

Crothorne-with-Charlton CofE First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116800
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	338893
Inspection dates	22 – 23 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Martyn Groucutt

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

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 – 10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	84
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr P Taylor
Headteacher	Mrs S Martin
Date of previous school inspection	21 March 2007
School address	Main Street Crothorne Worcestershire WR10 3NB
Telephone number	01386 860246
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Age group	4 – 10
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector visited four lessons and held meetings with pupils, teachers and governors. He observed the school in action and looked at pupils' work, as well as administrative, policy and other documents. A total of 47 parental questionnaires were analysed.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at the following:

- the learning and progress made by all pupils, with a focus on the more able and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the effectiveness of the school in raising standards in mathematics
- the extent to which pupils appreciate the multicultural, multi-ethnic nature of contemporary British society
- the effectiveness of arrangements for safeguarding.

Information about the school

Cropthorne-with-Charlton CofE First School is a far smaller than average size school. Virtually all pupils are White British in origin and none are at the early stages of English language acquisition. Currently very small numbers claim free school meals and 9% have special educational needs and/or disabilities, which is well below the national average. Children start the Early Years Foundation Stage in Reception. The school has three classes – class one takes pupils from Reception and Year 1, class two from Years 2 and 3, and class three from Years 4 and 5. Pupils transfer to middle school at the end of Year 5. The school is currently applying for the Artsmark. It was one of only fifteen schools chosen nationally to display its pupils' artwork in the National Gallery during summer 2009. The school administration is accredited as meeting the Financial Management Standards in Schools.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school with outstanding features. The inspirational leadership of the headteacher is acknowledged and she is well supported by all the staff and governors. This is therefore an improving school that receives the full support of parents and the community.

- Progress is not uniform throughout the school, but overall pupils make good progress. They enter Reception with standards that are broadly average and attainment is often well above average by the time they leave at the end of Year 5. The processes for supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities through half termly strategy and review meetings do not always challenge these pupils to reach their full potential. This is despite very good general support for this group and for those arriving from non-English speaking backgrounds which enables them to make progress generally in line with their abilities.
- The most able pupils are not always fully challenged because their skills in analysing their own progress or in setting their own targets are not maximised.
- Pupils enjoy school and their behaviour is outstanding, as are the extent to which they feel safe, enjoy healthy lifestyles and participate in a range of artistic and sporting activities.
- Teaching varies in quality – a lot is at least good, but some is closer to satisfactory. Overall, teaching enables pupils to make good progress. It is based on the delivery of an effective curriculum that promotes personal, social and health education as well as basic skills. However, it does not have a sufficient emphasis on improving mathematical thinking skills to help raise standards in this core subject or to strengthen the skills based curriculum overall.
- Parents and pupils alike acknowledge the support given which promotes good care, guidance and support.
- There are successful partnerships with parents, the community and the local authority which combine to provide good quality learning across a wide range of subjects, increasingly delivered in a cross-curricular format. These do not yet fully help pupils to gain a fuller understanding of life in multicultural and multi-ethnic Britain.
- Support staff work very closely with teachers in excellent partnerships.
- With a strong focus on improvement and a secure knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses arising from effective self-evaluation, the school shows strong capacity for sustained improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop mathematical thinking skills throughout the school by:
 - enhancing the use of mathematical vocabulary
 - developing mathematical concepts in cross-curricular work
 - developing pupils' analytical and recording skills.

- Increase the challenge to some pupils by:
 - supporting more able pupils in developing analytical skills for monitoring and assessing their own progress, and in setting next steps
 - using the half-termly strategy meetings to accelerate the progress of identified pupils and ensuring that individual education programmes have clear, measurable and achievable goals.

- Promote community cohesion through:
 - increasing pupils' understanding of multicultural, multi-ethnic Britain through strategies that promote understanding across the curriculum;
 - establishing links with schools from different socio-economic backgrounds.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Behaviour is outstanding and since pupils enjoy school so much their attendance is good. They respond enthusiastically to challenges set by their teachers so that all, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or who arrive with little or no English are able to make progress in line with their abilities. Attainment is therefore above average by the time they leave for middle school at the end of Year 5. However, there are some occasions when the most able pupils and those with a variety of difficulties are not sufficiently challenged. Outcomes for the most able are not fully maximised and so they have not fully developed their skills of thinking and reflection. Pupils who receive additional support, while making progress generally in line with their abilities, are not always given goals that have measurable outcomes, so it is sometimes difficult to quantify the progress they have made. Differentiated work does not fully maximise the level of challenge for the most able because there is scope to further develop their skills in thinking and reflection. This also means that this group is not maximising its potential for self- and peer-assessment and in setting their own targets. The process for monitoring the progress of pupils with individual education plans has not always ensured that teachers are fully aware of progress or involved in developing targets that are aspirational and measurable. As a result, despite the progress that they make, challenge for these pupils is not always maximised..

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Throughout the school, standards in mathematics are lower than for those in reading and writing, particularly in the development of thinking skills in mathematics. This has a detrimental impact on developing skills for later economic well-being. The school has identified this and is setting out to address it through focussed strategies. Interventions in English have led to an improvement in standards and the effective use of computers to support learning has had a very positive impact on supporting achievement. Since the arrival of the current headteacher attainment and the quality of learning have improved in all areas. Because assessment and tracking systems are good the school knows its strengths and areas for improvement in teaching and learning and bases its planning for future improvement on identified needs. This helps to create a good capacity for further improvement, and self-evaluation is very good.

Pupils show an excellent understanding of issues around personal safety and the importance of healthy lifestyles. This is reflected in the very large numbers who take part in sporting activities in school and the local community. Throughout the building positive global images of people and places support excellent spiritual, moral and social development, although cultural development is not so strong. There are outstanding programmes to develop the arts, so that every pupil is learning to play an instrument. The quality of singing is high and high quality art work is displayed throughout the school. Strong values and effective relationships with the local parish and community sustain this, although an understanding of cultural, ethnic and religious diversity in Britain is not so well developed.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
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	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

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How effective is the provision?

Much teaching is at least good and helps pupils to make rapid progress. On occasions it is only satisfactory because it fails to engage pupil's interests and lacks focus in helping maximise their potential. The best teaching is very effective because it is lively, engaging and supports learning through a variety of strategies, including independent learning in pairs or small groups. As a result, pupils want to learn and they make very good progress irrespective of ability. Teachers often use questioning effectively to ascertain levels of understanding and prior knowledge. Since pupils enjoy their work they are able to make good progress.

Assessment information is used well and planning is well informed. Most lessons have clear objectives and anticipated outcomes, so pupils know what is expected of them. However, the most able have few chances for self- or peer-observation and opportunities to involve them in setting their own targets are not taken. Similarly, provision for those needing additional support has not always involved teachers in setting aspirational and measurable targets for review at the half-termly strategy meetings that are called to assess the progress of these pupils.

Teachers and support workers plan together well and make excellent teams based in each classroom. This helps sustain very effective systems for care, guidance and support.

The school is moving towards a more skills based curriculum, while taking great care to ensure that National Curriculum requirements are met. The impact of this is that pupils are able to apply what they have been taught to a variety of situations, rather than teaching being solely around subject content. External partnerships, such as those with learning support professionals, help ensure that all pupils are able to access the curriculum, even when they sometimes have quite high levels of disability.

The informal curriculum is another outstanding element of school life. In addition to a wide range of well attended clubs the pupils say how much they enjoy the regular themed weeks which replace the normal timetable. This gives them chances to learn in a wide variety of ways.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

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Since her arrival two years ago the headteacher has brought a focus on excellence. As a result the whole school has high expectations of success. Working closely with teachers and governors she is focussed on raising standards and current data reflects the success that this is bringing. Good self-evaluation has enabled clear priorities to be identified so the school is well placed to move forward. This, coupled with the good use of resources to focus on improvement, means that the school provides good value for money. Equality of opportunity is good, so that all can develop their potential in this inclusive environment, with the proviso mentioned above that sometimes support, particularly for the most able, might be further refined.

School leadership enjoys full support from parents, carers and the local community, who are involved in a variety of ways. This promotes community cohesion, although more could be done to foster an awareness of the wide diversity in contemporary Britain. Partnerships, such as those with local arts organisations, provide excellent support, creating wider learning opportunities. Safeguarding is a major focus and arrangements, including those for the safe recruitment of staff, are outstanding.

The governing body is well informed and brings a range of professional and other expertise to its role. It supports and challenges the school in a variety of ways, such as through class observations. As a result it is effective, carrying out its statutory duties thoroughly. However, it does need to ensure that policies are reviewed and amended in a timely fashion.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly and enjoy school. On entry their achievement is broadly in line

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with national expectations and remains so when they enter Year 1. Progress over the year is now starting to be tracked more effectively. The teacher and two support workers work together well and so learning opportunities are well coordinated.

There is a balance between adult directed and child chosen activities. Reading and pre-writing skills have traditionally been weaker areas so have provided a focus for improvement. Children are encouraged to speak confidently and to cooperate in play and learning activities, so that social and educational skills are developed.

Welfare is a priority and staff respond sensitively to individual need. Personal development is satisfactory and this is supported by effective partnerships such as that with the Forest School, which also provides an effective link with the pre-school group that a majority of the children attended.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Parents have very positive views of the school. They are particularly pleased with the caring, friendly and welcoming ethos. One said 'The school has a positive approach to inclusion and offers a wide range of after school activities.'

Evidence from the inspection supports parents' views that children enjoy school, that there is excellent care for children's health and safety and the school is very well led and managed.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Crophorne-with-Charlton CofE First 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspector received 47 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 81 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	30	64	16	34	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	37	79	9	19	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	13	28	27	57	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	11	23	29	62	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	16	34	26	55	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	12	26	29	62	1		0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	53	16	34	1	2	0	0
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)	25	53	16	34	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	16	34	25	53	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	32	26	55	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	34	26	55	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	32	68	12	26	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	30	64	15	32	0	0	2	4

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 all 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

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 pupils' 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.



24 September 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cropthorne-with-Charlton CofE First School, Cropthorne,
Worcestershire, WR10 3NB

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. It was lovely to see how well you get on with each other and your teachers. You enjoy school and so you are able to learn well, usually doing the best you can. I think you go to a good school where Mrs Martin and all the staff take very care good care of you, make sure you are safe and help you to be successful.

As well as seeing how hard most of you work I was impressed by your excellent behaviour, the way you help each other, your understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and the enjoyment you get from joining clubs, playing sports or being involved in art and music.

I have congratulated the adults in your school for the hard work they put into helping you be successful. It is clear that by the time you go to middle school you have learned a lot, which will help you to be successful later. I have also asked your teachers to look at a few things that will help your good school become even better. These are:

- supporting you to become better at mathematics by helping you to think and talk about it as part of other lessons that you do
- making sure that work is always challenging you to do your very best if you sometimes find it too easy, or perhaps if you find that you need extra help
- helping you to understand what life is like for some people who live in other towns and cities in Britain that are very different to where you live

I hope that this will help you to do even better in the future and I wish you all very good luck and every success.

Yours sincerely

Martyn Groucutt
Lead Inspector

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