



Crofton Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number 101660
LEA London Borough of Bromley

Inspection number 274822
Inspection dates 20 - 21 June 2005
Reporting inspector Martin Creasey

Inspection deemed to have been carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 according to section 12(3) of the same act.

Type of School	Junior	School address	Towncourt Lane
School category	Foundation		Orpington
Age range of pupils	7 - 11		Kent
			BR5 1EL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	(01689) 821 716
Number on roll	703	Fax number	(01689) 821 716
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Diane Moss
Date of previous inspection	18-21 October 1999	Headteacher	Richard Sammonds

Age group	Published	Reference no.
7 - 11	July 2005	274822

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Introduction

The inspection was a pilot of the new arrangements for inspection announced by Ofsted in consultation paper of February 2004. It was carried out with the support and co-operation of Crofton Junior School and of the local education authority.

The inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Crofton Junior School is a very large school serving the Crofton area in the London Borough of Bromley. Most pupils are White British, with about one in ten coming from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Almost a third of the school's pupils come from outside the area. This broadens the range of the pupils' attainment on entry, although it remains above average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average but the proportion with a statement is broadly average. The number of pupils with first languages other than English is above the national average, but no pupils are in the early stages of learning English. Very few families claim free school meals.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Crofton Junior School is a good school that effectively meets the needs of all learners. It has many strengths some of which are outstanding, such as pupils' behaviour; the care, guidance and support pupils receive; the way staff are supported and challenged in order to improve their effectiveness; and the spiritual, moral and social development of pupils. There are no major weaknesses but some aspects of the school could be improved. These are that too many holidays are taken by pupils in term time, that the school's recent initiatives on teaching and learning are not fully in place in all lessons, and that information and communication technology (ICT) skills are not as strong as literacy and numeracy skills.

Pupils enjoy their experiences at school and are developing their learning in a safe and pleasant environment. The school provides good value for money. Teaching is good, well planned and stimulates learning so that pupils achieve well. Pupils begin at Crofton School with standards that are higher than usually found. Because the quality of teaching is good, pupils progress well and by Year 6 achieve standards that are well above the national average.

Those pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities do well. Pupils who speak first languages other than English make good progress.

Leadership and management are good and the school has a very effective system of self-evaluation. The school also judged itself to be good. Through the analysis and sharing of data, the main strengths and development points are known and understood by staff and governors. Governors provide support, have a clear view of the strategic direction for improvement and through good committee work, monitor and challenge senior staff to ensure improvements are implemented.

The school has established very good links with outside groups to ensure that pupils develop a fine understanding of matters regarding their health, safety and general well-being.

Since its last inspection, the school has made considerable improvement. Standards have improved at a faster rate than that found nationally and the key issues have been tackled well. Strategic planning looks three to five years ahead. The capacity to improve further is strong in the school because of the clear strategic planning and well established monitoring and evaluation leading to high quality self-evaluation.

Grade: 2

What the school should do to improve further

There are no significant weaknesses. The leadership team are effective and have clearly outlined and shared the future development of the school in the school plan. The inspection confirmed that the following points should be included in the school's priorities:

- Work with parents to reduce the above average unauthorised absences.
- Continued development of teachers' skills in the application of interactive learning across the curriculum.
- Implement the planned introduction of 'response partners' so that pupils have the opportunities to check their ideas and learning with each other.
- Develop the planned innovations in group work so that the more able are challenged by different tasks.

Achievement and standards

The well above average standards and pupils' good achievement are the result of consistently good teaching and assessment and an interesting curriculum. Pupils make good progress from their above average start and by Year 6 standards are well above average and better than those found in similar schools. Challenging targets are set for pupils in English and mathematics and most met these last year, consequently, targets for the current Year 6 have been raised in order to improve the attainment of the school overall.

Good support is given to pupils who have learning difficulties or those who are capable of higher attainment. Some of the lower attaining pupils' skills are not as well developed in mathematics as they are in English, but the school has recognised this and teachers are setting more precise mathematics targets for these pupils. All groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties, do well.

Over three-quarters of pupils make better progress than that normally found in junior classes. The strong upward trend in the school's results since 2001 is greater than that found nationally. Boys and girls achieve similarly. Pupils write well, using balanced arguments, interesting vocabulary and good punctuation. In mathematics, they tackle complex work confidently. The effective links between different subjects and the use of literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum contributes to the good progress. For example, in science and geography, pupils make measurements, display them as graphs and interpret them well. Achievement is satisfactory in ICT but is not as good as in numeracy and literacy. Although the use of ICT is satisfactory overall, it is not consistent between classes, so pupils' experience of using computers varies as they move through the school, slowing progress a little.

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding overall. The school is properly aware of which aspects of personal development are good and which are excellent. In this school, the key aspects of behaviour and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are excellent and all other elements of personal development are good.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, as is their behaviour in lessons and around the school. Pupils respond very well to the opportunities provided for their spiritual development in assemblies, which are often led by local religious leaders, and in lessons. Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning; for example, expressing their wonder at the sight of sugar crystals emerging on the interactive whiteboard in a science lesson. Their knowledge and understanding of other cultures is very good and the curriculum makes excellent provision for the study of other cultures from overseas and those that can be found in Britain.

The pupils have a high regard for each other and the older pupils look after the interests of the younger and vulnerable pupils through the well-established 'buddy system'. The school council represents the pupils well and takes its responsibility seriously in supporting the behaviour and anti-bullying policy.

The other elements of pupils' personal well-being are good. Overall attendance figures are better than those seen nationally and there is a good system in the school where parents and carers provide notes or telephone in to report absence. An area of attendance that might be improved is the number of pupils absent from school without reason - which is higher than national figures. The school's analysis shows this to be linked to the number of families taking unauthorised holidays during term time. The headteacher writes to all these families but, as yet, there is no improvement in the figures.

Pupils are encouraged to take on responsibility and make a contribution to the life of the school, particularly through their involvement in the school council. Every class in the school has representatives in this group. They debate relevant issues and make decisions at meetings with great confidence. This helps them to mature and develop into responsible young citizens. Pupils' future economic well-being is encouraged and their skills are being developed well most notably through managing the budgets for aspects of the school such as new playground games and raising funds for charities during 'Charity Fortnight'.

Pupils are very positive about the school and talk animatedly about all the activities on offer. They enjoy coming to school and think lessons are interesting and their teachers supportive. Pupils are taught well about healthy lifestyles. In the work observed in science, design and technology and

geography they were aware of the risks and were taking all necessary precautions. Pupils have a very secure awareness of safety issues, such as using equipment during playtimes where there is good adult monitoring to support their careful behaviour. The playgrounds are healthy environments where pupils can play or relax without fears.

Grade: 1

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good and are reflected in the high standards pupils achieve. In lessons observed, judgements corresponded with the school's own self-evaluations about teaching and learning. Teachers have high expectations and create an atmosphere in classrooms where shared learning is encouraged, enabling pupils to feel secure when answering or raising questions and helping them to learn well, take pride in and enjoy their work.

Teachers make clear to pupils what they want them to learn and how to judge whether they have been successful. This enables them to check and appreciate their own achievements. Marking is regular and in line with the school policy, ensuring teachers give particularly useful feedback to pupils enabling them to know what they must do to improve. Teachers keep detailed information about pupils' attainment and progress and use this to plan work and set targets for improvement.

The teaching of pupils with learning difficulties, which has improved since the last inspection, is now good and enables pupils to achieve their targets. When pupils are taught in their learning support groups for English and mathematics, the work is matched closely to their needs and relates well to the work of the rest of the class, so that they are able to apply their learning suitably in other subjects.

The school's management team have a clear view of where there are weaknesses in teaching and learning. Teaching does not yet consistently follow the schools' recent initiatives on teaching and learning. Some groupwork is not different enough to challenge the more able groups and teacher questions are not always focused on the abilities of the pupils required to answer. There is inconsistent use of the planned introduction of 'response partners' designed to enable pupils to try out their ideas and thinking on each other. The school continues to monitor teaching and learning and is working towards improving these weaknesses.

Grade: 2

Curriculum and other activities

The school's recent revision of its curriculum planning has brought about a renewed emphasis on making learning enjoyable. Teachers work well together in year teams. They base their planning effectively on national guidance to provide pupils with interesting activities and first-hand experiences, which link subjects and provide good relevance for their learning. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and provides the right level of challenge for all pupils.

Pupils take part in a good range of clubs organised to meet their interests including opportunities for music, sport and drama. They have many visits that enrich their learning across a number of subjects. These visits include to HMS Belfast, the Dulwich Picture Gallery and a five day residential adventure trip to France. Pupils enjoy sharing their experiences with other year groups in the school helping them to reflect on what they have been doing and reinforce their learning. An emphasis on physical education and health education encourages pupils to be healthy and keep fit.

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support

The care, guidance and support for pupils are outstanding because the school places a very high priority on supporting all pupils and has processes in place to ensure that this happens. The school judges this aspect as good, but the inspection evidence shows it is better than that because the level of care is so high and is consistently applied by all staff. The staff display this high level of care and guidance in many ways. All pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work, thanks to constructive marking and clear targets. As part of their care, pupils are regularly informed of possible problems - for example they were reminded of the need for safety in hot weather and to ensure that they drank plenty of water and sought shade when outside.

Those pupils with behavioural problems have very effective plans prepared in order to help them meet targets for improvement. Child protection procedures are extremely good and staff are very well-informed through regular updating sessions and are therefore consistent when dealing with pupils.

Playground buddies are popular and help younger pupils to settle into school routines and to work and play amicably together. The system of buddies and the school council are excellent strategies that promote pupils' involvement in the creation of a safe and happy environment.

Relationships between adults and pupils are extremely good and help pupils feel very secure in their learning. Pupils who have learning difficulties receive excellent personal support and guidance and vulnerable pupils are provided with individual adult support. A governor participates in monitoring this provision and provides useful feedback to the school on its effectiveness.

Grade: 1

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school, expressed through the school improvement plan and firmly based on the high quality self-evaluation process. The school has improved considerably since the last inspection. This is because the headteacher has established a management structure that supports staff in their year group teams, enables all teachers to participate in leadership and provides clear direction. The good management procedures in place and the effective implementation of most current plans demonstrate that the school leadership has the capacity to ensure the achievements of pupils continue to rise.

All staff receive regular reviews of their work from a senior colleague and governors undertake this process for the headteacher. In this large school this well organised and excellent process serves to engage all staff with the leadership and management of the school, ensures the improvement priorities are acted upon and contributes significantly to the good quality teaching and learning. The induction of new staff, newly qualified teachers and those from overseas is good.

There have been improvements in the leadership and management of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, which is now good and pupils achieve well, both academically and socially. The school meets its responsibilities well in fulfilling the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Discrimination Acts. Staff promote an inclusive environment and all pupils are fully included in every part of school life.

Grade: 2

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INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.	School Overall	16-19
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OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	N/A	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

How well do learners achieve?	2	
The <i>standards</i> reached by learners	2	
How well learners' make <i>progress</i> , taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELL-BEING

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community.	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2	
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily.	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise.	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse.	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health.	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements.	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place.	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism.	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them.	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships.	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them.	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills.	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams.	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in Key Stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form.	N/A
Education for all learners aged 14-19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy.	N/A

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The School Council
Crofton Junior School
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BR5 1EL

1 July 2005

Dear Pupils,

Thank you all for the help and friendliness you showed myself and the inspection team. You contributed greatly to the success of this inspection. We thought you would like to know the judgments we have made about your school.

These are the things that we are most pleased about:

- The care, guidance and support you receive in the school are excellent. Many of you said there was always someone to go to for help if you had any problems.
- The work you do and the test results you get are good - because of the effort we saw from you and the good teaching you all receive.
- The headteacher and staff run the school well and try to find ways to involve all of you.
- The school council works very well. We hope you enjoy using your new playground games.
- The staff work hard to put on clubs and visits for you. They also make sure that you hear from experts on how to keep yourselves safe and healthy.
- Your behaviour in classes and around the school is excellent.
- You learn a great deal about other people's lives and cultures, how to make decisions about things that are right or wrong and how to live together safely.

There are also some things that we think your school could do to be even better:

- There could be more opportunities for you to develop your ICT skills, and to work in groups and with response partners.
- You need to work with the school so fewer of you are absent without a good reason. We know that Mr Sammonds writes to your parents and carers about this and that the absences are often linked to the holidays they take. It would be good if this improved in the future.

Thank you again for your help throughout this inspection.

Yours sincerely,

Martin Creasey
Lead inspector