

Crookhill Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108366
Local Authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	356347
Inspection dates	12–13 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Linda Buller

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	135
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Brian Kelly
Headteacher	Mrs Kristine McCormack
Date of previous school inspection	28 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed 10 lessons and saw six teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors, staff and partners of the school, including the School Improvement Partner. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work, and a range of documentation was scrutinised, including the analysis of the tracking of pupils' progress, school policies and procedures, school leaders' monitoring records, school improvement planning, risk assessments and other documentation relating to safeguarding pupils. The questionnaires received from pupils, staff and 37 parents and carers were analysed and considered.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The achievement of boys in writing and girls in mathematics to determine whether teaching is consistently good.
- The outcomes for pupils, including for those who are most vulnerable, to determine the impact of curriculum provision and the care, guidance and support provided for pupils.
- The success of the actions taken by leaders and managers, at all levels, including those taken in partnership with others, to determine whether accurate self-evaluation successfully drives improvement.

Information about the school

The school is much smaller than the average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The deputy headteacher has led the school as acting headteacher since the resignation of the substantive headteacher in December 2009. Three newly qualified teachers joined the school in September 2010 following the resignation of three members of the teaching staff. The school is nearing the end of a substantial amount of remodelling as part of the Building Schools for the Future programme of school building improvements. Until August 2010 the school housed and managed a local authority base for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Crookhill Early Years which provides education for children aged three is located on the school site but is managed independently and did not form part of this inspection. The school has a number of awards, including the Anti-bullying award, Healthy Schools status and the Artsmark Gold award.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. Some aspects of the school's work are good. A strong ethos of care leads to pupils' good personal development and well-being. The school is vigilant in tackling discrimination, at identifying risks and in seeking partnerships to provide outstanding support for those pupils and families who are the most vulnerable. The majority of children enter the Reception class with levels of attainment below that which is typical of children of their age. As they move through the school the progress of different groups of pupils is monitored carefully. Careful consideration has been given to improving boys' attainment in writing and improving the confidence of girls to reach higher levels of attainment in mathematics. Actions taken have met with some success and the gap in the attainment of boys and girls is beginning to close.

The curriculum has undergone substantial development in order to expand opportunities for pupils and provide better links between subjects. Regular opportunities for pupils to learn through practical activities have led to an enthusiasm for learning, with pupils describing lessons as being interesting and fun. Pupils are keen to come to school and attendance levels have improved. Information and communication technology skills are developing well and more pupils than previously are reaching higher levels of attainment. However, although teaching is now consistently at least satisfactory there is not enough good teaching. As a result pupils' enjoyable learning experiences are not yet being translated into consistently good progress and, despite good curriculum provision, pupils' achievement remains satisfactory.

The acting headteacher successfully leads a team with a culture of corporate accountability. A rigorous school-wide system to record pupils' achievements has been introduced. This is used well to track pupils' progress overtime and to put in place targeted intervention for those who need to make rapid progress in order to address previous underachievement. Regular monitoring activities take place involving leaders and managers at all levels. However, monitoring is not yet focused sharply enough on the impact which school provision has on the progress which pupils make. As a result, evaluations are at times over generous and opportunities to provide guidance to drive improvement in the quality of teaching are at times missed. Nevertheless, actions taken to eradicate inadequate teaching and to provide targeted support for those who need to recover lost ground demonstrate the school's satisfactory capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards and improve the quality of teaching and learning from satisfactory to good by ensuring that:

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- better use is made of assessment information to ensure that work is consistently matched to all pupils' abilities throughout different parts of lessons
- teachers engage pupils in dialogue and questioning that checks their understanding and provides appropriate challenge
- teachers maintain a good pace in pupils' learning throughout lessons
- teachers are able to recognise when pupils are ready to move on from practical activity to independent writing
- teachers provide pupils with opportunities to write independently, at length, without the use of worksheet prompts.
- Ensure all those with leadership responsibilities, including governors, use monitoring and evaluation effectively to bring about improvement in pupils' achievement by:
 - leaders and managers having a sharp focus on the impact of provision on pupils' progress when monitoring lessons
 - senior leaders using the analysis of pupils' progress more effectively in self-evaluation
 - improving governors' ability to use the analysis of pupils' progress to ask the right questions and provide greater levels of challenge in matters of pupils' progress.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils' achievement, including that of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is satisfactory. Pupils' current attainment indicates that the fall in attainment in English over the past three years has begun to be arrested. Pupils' progress is beginning to improve and higher standards are developing in the current Year 6. In lessons, most pupils show great keenness to do well in their work, they work cooperatively with each other and behave well. Occasionally, in lessons where explanations are not clear or where further challenges are not provided, pupils are content to sit passively and do not proactively seek to improve their learning. The strengths in curriculum provision and the high-quality care provided for pupils ensure that they thoroughly enjoy their time at school. They respond well to the good range of activities available to help them to stay fit and healthy. There is good take up of healthy school meals and pupils enter into opportunities for exercise, for example, 'brain gym' sessions at the start of each day, with enthusiasm.

Pupils are responsible and mature in the way they take responsibility for jobs around the school and in how they share ideas. By Year 6 they are keen ambassadors for the school and good role models for younger pupils. They are rightly proud of their contribution to their school's rebuilding and refurbishment, not least in how they used their knowledge of how to stay safe in contributing to risk assessment and being careful to follow safe practices. Pupils are knowledgeable about different faiths and display high levels of curiosity, appreciation and wonder when learning about cultures and countries which are different to their own.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
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

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers manage pupils well and often provide exciting and varied learning contexts. Teachers' use of modern technology is innovative and plays a significant part in pupils' enjoyment of school. The use of speaking and listening activities as a stimulus to writing is beginning to improve pupils' confidence. However, teachers do not always recognise quickly enough when pupils are ready to put this new-found confidence into practice by writing at length. Planning is detailed and demonstrates teachers' depth of knowledge of pupils' differing levels of ability. The information gained from good assessment procedures is used well by teachers in placing pupils into groups working at similar levels of ability and to provide different activities for each group. Teachers do not always recognise, however, that although different, the activities planned do not require different levels of knowledge or skill and therefore do not result in good progress for all pupils. In those lessons where teaching is good, staff are skilled at monitoring pupils' learning and intervening to correct misunderstanding or to raise expectations. However, this is not yet a consistent feature of lessons and opportunities are missed to engage pupils in dialogue or to pose questions which challenge pupils throughout each part of the lesson. At these times the pace of learning is not maintained and pupils can spend too much time observing the learning of others before being engaged in activities which move their learning forward.

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The school has developed a curriculum which helps pupils to develop the personal skills needed to be good citizens and which is rich in practical experiences. As a result pupils are beginning to understand how to apply their knowledge and skill across their areas of learning. For example, pupils recognise how important it is to be able to measure accurately so that they can carry out fair testing in science. Information and communication technology is integral to pupils' learning. Computer skills are developing well, and the use of video and digital technology helps pupils to develop valuable skills for future economic well-being. Other subjects, such as history and geography, are used well as a focus for pupils' work in literacy. There are times, however, when the overuse of worksheets in topic work limits opportunities for pupils to develop independence in writing at length.

There are some outstanding features in the school's provision of care, guidance and support for pupils, especially in the attention that is given to the specific personal needs of the most vulnerable. The school can clearly demonstrate where its actions have made a significant difference to attendance, behaviour and the self-esteem of individuals. As a result, persistent absence in the school has fallen by almost 3% over the last school year, pupils say they feel very safe in school and no lessons are disrupted by unacceptable behaviour. Very effective transition arrangements ensure that pupils settle into the school quickly, either into the Reception class or part way through their primary schooling. They quickly become part of the school family and any specific needs are effectively identified. The school has strengthened intervention procedures for helping pupils to 'catch up' from any past underachievement. However, these are too recent as yet to have a full impact on pupils' achievement.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
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?

Leaders and managers at all levels are fully involved in the self-evaluation process and have been proactive in bringing about improvements in curriculum creativity and in the accuracy of assessments of pupils' levels of attainment. Actions taken to improve the curriculum for mathematics have helped pupils to understand how their skills can be applied in different situations. As a result, more pupils than previously reached the higher level in 2010 national tests for Year 6 pupils. Systems to monitor the quality of teaching and learning, although satisfactory, have not yet resulted in pupils' consistently good achievement. Too much emphasis is placed on the implementation of agreed priorities rather than the rate of pupils' progress.

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Equality of opportunity is promoted well so that there are no longer any groups of pupils who are falling behind others. The school is vigilant in adopting recommended procedures for safeguarding pupils across all areas of its work. Risk assessments are exceptionally detailed and effectively involve all those who have an interest in the school's work; they are a model of good practice. The sense of community in the school is strong and there are good links with the local community and a good awareness of life in other countries. There are opportunities for pupils to build an understanding of Britain as a diverse, multicultural society but the school is aware that these need to extend to providing pupils with first-hand experiences of those from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Governors fulfil their statutory duties and have supported the school well through the upheaval of the rebuilding programme and in significant changes to staffing. Although governors understand the levels of pupils' attainment, they have an over-generous view of the school's success in addressing identified weaknesses. This has hindered their ability to challenge the school in the drive for further improvement.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. An excellent partnership with the nursery providers who share the school site contributes exceptionally well to how quickly children settle into school routines. A stimulating curriculum and good teaching ensure children make good progress. Both indoors and outdoors, children develop their confidence and ability to cooperate through purposeful play. There is a lively atmosphere and children are happy and involved. The use of the 'Forest School' provides children with an excellent range of outdoor experiences. It contributes exceptionally well to children's understanding of safety, sustainability issues and their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Adults skilfully use questions to develop children's language skills by encouraging them to reason and think for themselves.

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Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good with close and effective teamwork between all staff. All welfare arrangements are met, assessment is thorough and careful analysis has led to children's consistently good attainment. However, there is still work to do to make certain that assessment information is used as well as it could be to ensure that children do as well in writing as they do in other aspects of their learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Although a relatively small number of parents and carers responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire, the great majority of those who did so are satisfied with the school. Almost all felt that their child enjoys school and that the school keeps their children safe. A small minority felt that the school does not take sufficient account of their concerns and does not help them to support their children's learning. Inspection evidence indicates that there are clear and accessible systems for parents and carers to communicate with the school including an informative and interactive website. The school regularly seeks the views of parents and carers and uses these to inform school policy on important matters such as bullying, behaviour and attendance. Parents have been actively encouraged to share in the redevelopment of the school and many have done so. Target-setting meetings, progress reports and web-based mathematics programmes are all used to help parents become involved in their children's learning.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Crookhill Community 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 37 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 135 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	25	68	11	30	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	25	68	11	30	1	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	22	59	12	32	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	51	14	38	2	5	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	22	59	14	38	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	62	8	22	4	11	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	57	14	38	0	0	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)	27	73	7	19	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	57	14	38	0	0	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	57	11	30	2	5	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	51	12	32	5	14	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	19	51	11	30	1	3	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	59	13	35	0	0	1	3

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.

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.



October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Crookhill Community Primary School, Ryton, NE40 3ES

You go to a satisfactory school and some things are good. The staff care for you very well. You get off to a good start in the Reception class. You are polite and helpful and we enjoyed talking to you about your school. You told us that you look forward to coming to school because you like your teachers and appreciate the activities the school provides for you. You think that your teachers make lessons varied, interesting and fun, and we agree.

Sometimes you make good progress in lessons but most often your progress is satisfactory. This is because you do not always learn as well as you can in all parts of the lesson. Sometimes your work is too easy or you do not always understand how much teachers want you to do. Some of you spend too much time waiting while teachers are explaining things to other pupils. Your teachers are very good at encouraging you to try hard. However, we have asked them to make sure that they ask you questions and give you work which helps you all to do as well as you can in all parts of lessons.

The people who lead and manage your school know what needs to be done to make the school better and their work is beginning to improve how well you are doing. Sometimes, however, they think that things are improving faster than they are. We have asked them to look carefully at your lessons to make sure that what you are taught always helps you to make good progress.

All of you can play your part in this by always letting your teachers know if you do not know what to do next or if you are ready to move on to a new challenge.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Linda Buller

Lead inspector

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