



Croxteth Community Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104612
LEA Liverpool
Inspection number 277189
Inspection dates 13 June 2006 to 14 June 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Frank Ravey CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Moss Way
School category	Community		Liverpool
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Merseyside L11 0BP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0151 5463140
Number on roll	212	Fax number	0151 5463809
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Rev I Brooks
Date of previous inspection	20 November 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Frances Harrison

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3 to 11	13 June 2006 - 14 June 2006	277189

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is situated in an area of extreme and complex social disadvantage, one that has endured numerous crises in recent years. Over half its pupils are eligible for free school meals and nearly a third have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, well above the respective figures for most schools. Like other local schools, numbers on roll are falling. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. The school educates several looked-after children. Pupils start school with very low standards and often with other social or emotional difficulties. The school has a Healthy Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education. It has 'turned the corner' this year after a period of declining standards when many pupils did not make enough progress. This decline was due to a combination of severe increases in negative local circumstances, illness amongst staff and the need to make reductions in staffing levels. The school has responded well to the difficulties it has faced and is now in a more stable position. Staff and pupils work well together to produce a calm, happy and optimistic school where pupils want to learn and where they behave well. Standards in English, mathematics and science are rising, although they could still be higher. Pupils are making satisfactory progress, although with more consistent challenge in lessons they could do even better. Teachers would be helped by more detailed guidance on how to achieve such challenge in different subjects. Teaching is satisfactory overall but in some lessons it is good, giving a strong boost to pupils' learning. In some classes, teachers provide detailed, accurate advice to pupils on how to improve their work but this practice is not yet consistent throughout the school.

The development of personal and social skills, in particular, gets off to a good start in the Foundation Stage, where children make good progress in all their work because teaching is good and the curriculum is well planned and stimulating. The school's very successful programme for helping pupils cope with difficult circumstances in their lives gives a big boost to the development of personal and social skills from Years 1 to 6. It helps pupils to want to learn and enables them to grow in self-confidence and self-belief. This school values its pupils greatly and does all it can to help them adopt healthy lifestyles, through providing healthy food and good opportunities to exercise. Pupils take good advantage of this. They are clearly happy at school and show an understanding of how to stay safe and avoid dangers in the wider world. They are thoughtful and willingly help others. The school works very well with other agencies to provide a high standard of care for pupils and to encourage parents to do all they can to support their children's education, however, a significant minority of parents still do not make sure that their children attend school regularly.

The school's leadership has created successfully a safe, positive learning environment and is beginning to have a similar impact upon pupils' academic achievement. The headteacher has created a strong sense of common purpose amongst staff which shows itself in the way all are highly committed to providing the best for pupils. The school's success in coming through extremely difficult circumstances, the recent improvements in standards and progress and the commitment of its staff show that it has the capacity to improve further. It provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science in Years 1 to 6.
- Provide teachers with detailed guidance in curriculum plans to challenge pupils to get the most out of their learning in lessons.
- Improve attendance.

- Extend existing good practice to all classes so that all pupils know exactly what to do to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Starting school with extensive learning and social difficulties, children in the Foundation Stage make good progress thanks to good teaching that helps them grow in confidence as learners. Their progress is checked closely by staff, who then make sure that the next learning tasks are pitched at the right level for good progress to continue. All the same, standards remain below average when children finish Reception, because they started with such low levels of skills and knowledge.

Standards have improved at Year 2 and Year 6 this year from exceptionally low levels in 2005 to below average, due partly to the ability of these cohorts but more importantly to them making satisfactory progress. This is because of the school's success in coping with pupils' complex needs in lessons, and through teachers building successfully upon this to provide pupils with work that enables them to learn consistently. The school acknowledges that it is in the early stages of improving standards, and that with more focused and challenging tasks pupils can progress better. Progress in other year groups and for particular groups such as those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and looked-after children is also satisfactory, indicating that teaching and the school's climate for learning are having a consistent impact upon pupils' achievement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy lessons and the other activities school has to offer. They are keen to contribute in lessons and to express their views on how school can be improved. They behave well and are cheerful and polite when talking to adults. Despite the school's efforts and the strong support of the local authority, attendance remains low. As a result a significant number of pupils are not benefiting from the school's increasingly successful approach to developing the skills that they will require for future economic well-being. Pupils enjoy healthy meals at lunchtime and take advantage of opportunities to exercise, especially those provided at break times. They help and support each other, for example, through the use of 'advocates' and 'buddies' and are keen to contribute time and money to support worthy causes. The school choir sings regularly in the local community. The school's success in combating anti-social behaviour is seen in pupils' clear sense of right and wrong, the good standard of behaviour and the absence of any exclusions from school this year. Involvement in The 'Safer Schools' Partnership with local police is enabling the school to build on that success.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

In the Foundation Stage, well organised activities and well timed interventions by adults to support and extend learning help children make good progress. In Years 1 to 6, progress has improved to satisfactory levels because the school's strategies for managing pupils' behaviour and coping with vulnerable pupils are well embedded and form a solid foundation for learning. As a result, teaching is now having a satisfactory impact upon pupils' learning, although several aspects of it are good. Teachers and support staff relate well to pupils. Support staff work well on strategies to help individual pupils. In good lessons, work is matched closely to the needs of different groups of pupils and they make good progress. This good teaching is now giving pupils the boost to learning that they need in order to succeed, although in some lessons an over-emphasis on activities led by the teacher means that pupils are not challenged enough in their learning. This results in slower progress. Teachers monitor the progress of individual pupils well and let older ones know what targets for success are expected of them, however, this practice is not yet happening consistently throughout the school. Similarly with marking, despite some good practice, teachers are not yet consistent in letting pupils know what they need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The Foundation Stage curriculum consists of well planned activities that enable teachers and support staff to develop the skills of each individual child. In Years 1 to 6, the curriculum has several strengths. These include provision for information and communication technology, the opportunity for pupils in Years 2 to 6 to learn French and the specialist teaching of music. All these provide pupils with chances to develop important skills. The additional curriculum provided for vulnerable pupils both benefits these pupils and contributes to the progress made by other pupils through the calm learning environment it promotes. A good range of activities outside lessons motivates pupils and also gives them the chance to further develop their skills. The school recognises the need to improve its curriculum planning to give teachers more detailed guidance to help them plan a greater element of challenge in their lessons and hence improve progress. It also knows that it does not yet provide teachers with a sufficiently formal plan of how to develop the skills of literacy and numeracy in subjects other than English and mathematics.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school goes to great lengths to make each pupil feel valued and is working hard to ensure that it continues to improve its practice so that all might achieve as well as they can. It takes very good care of its pupils, something that is illustrated by staff's

strong commitment to developing pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence. When Year 6 pupils were working on a task to identify how the school helps them to benefit from the 'Every Child Matters' agenda, one pupil wrote about a particular project, 'It offers you high choices and tells you you're the future' whilst another remarked, 'In Croxteth Community School we believe we are cared for'. Both statements are apt commentary on the school's approach to its pupils. The school makes very effective efforts to provide for looked-after children. All pupils are integrated well into school life and the result is a happy, harmonious and hard-working atmosphere. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are robust. Those at risk are identified early and given very effective support. The school's very effective approach to involving other agencies in its work is beginning to pay dividends. For example, adult learning classes are helping give parents the skills to support their children's learning. Whilst the school has developed good procedures for checking pupils' progress, not all pupils have a clear understanding of their learning targets and this limits their progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school's leadership is fully aware that in the difficult circumstances of recent years, pupils' performance has suffered and that the strategies put into place to combat this have taken time to have an impact. However, recent improvements in standards and achievement show that leadership and management are having an impact on this key area and that the strategies are working. The headteacher and other key staff have a clear view of what the school needs to do to be more effective and the newly established leadership team is now securing improvements, helped by the guidance of the local authority. This is resulting in a keener focus to improvement than that provided by the school's own evaluation of its performance, which lacks sufficiently sharp analysis, despite grading the school's performance at similar levels to inspectors. Subject managers are sometimes limited in their effectiveness as they get to grips with new areas of responsibility.

The headteacher has created a very strong sense of common purpose amongst staff, pupils, parents and other supporting agencies. She leads strongly and effectively in developing the pastoral curriculum that forms such a good foundation for learning. Governors are very knowledgeable in this area but the governing body largely lacks the formal links to subject and other managers that would enable it to hold the school more closely to account for its academic performance.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

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	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we came to inspect your school recently. We enjoyed talking with you and hearing all the things you like about your school. You are really very proud of it!

We think your school gives you a satisfactory standard of education and that it is getting better all the time. Here are some of the things we think are good about it.

- The very good care everyone takes of you and how hard all the staff work and do their best for you.
- Your good behaviour and cheerfulness, and how keen you are to learn.
- The very good way your school helps those of you who sometimes find things difficult.
- The progress made by children in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- The way your headteacher works so hard and successfully with lots of people and groups to help you in your education.

There are also a few important things that we think could be better and so we have asked your headteacher and all who work in your school to:

- help those of you in Years 1 to 6 to reach higher standards and make better progress in English, mathematics and science
- give you more challenging work in some lessons so that you learn even better
- try to get as many of you as possible to attend school regularly so that you all get the most out of your education
- make sure that you all get good advice on how to improve your work.

Of course, you have a big part to play in helping your school to carry on improving - keep being as positive about learning as you are and keep trying your best, especially in English, mathematics and science. Thanks again for welcoming us.