Churchtown Primary School, Southport, PR9 7NN

We really enjoyed inspecting your school and we were extremely impressed by how each one of you is eager to do as well as you can. We thoroughly enjoyed talking to some of you and seeing how much you enjoy your lessons, playtime and lunchtime with your friends. I particularly enjoyed – and as I told you, it really made my day a happy one – hearing the Year 2 children sing the Churchtown Rap' and exclaim in song how in your school you want 'each day to be filled with kindness and love'.

You really live out that message and we judged your school to be outstanding. These are some of the things the school does very well:

You are taught exceedingly well and receive excellent care, support and guidance. You make outstanding progress in lessons and your behaviour is excellent. We were very impressed with your responsible attitude and the way you consider each other's feelings often before your own.

You thoroughly enjoy the many interesting activities arranged for you. Your headteacher and all the school's leaders are determined to continue to improve your school so that you all continue to do as well as you possibly can. We have asked your teachers to do one thing more. That is, to give you more chances to experience different people and religions by extending links beyond your local area.

Your parents and carers are very pleased with your progress in school. You all have an important part to play in continuing to make sure your school remains outstanding. You can help by continuing to work as hard as you possibly can. This will help you continue to achieve well and reach even higher standards.

Thank you for helping us with this inspection. I hope the school will keep building on its strengths.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Clare Henderson

Lead Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.