

INSPECTION REPORT

CROFTLANDS INFANT SCHOOL

Ulverston

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112197

Headteacher: Mrs Jane Smith

Reporting inspector: Mr Andrew Clark
21596

Dates of inspection: 10th - 11th March 2003

Inspection number: 247195

Short 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
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Oakwood Drive Ulverston
Postcode:	LA12 9JU
Telephone number:	01229 894181
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Colin Hewson
Date of previous inspection:	November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Croftlands Infant School is in the small market town of Ulverston. It is about average size with 208 boys and girls on roll aged between three and seven. This includes 46 pupils who attend the nursery on a part-time basis. Almost all the pupils are from white British backgrounds. A very small percentage of pupils speak English as an additional language. The school serves an area of mixed privately owned and rented housing and about a third of the pupils are from outside the school's catchment area. The percentage of pupils eligible for a free school meal, 14 per cent, is broadly average. Approximately 16 per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs, which is below average, although the percentage of pupils with a statement for their special educational needs is above average at 4 per cent. The pupils' needs include moderate learning, emotional, behavioural and physical difficulties. There is a wide spread of attainment on entry to the school and this is broadly average overall.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school. The pupils attain high standards because of the very good quality of teaching. The excellent ethos for learning is successfully promoted by high quality leadership and management and the school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The very good leadership and management of the school are very successful at maintaining high standards
- The very good quality of teaching promotes positive attitudes to learning
- There is excellent coverage of the full curriculum
- All pupils are fully involved in the life of the school and there are high standards of care

What could be improved

- There are no significant areas for improvement

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been very good improvement since the school was last inspected in 1997. The many strengths identified at the time in the quality of education and leadership have been maintained despite a change of headteacher. Standards have improved well for pupils of all abilities. The school has continued to improve the quality of planning and assessment procedures and they are now of a high standard.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
Reading	B	B	A	A
Writing	C	A	A	A
Mathematics	B	A	B	B

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The standards are well above average. The school has maintained high standards since the last inspection and, because of the commitment to achieving the challenging targets set for pupils' attainment; it is well placed to continue to do so. There is little difference between the test results year-on-year. There are very few pupils who do not reach the result expected for their age by Year 2 in all subjects and a very high proportion who attain higher levels. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress through the school as a result of very good teaching. Pupils who are gifted or talented are supported well and also make very good progress. Children make very good progress through the reception classes and by the time they start Year 1 the majority of children exceed the levels expected for their age in all areas of learning.

The very high standards were reflected in the work seen on inspection. Pupils read very fluently and with good expression by Year 2. They write at length and express their ideas well on a wide range of subjects. They know their number facts well in mathematics and are very accurate in their work. Pupils' investigative skills are very good in science. Pupils' skills in information and communication technology are above average. The pupils achieve well in many subjects and there are good standards in art, design and technology and physical education. There is no significant difference in the standards reached by boys and girls.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The pupils are very happy and work together extremely well. They respect the staff and enjoy their lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The pupils are thoughtful and kind towards each other. They play together well at playtimes and are co-operative in class.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. By Year 2, the pupils are very mature and responsible and work with minimum supervision. There are excellent relationships throughout the school.
Attendance	Very good. The pupils are prompt and eager to come to school.

The pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour make a significant contribution to the high quality of learning. The close relationship with parents supports pupils' very good attendance.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	Very 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.

The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good. The teaching of English and mathematics is very good and basic skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught throughout the curriculum. The subject leaders support the development of these subjects very well. Teachers plan their lessons very well. They make it very clear to pupils precisely what they are aiming to achieve during the lesson and how they should go about it. All staff maintain very good discipline by setting high expectations for pupils to work towards. The teachers question pupils closely and engage them in interesting discussions. They use a wide range of good strategies to motivate and involve the pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are very well taught. All staff have a very clear idea of the steps these pupils need to take to achieve their targets. This helps pupils develop their independence. Teachers make effective use of information and communication technology in several subjects. The relationship between pupils and staff is good natured and built on care and humour and this contributes to an eagerness to learn. Teaching assistants provide very good support for pupils. The children make a very good start in the nursery and reception classes. They learn to work and play independently and to listen carefully. There are stimulating displays and labels to encourage pupils to read and think. The pupils work very hard throughout the school and take great care.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Excellent. It is broad and challenging offering pupils many practical experiences. They study many subjects such as science, art and physical education in depth and produce work of a high quality. There is a sound range of out of school activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The few pupils with special educational needs are identified early and supported well through carefully planning and regular reviews. The parents offer good support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This is very good. All staff set very good examples to pupils and treat them with maturity and respect. They engage pupils in discussions on moral and social issues. The displays, visits and visitors teach pupils to respect the views of others and become increasingly aware of the beauty and wonder in their world.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. There are good procedures to ensure pupils are well cared for and protected. The school monitors pupils' personal and academic ability very well.

The school works very well with parents. Parents are kept very well informed about their child's progress and contribute to learning both in the classroom and at home.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher establishes a very clear direction for continued improvement. She is highly respected by staff, pupils and parents. The supportive and effective staff team excellently promotes the aims of the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. They are very effectively organised, ensure appropriate policies are in place and monitor school improvement closely. They take a good role in planning future developments.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is very good. The results of a wide range of test and other data are critically and imaginatively analysed to set challenging targets. The subject leaders play a very good role in this. The school listens carefully to the views of parents and others and incorporates this into their planning.
The strategic use of resources	There is very good financial control and funds are used well. The staff are well trained and make good use of all available resources.

The headteacher works closely with all staff to plan for strategic improvement through a careful and accurate review of standards and provision. The governing body is supportive, yet challenging to the school. The governing body is very thorough in making sure they provide best value in all the school's major purchases and improvements.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of teaching is good • The school expects children to work hard • Children enjoy school • The school is well led and managed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities for children out-of – lessons

The inspection team agrees with the positive views of parents. The school offers gymnastic and music clubs, which is at least as good provision as the majority of infant schools. The inspectors, therefore, disagree with the parents' views in this respect. The school is, however, actively exploring ways to develop extra-curricular opportunities.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The leadership and management of the school are very successful at maintaining high standards.

- 1 The standards are high and pupils make very good progress. The overall trend of improvement for standards in reading, writing and mathematics have been better than average since the last inspection in 1997. This is a result of the skill and care the headteacher and senior staff show in closely monitoring the pupils' progress and raising the standards of teaching and learning. They are very well supported by an active and well-informed governing body.
- 2 By the time pupils leave school the percentage of pupils achieving the expected levels in national tests for reading, writing and mathematics are well above average. It is also well above average for pupils who attain the higher levels in the national tests. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. The test results are reflected in the work seen in school. The pupils make very good progress from their attainment on starting the nursery school.
- 3 By Year 2, the pupils speaking skills are very good. They are confident and fluent speakers who keep to the point well. For example, they explain clearly their own strategies for solving doubling and halving problems in mathematics in great detail. The pupils read fluently and expressively. They recognise rhymes and the way letters blend to form new sounds. They use this knowledge well to make their reading enjoyable. They concentrate hard and pupils of all abilities make few errors.
- 4 The pupils' writing skills are very good. The pupils often write at length. Their work is clearly put in order so that stories and factual writing are easy to follow. They can reason why characters in act as they do. They use a rich vocabulary to create a mood; 'We realised the generator had disconnected. Could we save it?' Handwriting is usually neat and most pupils join the letters in an attractive cursive style. Pupils with special educational needs and the less able make good progress towards these levels of working and often show a similar awareness of language and enjoyment in reading and writing.
- 5 Standards in mathematics are also very high. The pupils work very hard and produce a lot of work. They are quick and accurate in answering mental and oral questions. They recognise patterns in numbers. For example, they have no hesitation in counting backwards or forwards from any given number over a hundred or counting on in twos, fives or tens from different starting points. The pupils are accurate in their practical work in measuring and data handling. They solve word problems with confidence using their knowledge and earlier learning well.
- 6 The headteacher establishes an excellent ethos in which learning can flourish and high standards be achieved. There is a very effective team of senior teachers who work closely together to promote standards. The breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding of infant practice amongst the team is very high and this supports the systematic approach to school improvement well. The head teacher and other senior teachers offer excellent examples through their teaching. Ideas and opinions are openly shared and the views of all staff are welcomed. This is very evident in detailed minutes for staff and curriculum meetings. As a result, teachers will ask for help and are not afraid to express difficulties they have had.

- 7 The close teamwork is built on firm foundations for monitoring and supporting teaching and learning. The head teacher and subject leaders for English and mathematics have regular programmes for monitoring work and teaching. They produce detailed feedback for individual teachers and this feeds into useful target setting for future professional development. The monitoring has directly led to training in specific aspects of teaching to raise standards overall. For example, teachers have been developing techniques for improving pupils' knowledge of their own learning through the use of the end session or 'plenary' of lessons. The subject leaders and headteacher very closely analyse pupils' progress and standards in national tests. This has led to very specific changes in the mathematics and English curriculum planning. New developments are always followed up with careful evaluation of success and further change if required. Target setting is based on a thorough knowledge of individuals and groups of pupils.
- 8 The governing body is very effective in supporting the school in moving forward. They take an active interest in all aspects of the school's work. Again the knowledge of schools and teaching are a strength of several governors and others make use of a wide range of relevant experiences such as working with adults with special educational needs. They have established close links with subject leaders through their presentations to governors, visits to school and sharing the analysis of test and other data. They have been particularly effective in supporting bids for additional funding and raising support from local industry. They are well informed by the headteacher on all aspects of their work and make good use of computers to manage information.

The very good quality of teaching promotes positive attitudes to learning.

- 9 The standards and learning opportunities described above are directly linked to the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. The quality of the majority of lessons observed on inspection was very good and no lessons seen were less than good. This is because of the effective planning and positive ethos.
- 10 The planning is a particular strength of the teaching. Teachers make very good use of the school's own schemes of work for most subjects. They make good use of national strategies for literacy and numeracy, which have been incorporated in to the school's schemes. There is a strong sense of ownership, which gives the lessons purpose and relevance to the pupils.
- 11 The pace of most lessons is brisk, yet balanced. For example, many lessons start with a fast paced mental activity and recap of previous work, but still allow pupils sufficient time to consider their replies to questions carefully. As a result, pupils are usually accurate and careful in number work or when reading texts together. The teachers often set clear and appropriate targets for how long pupils have to complete tasks. This leads to pupils who generally settle quickly to their work and are eager to succeed. They are very interested in their work. For example, Year 1 pupils experimenting with creating different effects with coloured paper recalled their earlier learning well to produce lively faces.
- 12 By Year 2, most pupils work well independently. Many do not start school with confidence in working on their own. This is very strongly focused on from the start through the wide range of experiences in nursery and reception. In Year 1 and 2 this is built upon and teachers' expectations for independent work are high. The school improvement plan is focusing on developing ways for pupils to work with more independence.

- 13 Teachers make good use of detailed assessments of pupils' achievement to make sure the work is suitably challenging. This means that whilst pupils are challenged they also feel secure in the knowledge that if they try they will succeed. This is supported by good use of praise and support from teachers. This is very evident in the work planned for pupils with special educational needs and the most able. For example, in a Year 1 mathematics lesson, the teacher had prepared separate, but similar word-problems for one child who was very able but not always willing to work hard. The nature of the questions appealed to the pupil and the teacher injected a good balance of praise and critical comment to enable him to rise to the task.
- 14 The teachers' management of pupils' behaviour is a strength in creating good learners. There are several pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties on the register of special educational needs. Their behaviour is managed very well enabling the pupils to increasingly reflect on the appropriateness of their actions. Teachers are very sensitive to when a pupil should be cajoled into trying hard and when space should be created to allow them to participate fully. The skilful handling is a result of teachers' personal skills and the regular sharing of good practice through discussion and observation. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides very effective support.
- 15 As a result of the very good quality of teaching pupils' are well prepared for future learning.

There is excellent coverage of the full curriculum.

- 16 The pupils experience a broad and balanced curriculum and achieve high standards in several subjects. The drive to make sure of good performance in English and mathematics has not been at the expense of other subjects. Every classroom and shared area such as the hall and entranceway sings out with good quality pupils' work representing many subjects.
- 17 The school has given a lot of thought to ways to make certain that pupils' experiences in all subjects are meaningful. As a result they often teach subjects in relatively short, but intensive blocks of time. For example, they may devote two or three weeks to one or two subjects as well as English and mathematics. In this way pupils can start and finish a design and technology or geography project over a manageable period of time and research and experiment whilst knowledge is fresh in their minds. The teachers can build on earlier lessons without wasting time refreshing the pupils' memories. The curriculum is very well planned so that knowledge and understanding progresses well in all subjects during the pupils time in school.
- 18 In the nursery and reception classes pupils have very good experiences of all areas of learning. There is a strong focus on developing pupils' independence and concentration from the start. Activities are practical and relevant. As a result, pupils spread butter on their bread for tuna sandwiches with exceptional care and good understanding of basic hygiene. The role-play areas are well planned to promote learning in many areas. A young girl in the 'vets' described in great detail how her cat needed an injection and how to take care of it. The opportunities to promote pupils physical and creative development are very good because of the imaginative tasks. For example, they had a real fishing game with nets in the water play area to develop their knowledge and understanding. Pupils use computers well in nursery and reception, for example in shape-matching games closely linked to other work.

- 19 In Years 1 and 2 the pupils' experiences in physical education are particularly good reflecting the impact of a leading physical education teacher. In dance, for example, pupils responded very well to the thorough planning and teachers expertise. They used an exciting vocabulary of 'dots, dashes and squiggles' to describe their movements. The pupils created extended sequences of movements with a good finish. High standards were also seen in gymnastics and ball skills. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn gymnastics out of school time.
- 20 The pupils have very good practical experiences in many subjects and there are strong expectations for pupils to think for themselves and organise their own work. Pupils with special educational needs and those with a gift or talent thrive on the open nature of these tasks. For example, a pupil with learning and behavioural difficulties articulated his ideas on how to make a winding mechanism very clearly as a result of excellent questioning by the teacher. There are very good links made between subjects that help to motivate pupils and develop research and reference skills. For example, pupils explored drawbridges and other historical winding mechanisms in design and technology. In science, pupils show imagination and understanding in their recording methods and diagrams are often very well executed. They design their own symbols for electrical components alongside learning appropriate standard symbols.
- 21 The pupils experience a very good range of art and design. They make prints, collages and work with fabrics and three-dimensional materials including clay and plaster. The pupils make close observational drawings using a very range of media. They make good use of computers to create pictures and cards. The work is attractively displayed, often with thought-provoking questions for the viewer.
- 22 The school makes very good use of visits and visitors to enliven pupils' learning. During the inspection the pupils participated in a full touring theatrical production, based on signing as a method of communication, set in the 'wild west'. The Year 2 pupils took leading roles through improvised role-play. The school is involved in many local festivals and fairs including music, sport and drama.
- 23 The pupils' learning experiences at Croftlands Infant school make a significant contribution to their personal and academic development.

All pupils are fully involved in the life of the school and there are high standards of care.

- 24 The school, as can be seen above, is successful in involving pupils of all abilities in reaching high standards in learning and personal development. There are strong systems to support the progress made by pupils with special educational needs, including those with a statement of special educational needs and the more able pupils. The school is also very sensitive to the particular needs of pupils who are 'looked after' by the local education authorities and others in circumstances of social concern. A very low percentage of pupils do not speak English as a first language and the school meets their needs well.
- 25 The basis for the high standards of care is the school's detailed knowledge of individual pupils. Close relationships are established with parents when the pupils start nursery and detailed records are kept of academic or personal concerns. These records are maintained well throughout the school so that all teachers are well informed. The special educational needs co-ordinator works closely with staff to make use of all available information to set targets for learning and to develop

appropriate teaching methods and activities. This is very effectively communicated to all those involved in working with the pupils. For example, the teaching assistants have a very good knowledge of the progress made by pupils in their care. This results in sensitive teaching and support.

- 26 The recording and analysis of pupils' achievements is very thorough for all subjects and this again helps teachers to adjust their teaching to suite individuals. This has already been described above but is an important reason why the school is effective in including all pupils in the learning process.
- 27 The school keeps a record of pupils who show particular gifts or talents. They review their progress regularly and look for opportunities to promote their learning further. The open-nature of many activities and the wide range of learning opportunities is generally sufficiently challenging in itself.
- 28 Levels of daily care are very good. The procedures for Child Protection and for promoting health and safety are well managed and rigorously monitored by the governing body. The school administrator knows pupils and procedures very well and supports pupils and parents well.
- 29 The inclusive nature of the school serves the pupils and wider community well.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 30 There are no significant areas for improvement.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	17
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	7

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	9	6	-	-	-	-
Percentage	12	53	35	-	-	-	-

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than four percentage points.

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)	23	185
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	25

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	8
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	34

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.6
National comparative data	5.4

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 2)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	35	17	52

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	32	34	33
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	48	50	49
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (95)	96 (95)	94 (95)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	35	32	34
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	51	48	50
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (95)	92 (89)	96 (95)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

Ethnic background of pupils**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	182	-	-
White – Irish	-	-	-
White – any other White background	1	-	-
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	-	-
Mixed – White and Black African	-	-	-
Mixed – White and Asian	-	-	-
Mixed – any other mixed background	-	-	-
Asian or Asian British - Indian	-	-	-
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	-	-	-
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	-	-	-
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	-	-	-
Black or Black British – Caribbean	-	-	-
Black or Black British – African	-	-	-
Black or Black British – any other Black background	-	-	-
Chinese	1	-	-
Any other ethnic group	-	-	-
No ethnic group recorded	-	-	-

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, 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)	8.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	23

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	157

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	12

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
£	
Total income	470,302
Total expenditure	489,241
Expenditure per pupil	2,589
Balance brought forward from previous year	45,164
Balance carried forward to next year	26,225

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	160
Number of questionnaires returned	117

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	73	22	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	61	35	3	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	51	0	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	51	3	3	9
The teaching is good.	66	32	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	46	10	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	27	0	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	43	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	38	57	2	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	66	32	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	42	2	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	20	33	15	2	30