



Cramlington Cragside C of E Controlled First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134473
LEA Northumberland
Inspection number 282582
Inspection dates 5 October 2005 to 6 October 2005
Reporting inspector Iain Rodger

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

Type of school	First	School address	Cateran Way
School category	Voluntary controlled		Collingwood Grange
Age range of pupils	4 to 9		Cramlington, Northumberland
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01670 714200
Number on roll	180	Fax number	01670 732600
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Steve Boddy
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Ms Joy Sleet-Thompson

Age group 4 to 9	Inspection dates 5 October 2005 - 6 October 2005	Inspection number 282582
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized first school became a Church of England Voluntary Controlled school two years ago. The pupils live in the new town of Cramlington in Northumberland. The proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal is average as is the number with learning difficulties. Very nearly all the children are of White British heritage and none speaks English as an additional language. There is little pupil mobility.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Inspectors judge this to be a good school with pockets of excellence and this matches the school's own evaluation. Standards are very high by Year 2 and the children make good progress. Standards are also very high in reading by Year 4 but the pupils make less progress in writing and mathematics. The school is aware of this and has taken steps to remedy it. Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage and provision is good.

The pupils' personal development is good; they are well behaved, polite and articulate. They are well cared for at school. The quality of teaching and learning is good; the pupils enjoy their work and respond well to their teachers. The curriculum is effective and has several innovative features.

The leadership and management are good with several very strong features. The headteacher has achieved a lot in the short time she has been at the school. The leadership team is strong. Many new developments have been introduced and these will need to be checked to make sure that they have the expected impact on learning. The school knows itself well and has good capacity to improve further. It gives good value for money.

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What the school should do to improve further

- pursue with vigour the strategies put in place to improve standards in writing; and
- ensure all developments are rigorously evaluated to check that they have the desired impact on learning.

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Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The inspectors agree with the school that standards and achievement are good. Children enter the school with slightly above average attainment and make good progress in the Foundation Stage. They continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and reach well above average standards, although the proportion reaching the higher level in writing fell in 2005. Progress is not as rapid in Years 3 and 4, apart from in reading where pupils achieve very well. The higher attaining pupils do not reach the levels they should in writing and mathematics: in writing only a minority made the expected progress between Years 2 and 4 in 2005. The school has recognised this and has set strategies in place to remedy it. Pupils attain good standards in science and in the rest of the curriculum. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress; boys and girls do equally well and the few gifted and talented pupils achieve in line with their capabilities.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The inspection confirms the school's judgement that the pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good; they have written very thoughtful prayers for the 'prayer board' and have participated in writing class rules. A 'belonging' project has developed their understanding of relationships and the school council enables pupils to take part in making decisions about the running of the school.

Behaviour is good and the children are polite, confident and articulate. They have very positive attitudes to learning; they are often eager for lessons to start. Anti-bullying and positive behaviour programmes have been effective; the children could think of no recent examples of bullying. There is an effective range of strategies in place to raise attendance levels, which are now slightly above average. The school promotes healthy lifestyles well and this enables the children to make informed choices about the food they eat. There are several extra-curricular activities to encourage exercise. A Young Enterprise project introduces the pupils to the world of business. There is strong community involvement in the school and the pupils have many opportunities to contribute through local events and by raising money for charities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school judges teaching and learning to be good and the inspectors agree. Lessons are well planned and prepared. English and mathematics are taught in sets based on the pupils' prior attainment, and work is effectively matched to their learning needs at three levels within each set. Teachers use a good range of methods and pay careful attention to the preferred learning styles of their pupils. Questioning is used effectively to draw all pupils into discussions and to establish their levels of understanding. The assessment of pupils' ongoing work is helping them to know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Assessment information is increasingly being used to track pupils' progress, to identify those who need extra support, and to set individual targets.

Many adults help in classrooms. In some cases they are well deployed, for example to record individual pupils' responses to tasks; in other lessons, they are passive observers for extended periods of time.

The setting arrangements mean that pupils frequently have to move around the school; these transition times are managed well and the children say that they like having different teachers. Marking is generally very thorough and is linked well to the learning objectives of each lesson and to the pupils' individual targets.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good with several very innovative features and this matches the school's judgement. The core subjects are given the right amount of emphasis. The setting arrangements for English and mathematics are effective and enable pupils to work at the right level. The other subjects are taught in blocks of time which allow for depth of study; displays and children's books have many examples of interesting work that has been completed. A 'creativity club' takes place on one afternoon each week. This involves the teaching of the creative subjects, information and communication technology, and thinking skills.

Although it is too early to judge its impact, this interesting innovation has the potential to enable the pupils to become very effective learners.

The Foundation Stage curriculum covers all the required areas of learning and is purposefully organised and delivered. The personal, social and health education programme is effective and a broad range of enrichment activities is provided. Very effective use is made of the local environment and the school grounds.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The inspection confirms the school's evaluation of this aspect of its work as good. There are some strong features. The care of the children is planned well, with regular meetings between teachers, support assistants and other agencies. Good provision is made for children at risk. An effective nurture group helps build the confidence and self-esteem of those who find it difficult to learn social skills. There are good behaviour support plans in place for pupils who display challenging behaviour.

Health and safety routines and risk assessments are fully in place and child protection procedures are clear and understood by all. The children feel safe and secure in school and know who to turn to if they have any problems. Pupils are well supported in their learning; they know their individual targets and what they have to do to make progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school judges its leadership and management to be good and the inspectors agree. There are some very strong features. The headteacher has achieved a great deal in the short time she has been in post. New systems for matching work to pupils' needs have been implemented, liaison with the private nursery on the site has increased and several curricular innovations have been introduced. There is regular and accurate monitoring of planning, teaching and the pupils' work. The three members of the senior management team each lead a key stage and manage a core subject. This is an effective system and is leading to school improvement. However, it places a considerable burden on each member of the team and, in time, other members of staff will need to be trained to take on some of these responsibilities.

School improvement planning is comprehensive; timescales, key personnel and monitoring activities are identified. The ways of judging whether actions have been successful are less precise. School leaders have a clear view for the future direction of the school; they know its strengths and areas for development well. Subject leadership is good; all the required responsibilities are carried out and these are providing increasingly useful information about how well the school is doing. The governing body discharges its duties conscientiously. Several governors, including the chair, are frequent visitors and are strongly supportive of the school. The need to hold the school to account is acknowledged and the governors act as an important link between the school and the community. Measures are taken to find out the views of parents and pupils and these show very strong support for the school.

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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	NA	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	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?	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

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Cramlington Cragside Church of England Controlled First School
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NE23 6EX

6 October 2005

Dear Children,

Mrs Armstrong and I would like to thank you very much for the welcome you gave us when we inspected your school and for the very helpfully way you talked to us about the work you do there. We agree with you that you have a good school. The things we particularly liked about it are:

- the very high standards you achieve and the great progress you make in reading;
- the good work you do in other subjects;
- the good teaching you receive;
- the way the school cares for you so well;
- the exciting and interesting work and activities your teachers prepare for you;
- the way you all look after each other;
- the good contribution your school council makes to the life of the school;
- the good way the school is led and managed.

We have asked Mrs Sleet-Thompson and her teachers to do two things that we feel will make your school even better than it already is:

- to carry on making the teaching of writing exciting for you;
- to make sure that all the changes in the school are as good as the teachers want them to be.

Many thanks once again for welcoming us into your school. We really enjoyed our time with you and wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Iain Rodger

(Lead inspector)

Annex B