

Cramlington Shanklea Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122194
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	380419
Inspection dates	28–29 February 2012
Lead inspector	Clive Petts

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	401
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gareth Pearson
Headteacher	Helen Brown
Date of previous school inspection	25 June 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Clive Petts

Anne Vernon

Patrick Hargreaves

Additional inspector

Additional inspector

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 23 lessons taught by 17 class teachers and two nursery nurses. They also observed a range of intervention activities for small groups of pupils, observed a pre-school session, talked to different groups of pupils about their learning and scrutinised in detail the work in pupils' books. Inspectors checked pupils' reading across the age range. In addition, inspectors held discussions with pupils, a parent of a newly admitted child, members of the governing body and staff, and spoke to the designated local authority school adviser. The inspectors observed the school's work and examined a range of documentation, including the school's records relating to pupils' progress and achievement, evidence relating to leadership and management, monitoring and evaluation, behavioural records and safeguarding. They also took into account the questionnaires returned by 148 parents and carers, 84 pupils and 60 staff. Inspectors looked at the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), but too few responses were recorded for the lead inspector to access these.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average-sized primary school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage with none at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. A below average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above the national average. An increasing number have a statement of special educational needs. The school meets the current floor standard. The school extends its services in that it provides before- and after-school care. The school has achieved the International School and Anti-Bullying accreditation award. In January 2011, a new headteacher was appointed.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- Shanklea is a satisfactory school which has made exceptional progress in the last 12 months, eradicating a legacy of underachievement. Outstanding features are the drive of the inspirational headteacher and the high quality of pupil care and support. Almost all parents and carers agree. The school is not good because, despite effective action to enable all pupils to reach their potential, a sustained pattern of above-average attainment at the end of Year 6 has yet to be achieved.
- Children enter the Nursery keen to learn and make good progress in their early communication, social and emotional development. Over time, pupils make satisfactory progress across Key Stages 1 and 2 but it is accelerating rapidly because of the wide-ranging improvements in the quality of their learning. The most rapid progress is in writing, closing the gap with reading and mathematics. The current Year 6 pupils are on course to achieve well and to reach at least average attainment in English and mathematics.
- A large majority of teaching observed was good and sometimes outstanding, although over time its impact on pupils' achievement is satisfactory. When progress in lessons is slower, activities are not always well matched to the range of needs and pupils are less clear about how to improve. The school recognises that the lively and inspiring teaching which already exists provides a model to improve the less challenging and engaging practice.
- The warm, nurturing school atmosphere promotes good and sometimes exemplary pupil behaviour. Pupils are considerate and display a good sense of how to recognise risk and stay safe. The overall pattern of above-average attendance reflects pupils' enjoyment of school and the school's excellent links with parents and carers.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has driven school improvement very effectively. Teaching is highly effectively led and managed. The good curriculum provides an interesting range of often memorable experiences. It also encourages the pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The reflective governing body are pro-active in shaping the strategic direction of the school.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure teaching is consistently at least good to boost achievement further and raise attainment by:
 - using and building upon existing imaginative and inspiring practice in school to ensure a high level of challenge, pace and interest in lessons
 - ensuring that all activities are constantly adapted to match the age, ability and needs of pupils to ensure a relentless focus on raising achievement
 - making certain that teachers' written guidance in books provides well-defined steps for improvement
 - continuing to embed the effective teaching of letter and sound relationships in all teaching.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Over time pupils' achievement is satisfactory from their typically average starting points. Currently, it is rising rapidly for pupils of all abilities, especially in Years 1 to 6, as essential improvements in the quality of learning are successfully embedded. For example, reading skills and the enjoyment of reading are promoted extremely effectively. Rigorous systems to measure and check pupils' progress quickly identify where pupils need additional help and support including for those pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Concerted action has improved writing skills, especially of boys, so that there are no significant differences between pupils' performance in writing and that in reading and mathematics. This improvement is firmly underpinned by highly effective teaching of letter and sound relationships to promote skilled and confident early reading and writing. In a Year 6 lesson, excellent use of thought-provoking questions was observed which demanded accurate use of mathematical language. Despite the rapid pace of improvement in all subjects, pupils' progress remains satisfactory, because the higher achievement has yet to be maintained over time and in a few lessons the challenge and pace of learning are sometimes variable. However, in most lessons, pupils learn well and make good progress.

Children's skills on entry into Nursery are broadly those expected for their age, although speech, language and social skills are sometimes underdeveloped. They settle quickly to make good progress, because imaginative approaches encourage pupils to explore, investigate and think for themselves. Clear expectations for classroom routines promote self-control well. The innovative curriculum promotes key skills well as pupils develop their talents and interests. Yet, at times, not all activities are shaped well-enough to meet the needs of all pupils. Increasingly, the richness of their learning is effectively enhanced by the linking of subjects together in imaginative ways, such as when visiting nearby Beamish Museum and acting out the emotional experiences of child evacuees during World War Two. This generates much enjoyment in their learning.

By the end of Year 6 in 2011, attainment in national tests was below average in English and average in mathematics. This represents satisfactory progress overall from pupils' starting points. Current Year 6 pupils are achieving well and attainment is rising with no gaps in

subject attainment. For example, attainment in English has risen to match that in mathematics, because there is now a consistent pattern of challenge and pace in lessons. This good achievement is confirmed by inspection evidence. Pupils' attainment in reading by the age of six and at the end of Year 2 is typically that expected for their age. A coordinated approach to the teaching of sound and letter relationships, making sense of words and taking advantage of reading to discover, visualise and examine is bringing learning to life. In Year 6, much improvement is being made fostering an interest in reading, such as studying Shakespeare to promote the enjoyment of his dramas and comedies. As a result, skills are improving and are in line with those expected for their age. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. This is accelerating quickly as intervention programmes provide close attention and systematic challenge and support. Parents and carers appreciate the quality of support their children are given. Increasingly, they are involved in helping their children to develop, such as regularly listening to their children read.

Quality of teaching

Although the impact of improved teaching on pupils' achievement has yet to be sustained, inspectors found a strong staff commitment to professional development. Effective strategies are firmly in place to foster sustained improvement in the quality of teaching. Consequently, a large majority of teaching observed is good and sometimes outstanding, because teachers set high expectations, make good use of the planned curriculum and encourage pupils of all abilities to achieve their potential. Almost all parents and carers agreed that their children are well taught and this is what inspectors saw in most lessons observed, although the impact of teaching over time is satisfactory. As a result of professional development, the teaching of reading and writing has improved rapidly in the last year and matches the good quality found in the teaching of mathematics. When progress is quickest, effective use of assessment ensures tasks are well matched to pupils' abilities and teachers' questioning is thought-provoking. For example, pupils were seen absorbed working out lines of symmetry, with the teacher demanding accurate use of correct vocabulary to explain their thinking. Highly effective teaching of sound and letter relationships to younger pupils provides good opportunities for pupils to develop good speaking, listening and thinking skills. This enables pupils to continually develop and reinforce these skills in all subjects. When teaching is occasionally satisfactory, the challenge and pace of learning is slower, tasks are not well-enough matched to pupils' needs and interests and too much time is spent on the same task. As a result pupils can sometimes become restless as concentration slips.

When teaching is outstanding, lively approaches engage pupils' appetite to think for themselves, analyse a problem and describe their solutions. No opportunities are missed for pupils to practise their literacy and numeracy skills in meaningful ways. Probing questioning envisages the next steps in pupils' thinking, thereby accelerating their learning. Careful planning for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs ensures that there are no achievement gaps between them and other groups. The more-able pupils relish the opportunities to work independently or in groups when they can challenge each other. The willingness and the skills necessary to work together are strong features of their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are familiar with the levels at which they are working and although marking is helpful, it does not constantly provide clear written pointers for improvement. In the Nursery and Reception children's development is well recorded and assessments accurate.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' good and sometimes exemplary behaviour, especially of older pupils, helps create a positive climate for learning. Nearly all pupils are attentive and respond quickly to changes of activity enabling time to be well-used in lessons. A large majority of parents and carers agree. However, a small minority of parents and carers did express some concern about minor disruption in lessons. When inspectors observed lessons they found that occasionally younger pupils become fidgety when tasks are mundane, but in a large majority of lessons the pupils' whole-hearted attitudes made a strong contribution to their learning. Inspectors spoke to pupils, parents and carers. They reported that the school's approach – to listen to any concerns raised and respond promptly and appropriately – resulted in very few incidents of inappropriate behaviour or bullying in any form. The school's records show this to be the case over time. Pupils demonstrate consideration for others and respect for difference and this underpins their thoughtful attitudes about the diverse cultures in the world around them. Pupils show a good sense of how to stay safe, recognise danger and consider risk. This enables them to feel safe and secure. Pupils thrive on the responsibilities given to them, for example, acting as a playground buddy. The school council takes much pride in their positive contributions to school improvement, such as developing the quality of outdoor play. The school promotes good attendance and punctuality really well. This results in almost all of the older pupils having a pattern of high attendance. The well-organised and managed before- and after-school club makes a positive contribution to pupils' care, support and to their additional learning.

Leadership and management

The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, has rejuvenated the whole school in a short space of time. Staff share her ambitions and are a cohesive team. Her resolute approaches have transformed leadership and management by establishing a strong vision, clear roles and excellent systems for improving the quality of learning. Self-evaluation is accurate. Middle leaders are increasingly effective in the drive to raise attainment and eliminate inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. As a result, the school has improved at a fast pace and across a wide front in the last year.

Sharply focused professional development, making good use of partnership working, such as with local authority specialists, adds to the vigour and speed of improvement. Members of the astutely led governing body are rigorous in their monitoring of the school and in the challenge they provide for the headteacher. They bring much expertise, as well as determination to achieve the school's high aspirations. Equality of opportunity is much improved as gaps in pupils' learning are successfully closed, barriers removed and discrimination tackled effectively. The excellent care and support ensures that pupil and family needs are swiftly addressed. The emerging pattern of rapid progress, rising achievement and attainment demonstrates that the school has a strong capacity to sustain improvements.

The curriculum is good, providing a wide range of interesting experiences. The re-shaping of curriculum by the headteacher following appointment has ensured that all members of the school community have an input into the school's organisation, priorities and development. This had led to a sharper focus on basic skills, especially the teaching of early reading and writing to younger pupils and themed events throughout the year, such as employing a cartoonist during World Book week to inspire pupils' writing, particularly that of boys. Topics

are carefully planned to provide good opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills in new and different contexts. The excellent engagement of parents and carers ensures that they can play a part in school improvement. The increasing range of cultural experiences promotes the pupils' good understanding of the diverse world in which they live. Safeguarding meets requirements with much good practice adopted; for example, child-protection procedures are exemplary.

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



1 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cramlington Shanklea Primary School, Cramlington, NE23 1RQ

We want to thank you all for the warm and friendly welcome that you gave the inspection team when we visited your school to see how well you were learning. We really enjoyed our time talking to you.

Shanklea is a satisfactory and rapidly improving school. We were really impressed with the excellent relationships your school has with your parents and carers. You told us that your staff continually urge and support you to do as well as you can. We were pleased by your good behaviour and the high-quality staff support that you receive. You describe that you feel safe and happy as a result. You also told us of your pride in helping your school, such as your notable contributions to improving the quality of your outdoor play.

The headteacher and the governing body are taking concerted action to ensure that the school continues to improve and this can be seen in your accelerating progress and improved skills, including in your writing. We have asked the school to reduce the variations in the quality of your learning in lessons. We have asked your teachers to provide more activities which interest you and test your thinking and understanding. We would like them to share their best practice to make certain all of your activities are well matched to your needs and interests. We have also asked that your teachers provide you with clear guidance for improvement to extend your skills.

You can all play your part by attending regularly and continuing to work as hard as you can. All the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Clive Petts
Lead inspector

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