

INSPECTION REPORT

CROFTON INFANT SCHOOL

Crofton, Wakefield

LEA area: Wakefield

Unique reference number: 108142

Headteacher: Mrs S Shaw

Reporting inspector: Mr R Crompton
7230

Dates of inspection: 15th – 16th March 2000

Inspection number: 190730

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	High Street Crofton Wakefield
Postcode:	WF4 1NG
Telephone number:	01924 303900
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr S Bennett
Date of previous inspection:	25 th November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Mr R Crompton	Registered inspector
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in Crofton, about three miles east of Wakefield. Children are aged between four and seven, and mainly live nearby. The school is smaller than average. There are 168 pupils on roll, almost all of whom are white. Pupils' attainment as they enter the school is broadly average. About ten per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average. Sixteen per cent of the pupils have special educational needs, which is typical of most infant schools. Three pupils receive support from outside agencies.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school which achieves good standards. Under the strong leadership of the headteacher, the staff, governors and parents work together successfully with a common sense of purpose. The quality of teaching is very good and pupils progress well. The school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching is very good; pupils progress well and achieve above average standards.
- Good attitudes and behaviour are successfully promoted
- The highly effective partnership with parents has a positive impact on progress and attainment.
- The headteacher and key staff provide good leadership and management
- Pupils benefit from a broad curriculum.

What could be improved

- Standards in writing could be improved to bring them more in line with the high attainment in reading and mathematics
- Marking needs to be more consistent through the school.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school was last inspected in 1996, improvement has been good. Job descriptions for co-ordinators are now much clearer, responsibilities no longer overlap and finance is now closely linked to development planning. The strengths identified previously have been sustained; in particular, the quality of teaching continues to have a very positive impact on standards of attainment.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
Reading	A	B	B	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Writing	B	B	B	B	
Mathematics	A	A	A	A	

At the age of five, many children achieve beyond what is expected for their age in language and literacy and in numeracy. They make good progress so that, by the time they are seven, standards are above average in English and science, and well above average in mathematics.

Since 1996, results of National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science have been consistently above the national average and also above those of similar schools. Results in 1999 reflected this trend. Currently standards in Year 2 are generally above average. Higher attaining pupils generally fulfil their potential, although the number achieving higher levels in writing is below average.

Across the school, good work was seen in literacy and numeracy, and in other subjects including, art, information technology, and music.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are enthusiastic and keen to do well. They enjoy school and are interested in all aspects of school life.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good. Pupils are polite, courteous and trustworthy; a credit to the school and to their families.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils have very good relationships with adults and with each other. They work well together and respond well when given responsibilities around the school.
Attendance	Very good: attendance is above average and pupils arrive promptly

Pupils' attitudes and values have a positive influence on their learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years
Lessons seen overall 14	Good	Very good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Overall, the teaching in the school is very good. In 93 per cent of lessons, the teaching ranged between good (57 per cent) and very good or excellent (36 per cent). No teaching was unsatisfactory. At least one very good lesson was seen in all year groups.

The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good overall; teachers explain things clearly to children, generate enthusiasm and create a purposeful working atmosphere where pupils feel confident and do their best. The teaching of writing is not as effective as that in other aspects of English. The school is currently providing further training in order to increase teachers' expertise. In mathematics, teachers know the subject very well and are able to build on pupils' existing knowledge through skilful questioning.

Pupils are enthusiastic and try hard. They are developing appropriate levels of independence and know the importance of doing their best.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good: The curriculum is approached imaginatively and pupils' learning is enriched through creative subjects such as art and music.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good overall: Pupils with individual needs are identified early and receive extra support and many make good progress. Individual learning targets could be more frequently used when marking and assessing progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	<p>There is good provision for pupils' spiritual development in assemblies, which include opportunities for reflection. The wonders of nature are discussed in science and the beauty of paintings is celebrated in art. The history of the school is used imaginatively to encourage children to reflect on their own place in time.</p> <p>Pupils' moral development is promoted very well. Staff are excellent role models and parents speak highly of the values promoted by the school.</p> <p>Paired and small group discussion promotes co-operation and social interaction is effectively promoted during playtimes and other informal occasions.</p> <p>Cultural awareness is developed satisfactorily through art workshops and theatre visits. There is room for extending pupils' awareness of other cultures.</p>
How well the school cares for its pupils	All staff know individual children well. The school has high regard for their safety and welfare.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The head teacher provides very effective leadership. She is supported well by the deputy and there is a common sense of purpose throughout the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil all their statutory responsibilities. Development plans are detailed and clearly set out.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Thorough analysis of pupils' progress takes place and teaching is closely monitored. This enables the school to refine the curriculum and to set appropriate priorities for teaching and learning.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are carefully allocated in line with the school's priorities.

The smooth running of the school enables staff to concentrate on teaching and is a factor in the maintenance of good standards. Governors apply the principles of best value to ensure resources are used well to support high quality teaching and learning.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are eager to come to school and they make very good progress. • Children behave well and work hard. • The quality of teaching is consistently good. • Parents are made very welcome and are encouraged to play a full part in their children's learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual parents raised minor issues but there are no common concerns.

The inspection supported the parents' positive views.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The quality of teaching is very good; pupils progress well and achieve above average standards.

1. The attainment of seven-year-olds over the past four years has been above average in reading, writing and mathematics. The school has consistently enabled each year group of pupils to move from a broadly average base to achieving standards better than those found nationally and better than those of schools with similar characteristics. This good progress is the result of effective leadership, careful planning and, especially, the high quality of the day-to-day teaching.
2. Children thrive in the early years classes. Teaching staff have created a very stimulating environment for young children. Resources are of good quality and plentiful; they are clearly set out and easily accessible by both children and teachers. The combination of separate rooms and open areas is used effectively to group children in various ways during the day. For example, the older children are often taught in the classroom while the younger ones enjoy a range of learning activities – such as sand/water play, painting, modelling and role play - in the open area. Relationships are excellent and each member of staff knows all the children well. This was evident during story time, when the two nursery nurses carefully structured the session for the older and younger part-time pupils. The older group joined in frequently, enjoying predicting words and phrases and anticipating what happened next. The nursery nurse ensured they could identify the title and author, providing a good foundation for subsequent work. Her colleague generated enthusiasm for a book about shapes. Children were eager to spot and name the various shapes and those who were unsure were gently helped to offer suggestions. Both nursery nurses were sensitive to the children's concentration span and finished off the session appropriately with a song.
3. The older reception children who attend full-time are involved in lessons that are a little more formal. The teacher successfully introduces letter sounds, following a systematic programme. Through a wide range of practical activities, children gain a good degree of phonetic awareness. When learning the sound *b*, they were making letters using play dough, investigating the *b box* and using more conventional resources, such as word lists and dictionaries.
4. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 successfully builds on the good start made in the early years. Lessons are well planned. Teachers are very clear about what they want pupils to learn and often make this known at the beginning of a lesson. Planning takes into account the different levels of attainment in the class, so that all pupils can build on what they already know and confidently tackle more challenging work. Towards the end of an excellent lesson on reading, the teacher gathered the pupils together to focus on specific letter clusters. Pupils identified the two sounds in *ip*, referring to them by the correct term, *phonemes*. The teacher had made a flipbook and the pupils were bursting with enthusiasm to complete words with the same sound. During another word game – *Full Circle* - their eagerness was difficult to contain. This lesson clearly illustrated how pupils' learning is frequently enhanced through dynamic and well-informed teaching.

5. The teaching of mathematics is a strength of the school and enables pupils to achieve high standards. For example, in a Year 2 numeracy lesson, the teacher structured the activities very well. The initial mental mathematics session was brisk and pupils were skilfully motivated to demonstrate and extend their knowledge of the 2, 5 and 10 times tables. They were able to quickly identify the next multiple in a series, counting both forwards and backwards. Using a magnetic board and counters, the teacher led a discussion about the *commutative law* of multiplication, illustrating the equivalence of 7×4 and 4×7 , 2×14 and 14×2 and so on. Subsequent group work provided good opportunities for pupils to practise skills and consolidate their understanding. There was an adult assigned to each group, which greatly enhanced pupils' learning. Some of the higher attaining pupils spontaneously counted using negative numbers, demonstrating a level of understanding more usually associated with work at Key Stage 2.

Good attitudes and behaviour are successfully promoted

6. From the time they start school, children are encouraged to be positive about school life. In the early years, the caring and supportive atmosphere contributes greatly to the children's feeling of security. Adults treat children with respect and provide good role models for acceptable behaviour. Work habits are established early; children are given clear parameters for behaviour and staff create opportunities for them to share resources, to take turns and to look after each other.
7. Lessons are made very interesting, which means that children become absorbed in their work. Co-operative work in pairs and small groups helps them to develop supportive relationships and teachers consistently promote tolerance and respect for others. Pupils' self-esteem is enhanced through the many opportunities for them to shine in small ways – perhaps being praised in class for a good answer, or being rewarded with a sticker for helping someone in the playground.
8. Pupils take responsibility willingly and treat resources with care. The good condition of classroom materials, computers and musical instruments, which are readily accessible, is an indication that pupils handle them carefully and have a respect for school property.
9. Movement around the school is well ordered and behaviour in lessons and break times is very good. The way that visitors are welcomed provides further evidence of pupils' positive attitudes. They are open, friendly, polite and courteous; a credit to the school and to their families.

The highly effective partnership with parents has a positive impact on progress and attainment.

10. Parents are very positive about the school. At the parents' meeting before the inspection, there was strong support for the partnership that the school has developed with parents over a number of years. The questionnaire returns also reflected this view. Parents have good opportunities to discuss their children's work and annual written reports clearly indicate how they are progressing.
11. All school documentation is very parent-friendly and a genuine desire to involve parents is evident in the day-to-day life of the school. There is lots of information around the school about the curriculum, and how parents can support their children. The school consults parents on many issues, frequently using questionnaires to canvass opinion.

12. A very significant aspect of the school's commendable partnership with parents is the joint approach to reading. From the time they start school, all parents have the opportunity to come into school each morning to help their children read. This is extended in Year 1, when parents are invited in every Thursday for the first teaching period. This arrangement was observed during the inspection. Teachers planned the session carefully, setting out pupils' books and providing various related activities for parents to do with their children. Almost all pupils had the support of a parent, carer, grandparent or friend; school staff and other volunteers helped those whose parents could not come. All involved were fully absorbed and the one-to-one teaching meant that pupils made very good progress. They were very keen to learn and the wide range of reading material and associated resources ensured that all were appropriately challenged.
13. Parents and children value these sessions highly. The success of this partnership can be seen in the reading results, which are consistently above average. In addition, the sessions enable parents and teachers to have an informal word about any issues, which means both parties can keep in close touch throughout the child's school life.

The headteacher and key staff provide good leadership and management

14. The headteacher has a clear vision for future development and plays a vital role in moving the school forward and in sustaining high standards. She is ably supported by the deputy head. All staff take on additional responsibilities willingly and effectively. All involved in the school feel valued. There is a common sense of purpose, which contributes to the positive atmosphere that permeates the school.
15. Successful strategies have been introduced to monitor teaching. All teachers have observed each other and have provided feedback about the implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies. Teachers have benefited from this feedback and it is having a positive effect on standards.
16. In order to ensure consistency within and across year groups, the work of three pupils from each year is closely monitored to track progress and attainment. The results of National Curriculum tests and other assessments are carefully analysed to enable the school to identify whole-school and individual targets. Pupils' progress is tracked from the time they start school so that teachers know what progress should be expected of individual pupils. This often results in extra support for those pupils who appear to fall behind and contributes to their overall success at the end of the key stage.
17. The school was awarded the Investors In People standard in December, a further indication of how the head and staff work successfully work together to achieve the school's aims.

Pupils benefit from a broad curriculum

18. Although this short inspection focussed mainly on literacy and numeracy, there was ample evidence of the rich curriculum enjoyed by the pupils. The pupils' books, art folders and displays around the school included a variety of work across the curriculum. Great effort is put into displaying pupils' work in a range of subjects with imagination and flair. Every pupil has something on display. Artefacts are used to good effect to stimulate pupils' thinking about current topics. There is a rich tapestry of art and sculpture throughout the school, which provides vivid reminders of other countries and religions. The learning environment is further enhanced by the presence of

budgerigars, stick insects, hamsters and fish; pupils take a great interest in these creatures and teachers often use them during lessons. Plants and flowers are used to great effect. Photographs of pupils on educational visits and performing in school plays also indicate that they have a varied and exciting school life.

19. The school has successfully sustained good standards in the core subjects while at the same time covering the whole of the National Curriculum and introducing pupils to a wealth of ideas and experiences.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Standards in writing could be improved to bring them more in line with the high attainment in reading and mathematics.

20. The school has identified the need to improve pupils' attainment in writing. Although the number of pupils attaining the expected Level 2 in National Curriculum tests is well above average, only one pupil achieved the higher Level 3 last year. This contrasts with reading and mathematics in which about a third of pupils achieved Level 3.
21. *Writers' Workshops* have been introduced and these are already having a positive effect. Some good examples of extended writing have resulted from this approach. Pupils are becoming aware of the need to plan written work and to draw on conventional structures for non-fictional writing. For example, they were making good attempts to write a *tadpole diary*. However, more support could be provided for pupils to generate ideas and to sequence their writing. More opportunities are needed for pupils to draft, edit and re-draft their work, perhaps with a writing partner. Further use could be made of word processing for this purpose. The writing tasks are usually expected to be completed in a relatively short space of time, but a more extended period would often be more appropriate, allowing pupils more time to modify and improve their work.
22. Given the general level of competence in reading, many pupils have weak spelling skills and this also detracts from the overall quality of writing. The use of dictionaries and word lists should be further encouraged so that pupils are helped to become more confident in spelling common words.

Marking needs to be more consistent through the school

23. Teachers are conscientious in ensuring that pupils' work is regularly marked. Where teachers focus on the learning intentions behind a piece of work and make comments on these, marking is effective. Although a long written evaluation would not be appropriate, some marking is a little superficial. The better marking, as well as acknowledging pupils efforts, includes a brief comment about how pupils could improve. Teachers frequently provide oral feedback during lessons and, together with the pupils, identify individual targets. These targets provide an ideal focus for subsequent marking and could be more consistently used.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The school should now:

- Improve standards in writing by:
 - making more effective use of support materials to help pupils with their written work
 - encouraging higher attainers to draft and edit their work to improve the quality of the finished piece
 - introducing strategies to improve the quality of presentation, including the use of information technology.

- Develop a more consistent approach to marking by:
 - extending the good practice of some teachers in commenting on the quality of pupils' work and giving them specific targets for improvement
 - using individual targets as a focus for marking.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	14
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	12

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
7%	29%	57%	7%	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	-	145
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	-	12

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	-	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	-	25

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.0
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	25	23	48

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	24	25
	Girls	21	22	23
	Total	44	46	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (87)	96 (90)	100 (98)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	25	25
	Girls	23	23	23
	Total	47	48	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (90)	100 (94)	100 (98)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	106
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR - Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR - Y2

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	117

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	247736
Total expenditure	258486
Expenditure per pupil	1596
Balance brought forward from previous year	12300
Balance carried forward to next year	1568

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	145
Number of questionnaires returned	42

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	83	17	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	62	33	0	0	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	52	48	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	43	12	2	17
The teaching is good.	79	19	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	48	38	5	2	7
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	81	19	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	36	0	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	57	38	0	0	5
The school is well led and managed.	60	36	0	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	64	31	0	0	5

The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

29	26	14	0	31
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