



Creswick Primary and Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 117229
LEA HERTFORDSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 280019
Inspection dates 27 February 2006 to 28 February 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs. Alison Pangbourne LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Sir John Newsom Way
School category	Community		AL7 4TP
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01707 323038
Number on roll	237	Fax number	01707 323038
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. David Hegarty
Date of previous inspection	2 October 2000	Headteacher	Mrs. Ann Keen

Age group 3 to 11	Inspection dates 27 February 2006 - 28 February 2006	Inspection number 280019
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by a team of two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized primary and nursery school. Most pupils come from White British families with a few from minority ethnic backgrounds. None are at an early stage of learning English. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. When children start school, standards are below those typical for 3 and 4 year olds, particularly in social and language development. Since the previous inspection, there have been several headteachers and numerous staff changes.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. In its self-evaluation, the school was modest in some of its judgements, in particular the progress pupils make and the quality of the curriculum. The school is emerging from an unsettled period and so it has been understandably cautious in its judgements. Now the position is much improved with a settled teaching staff who are helping all pupils to make good progress. When children start school, standards are below those typical for 3 and 4 year olds. The youngest children get off to a good start and make good progress. Standards have risen year on year. This year, standards are likely to be above average in English and mathematics by the time pupils leave when they are 11 years old. This represents good progress. Standards in science are broadly average and the number of pupils exceeding the expected level for their age is below average. Progress here is satisfactory. The school has already identified this as an area for improvement. Pupils do well overall because the quality of teaching is good and the teaching for the oldest pupils is excellent and boosts their achievement. However, not all teachers use pupils' individual targets effectively to help them understand what they need to do to improve. Interesting activities encourage pupils to work hard. They are well cared for, their behaviour is good and they enjoy coming to school. Parents think highly of the school. The headteacher provides good leadership, ably supported by the deputy headteacher and senior staff. The rising standards and the improvements since the previous inspection, particularly in information and communication technology (ICT), show that the school has a good capacity to improve further. It provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in science by improving the proportion that exceeds the expected level for 11-year-olds.
- Develop the use of pupils' targets so that they are clearer about what they need to do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good. Children in the Nursery and Reception class make good progress because of the good teaching and the interesting things to do. In spite of this, by the beginning of Year 1, most children have not reached the level expected for their age because they still have a lot of catching up to do. In recent years, standards have been below average for 7-year-olds, but this year they are average and pupils are making good progress. Pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 have had many changes of teacher and this has disrupted their learning. They have not made as much progress in the past as they should. Now, they are rapidly catching up and standards through the school are steadily rising now that the staffing situation has stabilised. Pupils in key stage 2 are now making good progress. Standards for 11-year-olds have been broadly average in English and mathematics and below average in science recently. This year they are above average in English and mathematics and average in science.

This is partly because there is a smaller proportion of pupils with learning difficulties in this year group but also because of the initiatives put in place to raise standards, for example, the focus on problem solving. There is room to improve the proportion that exceeds the level expected for their age in science by ensuring that tasks are sufficiently challenging for higher attainers. Pupils who left last year met the challenging targets set for them in English and mathematics. Pupils do well because they are given many opportunities to work in pairs and they get additional encouragement from the excellent teaching in Year 6. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language also do well because tasks are carefully matched to their needs and they are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' personal development is good. Pupils enjoy their lessons and attendance is average. They work hard and behave well. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. One Year 6 pupil said, 'We all get along.' They are proud of the school, play together with enthusiasm and energy, whilst ensuring that the needs of others in the playground are respected. They enjoy taking responsibility, such as being members of the school council and being 'playground pals'. These pupils make a strong contribution to others' enjoyment at play and lunchtimes. The school council has been responsible for raising money to buy new playground equipment. Pupils value the customs and beliefs of other cultures. They have a good understanding of aspects of Jewish, Buddhist and Hindu beliefs. Most pupils contribute effectively to the community. Older pupils go and sing to patients in a local hospital. In addition, they are very proud of their fund raising activities to support a school in Sri-Lanka. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils explain well how to lead healthy and safe lives. Most pupils eat fruit at break times. Those in Years 1 to 6 work with sports specialists on a weekly basis. All pupils have two physical education lessons a week and some have three sessions. A significant number of pupils take part in Welwyn Garden City tournaments for netball, football and athletics. All Year 6 pupils gained a basic hygiene award last year. They are effectively prepared for the world of work with well developed skills in English, mathematics and social skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good. This allows pupils to make good progress in learning basic skills. Teachers are enthusiastic about learning and so pupils are keen to work. Exciting use of ICT means that pupils develop their understanding of more complex ideas such as the interpretation of data and graphs. Effective teaching methods and practical activities are used well to capture pupils' interests. For example, in a good English lesson in Year 1, the teacher used a game of word bingo to develop pupils'

reading skills. This enabled them to learn to recognise key words accurately and quickly. Good lesson planning ensures time is used effectively and different groups of pupils are usually challenged. However, higher attaining pupils are not always challenged sufficiently in science. Effective use of paired work means pupils learn to support each other in various subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities receive a good level of support from teaching assistants and the co-ordinator for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Assessment activities are used satisfactorily. However, some teachers do not use the time at the end of lessons well to assess and involve pupils in evaluating their success and areas for improvement. This means that they are not consistently developing skills that will assist them to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Pupils achieve well in literacy, numeracy and ICT. The work pupils do is varied with enough time given to each subject. However, links between subjects are not always made effectively. The school works carefully to ensure that pupils' days are interesting. For instance, exciting weeks are planned regularly and a recent one developed pupils' awareness of healthy lifestyles. Effective provision for music includes the opportunity for all to have specialist teaching and pupils in Year 5 have extra provision which allows them to learn to play instruments such as the saxophone, flute and clarinet. They have many opportunities to sing and perform within the school in musical productions and activities. A good range of after-school and lunch time clubs is enjoyed by the pupils and enhances their education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support for pupils is good. Teachers and teaching assistants know all pupils well and work effectively to ensure they are safe and healthy. Procedures for child protection are thorough. The school makes all required checks on adults working in the school so that the pupils are kept as safe as they can be. Pupils speak highly of their teachers. One Year 6 pupil said, 'A lot of teachers are friendly.' High quality support and care ensure that pupils remain enthusiastic about coming to school and are willing to learn. Pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities are identified early and supported well. The school works closely with external agencies to ensure the needs of these pupils are met. The school works effectively with parents. Workshops are planned which explain teaching methods. For example, a recent session developed parents' understanding of ways to teach numeracy. Pupils' achievement is tracked effectively in reading, writing, mathematics and science from the Nursery to Year 6. However, not all pupils are clear about which targets they are working towards. This means that pupils are not as clear as they could be about how to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher leads the school with energy and dedication. She has been the driving force behind the many improvements that have been made. She has brought stability and a strong sense of teamwork to the school. The school has identified the right areas for improvement in the good development plan. Raising standards in science has been identified as a priority for next year. This shows that the school's self-evaluation is effective. While subject leaders for English, mathematics, science and ICT fulfil their roles effectively with a clear understanding of standards and areas for improvement, this is not as well developed for those who lead the other subjects. The school works effectively to include pupils from all backgrounds and this contributes to the good ethos of the school. The views of all members of the community are welcomed and the school takes every opportunity to help parents understand how their children learn. Parents are very positive about the school. One parent said 'We think the school is fantastic. We work closely together to sort out any problems.' The good team spirit among the staff and governors is helping to drive the school forward. The governors watch over the school well and are fully involved in the work of the school. The constant desire to do better and the improvements that have taken place since the previous inspection, particularly in ICT, shows that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

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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?	2	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	2	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?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	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	3	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?	2	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?	2	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	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	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

Following our visit to your school, we would like to thank you for helping us. We enjoyed talking to you and watching you learn. What we liked best: - your behaviour is good and you play nicely with your friends - you are learning well because teachers give you the right things to do in lessons - you have lots of interesting things to do in lessons - you all look very smart in your school uniforms - all the grown-ups make sure that you are well cared for - the way your headteacher runs the school is good and she wants you all to do well - you and your parents are right in thinking that you go to a good school. What we have asked your school to do now to make it even better: - help more of you to do better in science - we have asked teachers to help you to know your targets so that you can do even better. We wish you all the best with your learning. Carry on enjoying your time at Creswick Primary School.