



Normand Croft Community School for Early Years and Primary Education

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134273
Local Authority Hammersmith and Fulham
Inspection number 282523
Inspection dates 18–19 October 2006
Reporting inspector Barry Jones

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Bramber Road
School category	Community		West Kensington
Age range of pupils	3–11		London W14 9PA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02073856847
Number on roll (school)	316	Fax number	02076101054
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Beth Worrall
		Headteacher	Mr Nicholas Holt
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 18–19 October 2006	Inspection number 282523
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school caters for children from 18 months to 11 years old. The provision for under three year olds was inspected in May and was not inspected further this time. It is an inner-city school and serves a community with high levels of deprivation. There are more pupils from minority ethnic groups than in the great majority of schools and a high proportion of these pupils do not have English as their home language. There are more pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities than in most schools. The school has one unit with two classes that caters for 20 pupils with special educational needs including medical, physical and complex learning needs. The school was designated as an Early Excellence Centre in 2001 and as a Children's Centre in January 2005.

The school has not previously been inspected. It was formed in 2003 from the amalgamation of a primary school and a Nursery. The school has experienced recruitment and retention difficulties since that time. An interim headteacher has been in post since September 2006 and an interim deputy headteacher since January 2006. The interim headteacher was appointed to the permanent position the day before the inspection began. The Early Years Foundation stage moved into its new buildings in September 2006, the rest of the school has not been renewed.

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. Children start in the Nursery with communication skills that are well below average. The school rightly places a high priority on developing these skills and is largely successful. The quality of provision and standards in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. Standards by the end of Year 6 are below average but given the pupils' starting points this means that overall progress is satisfactory. However, standards in the end of Year 2 are exceptionally low, as they are in mathematics at the end of Year 6. Although, girls make good progress in English and science in Key Stage 2, achievement is inadequate overall because there is underperformance by particular groups of pupils. In 2006, there was underachievement by boys at Key Stage 2 and in reading and writing at Key Stage 1. The school's monitoring is now satisfactory but previous weaknesses mean that these trends were not identified quickly enough and appropriate action was not taken. The best teaching is seen in Years 2 and 6 but it is not sufficient to make up for weaknesses in earlier years in all subjects.

The inconsistencies in pupil' performance reflect past weaknesses in leadership and the lack of effective coordination for mathematics. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. A weakness of the teaching is that, until this year, teachers have not had access to reliable assessment data and the work given to pupils has too often not been well-matched to their capabilities. The school has far more support assistants than most schools. They are effective in helping to develop language skills, particularly for pupils whose home language is not English. The weak assessment procedures mean that they offer general support in class but opportunities are missed to target underachieving pupils in other aspects of the work. This is now being reviewed by the school.

The school is successful in promoting pupils' personal development and well-being which are good. This is a caring school and it has formed positive links with the community it serves. As a result, parents are very supportive of the school. Pupils behave well, feel safe, make a good contribution to the community and enjoy coming to school. As one parent wrote, 'My daughter loves coming to school and looks forward to coming every day.' There is good provision for healthy living and consequently the pupils have a good understanding. A strength of the school is the partnership working with other agencies. Consequently, pupils in the units and other pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make satisfactory progress.

Leadership and management are now satisfactory despite a turbulent period following the amalgamation of two schools. The new school has had to deal with overcrowding and the use of temporary accommodation. Senior managers have needed to devote considerable time to day-to-day issues which have sapped energies and meant that strategic leadership and management has suffered. This situation has been aggravated by the fact that, despite strenuous efforts over a long period, the school was unable to find appropriate successors to the previous headteacher and deputy headteachers. As a result, the school had taken its eye off the ball with regards to pupils' standards. This is now being remedied but some procedures are so recent that they are not

consistently implemented by all teachers. The school is receiving strong leadership from the headteacher, supported well by the interim deputy headteacher. Capacity to improve further is satisfactory. Although the school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory its performance in one respect is inadequate. Before its next section 5 inspection, Ofsted inspectors may visit the school to monitor the progress that is made in remedying this weakness. The school would receive two to five days notice of such a visit.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards at Key Stage 1, particularly for boys.
- Improve standards in mathematics in Key Stage 2.
- Make effective use of assessment data to ensure the work set for pupils is well matched to their abilities.
- Improve monitoring and evaluation to ensure that policies are consistently implemented by teachers and to ensure that support assistants are used well.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Pupils' achievement is inadequate overall because of the exceptionally low standards at Key Stage 1, particularly those who are born in the summer, and the unsatisfactory progress made by boys through the school. In 2006 only a quarter of the boys reached the expected level in reading and writing. At Key Stage 2 only a half of the boys reached the expected level in English and less than a half for mathematics. The main reasons for this underachievement were weaknesses in teaching and monitoring pupils' performance in previous years.

The school is sensitive to the needs of pupils with English as an additional language. English has been given a high priority, received extra resources and been coordinated well and this is reflected in the improving results at Key Stage 2 and the improved language skills of pupils. The overall trend is upwards at Key Stage 2 and this is because girls are improving at a faster rate than nationally in English and science. Over the last three years there has also been a significant increase in the proportion of pupils attaining the highest level in English, mathematics and science in the national tests at the end of Year 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good. The school population is drawn from a rich diversity of backgrounds and the pupils learn to respect other beliefs and cultures. The school is an harmonious community and the pupils play their full part in maintaining this ethos. Pupils' views are valued. Every pupil can contribute through their class council and then through the school council. In the 'pupil parliament' there was a very well-argued debate on smoking in public places. The pupils showed

a good understanding of the workings of democracy. They also have a keen interest in environmental issues. For instance, pupils gathered their own vegetables from the school garden and cooked for harvest festival. They use computers in a variety of contexts and develop satisfactory skills. In such ways the pupils are well prepared for later life; their economic well-being is only satisfactory because of their weaker numeracy skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers make clear the objectives of the lessons, have good subject knowledge and are skilled in questioning the pupils and helping them to clarify and develop their answers or arguments. There is consistent use of 'talk partners' and pupils respond well to these opportunities. Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards and these add to pupils' interest in lessons. They show and receive respect from the pupils and this contributes to a positive working atmosphere in classes. In an outstanding Year 2 English lesson on writing instructions for cooking, the pupils made excellent progress through the well-planned activities that captured their interest. Only in the best lessons, however, do teachers take sufficient account of what pupils already know when planning work for different abilities. This also means that the teachers do not use the support assistants to maximum effect. In mathematics lessons, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in doing mental calculations.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory. The provision for English and for personal, social and health education is good. The additional time given to guided reading supported by further resources has led to improvements in standards. The school provides a good range of after-school clubs and these activities are popular with pupils and contribute well to their overall achievement and personal development. Many visits and visitors help to make lessons interesting and exciting. The school also holds special events such as art and health-promotion weeks to further enrich the curriculum. The curriculum is not consistently delivered in all classes to meet the needs of all pupils and the school has correctly identified the need to check whether all elements of the mathematics curriculum are being given sufficient attention.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The quality of care and support is good and is aided by good links with several specialists and agencies. The school's generous support staffing, speech and language specialists and learning mentors provide particular expertise to meet pupils' needs. There is good support for those with behavioural and emotional needs and with learning

difficulties and disabilities both in the unit and in the main school. Speedy assessment of pupils' special educational needs enable suitable support to be put into place quickly. Pupils and their parents take part usefully in the review of individual education plans that guide pupils in their learning.

The academic guidance for pupils to improve their work is now satisfactory. Teachers are setting targets for individual pupils based on assessments in English and mathematics but the practice is not consistent enough. Some pupils are unclear about their targets and what they need to do to improve. More time has been devoted in English than in mathematics to ensuring that the teachers' assessments are accurate. Some underachieving pupils are not identified early enough and so do not receive the appropriate support when required. Consequently, care, support and guidance are satisfactory overall.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The governors, in partnership with the local authority, have given good support and challenge to the school in a period of considerable change and uncertainty. The governors took a difficult decision to delay appointing a headteacher until a suitably-qualified field was available. This has been rewarded since they have now appointed a headteacher with a proven track record in leadership. He has already been able to give the school a clearer direction and the staff have united behind him. The interim deputy headteacher has significantly improved the pupil tracking in the school so that the school has a more accurate understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and so is better placed to rectify its shortcomings. Several middle managers are new to their posts. They are enthusiastic but there has been too little time for them to have a significant impact on raising standards in their areas of responsibility. Self-evaluation is developing but is not fully effective. For instance, there has been no monitoring or evaluation of the effectiveness of the deployment of a high number of support assistants to classrooms. Consequently, there is much to do but the school has assembled a potentially strong team and so has satisfactory capacity to improve.

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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
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
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	3

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for welcoming us to your school. We spoke to members of your school council and to many others. You were always polite and courteous and we were made to feel very welcome. You told us how you enjoy coming to school, feel safe and that the adults look after you very well. You say that your views are valued by the school and are expressed through the school council. We watched a very interesting debate about smoking by your school parliament.

The school has been through a difficult time following the joining together of two schools. You mentioned that parts were like a building site at times. That is now behind you and you are delighted with the new building and especially the spacious playgrounds.

There have been many changes in the school but it gives you a satisfactory education. In some ways it is good. It helps you to develop into responsible, well-behaved young people who show respect for other beliefs and cultures. In most respects, it prepares you well for later life. In recent years the girls have done particularly well in their science and English work.

We have asked the school to improve things further by:

- ensuring you do your best in Years 1 and 2.
- helping you to do as well in mathematics as you do in English.
- making sure that the work you are given is based on what you already know.
- asking support assistants to help you do these three things.

You can do your part by making sure you come to school regularly and continue to behave well so that you can all learn in lessons. Make sure you ask if you do not understand something - the adults will be very pleased to help you.

We wish you every success in the future.

Barry Jones

Lead inspector