

Criftins CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123472
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	359442
Inspection dates	9–10 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Christopher Green

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	77
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon Pope
Headteacher	Pam Edwards
Date of previous school inspection	10 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They visited nine lessons, the breakfast and after-school clubs and observed four teachers and their teaching assistants. They held meetings with the headteacher, teachers, governors and groups of pupils and talked with support staff, parents and carers. They looked at pupils' work, teachers' planning and assessment records, statutory policies and the school's self-evaluation summary and improvement plan. They also scrutinised minutes of governors' meetings and held in-depth discussions about the evaluations of school performance. The team analysed questionnaires, including 38 returned from parents and carers, 42 from pupils in Key Stage 2 and 12 from staff.

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

- Is teaching sufficiently challenging to ensure improvements in pupils' attainment and progress, particularly for the more able pupils and in mathematics?
- How are judgements in the school's self-evaluation processes checked to ensure an accurate appraisal of the school's performance?
- What is the quality of provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage given that they are taught alongside pupils in Key Stage 1?

Information about the school

Criftins CoE Primary School is a small school serving its immediate and wider communities. Pupils are organised into three mixed-age classes and taught in a variety of groupings at different times in the day. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are usually taught alongside pupils in Year 1 in the mornings and Years 1 and 2 in the afternoons.

Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. These pupils' needs are associated with specific learning and language difficulties. There are breakfast and after-school clubs on site which are attended by children from the school under the direction and management of the governing body and so form part of this inspection. At the time of the inspection the headteacher had only been in post for five weeks. The school has achieved a number of national awards, including Healthy Schools, ECO Silver, Safer Schools and Active Mark.

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. Excellent care, guidance and support are provided, especially for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who make very good progress because of it. Effective teaching and learning lead to good progress for the very large majority of pupils.

Pupils attain more highly and make better progress in reading and writing than they do in mathematics. Across the classes, work tends to be more challenging in English than in mathematics and pupils are asked to use and apply literacy skills more readily than those in numeracy. There are signs that the gap is closing because the current attainment and progress in mathematics for pupils in both key stages are improving. There is room for further improvement. Progress is more rapid through Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2. Attendance is above average and pupils are invariably punctual, extremely polite and keen to please. Pupils feel safe and say so. They clearly enjoy school and many extend their day at the well-organised breakfast and after-school clubs. They have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy, eat properly and take plenty of exercise. The development of pupils' spiritual, moral and social awareness is good, but pupils have less understanding of the values and diversity of people living in Britain.

Teaching and learning are good. Excellent relationships between adults and pupils create an atmosphere highly conducive to learning. Teachers work purposefully to ensure that pupils' good achievement continues, but their expectations are not consistently as high as they should be. Provision in Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory but children's learning, both indoors and out, is heavily directed by adults. Pupils throughout the school are not expected to think and act for themselves enough. Assessments of their prior learning are not used sufficiently well to pitch lessons at levels that challenge and stimulate all the pupils, particularly the more able pupils in Key Stage 2. The curriculum is good with many enrichment activities and visits to local and more distant places. Habits of safe and healthy living are promoted exceptionally well throughout the curriculum.

Leadership and management are good. Since the last inspection, progress has been secured towards achieving the recommendations made. Senior staff recognise that the school's existing self-evaluation of its performance is overly optimistic. New leadership and management processes are underway as a result. Good relationships between governors, staff, pupils, parents and the community are well-established. Safeguarding procedures have been tightened further and are excellent. The governing body is highly skilled and generally well-informed and effective in supporting the school, but only recently has it begun to use national criteria to assist in gauging challenge realistically. Excellent partnerships with parents and local community groups have been built over the years and have contributed to the good quality of pupils' learning and progress. The school has good capacity for sustaining improvement. Many parents express their gratitude for the

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excellent help and care they and their children receive. Staff and pupils report very positively in their responses to questionnaires also.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to accelerate the rate of pupils' progress and raise their attainment, especially in mathematics by:
 - using assessment information to raise expectations and plan more challenging and independent learning that builds upon what pupils already know
 - holding high attaining pupils to account more firmly for the accuracy and the quality of their work, particularly in Key Stage 2.
 - Improve provision in Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - increasing the range of resources and capacity for teaching and learning
 - auditing indoor and outdoor curriculum provision to identify and improve those areas of learning which are the least effective in improving children's experiences and outcomes.
- Embed inclusive approaches to school self-evaluation by:
 - moderating judgements routinely using national criteria
 - ensuring informed contributions from senior staff in the evaluation processes and subsequent development planning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Inspectors' observations in the classrooms and scrutiny of pupils' current work confirm that rates of progress have improved recently and that pupils' attainment in mathematics is now better than it was at the time of the previous inspection. Tracking of individual pupils' progress over time shows that many are attaining above average levels and are progressing well. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make very good progress even though their attainment remains below average.

In English, pupils understand what they have to do to improve because they see the direction their work is taking. However in mathematics, learning objectives are not so clear. Consequently, work in mathematics is not seen by some pupils as being as purposeful or relevant in different situations as their work in English. This has contributed to progress in mathematics being somewhat slower than the significantly good progress made in English.

Pupils are extremely well behaved and co-operate readily. Older pupils say that they feel ready for the next stage of their education because they have basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), which equip them well. Pupils have a good understanding of the benefits of physical exercise, such as walking to school and taking part in the excellent range of sporting opportunities. They are keen to follow a healthy diet and school lunches provide a popular and appropriate choice. Good contributions are made, by the pupils in Key Stage 2 particularly, to the school and wider community through a range of activities, such as a regular Sunday luncheon club for families and charitable fund raising events. The school council and eco council are very

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active and enable pupils to contribute to, and influence, decisions made about life in school and the wider community. Members understand the serious responsibility they accept, for example in helping with the appointment of the new headteacher. Pupils' happy and confident attitudes make a positive contribution to their learning.

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	3
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	2
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	2
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

How effective is the provision?

Positive relationships between adults and pupils facilitate learning well. Teachers are knowledgeable and experienced. They use a range of national programmes and published schemes as the framework for their planning, which provide for efficient continuity and resource coverage.

A brisk pace in teaching and learning is maintained, especially where practical work is undertaken and in literacy. For example in a science and technology lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4, the gains in learning were rapid. Pupils wired circuits which lit bulbs and set-off buzzers when correct answers were connected to questions on the game-boards they were making. Similarly, teachers and assistants encourage pupils to talk about their work to develop ideas and rehearse answers in lively ways, as a preparation for their writing. Teachers modify reading and writing tasks effectively to ensure that different groups of pupils do as well as they can. Good examples of this were seen with pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3, resulting in a marked impact upon raising attainment and achievements. In other lessons learning objectives are not adapted sufficiently to build upon what

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different groups of pupils already know, understood and can do. This limits the potential for pupils to make outstanding progress and reach the higher attainment levels by Year 6.

Marking is regular and positive. Tracking records of pupils' progress are maintained accurately and thoroughly, but this information is not used consistently to pitch work at levels that challenge and stimulate sufficiently. This is a cause of the gaps in pupils' skills in mathematics. Recent actions are rectifying this problem.

The curriculum is good and is enhanced by effective partnerships. There are extensive enrichment activities, including local visits and visitors and a regular residential visit for pupils in Years 5 and 6, which parents and pupils value highly. Opportunities to use reading and skills in ICT across different subjects are taken well, but others for factual writing and graphing skills in subjects such as science and history are missed. Good use is made of specialist teachers, for example from the local secondary specialist sports college and private agencies, for physical education and music. The school's sports hall and trim-track circuit are outstanding facilities that benefit all. There is excellent take-up of out-of-school activities and extended provision. Teaching assistants enable pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to access fully the mainstream curriculum and through the breakfast and after-school clubs.

Pupils receive excellent care, guidance and support and staff know them well. Pupils who have additional learning needs are identified early by the skilled special educational needs coordinator and subsequent interventions are key factors in securing their consistently good progress. Strong links with the church and other out-of-school agencies to enable families to access support for their children, especially for pupils who face specific difficulties are highly effective. Pupils leaving school are well prepared for the demands of the next stage of their education and enjoy a smooth transition.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Only recently has there been discernible impact on improving pupils' achievements in mathematics, sharpening of the school's self-evaluation systems and on two of the recommendations from the previous inspection report. The headteacher has shown respect for the good practice inherited while quickly forming and sharing a realistic view about the school's performance. The national evaluation schedule for schools, wisely introduced by the local authority's school improvement partner, is now used to moderate the school's self-evaluation judgements. The headteacher has also instigated appropriate methods to review the school improvement plan and is engaging stakeholders in shaping a vision for future developments and re-casting the three-year plan accordingly. The

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assistant headteacher and coordinator for special educational needs has devised good strategies to improve the progress of the lower attaining pupils. This has had a marked impact upon raising the achievement of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The governing body takes an active role in supporting the school. Governors are professional and competent. They ensure that important aspects, such as robust safeguarding procedures and good provision for vulnerable pupils and those with particular needs are closely monitored, and that high standards of care are maintained. Statutory requirements are met and equality of opportunity for all is promoted well. The headteacher, governors and staff work conscientiously to build good community cohesion with excellent engagement with parents and carers and members of the local community. The school also has links with Kenya. As yet the school has not evaluated its role across those aspects of its community cohesion policy to help pupils gain in-depth understanding of what it means to live in multicultural Britain and how they might contribute at that level. The school, despite its small size and high unit costs, provides satisfactory value for money.

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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Attainment on entry has wide variations year on year and within years, because some children show performance above expectations and others who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. By Year 1, they have made good progress with improved attainment, especially in the areas of personal, social and emotional development and communication and language, but this is still broadly within the expected levels for their ages.

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Children settle quickly to the routines of the class and, because of the extremely good care and guidance, their social and emotional development is rapid. Well-prepared teacher-directed tasks help children to learn basic skills in a secure way. Their progress in language acquisition accelerates quickly because of good teaching and frequent interactions with the Key Stage 1 pupils. However, there are limited opportunities for children to follow their own initiated activities. The outdoor area is not freely accessible and some areas within the classroom are not stimulating enough to inspire the youngest children to make marks and pictures, write, be creative or carry out mathematical and science activities of their own choosing. Children's overall good outcomes are also supported well by the example provided by Key Stage 1 pupils with whom they work on a daily basis.

Leaders have correctly identified the need to extend and improve the provision and staffing levels in Early Years Foundation Stage, but action to implement this is overdue.

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	2
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

Most parents and carers express their strong support for the school. One, reflecting many, wrote, 'This is a superb school in every way!' The vast majority say children are kept safe, that teaching is good and that their children are learning well and making good progress. Home-school support and communication are good and teachers are easily accessible. A few parents expressed concerns about the progress their children are making and that they could do more. Inspectors found that pupils are making generally good progress, especially in English, but that more able pupils in Key Stage 2 could make more progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Criftins CofE 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 38 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 77 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	26	68	12	32	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	29	76	9	24	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	28	74	9	24	0	0	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	27	71	8	21	3	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	27	71	11	29	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	63	13	34	0	0	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	58	16	42	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)	19	50	16	42	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	61	15	39	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	53	15	39	0	0	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	68	10	26	2	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	24	63	10	26	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	26	68	12	32	0	0	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



11 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Criftins CofE Primary School, Ellesmere, SY12 9LT

Thank you for your help when we recently visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and finding out about your work. Your school is good and the way your staff care and support you is excellent. Thank you too for your very positive views when you completed your questionnaires. These have helped us to get a good picture of your school.

The teaching is good and because of this you make good progress.

The staff provide outstanding care, guidance and support, especially to those of you who find work difficult at times, and they keep the school very safe.

You are excellent at keeping yourselves safe and healthy.

You are very polite and your good behaviour helps to create a positive atmosphere around the school and this helps you to learn.

The school has excellent relationships with your parents and carers and with other groups such as the church, who support your learning and well-being.

There are still some ways in which your school could be better. We have asked your headteacher, teachers, teaching assistants and governors to do three things.

Help you make quicker progress and reach higher standards, especially in mathematics and for those of you in Key Stage 2 who find your work fairly easy. You can make better use of what you know already. Teachers should plan for you to use your knowledge and skills to produce outstanding work, as you learn more.

Improve the curriculum, equipment and classroom, and increase the number of adults teaching the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 pupils.

Check how well the school is doing more carefully, so that the school gets better and better as time goes on.

You can help by using your initiative and thinking more for yourselves, without relying too much on teachers and teaching assistants.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Green

Lead inspector

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