



Crook Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114056
LEA Durham
Inspection number 279302
Inspection dates 2 February 2006 to 3 February 2006
Reporting inspector Mr John Heap

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Croft Avenue
School category	Community		Crook
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		County Durham, DL15 8QG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01388 762400
Number on roll	322	Fax number	01388 765128
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Dennis Halladay
Date of previous inspection	1 November 1999	Headteacher	Mrs Antonella Lupton

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 2 February 2006 - 3 February 2006	Inspection number 279302
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an above average sized primary school. Attainment on entry to the school is very low. The school serves an area where social disadvantage is high. Nearly all children are from white, English speaking families. The proportions of children entitled to free meals and with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well above average. In 2005, the school received the International School's Award, Active Mark Gold and Healthy School Award. The school has been involved for some time with a nationally funded information and communication technology (ICT) project.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Inspectors judge this to be an outstanding school that gives excellent value for money. This is better than the school's own cautious judgement. Parents' views are summed up by this typical comment: 'I am really glad that my child is in this school as it is the best one around'.

Despite standards being very low on entry to the Foundation Stage, achievement is outstanding by the end of Year 6. Progress is excellent for all children, including those with a range of extra needs. Provision in the Foundation Stage is effective and provides a strong basis for all children to benefit from the exceptional provision on offer. Care is outstanding. Overall, teaching is outstanding. Many lessons are inspirational, fun and packed with challenging activities. Children are highly motivated to learn. Personal development is exceptional because the ethos of the school rewards hard work, achievements and care for others. The school's management is outstanding and innovative. Action plans provide an excellent breakdown of the steps being taken and the capacity to improve is outstanding. Two initiatives have promoted excellence in the curriculum:

- the development of ICT as a compelling tool for teaching and learning
- extensive international links with schools that have broadened the curriculum, improved teaching and given a major boost to children's knowledge and understanding of a very wide range of cultures.

At the centre of all this work is the excellent headteacher. Her many qualities include clarity of vision and tenacity which are recognised by the whole school community.

What the school should do to improve further

In this outstanding school, there are no areas for development because it is dealing very effectively with its key priorities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement is outstanding, particularly in ICT. The combination of excellent teaching and an outstanding curriculum means that the children make very strong gains in their learning. Results in the 2005 national tests remained below average; however, there was a high proportion of children who had extra needs. It is to the credit of the excellent management team that the realistic and ambitious targets show improved achievement this year, particularly for the highest attaining children.

On entry to the Reception Year, children have very low standards, most particularly in language, mathematics and social skills. Progress is good and children develop well as independent learners. Although the current standards are low in Years 1 and 2, the children achieve well. Standards by Year 6 are broadly average. However, throughout the school, overall standards are depressed by high levels of children with learning

difficulties. Moreover, recent tracking of children's achievements show that they are making excellent progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This is due to the outstanding teaching which puts a very strong focus on developing strong basic skills.

Children with a variety of extra needs benefit from excellent support and achieve as well as their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being are outstanding. Foundation Stage children make outstanding progress in personal, social and emotional development. Behaviour in and around the school is excellent and children know that it is important to play safely. All children enjoy school and their attitude to work is exemplary. Children are highly aware of the need to eat healthily, and the school has received an award for its work in this area. For example, at lunchtime there is a selection of healthy options on offer. Children agree that their excellent ICT skills are equipping them really well for future learning and the world of work. Although attendance is a little below average, the school continues to do all it can to improve it.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils explore feelings and emotions very effectively through drama. They respect and understand the consequences of their actions on others; for example, buying goods directly from Fair Trade producers. Children have a very strong sense of community and willingly take on responsibilities. They understand cultural diversity through, for instance, the excellent links forged with a school in Tanzania and visits from Japanese students. The school's excellent ICT facilities have further enhanced this work through video conferencing.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Lessons are very rarely less than good and many are outstanding, particularly in Years 2, 3 and 6. Particular strengths include:

- the superb use of the remarkable ICT resources; teachers and children alike are highly enthused and motivated by this exceptional tool for learning
- the excellent management of children that leads to increasingly high levels of concentration, reflection and achievement
- high levels of teacher knowledge and drive towards ensuring that individual children's needs are well catered for through accurate and robust assessment; this is an improving picture because of the knowledge of good practice gained from training and partnership with other schools both home and abroad.

As a result, learning is fun but due attention is paid to ensuring that children gain skills, knowledge and understanding at a sufficiently quick pace. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are good. The correct emphasis on developing children's basic skills is providing a very firm basis for future achievements. Classroom assistants make a very strong contribution to children's learning, particularly for those with extra needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding and meets the needs of all children. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good with a high priority given to promoting personal, social and emotional development, literacy and numeracy. The school's enormous involvement in a national ICT project has had a tremendous impact on children's learning. For example, they have very wide knowledge and understanding of life in other parts of the world as a result of video-conferencing with other schools. The involvement of the school in the local and international community is first rate. The emphasis on developing healthy bodies is fostered by very frequent keep fit sessions, such as Tai Chi and daily access to a very well equipped playground. After school clubs, including golf, football and netball are well attended. As one Year 6 child said on hearing he was picked for the netball team, 'that was my most memorable moment'. An award gained by the school acknowledges the quality of the work done to promote physical fitness.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support given to children are outstanding. An overwhelming number of parents are impressed by the high level of care their children receive. There are excellent systems for monitoring children's progress and teachers identify quickly those children in need of additional support. Teachers and support staff, with the help of outside agencies, work together exceptionally well to ensure all children with additional needs receive excellent support. Arrangements for promoting children's safety and welfare are exemplary. Child protection procedures are closely followed. Parents and children are confident about taking any problems to teachers and know that any incidents will be dealt with firmly. Parents are promptly notified if there are any issues or concerns. Patterns of attendance are closely monitored and the school is doing all it can to urge parents to decrease the number of days their children are not in school, such as holidays in term time.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding, which is a little higher than the school's own view. The headteacher is excellent at promoting innovation and has very high expectations of every aspect of the school's work. She is effectively supported by the senior management team. Monitoring of academic standards, teaching, curriculum

and care is exemplary. Consequently, the priorities in the school improvement plan are a very accurate reflection of the school's needs. Teamwork is a great strength. The views of parents and children are highly valued and regularly sought. Governors are well informed and know the strengths and weaknesses of the school very well. Financial management is prudent. The school very successfully ensures that it gets the best value when purchasing supplies and services, for example, by combining with the local cluster of schools to service the extensive ICT provision. The provision for children with extra needs is equal to all other children's because it is exceptionally well managed. Barriers to learning have been lowered by many very successful initiatives, such as:

- using drama to motivate children and parents
- the loan of laptops to support homework
- the excellent effect on the recruitment and retention of high quality staff of forging links with schools across the world and the development of high quality ICT resources.

Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good. Good support is provided for a new team member. Improvement since the last inspection, in which the school was judged to be satisfactory, has been outstanding.

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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?	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	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?	1	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	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?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	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

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Mrs Antonella Lupton

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DL15 8QG

4 February 2006

Dear Children

The inspectors really enjoyed working in your outstanding school this week. We are pleased that you and your parents like the school so much and are proud of its achievements. We are delighted by the welcome and hospitality that you and the staff gave to us. We are also pleased that many of you wished to talk with us and we were impressed by the courtesy and help you provided.

What we really liked about your school:

the excellent behaviour and attitudes to work

the outstanding progress you make as young citizens, often by taking on responsible roles in the school

the outstanding links that have been made with schools in other countries, such as Tanzania and Japan

the way that results in national tests are improving

the excellent way you develop as learners and the outstanding way that you use ICT to find out about the lives of others

the way that you and some of your parents take part in activities such as drama

the excellent teaching that provides you with a very large number of opportunities to learn and thoroughly enjoy what you do

the great care that the adults show you

the excellent way that Mrs Lupton and her staff provide you with every chance to do well in the future.

The school keeps a close eye on all that is going on and is constantly planning for improvements. So, for instance, your teachers are planning improvements to the way that they set targets for your work and then refer to these targets in their marking. You can be very helpful in this process by working hard to meet the targets in each piece of work that you do.

Yours faithfully

John Heap

Lead inspector