

Cranmer Primary School

Cranmer Road, Mitcham, CR4 4XU

Inspection dates 15–16 May 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils' achievement is good. They make rapid progress in writing and mathematics to reach standards that are significantly higher than average by the end of Year 6. In reading, pupils make good progress to reach average standards.
- Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage where there are lots of stimulating activities to support their learning.
- Teaching is good overall, and outstanding in mathematics and writing across Key Stage 2, resulting in pupils' rapid and sustained progress in those subjects.
- By developing new leadership roles at both senior and middle levels, senior leaders and governors show their determination to ensure that the school has the capacity to continue to improve as it expands.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well in and around the school. They are courteous and thoughtful, with older pupils helping younger ones to enjoy happy and active playtimes.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe is outstanding. Pupils are keenly aware of how to stay safe from bullying, for example, or on the internet.
- Governors, leaders and managers have significantly improved the quality of teaching since the previous inspection.
- Parents and carers are highly positive about the school. Pupils enjoy coming to school, as demonstrated by their high rates of attendance.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Reading is not taught as well as writing and mathematics; therefore, pupils do not make the same rapid progress.
- When teaching reading, the tasks set by teachers are not always well planned, or sufficiently challenging.
- The teaching of phonics (letter patterns and the sounds they represent) varies too much in quality across and within year groups.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 24 lessons or parts of lessons, 15 of which were conducted jointly with school leaders. The lessons seen included the teaching of reading and phonics, writing and mathematics.
- Inspectors attended an assembly, listened to pupils reading and looked at pupils' work in lessons and work completed over time in their books.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff and representatives from the governing body and the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 51 responses to the online Parent View survey as well as the views of parents and carers spoken to during the course of the inspection. The results of 30 questionnaires completed by staff were also considered.
- Documents scrutinised by inspectors included those related to safeguarding and child protection, records of pupils' behaviour and attendance, checks on the quality of teaching, figures outlining pupils' academic performance, the school's self-evaluation and development planning, and minutes from meetings of the governing body.

Inspection team

Jeanie Jovanova, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Simon Francis

Additional Inspector

Jan Edwards

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Cranmer is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is just above the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is slightly lower than average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium, additional funding for children looked after by the local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is very close to the national average.
- The school serves a diverse community, with nearly three quarters of pupils coming from a range of minority ethnic groups. Over one in four pupils speaks English as an additional language, often starting in the Early Years Foundation Stage at the early stages of learning English.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- At the time of the previous inspection the school was run jointly by two headteachers. In March 2013, one headteacher retired and the current headteacher took over sole responsibility for the school.
- The school is expanding to accommodate three forms of entry. Currently, there are three classes in each year group from Reception to Year 3 and two classes in each year, in Years 4 to 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the teaching of reading so that pupils make rapid and sustained progress in all year groups, by ensuring that teachers:
 - carefully match the tasks they set to the starting points of different groups to ensure all pupils are suitably challenged
 - carefully design the tasks they set to help pupils practise and develop the skills they need to move forward
 - teach phonics equally effectively in all classes and groups.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of skills and knowledge below those of typical three- and four-year-olds, particularly in key areas such as language and communication. They begin to make progress immediately, helped by the range of activities provided which gives them ample opportunity to develop a wide range of skills.
- Results for the phonics screening check in Year 1 have been slightly above average for the last two years. However, results for the Year 2 retake were well below average. The school has introduced a specialist programme to ensure those pupils at risk of falling behind with their reading are helped to catch up. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that this programme is having a clear impact, with pupils advancing approximately a year in their reading in six months.
- By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils reach standards in writing and mathematics that are significantly above average, having made rapid progress from their low starting points. They reach average standards in reading which represents good progress.
- The school uses a range of effective methods, including productive partnerships with local secondary schools, to motivate and challenge the most-able pupils, which has resulted in ever rising proportions reaching the very highest level (Level 6) in writing and mathematics.
- Systems for ensuring disabled pupils and those with special educational needs get the support they need are robust. The school monitors their progress carefully and well-trained teaching assistants provide additional help when necessary which ensures they achieve well.
- The school uses the pupil premium highly effectively to narrow gaps in attainment between eligible pupils and other groups in school. For example, in national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2013, the gaps in writing and mathematics were of only just over a term and the gap in reading had been closed completely.
- The school tackles discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity well. This is evident in the way pupils from different minority ethnic groups in the school achieve equally well, including those who speak English as an additional language.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers are good at challenging pupils to engage with topics which make them think deeply. For example, in a Year 6 lesson covering a range of subjects, pupils had to justify their opinions when responding to the question: 'Did the Greeks have talent?'
- Pupils make rapid progress in writing and mathematics because tasks are carefully planned to ensure they quickly develop the literacy and numeracy skills they need to move on to the next stage of their learning.
- Pupils are good at writing because they have opportunities to plan and edit their work along the way, with clear guidance from teachers on the specific language features they need to take into consideration. For example, in Year 2, pupils were producing a non-fiction book on spiders. Inspectors observed them learning how to use subheadings and match information to the appropriate section, which they did with great success.
- In mathematics, pupils make rapid progress because teachers check carefully how well pupils are doing and move them on to harder work quickly so that the level of challenge remains high. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils were totally engaged in solving increasingly hard problems because the teacher continuously challenged them to stretch their thinking.
- The vibrant and engaging lessons described above strongly motivate the most-able pupils so that they make the same rapid progress as other groups in school. This, coupled with the specialist expertise provided by secondary teachers, ensures that the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 is significantly above average in writing and mathematics.
- The teaching of reading is less successful than the teaching of writing and mathematics.

Teachers do not always check that the tasks they set are sufficiently challenging for pupils at different levels or design the tasks carefully enough to help pupils practise and develop the skills they need to move forward.

- The teaching of phonics is of variable quality, which results in some uneven rates of progress among pupils. In some lessons, pupils are engaged throughout and clearly acquire the new concept being taught. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, pupils used symbols successfully to show whether sounds are made with one letter or more than one letter and spelt a range of difficult words correctly. However, in a Year 2 group, pupils' progress slowed as they became restless because they had to wait too long with nothing to do while others spelt out letter patterns in the sand.
- Teachers write useful comments in pupils' books which help them to see what they need to do next. Pupils then respond to these comments and adapt their work as advised which creates a cycle of rapid progress. For example, good guidance in Year 2 has helped many pupils with the correct use of punctuation and capital letters, which is essential to moving forward as a writer.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school fosters positive relationships well and this is evident in how adults and pupils interact in class, in the dinner hall and in the playground. Pupils said the school is like a family. Attendance levels are very high.
- As well as courtesy and respect, pupils show high levels of care in their dealings with each other. Roles of responsibility such as 'playground pals' ensure pupils are involved in making playtimes fun for all. Acts of kindness, such as helping a pupil who had fallen in the playground, were witnessed by several inspectors. Pupils said that behaviour is typically this good and the school's well-kept records confirmed this.
- Pupils are positive in lessons, listen carefully to teachers' instructions, pack away books and other equipment tidily and move from one lesson to another sensibly. This ensures that time is not wasted.
- Pupils' behaviour is not outstanding because occasionally, such as when tasks are not challenging enough, pupils can become restless and then lose focus.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils know how to stay safe on the internet, on the road, in the home and when approached by strangers. All pupils said they feel safe in school because they have total confidence that adults will look after them. Parents, carers and staff were also positive about how safe pupils feel.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of what bullying is and how to stay safe from it. They recognise that it is repeated and comes in many forms. For example, they are very clear that technology can be used to bully and said that they would report anything they came across straight away.
- Behaviour is managed well. Exclusions are extremely rare. Pupils who have particular difficulties behaving are helped to develop strategies that enable them to manage their behaviour effectively.

The leadership and management are good

- The school has embraced recent changes and adapted accordingly. It is improving, and a new management structure has been put in place, with new leadership roles, to ensure that the school has the capacity to continue to improve as it expands. The school has successfully raised standards in writing and mathematics and the headteacher and her team know that they must do the same with reading.
- Leaders and managers have worked effectively on improving teaching since the previous inspection. There is a robust system for checking on the quality of teaching, including observing lessons and looking at the work pupils complete over time in their books and the way teachers' comments help them to progress. Teachers' training needs are identified and appropriate

support provided where necessary. Staff are very positive about how much this helps them to develop their professional expertise.

- Subjects are led very well by subject leaders who have a clear grasp of information related to the progress pupils make in their subjects and support teachers effectively to raise pupils' attainment. Middle leaders with other responsibilities, such as for particular year groups or pupil groups, are equally effective.
- School development plans clearly identify reading as a high priority for improvement. Senior staff regularly evaluate these plans to ensure they are having the maximum impact possible on pupils' progress.
- The school's curriculum provides numerous opportunities for pupils to develop a range of skills, particularly writing and mathematics, across subjects. For example, pupils' books showed them interpreting population data in geography lessons and writing scripts to accompany animation projects in information and communication technology.
- The school ensures that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Inspirational assemblies and opportunities to marvel at nature as caterpillars turn into butterflies feed pupils' sense of awe and wonder. Lessons on Fairtrade and how to run a micro-society inspire debates about right and wrong. Opportunities to work collaboratively and liaise with other schools promote good social skills. Celebrating the school's diverse community and learning how it relates to the world at large help pupils to develop a strong respect for others.
- The new primary school sports funding is being used well to increase pupils' participation in a range of activities, to enhance staff's expertise in teaching key elements of physical education and to develop pupils' healthy lifestyles and physical well-being.
- The local authority provides light-touch support to this good school because it has every confidence that school's leaders have the capacity to continue to make improvements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know how well the school is performing compared to schools nationally. They support and challenge the school well, focusing their energies on the key priorities. For example, they looked carefully in classrooms and in the library at how the range and provision of books could be enhanced to entice pupils to read more extensively. They support the headteacher and her team by reviewing development plans to ensure that they are properly focused on improving pupils' achievement. Governors attend training to bring their skills up to date, and their responsibilities with regard to all their statutory duties, including safeguarding, are fully met. Governors are clear that good teaching should be rewarded and that pay rises should not be awarded to teachers who do not meet their targets. They get detailed updates about the quality of teaching and they know about pupils' increasingly rapid progress in writing and mathematics; they understand the reason for the school focusing its energies on developing pupils' reading skills. Governors know what the pupil premium is achieving and they keep a close eye on the progress of eligible pupils.

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	102653
Local authority	Merton
Inspection number	439499

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	629
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gary Stanton and Simon Kardosh
Headteacher	Ruth Whymark
Date of previous school inspection	26–27 March 2009
Telephone number	020 8648 2621
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