

Crabtree Farm Primary School

Steadfold Close, Crabtree Road, Nottingham, NG6 8AX

Inspection dates 13–14 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The impact of action taken by leaders to improve teaching is not yet evident across all parts of the school.
- The work that teachers set in some lessons is not matched well enough to pupils' abilities to enable good progress to be made.
- Pupils do not make good enough progress in Key Stage 1 to raise standards more quickly.
- Standards and progress in writing are not good enough. Pupils are not always given enough opportunity to talk about their ideas before writing.
- Sometimes teachers' explanations of learning are too long when higher-ability pupils could be getting on with more-challenging work.
- In a few lessons, teachers do not check pupils' progress often enough to identify when learning can be moved on more rapidly.
- The marking of pupils' work does not always communicate high enough expectations of the standards pupils should aspire to reach.

The school has the following strengths

- Good school leadership has secured the total confidence and trust of parents and carers.
- Good leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures children make good progress in a stimulating learning environment.
- Pupils make good progress in reading and mathematics in Key Stage 2.
- Pupils' good attitudes and behaviour contribute to the very strong sense of community in the school where pupils feel safe.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 25 lessons. Several lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. The deputy headteacher also joined the inspectors in reviewing pupils’ work and the work of teaching assistants.
- Inspectors also observed the breakfast club and three assemblies, and made a number of short visits to classrooms.
- Pupils were observed at break and lunchtimes.
- The inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, staff, pupils and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body. They also met with some parents and carers at the start of the school day.
- A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Groups of pupils of different ages were heard reading.
- Inspectors took account of 41 responses to the staff questionnaire and 12 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- They looked at the school’s policies, teachers’ plans, samples of pupils’ work, school improvement planning and records on behaviour and safety. Inspectors also looked at information on individual pupils’ progress and teachers’ performance, and records of meetings held by the governing body.

Inspection team

Kenneth Thomas, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Vivienne McTiffen	Additional Inspector
Deirdre Lyddy	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an above-average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is high. This is additional government funding for particular groups such as pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well-above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school provides a breakfast club that is managed by the governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by making sure that:
 - teachers' explanations of learning are not too long so that higher-ability pupils in particular have more time to work independently
 - the work set in lessons provides pupils with the right level of challenge, particularly in Key Stage 1
 - teachers continually check the progress pupils are making in lessons so that learning can be moved on more quickly
 - the expectations communicated through the marking of pupils' work are consistently high.
- Raise standards in writing by:
 - giving pupils more time to talk about their ideas before they write
 - providing more time for extended writing so that pupils have more opportunity to develop their basic skills
 - ensuring that pupils are constantly challenged to produce their best work in terms of punctuation, grammar, spelling and handwriting.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Progress requires improvement in Key Stage 1 and the good progress made in the Early Years Foundation Stage is not built upon. Reviews of pupils' work from the current and previous year show that the expectations of the progress pupils can make are not high enough and this impedes the rate of progress, particularly that of higher-ability pupils.
- Throughout the school pupils' writing skills are not developing as quickly as they need to because they are not constantly challenged to produce their best work in terms of grammar, punctuation, spelling and presentation, and they are not always given enough opportunity to talk about and develop their ideas before writing.
- Successful action to improve the teaching of phonics led to pupils making good progress in understanding letters and the sounds they make and a rise in pupils' performance in the Year 1 phonics screening test. In 2013, the proportion reaching the required standard improved greatly and matched the national figure although the proportion of girls reaching the required standard was still below average. However, this improvement is yet to be seen at the end of Year 2 where standards in reading, writing and mathematics are consistently well-below average. Reviews of pupils' work show that this is partly because pupils are not always given tasks that are suitably challenging, particularly those of higher ability.
- The attainment on entry to the school varies significantly from year-to-year. When children start school in the Nursery, their knowledge, understanding and skills are well below those expected for children of their age and in some years exceptionally low. Because teaching is consistently good in the Early Years Foundation Stage, they progress well. However, their skills are still below those expected, particularly in communication and language, when they enter Year 1.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has been consistently well-below average. It is however on a rising trend.
- Progress improves in Key Stage 2 where there is more good teaching. This was seen in the results of the tests taken at the end of Year 6 in 2013. These pupils were higher ability at the end of Key Stage 1 than most year groups. From below average standards at the end of Year 2, these pupils made particularly good progress in mathematics and in reading to reach broadly average standards at the end of Year 6. However, standards in writing lag behind those in reading and mathematics. Although most pupils made the progress expected of them in writing, not enough made the more rapid progress needed to raise standards quickly.
- Thoughtful use is made of pupil premium funding to provide support that is carefully matched to individual pupil's needs. As a result these pupils make good progress in reading and mathematics, and their attainment in 2013 rose to be close to the national average. Slower progress is, however, made in writing and in 2013 these pupils were about two terms behind pupils nationally.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs generally make good progress relative to their individual starting points. Their needs are accurately identified and appropriate support is provided.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is too variable to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress as they move through the school.
- While there have been improvements in the use of assessment to match work to pupils' needs, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage, inconsistencies remain. In a few lessons, particularly in Key Stage 1, pupils of different abilities are given the same tasks and so pupils are not always working at the right level to promote faster rates of progress.
- In some lessons, teachers do not routinely check pupils' level of understanding as the lesson develops. As a consequence, pupils are not moved on in their learning quickly enough to complete more demanding tasks.
- Occasionally, teachers take too much time explaining what pupils are to do next, when higher-ability pupils in particular are capable of being moved on more quickly. When this occurs, pupils have less time to work on their own and progress slows as a result.
- Much has been done to improve the quality of teachers' marking of pupils' work. Teachers' comments generally make clear to pupils how well they are doing and what they need to do next to improve. However, in a few instances, the expectations communicated through marking are not high enough and there is inconsistency in the identification and correction of errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to the teaching of phonics. They have a good understanding of how letters and sounds should be taught, and provide pupils with a secure base on which to develop their reading and writing skills.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is consistently good. Children make good progress because they are provided with a stimulating range of learning activities that promote the development of their skills, knowledge and understanding.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved because pupils are given more opportunity to apply their mathematical skills to more interesting real-life problems, and well-structured guided reading sessions are having a positive impact on pupils' progress in reading.
- The most effective teaching occurs when expectations are high and learning tasks are carefully planned to meet the needs of pupils' different abilities. For example, in an outstanding Year 6 English lesson, rapid progress was made in deepening pupils' understanding of the feelings and motivations of the main characters in 'Goodnight Mister Tom' because pupils were given many opportunities to share their own interpretations of key points in the story with their partners. All worked with enthusiasm because the learning tasks stimulated their imaginations.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs benefit from the well-planned individual and small group support from teachers and teaching assistants. Together they ensure that appropriate work is provided for these pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The basis for the good attitudes and behaviour seen throughout the school is set in the Early Years Foundation Stage. From the time children enter the Nursery they quickly learn that they are part of a safe, secure and caring community. They come to accept the school's expectations of behaviour and show respect for their peers and adults alike.

- The school is a calm and orderly place where teachers can teach and pupils can learn. Play and lunchtimes are happy occasions when pupils of all ages play well together and look out for one another.
- Pupils show a good awareness of different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and know how to keep themselves safe. Pupils and their parents and carers agree that pupils are safe in school and free from harassment. All have confidence in the ability of staff to manage behaviour.
- Pupils are provided with a good range of opportunities to contribute to the school community. They willingly take on responsibility and through, for example, the school council make a positive contribution to the life of the school. Pupils know they are valued because staff regularly seek their views, and often act upon them.
- The school provides particularly good support to pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Effective support enables such pupils to play a full part in the life of the school and make progress in line with that of others.
- Attendance has improved from being well-below average and is now approaching average because of the success of a number of actions taken by the school. Regular attendance is celebrated and given a high profile in school assemblies and on the school website. Absences are quickly followed-up by the school's attendance officer. The 'walking bus', which follows four routes covering a large area of Bulwell and collects about 90 pupils each morning, is also contributing to the improvement in attendance.
- The breakfast club is exceptionally well supervised and provides the large number of pupils who attend with a very welcoming, friendly and nutritious start to the day.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, staff and governors work together as a cohesive team. Together they have established the school at the heart of the local community. Parents and carers value highly all that the school provides.
- Leaders' checks of the strengths and weaknesses of the school lead to the accurate identification in the school development plan of the areas where improvements are needed. Although the plan sets a clear agenda for improvement, the targets set in the plan are too general and do not relate closely enough to measurable improvements in standards.
- Some actions taken by leaders have not had sufficient time to become embedded throughout the school. Nevertheless, successful management action to improve the teaching of phonics, reading and mathematics together with the improvement in attendance, demonstrate the school has the capacity for continued improvement.
- Procedures for the management of teachers' performance, linked to on-going training, ensure that teachers are held accountable for the progress of pupils in their classes. There is a clear understanding of the link between teachers' pay and promotion and pupils' progress.
- Good leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that supportive links are established with parents and carers from the time that children first enter school. This has a positive impact on children's academic progress and social development.

- Key stage and subject leaders have well-defined areas of responsibility and are provided with good levels of training and support to ensure that they are able to perform their roles effectively. They have a good understanding of the use of progress data and are becoming increasingly involved in contributing to the school's monitoring and assessment systems. They have a good understanding of the improvement needs of their own areas of responsibility.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and promoted through most aspects of school life. The curriculum is enriched by a range of clubs and visits which assist pupils' learning and their personal development. For example, residential experiences help to broaden pupils' outlook, raise aspirations and develop their self-confidence. The additional primary sports funding is used to further enhance provision through, for example, the inclusion of swimming in the activities the school offers.
- The school has a powerful ethos of care and inclusion. There is a united determination to ensure equal opportunities, foster good relationships and eliminate discrimination. The partnership with parents and carers is very strong and staff work very hard to involve them fully in their children's learning, particularly those who may be hard to reach.
- The school makes good use of the training and professional development opportunities available from the local authority and other external providers.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body fulfils its duties well and ensures that all statutory requirements, including those relating to child protection and safeguarding, are met. Governors are diligent in setting and reviewing the headteacher's targets for improving the school. Governors are well informed about the school's performance through detailed reports from the headteacher and staff. They have a clear understanding of the link between teaching and pupils' achievement, and their effectiveness is enhanced through regular training. Governors understand how the school's results compare with those of other schools. The governing body manages funding conscientiously. Good use is made of the pupil premium and governors are fully informed about the impact on pupils' progress.

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	122476
Local authority	Nottingham
Inspection number	425111

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	423
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Hancock
Headteacher	Robert Dunbar
Date of previous school inspection	8 December 2010
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