

Christ the King Catholic and Church of England Primary School

Fir Grove, Macclesfield, Cheshire SK11 7SF

Inspection dates

15–16 May 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders, including governors, have overseen a decline in the school's effectiveness since the previous inspection. Consequently, the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes are inadequate.
- A legacy of weak teaching and a high turnover of teachers has resulted in a notable decline in pupils' outcomes. By the end of Year 6, pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics are well below average.
- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum enables pupils to access different subjects. However, many of these subjects are not taught in sufficient depth to enable pupils to gain subject-specific skills and knowledge.
- The new assessment system does not enable leaders, including governors, to gain accurate and relevant information about pupils' progress.
- The expectations for pupils' behaviour are not consistently applied by all staff. When work is not explained clearly or is lacking in purpose pupils become distracted and inattentive.
- Teachers do not use assessment information well to match work to pupils' abilities. Teachers do not provide enough challenge for the most able and middle-ability pupils.
- Some subject leaders lack the skills required to lead their areas of responsibility effectively.
- Additional funding is not used effectively to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- The quality of provision in the early years is improving, but still does not allow children to make strong progress in their learning

The school has the following strengths

- The quality of teaching is beginning to improve in key stage 1 and lower key stage 2.
- The interim executive group (IEG) provides effective challenge to school leaders.
- Leadership of English and mathematics is strong.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strongly developed.
- Basic reading skills are taught effectively in the early years and key stage 1.
- Attendance is now in line with national averages.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen and improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - the new assessment system is embedded across the school so that leaders, including governors, are able to glean accurate and coherent information about the progress different groups of pupils make
 - subject leaders have the required skills to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes in their respective areas of responsibility
 - the planned curriculum enables pupils to study all subjects in sufficient depth so that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education
 - additional funding is used effectively to enable disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities to make the best possible progress.
- Urgently improve the quality of teaching and learning to rapidly improve outcomes for all pupils by ensuring that teachers:
 - use accurate assessment information to plan learning activities that meet pupils' needs
 - provide the most able and middle-ability pupils with sufficient challenge so a greater proportion reach the higher standards at key stage 2
 - enable pupils to develop subject-specific knowledge, understanding and skills in a range of subjects
 - have consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour, explain work clearly and plan learning activities that interest and engage pupils.
- Improve the quality of early years by ensuring that:
 - planned independent activities for children provide appropriate challenge to deepen children's learning, particularly in reading, writing and number
 - planned activities enable children to make more rapid progress in their learning so that they are ready to face the challenges of Year 1.

An external review of pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how effectively the additional funding is being spent to improve outcomes for pupils who are disadvantaged.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The standard of education has declined since the previous inspection. The school has not met the learning needs of pupils, nor are all pupils' needs being met currently. This means that there are significant gaps in pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills, particularly in upper key stage 2.
- Leaders and governors have experienced difficulty in recruiting staff. This has resulted in staff changes and inconsistent teaching. Despite this, leaders, some of whom are new, are demonstrating capacity to improve outcomes for pupils, especially through their work in lower key stage 2 and key stage 1. The tide is turning.
- Leaders and governors acknowledge that the school's new assessment system is not embedded across the school. Leaders are developing their skills in order to extract the detailed information that they need to track effectively the progress of groups of pupils from their starting points.
- The curriculum is planned adequately so that pupils are able to experience a wide range of subjects. However, leaders of subjects such as history, geography, design and technology and computing do not give teachers clear guidance about what pupils typically should know and be able to do by the end of each year in each of these subjects. Consequently, there is no clear progression in pupils' key knowledge, skills and understanding. The monitoring arrangements for these subjects are at an early stage of development. Currently, these subjects are not taught in sufficient depth.
- Leaders of English and mathematics lead their subjects well. As a result of their decisive actions, pupils' progress in mathematics and English is improving in some classes, particularly in key stage 1 and lower key stage 2. For example, they have delivered training to develop teachers' skills in teaching writing and mathematics. They have also purchased additional resources to enhance the quality of pupils' learning in these subjects. Teachers now have a clear understanding of what pupils should know and be able to do in English and mathematics at the end of each key stage.
- The inclusion leader is informed about the specific needs of pupils but assessment systems in this area are weak. Consequently, teaching is not fine-tuned to ensure that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make progress from their starting points. The way that funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is spent is not evaluated well enough. This means that leaders do not know if it is having the maximum effect on improving pupils' achievements.
- Leaders do not know if the pupil premium funding is being spent effectively. This is because its use is not routinely evaluated. There is insufficient evidence or clarity about the impact that this funding is having on improving disadvantaged pupils' attainment and progress.
- The additional primary physical education (PE) and sport funding is used well. Subject leaders evaluate its use effectively and can demonstrate how it is increasing pupils' fitness. Leaders' records show increased participation by pupils in a range of sports activities.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. For example, there are many opportunities for pupils to participate in sports and to learn about different cultures and religions. Strong Christian values are promoted well.
- The school engages constructively with the local authority and both the Anglican and Catholic dioceses. The local authority has shared its concerns with leaders about pupils' performance and, along with both dioceses, is providing effective external support. This support has helped leaders and governors to begin to make improvements in the school.
- The school has positive working relationships with parents and carers. Parents are welcomed into school to enjoy lunch with the pupils or to participate in early years activities. Teachers model the teaching of reading skills to parents. A newly formed parent council provides valuable links between the local community and the school.

Governance of the school

- Governors' desire to improve their own effectiveness has resulted in a recent review of governance of the school, including its membership and in the way in which it operates. Following new appointments, governors now bring a range of appropriate professional skills and experience to the school. More recently, the school has benefited from the incisive approach to governance demonstrated by members of the IEG, which meets fortnightly to review the impact of actions taken.
- Governors are playing a significant role in bringing about school improvement and are supporting the headteacher in eradicating weaknesses. Governors are passionate in their wish to see all pupils fulfil their potential. Leaders and governors are working hard to ensure that there is future staff stability so that standards of teaching and learning improve, particularly in upper key stage 2.
- The school's new assessment system does not allow governors to evaluate the pupil premium spend effectively. Governors recognise that they are not clear about the effect that this funding has on improving the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders maintain appropriate policies, which protect pupils and are closely followed. Governors and staff receive training to ensure that they are fully aware of how to raise concerns and how to ensure that pupils are safe in the school.
- Staff are trained regularly in the most up-to-date guidance, including the 'Prevent' duty. Staff are confident in making referrals where they have concerns about pupils. Referrals are dealt with in a timely and appropriate manner.
- The pupils' safeguarding group is a real asset to the school. They make a positive contribution to safeguarding processes by speaking in school assemblies or presenting at local authority safeguarding events.
- The school's positive and caring ethos is tangible. Pupils and staff feel that their social

and emotional well-being is of paramount importance to the leaders of the school.

- Leaders establish good links with parents and provide extra help and advice for those who need it. Leaders maintain ongoing effective communication with families. This means that staff are well placed to deal with any concerns and issues about pupils that may arise. Typically, parents say that 'Christ the King gives pupils a sense of belonging' and that the teachers are extremely supportive.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. Much of the teaching does not meet the needs of the pupils. This is largely because teachers do not pitch work at the right level to meet pupils' learning needs and different abilities. Teachers' planning for learning has not enabled pupils to deepen their knowledge and skills in different subjects. There are too few opportunities for pupils to practise their basic English and mathematical skills across the curriculum.
- Teachers are starting to build productive professional relationships with the newly appointed middle leaders. In some year groups, these relationships are starting to improve teachers' classroom practice and assessment skills.
- Some of the work that teachers give to pupils is too easy. When work is not explained clearly or lacks purpose, the quality of pupils' work suffers and can result in low-level disruptive behaviour.
- Teachers do not focus enough on developing pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills. This hinders the progress that pupils make, particularly in mathematics and science.
- Additional adults are not consistently effective in supporting the individual needs of pupils, especially those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Leaders do not monitor extra support closely enough. It is therefore unclear how effective this provision is in helping pupils to make the best possible progress.
- The teaching of phonics is improving. This supports younger pupils to make stronger progress in reading than in the past. Current information shows that more pupils are on track to reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Teachers now have high expectations of what pupils can achieve in this area. Improved teaching and learning of basic reading skills continues throughout key stage 1.
- There are clear signs that the teaching of reading is much improved. Inspectors' scrutiny of reading diaries shows that there is a clear focus on pupils' next steps and their individual targets. Many pupils now demonstrate confident reading and comprehension skills.
- Pupils value the positive and warm relationships that they have with their teachers.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and development are strong. The school's Christian values are at the heart of the school. A culture of trust and respect is evident throughout the school. Leaders ensure that pupils have an understanding of different religions and cultures.
- Threaded through the timetabled curriculum are frequent opportunities for pupils to practise social skills and show consideration for others. This helps them to acquire greater resilience and control over their emotions.
- It is heartening to see how pupils bond with each other and make firm friendships. In many cases, pupils show empathy because they realise that their friends share their problems and difficulties.
- Devoted, alert and knowledgeable staff help to keep pupils secure. Pupils say that they feel safe at all times, including when working online. They value and appreciate the assemblies and lessons that they receive on how to cope with unfamiliar situations and potential hazards in the community.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' physical and emotional well-being is valued and promoted well. Pupils speak highly of the time that teachers spend every morning making sure that they are ready to learn.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. This is because there is some variation in how well pupils behave in lessons and at other times of the school day.
- When teaching does not engage pupils in their learning, some pupils have difficulty managing their behaviour. This leads to lost opportunities for learning while other pupils wait patiently to get on. For the most part, Christ the King school is a calm and orderly place where pupils show respect for each other and for adults.
- Since September 2017, leaders have begun to keep detailed records of poor behaviour. They analyse these records to identify patterns or trends. Leaders use this information more effectively to minimise incidents of inappropriate behaviour.
- The school has worked hard to eradicate declining rates of attendance, so that attendance figures are in line with the national average. Persistent absenteeism has also fallen dramatically and is now below average.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Since the last inspection, standards of attainment by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics have declined considerably. In both 2016 and 2017, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 2 was in the bottom 10% of schools nationally. These pupils made poor progress from their starting points in all three subjects. The school's own assessment information shows that current pupils, particularly those in upper key stage 2, continue to make poor progress.
- Changes in curriculum and assessment, combined with staff turbulence over the past two years, have contributed to the poor progress that pupils make.
- Published data shows that the attainment of disadvantaged pupils is below that of other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2. The progress made by disadvantaged pupils in reading, writing and mathematics is variable across classes.
- In 2017, standards of attainment in key stage 1 improved in reading. However, attainment in writing and mathematics remained below average.
- Leaders are unclear about the effect of their actions to support the individual needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. This is because, although pupils participate in targeted support programmes, the impact of these is hard to measure using the current assessment system.
- The most able pupils, and middle-ability pupils, are not challenged sufficiently. Teachers do not provide them with regular opportunities to extend and deepen their learning. Consequently, these pupils do not achieve the standards of which they are capable.
- Key stage 2 pupils are not being adequately prepared for the next stage of their education. Weaknesses in their reading, writing and mathematical development, alongside their uneven grasp of skills and knowledge in a range of other subjects, prevent them from making a successful start to their secondary education.
- Current assessment information shows that pupils are starting to make better progress in lower key stage 2, key stage 1 and early years. This is largely due to improved leadership and effective external support.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children in early years are making better progress from their low starting points than in previous years. However, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception is well below that found nationally. In addition, expectations are not high enough to increase the proportion of children reaching and exceeding the early learning goals in writing, reading and mathematics.
- Too many children are not well prepared to begin Year 1. This is because they have not caught up in terms of their skills, knowledge and understanding from their low starting points. Leaders are aware that disadvantaged children do not do as well in

their work as other children and are now providing additional opportunities for this group of children to further develop their skills. As a result, these children are making better progress than in previous years.

- Parents who spoke to inspectors are positive about the way that staff care for their children. They particularly value how leaders communicate with them about the progress that their children are making.
- When children choose their own activities, adults do not routinely guide them effectively to deepen their learning. There are sometimes limited opportunities for children to access activities that enhance their knowledge and skills in writing and number.
- The early years leader's self-evaluation is accurate because it is based on clear evidence and reliable assessment data. She has received external support and the support of leaders in school to focus on key priorities for further improvement. This has resulted in higher aspirations and expectations for current children who are on track to achieve more positively.
- Some focused teaching activities are guided by children's interests. For example, children, dressed in their finery, enjoyed their own version of the recent royal wedding. This led to many opportunities to write or create works of art.
- The improved teaching of phonics is allowing children to make stronger progress in their learning. Children were able to use and apply their skills when reading to inspectors.
- Children's behaviour is good. They respect each other, can take turns and have fun in their learning. Safeguarding practices in the early years are effective. Children are taught to manage risks from an early age. The culture of well-being and social and emotional care that permeates the school is equally apparent in the early years. Staff manage the risks to children effectively and ensure that the statutory welfare requirements are met.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 135820 |
| Local authority | Cheshire East |
| Inspection number | 10042495 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 176 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs Caroline Mottram |
| Headteacher | Mrs Claire Gurden |
| Telephone number | 01625 383272 |
| Website | www.christtheking.cheshire.sch.uk |
| Email address | admin@christtheking.cheshire.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | July 2014 |

Information about this school

- Christ the King an average-sized primary school. There is one class in each year group. There is a privately run nursery linked to the school.
- This school is voluntary aided, jointly operated by the Catholic Diocese of Shrewsbury and the Anglican Diocese of Chester.
- The school has experienced significant staff turnover and a new leadership structure was implemented in September 2017. The substantive headteacher took up post in April 2016.
- Most pupils come from a White British background. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are increasing.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average. Numbers have increased over the past three years.

- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is similar to the national average but rising.
- In 2017, the school did not meet the government's current floor standards.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors either observed teaching and learning or undertook learning walks in every class during the inspection. During this time, inspectors also spoke to pupils and looked at their English, mathematics and wider curriculum books.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, English and mathematics middle leaders and governors to measure the impact of their various leadership roles and responsibilities. Inspectors also met with the subject leaders of history, geography and PE.
- The lead inspector met with a representative from the local authority and two representatives from the Diocese of Chester. She had an additional telephone conversation with a representative from the Diocese of Shrewsbury and a school improvement partner.
- The lead inspector met with the chair and three other governors from the IEB on the second day of the inspection.
- An extensive range of documents was evaluated regarding the school's safeguarding arrangements. These included the child protection policy, the single central record of employment checks, accident and behaviour logs, exclusion records and notes of actions taken to protect children at risk of harm.
- Inspectors considered a range of other documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and school operational plan, published information about pupils' attainment and progress, and the school's records about pupils' current achievement. Additionally, a thorough scrutiny was undertaken of the effectiveness of the assessment system used by teachers to record pupils' progress and attainment. Inspectors looked at a wide range of books, particularly English and mathematics, jointly with two middle leaders.
- The lead inspector scrutinised the school's website and minutes of meetings of the governing body and committee meetings.
- Inspectors took account of the seven responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and considered the four staff responses to the online Ofsted questionnaire.
- Inspectors spoke with parents as they dropped off their children to school on the first and second day of the inspection. Additionally, inspectors observed and spoke to children and pupils at break and lunchtime and as they played in the playground. Inspectors also met formally with groups of pupils to talk about their school experience, heard some pupils read, and observed a school assembly.

Inspection team

Maggie Parker, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Mike Merva

Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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