

Crockham Hill Church of England Primary School

Crockham Hill, Edenbridge, Kent, TN8 6RP

Inspection dates 19–20 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Leaders and managers, including governors, have taken decisive action to make sure that teaching is at least good in Key Stage 2, so that progress is improving rapidly.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage achieve well.
- Attainment in reading and mathematics across the school has been consistently above national averages for over three years.
- Pupil's behaviour is exemplary, and the 'small village feel' where every child is known well to all the adults contributes to a safe and cohesive community where no one is left behind. Pupils feel safe and enjoy school; this is reflected in their above average attendance.
- Pupils experience a wide range of rewarding and exciting activities which ensure that their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptional.
- Governors know the school well. They have developed improved partnerships with parents and helped to tackle weaknesses in teaching. This is helping all members of the school community to work together well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching has not been consistently strong enough in Key Stage 2 to always ensure rapid progress over time, especially for more able pupils in writing.
- Marking does not always help pupils to understand what they need to do next to achieve their targets.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited 12 lessons or part-lessons. Seven teachers were observed.
- All of the lesson observations were shared with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Pupils were heard reading, and work from each year group in Key Stage 2 was looked at with the deputy headteacher.
- The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, records of monitoring, minutes of meetings of the governing body, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- The inspector met with pupils, interviewed a sample of staff, and spoke to parents. He also spoke to members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The views of parents were obtained through the school's surveys and the 58 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). Written comments from 12 members of staff were also considered. Four parents took the opportunity to write to the inspector and their views were also considered.

Inspection team

Brian Netto, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is smaller than the average-sized primary school. There are five classes, of which four are mixed-aged. Year 6 pupils are taught in a single-year class.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is low. This is additional funding provided for looked after children, pupils eligible for free school meals and children of service families. In this school, it applies to all three groups listed here.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the last inspection, there have been a number of changes to the teaching staff in Key Stage 2. A new Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body have been appointed in recent months, and there have been several other changes to the governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress in writing at Key Stage 2 so that pupils make rapid rather than good progress, by:
 - making sure that teaching is consistently good or better, so that work is matched more carefully to the needs of all pupils, including those who are more able
 - increasing the opportunities for pupils, especially higher attainers, to practise their extended writing in subjects other than English
 - making sure that marking helps pupils to understand what they need to do next to achieve their targets.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress from broadly typical starting points on joining the school. Provision is varied, stimulating and fun and they quickly learn to concentrate for extended periods and work on their own. By the time they leave the Reception Year, their skills are above average. Progress continues to be rapid across Years 1 and 2 so that attainment is well above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2.
- In 2012, attainment for Year 6 in mathematics was above average. However, pupils' progress, particularly in writing in Years 4 and 5, dipped in consecutive years, mainly due to relatively fewer higher attainers reaching above average levels. School data shows that this is no longer the case and that progress across the school is now rapid in comparison to national patterns.
- There were not enough pupils known to be eligible for free school meals in 2012 to comment on their attainment without identifying them. However, across the school, all pupils make at least good progress, including those eligible for the pupil premium funding. Money has been well targeted to ensure that pupils are provided with effective support in lessons, and given additional support, especially in reading. Some make rapid progress in reading as a result.
- Similarly, the small numbers of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress from their different starting points as a result of good teaching and regular assessments which ensure that the school does all it can to meet their needs.
- Pupils make good progress in their mathematics skills. Opportunities to use their calculation skills are extensive, and they apply these skills effectively in different contexts.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and there is much that is outstanding. This is now leading to rapid progress across the school. Teaching assistants are used well to support small groups and individuals.
- The best teaching is characterised by effective questioning and work which engages and challenges the pupils to reflect and explore ideas. Pupils in the mixed Year 4 and 5 class investigated harmful and helpful micro-organisms before conducting an experiment to test their scientific ideas. Carefully targeted questions enabled the pupils to use and apply different concepts and grow in confidence in sharing their ideas.
- The teaching of letters and the sounds they make has improved considerably across the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Pupils make good use of their reading skills to tackle unfamiliar words. Older pupils read widely and speak fluently about favourite authors and genres.
- Teaching in the Reception, Year 1 and 2 mixed classes is strong. Children are given every opportunity to think creatively when, for example, the children in Reception imagined life in India through a stimulating guided journey on a magic carpet. They demonstrated excellent recall of typical features of an Indian jungle. Year 1 developed their skills of classifying pond life, as they caught then observed different mini-beasts. Their excitement and enjoyment enabled them to concentrate for long periods.
- Pupils are given opportunities to develop their writing skills on frequent occasions and using different styles. Year 6, for example, demonstrated effective skills in a literacy lesson, using questions to help them write autobiographical memories of their time at school. They showed strong independence and made use of different writing conventions to improve their writing. However, opportunities for extended writing in other subjects are less frequent.
- In the four mixed-aged classes, activities are mostly set at the right level of difficulty for each pupil. On some occasions, though, activities are not well matched to the needs of all the pupils.

This results in more able pupils not being fully challenged, particularly in writing.

- Marking and feedback at its best provides pupils with clear guidance on what they are doing well, and what steps they need to take to improve their understanding. Opportunities for pupils to review and edit their work are regular. However, marking does not always provide them with clear targets to enable them to improve independently and so help them take more responsibility for meeting these targets, and this sometimes restricts pupils' progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils have very strong attitudes towards their learning. They are keen to take part in lessons and cooperate well in small groups. This contributes to a very positive climate for learning. They show considerable respect towards all adults they work with, including visitors. Their behaviour around the school, in assemblies and at playtimes is impeccable. The large majority of parents who responded to Parent View agree that behaviour is outstanding. One commented that 'the school instils strong values and high behavioural standards in the children.'
- Pupils show a great deal of independence and responsibility around the school, for example when Year 1 and 2 quickly organised the gymnastics equipment in the hall, then took turns to use the different apparatus. They showed a keen awareness for each other to ensure that everyone used the facilities safely. Similarly, pupils are called upon to lead prayers at assemblies.
- Pupils show a sensitive awareness of others, and care and respect for each other. They say this is why bullying is rare. They understand how to keep safe when using electronic media such as computers and mobile phones.
- The school encourages all pupils to work and play together well. Disabled pupils take a full part in lessons, and are well supported. This ensures that the school community is harmonious, equality of opportunity is fostered, and no discrimination is tolerated.
- Pupils feel very safe, love coming to school and speak highly of the teachers and other adults. This is reflected in their above average rates of attendance. There have been no exclusions for many years.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders are strong and decisive, and action has been taken to address areas of relative weakness. Newly appointed governors are making a strong contribution to improvements. The quality of teaching has improved, for example through focused work on the teaching of reading in Year 1.
- Staff work well in teams, and partnerships with other schools are helping to provide them with different opportunities to develop their skills. Consequently, staff morale is high.
- The school uses information about how well it is doing in comparison with national benchmarks to identify priorities for improvement. As such, it has an accurate picture of its performance and what needs to improve. A robust system of checking how well teachers are doing ensures that increases in salary are only awarded for sustained high performance.
- Topics and themes make the most of the school's extensive environment. Pupils regularly use the pond and wildlife area and the local meadow to study mini-beasts and other wildlife. Opportunities to explore and investigate nature alongside many creative activities contribute strongly to the pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. One pupil said, 'Crockham Hill School is unique because it has excellent facilities such as a meadow, a football pitch and much more.'
- The school has worked hard to meet the needs of all the parents. The majority are very positive about the school. Some concerns were raised by a small number of parents about a range of different things but all agreed that improvements had been made. Evidence from the inspection confirmed that leaders and managers respond appropriately to all constructive suggestions.

■ The local authority treats the school with a 'light touch'. Support is provided to commission work with other schools, and this is having a beneficial impact, particularly on the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2.

■ **The governance of the school:**

– In recent months, governors recognised the need to take on a more strategic role within the school. Changes to the governing body have strengthened their role, including changes to the groups that meet. A new Chair and Vice-Chair have revitalised the governors, who are now more active in the school, and offer more effective support and challenge. They have a good understanding of why the school's performance dipped in relation to national benchmarks last year. They have supported the appointment of teachers and teaching assistants to improve the quality of teaching of writing in Key Stage 2, and of reading in Year 1. Their oversight of the changes in staff and their knowledge of how teachers are performing enable them to reward good teaching and hold the school to account. This has helped teaching to improve overall. They make effective use of local partnerships to keep themselves up to date with their training. Consequently, they are well informed about the school's finances, including the use of the pupil premium to provide for one-to-one and group support, and make sure that all statutory duties are in place and are effective, including those related to safeguarding.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	118615
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	412612
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	138
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ashley Netherclift
Headteacher	Valerie Viret
Date of previous school inspection	1–2 July 2010
Telephone number	01732 866374
Fax number	01732 865209
Email address	headteacher@crockhamhill.kent.sch.uk

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