

Husborne Crawley Lower School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109460
Local Authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	356551
Inspection dates	7–8 December 2010
Reporting inspector	Christopher Parker

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	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	53
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rob Hallam
Headteacher	Amanda Fuller
Date of previous school inspection	31 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Six lessons, taught by four teachers, were observed. Meetings were held with pupils, the headteacher and the Chair of the Governing Body. The inspectors looked at records of the pupils' progress, lesson plans, some of the school's policies and a sample of the pupils' work. Questionnaire responses from staff, pupils and 20 parents and carers were analysed.

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

- How well are pupils learning and making progress in writing?
- How is the leadership using monitoring and evaluation to drive further improvement?
- How effective have recent developments been in the school's community cohesion strategy?

Information about the school

This is a much smaller than average primary school. The pupils are taught in three classes. A much smaller proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals than in most schools. The pupils are predominantly from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.

The school has been accredited with the International School Award.

The headteacher returned from maternity leave in January 2010 and fulfils the role on a part-time basis.

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

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The headteacher and staff are committed to improving the school. This is evident in the increased range of opportunities provided within and beyond the curriculum. The impact of these opportunities can be seen in pupils' enjoyment of school and in the many good aspects of their personal development, which were very well illustrated by pupils' confident performances in their Christmas play. Attendance levels are high.

Attainment at the end of Year 4 is above average. Pupils do particularly well in reading and, as a result, their attainment is high. In mathematics, they make secure gains in their knowledge and skills, but they are not making as much progress as they should be in writing.

The headteacher has correctly identified areas where improvements are needed, most notably in writing. Recent staff training has explored elements of effective teaching. However, the school's plans to accelerate progress and raise attainment in writing are not sufficiently focused on improving the quality of teaching. Although some of the teaching is good, pupils are not always clear what is expected of them, and there are periods in lessons where the pace of learning slows. The marking of pupils' work is not providing them with sufficient clear guidance about how they can improve their writing. Consequently, pupils' progress is not accelerating at more than a satisfactory pace. The monitoring of the quality of lessons and the scrutiny of pupils' work are not rigorously examining the impact of the teaching on pupils' learning and progress. Therefore, the information gleaned from these activities does little to help the school to set a well-focused agenda for improvement or to establish an accurate evaluation of the school's overall performance.

The youngest children in the Reception Year are making satisfactory progress. Many, although not all, start school with a range of skills and abilities that match or exceed those expected for their age. Some of the activities they are set help them to extend these skills and abilities, but others are not challenging enough.

In response to the last inspection, the school has extended the range of opportunities in science as part of developments to provide a more creative curriculum for pupils. There have also been good developments in partnerships with other schools locally and internationally, enhancing pupils' understanding of other communities. The school has a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of the teaching of writing, in order to accelerate the progress that pupils make, by:

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- ensuring that expectations are consistently high and are clear to pupils
- maintaining a good pace and momentum to all lessons
- providing clear and specific guidance on how pupils can improve their work.
- Improve the rigour and quality of monitoring by ensuring that all activities have a sharp focus on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress.
- Ensure that all activities set for pupils in the Early Years Foundation are purposeful, challenging and well supported.
- 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**

Cohorts are small, and the children's skills and abilities when they enter school vary from year to year. Taken overall, attainment on entry is in line with or above that expected for their age. Although pupils' attainment is above average by the end of Year 4, there are inconsistencies in their rate of progress. While they make good progress in some lessons, progress in others is satisfactory. Pupils say they enjoy lessons but their behaviour is satisfactory. There are occasions when the unsettled behaviour of a few interrupts the flow of a lesson and the concentration of others. Some pupils find this 'so frustrating'.

Pupils do well in reading because of the focused and skilfully guided reading activities led by the teachers and teaching assistants. For example, in a Year 3 and 4 lesson, the teaching assistant's probing questions extended pupils' understanding of what they were reading. As a result, of this good teaching many older pupils are confident and increasingly fluent readers.

The variation in the progress that pupils make in writing was well illustrated in one lesson where not all pupils were clear about they were expected to include in their writing. Although most made satisfactory gains in this lesson, a subsequent lesson in which the teacher set out clearly what pupils were expected to achieve, challenging them to use more varied language, was much more successful in ensuring that they made good progress. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows their progress in writing to be satisfactory, but there are variations in the rate of progress. For example, capital letters and full stops have been used accurately in past work but are then used intermittently in subsequent pieces of work. Most of the pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are making satisfactory progress at the pace expected of them.

In conversation, pupils say they feel safe in school, and parents agree that this is the case. Pupils enjoy the wide range of sporting opportunities that the school provides. They have a good understanding of staying healthy, and are able to talk about a balanced diet and 'not eating too much cake!' Their personal qualities are being developed well through a range of interesting curriculum activities. These include opportunities to learn about a range of faiths, and pupils are gaining an increasingly broad national and international understanding through links with a large urban school and a school in Kenya. The opportunities that they are afforded through the learning platform are further extending their already well-developed information and communication technology skills.

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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	2
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	3
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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
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?

Although the teaching is good in some respects, there are variations and inconsistencies. This results in pupils making progress in line with expectations, rather than exceeding them. The teaching in writing lessons is satisfactory. It lacks the attention to detail necessary to accelerate learning and generate consistently good progress in developing greater accuracy and improved structure in pupils' writing. Furthermore, when pupils are drawn together at the end of a lesson, there is not enough emphasis placed on how they might improve their work or attention given to preparing them for what they need to learn next. Inspection of pupils' writing in their exercise books shows that their skills are not being developed and extended fast enough. Marking, although conscientious, does not set out sufficiently clearly what it is that the pupils need to do to improve, and some misunderstandings and inaccuracies identified by the teacher are not corrected in their subsequent writing.

The school has reviewed and developed its approach to providing a creative curriculum which is, as a consequence, diverse and interesting. There are effective links between subjects in order to create coherent 'learning journeys'. In conversation, pupils say they like this approach. There are good opportunities for pupils to use their information and communication technology skills and the school's good technology resources, through a range of interesting activities. The school plans many interesting and enjoyable activities

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that enhance and extend the curriculum. These are particularly beneficial to pupils' personal development.

A caring and supportive ethos is evident throughout the school. As a result, relationships between pupils and their teachers are positive. Behaviour is, for the most part, appropriately managed. Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is satisfactorily deployed. Through good links with support agencies, the school works conscientiously to remove barriers to learning that are encountered by a very few pupils.

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	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is keen to make improvements. She has a clear overview of the school's performance and of the individual progress of every pupil through the half-termly assessments carried out by the teachers. An evaluation of pupils' progress is conveyed to the governing body through the headteacher's informative termly reports. The governing body has, rightly, reviewed the way in which individual members, some of whom are new to the role and have links to areas of the curriculum, monitor the school's performance. Progress towards targets within the school development plan also forms part of the headteacher's report to the governing body. However, some of the targets and success criteria within the school development plan are too broad. Consequently, it is difficult for either the headteacher or the governing body to evaluate the impact of developments on the outcomes for pupils.

The school is committed to equality of opportunity. The headteacher is tracking each pupil's progress towards adequately challenging targets. She and other leaders monitor the quality of lessons, scrutinise pupils' work, and review teachers' planning. These activities provide a broad overview of the teaching, but they are not frequent enough or focused sharply on the impact on pupils' learning and progress. Furthermore, the records of these monitoring activities do not provide an insight into where improvements are needed, particularly in the teaching of writing, in order to accelerate pupils' progress.

The school works well with parents and carers and keeps them well informed. For example, regular newsletters keep them abreast of activities in the school, and developments such as the 'takeaway tasks' encourage parents to work with their children on interesting tasks at home. Links and partnerships with agencies are particularly effective in supporting the very few pupils who have specific needs. The school and the pupils also benefit from partnerships with other schools in the area.

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Procedures for safeguarding are satisfactory, although some aspects of these are not monitored rigorously enough by the governing body. The school promotes community cohesion well. It provides pupils with an international dimension through developing links with a school in Kenya, and is successful in giving pupils the opportunity to gain an insight into diversity within this country through links with an urban primary school.

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	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
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

The assessments for last year show that many of the children reached a good level of development by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. In lessons, children are making satisfactory progress. While some direct teaching, for example of linking sounds and letters, ensures that the tasks are well matched to the children's stage of development, other tasks are not sufficiently purposeful or challenging. In these activities, there are periods where children move around with little intervention from the teacher to develop and extend their learning.

The children's progress in developing their disposition and attitudes is variable. In one lesson, behaviour was inappropriate and was not managed effectively and, therefore, disrupted the teaching. At other times, children settle quickly and enjoy the activities provided for them, although there are occasions when there is too little adult intervention to encourage speaking and to extend activities for those with more developed skills and abilities.

Scrutiny of the children's work shows that they have access to an interesting range of activities. For example, as part of their work linked to the story Owl Babies they have taken apart an owl pellet. To extend their knowledge and understanding of the world, they have made simple circuits. They are also confident users of computers, although the programs they use are not always well matched to their level of development.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	3
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

Almost all parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were very happy with their children's experience at the school. Most of those who added additional comments to their questionnaires were particularly pleased with the individual care and support given to their children by the teachers and teaching assistants. Some parents commented positively on the recent development of the creative curriculum. The inspectors found the curriculum to provide pupils with a diverse range of opportunities.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Husborne Crawley Lower 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 20 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 53 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	15	75	5	25	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	16	80	4	20	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	12	60	7	35	1	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	70	4	20	1	5	1	5
The teaching is good at this school	14	70	5	25	1	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	65	6	30	1	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	70	4	20	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)	12	60	6	30	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	14	70	4	20	1	5	1	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	60	6	30	1	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	65	4	20	0	0	1	5
The school is led and managed effectively	13	65	5	25	1	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	15	75	4	20	1	5	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for 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.



9 December 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Husborne Crawley Lower School, Bedford, MK43 0UZ

Thank you for completing the questionnaires and taking the time to talk to me about your school. It was good of you to invite me to your Christmas play, and I really enjoyed the scenes I saw. I was very disappointed that I was unable to stay to see it all.

The school is providing a satisfactory education for you. You do particularly well in reading, but I have asked the headteacher to make some improvements to the way you are taught and helped to learn, so that you can make faster progress, particularly in writing. I have also asked the headteacher to be more thorough in the way that she checks to see that everyone is learning and making good progress in lessons. You are happy and feel safe at school, although some of you are concerned about the behaviour of a few pupils. Most of the pupils behaved well in the lessons I visited, but I have asked the headteacher and teachers to make sure that expectations for work and behaviour are always high so that everyone can help by concentrating on their work.

You told me that you enjoy learning about many interesting things and that you particularly enjoy the sports activities you attend. The youngest children do a range of activities led by their teacher and some they choose themselves. Some of these activities help them to learn quickly, but others are not as effective. I have asked the headteacher to make sure that all the activities for these children help them to learn quickly.

Your confident, thoughtful and sensible answers to my questions helped me a lot. I hope the steps I have asked the school to take will result in everyone doing very well in every lesson.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Parker

Lead inspector

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