



Crossways Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 109040
LEA South Gloucestershire
Inspection number 278108
Inspection dates 16 May 2006 to 17 May 2006
Reporting inspector Patricia Davies AI

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Knapp Road
School category	Community		Thornbury
Age range of pupils	7 to 11		Bristol BS35 2HQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01454 866566
Number on roll	232	Fax number	01454 866565
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	14 February 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Jenny Collett

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Crossways Junior is situated in a town on the outskirts of Bristol. It is broadly average in size and numbers have been gradually falling because of a drop in the local birth rate. Attainment on entry to the school at Year 3, with some variation, is largely above the national average. Most pupils come from the infant school, which is situated very close by. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities has increased a little in recent years, but is broadly average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, and nearly all of the few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds speak English well. There have been many changes of staff over the last four years, including the headteacher. Some key staff members have taken up their positions this school year.

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's overall effectiveness is satisfactory and improving, and this is also the school's view. Standards are above average and a much larger proportion of pupils are reaching the higher Level 5 in Year 6 this year than was attained in national tests last year. Achievement is satisfactory. The school rightly prides itself on its many exciting and stimulating activities. These strengths, taken together with a good level of care, are reflected in pupils' enthusiasm and confidence. Skilled support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities ensures that they make good progress. Value for money is satisfactory.

The many changes to staff have constrained the rate of development in recent years. However, the headteacher's clear vision has created a shared drive and determination among senior leaders and staff members. Consequently, new initiatives are beginning to increase the rate of pupils' academic progress, particularly in Years 4 and 6 where teaching is consistently good. These factors indicate a growing capacity to take the school forward. However, recent developments are not as yet having a full impact across the school. As a result, although the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, and there is no unsatisfactory teaching, it varies. More comprehensive assessment arrangements allow the school to keep a closer eye on pupils' progress, but learning targets do not always meet the needs of individual pupils. New arrangements for giving pupils feedback are not used as fully as they could be to tackle recurrent weaknesses, such as unsatisfactory standards of presentation. The school has an accurate overview of its strengths and shortcomings, but has not yet evaluated the impact of new developments in enough detail to move improvements on swiftly so that all pupils are achieving their very best.

What the school should do to improve further

- Evaluate rigorously the impact of initiatives so that improvement moves on swiftly.
- Make sure that learning targets always meet the needs of individual pupils so that they all progress at a good pace and achieve their very best.
- Use the marking of work and feedback to each pupil to tackle key weaknesses, including standards of presentation.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Having entered the school with above average attainment, pupils achieve satisfactorily overall. With the increasing impact of improvements to provision there are also areas of good achievement. Nevertheless, because many initiatives are still fairly new, they have not yet been fully influential and, consequently, progress is variable. In Years 4 and 6, for example, pupils achieve well, while progress is satisfactory in other year groups. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve well in response to carefully planned support in and out of lessons.

Improvement to assessment practices has enabled the school to adjust predictions of attainment and make sure that pupils are increasingly meeting appropriately challenging targets. The consistently good teaching in Year 6 has clearly accelerated the achievement of pupils in this year group. Standards in Year 6 are above average, and evidence indicates that many more pupils are reaching the higher Level 5 in reading, writing and mathematics than in last year's national tests. Much of this success is due to the attention given to improving specific areas of weakness in writing and mathematics. Other year groups have also benefited from this approach, especially Year 4, although the impact is less marked in Years 3 and 5.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good and reflect the school's commitment to nurturing pupils' independence, self-esteem and positive attitudes to learning. As a result, pupils are increasingly developing important skills needed in adulthood and working life. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about the school's many extra and special events and they appreciate that these activities are available to all. Their enjoyment of school life is also illustrated now in good levels of attendance. Pupils work hard in most lessons, sometimes outstandingly so.

Behaviour is good. Pupils are confident and mature and thoughtful of others. School council members take their responsibilities seriously. In consultation with other pupils they have influenced lunchtime arrangements and helped to improve playground equipment. Pupils support the wider community in fund-raising activities, for example, and are aware of environmental issues. They display a well developed understanding of the need to stay healthy and keep safe in daily life. Many attend the wide range of sporting activities and one pupil commented that fruit on sale at break time should be more competitively priced so that this option is more attractive than less healthy alternatives! Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. While the school uses the arts and religious education well to nurture spiritual awareness and an appreciation of other cultures and faiths, there is room to extend further pupils' experience and understanding in these areas.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The variability in pupils' progress is reflected in the quality of teaching and learning, which is satisfactory overall. There are strengths in every year group, but teaching is at its best in Years 4 and 6, where it is consistently good. Good lessons move at a cracking pace. Tasks are challenging and fun and, when these qualities are particularly strong, pupils respond with exceptionally high levels of motivation and application. Occasionally, however, the pace can be too rapid and there is not enough time to pause and consolidate pupils' understanding.

In the most effective lessons, pupils have plenty of chance to discuss and plan their work with others. These opportunities are now well developed in mathematics and science and are ensuring greater achievement in mathematical calculation and scientific investigation. Teaching is never less than satisfactory. However, progress is not as rapid when low-level noise and restlessness are not checked quickly enough. Pupils' concentration also drops when the pace of the lesson slows or activities lack the greater level of challenge found where teaching is good.

A number of improvements to assessment practices are fairly recent and in need of further refinement. Learning targets, for example, do not always meet the particular needs of individual pupils and are not changed as a matter of course as soon as they have been reached. New approaches to marking are giving pupils more feedback about how their work can be improved, although the quality of marking is not yet consistent and written comments do not routinely pick up on recurrent weaknesses such as untidy presentation.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A stimulating range of extra and additional activities is the strongest feature of the school's good curriculum. Sport and music are well represented and innovative aspects include French and philosophy. These features add much to the school's ethos and are greatly enjoyed by pupils. An emphasis on performance helps to expand pupils' confidence and maturity.

Planning has been strengthened in English, mathematics and science so that it gives teaching a solid foundation and a source of interesting and relevant activities. This was particularly true when pupils received a teacher's fictitious letter of complaint about a proposed class picnic. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities benefit from well organised and skilled support from teaching assistants. Some initiatives, however, are at an early stage of development and have not yet had the chance to make a significant impact. One example is the provision for those with particular talents and gifts. New projects and resources are also being tested out in information and communication technology (ICT). At the same time, improvements to resources and facilities are pioneering ICT as an everyday working tool and a means of linking learning across several subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school successfully secures the health, happiness and safety of its pupils, and to the extent that the overall quality of care, guidance and support is good. Pupils confirm this is so. Relationships with adults are good and pupils feel well supported. Procedures for protecting pupils are firmly established and well known to staff. Activities are carefully planned and assessed with a view to potential risk. A good balance has been established at break times between supervision and pupils' independence, with pupils acting as monitors and playground 'buddies'. Close links with the infant school help to ease new pupils into the school.

The recent improvements to academic guidance and support are appreciated by pupils. They are happy with the help they receive in lessons and are responding well to the new learning targets and opportunities for them to check and evaluate their own progress, although they have some awareness that they could be moved on faster. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported through regular reviews of their progress and good use of outside agencies. Parents are kept fully involved in this process, but the pupils do not have enough opportunity to participate.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management as a whole are satisfactory. The changes to staff and, most significantly, to senior staff and subject leaders, have constrained the rate of improvement since the last inspection. However, staffing has now stabilised and the headteacher has generated a high level of motivation and commitment among senior managers and staff members. A wide variety of initiatives have been introduced in a relatively short space of time, and there are clear indications that pupils' academic achievement is increasing as result of their influence. Key issues from the last inspection to improve attendance and increase liaison with the infant school have been successfully resolved. Taken together, these factors indicate that the school has satisfactory, and increasing, capacity for bringing about further improvement.

However, many developments are not yet fully developed or embedded. Most importantly, the school has yet to take a sufficiently rigorous and detailed look at the outcomes of its initiatives. While the school has a good broad view of its effectiveness, this lack of sharply focused information about the quality of provision and its impact on pupils' progress is inhibiting the school from improving its effectiveness more rapidly. Arrangements for consulting with parents and governors are satisfactory. The governing body is supportive and well informed. Finance is managed well and governors are already planning how to make savings for the future. They have helpful systems for monitoring the school's work but these could be further strengthened so that governors can be sure that money is well spent.

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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	NA	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	2	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	2	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	2	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	2	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?	2	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	3	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 very much for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed hearing your views and talking to you about what you were doing. This letter is to tell you what we found out about your school.

What your school does well:

You really enjoy all the exciting activities and clubs the school arranges for you, and these experiences help you to be confident and enthusiastic about learning.

You concentrate and work hard in most lessons, but you do your very best when lessons are challenging and good fun.

Those of you in Years 4 and 6, and those who need extra help with their work, are making good progress.

You think all the adults help and support you well.

All the staff have lots of drive and energy and have done lots of things to make the school an interesting and better place to be.

What we have asked your school to do now:

Check very carefully all the new things that the adults put in place in order to make sure that they are working well and things improve as fast as they possibly can.

Make sure that your learning targets are always exactly what you need to do to get better and are changed as quickly as possible after you have reached them.

Give you more feedback about important things that should be improved, such as the tidiness of your work.

We wish you all the very best for the future.