

Crownfield Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102295
Local Authority	Havering
Inspection number	286330
Inspection date	20 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Hugh Protherough

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Pam Craig
Headteacher	Mrs Sharon Nacmias
Date of previous school inspection	15 April 2002
School address	White Hart Lane Collier Row Romford RM7 8JB
Telephone number	01708 741826
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. He evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

The extent to which the school's action to improve pupils' writing is resulting in better achievement, especially the boys? Do the leaders responsible for English and Foundation Stage have a secure oversight of standards and the quality of education in their areas of responsibility? What is the impact of the school's work with parents, carers and other agencies in raising pupils' achievements?

Other aspects of the school's work were not inspected in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The majority of pupils at this average sized infant school are of white British origin. One in five is from a wide variety of other backgrounds. Few of these are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. Almost a quarter of pupils are identified as having learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD) which is above the national average; of these two pupils have statements of special educational need (SEN).

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'My son enjoys school so much and he is learning so well and that is down to his teachers ... he can't wait to get to school each day.' This comment is typical of the highly positive views expressed by the overwhelming majority of parents about Crownfield Infant School. They are right to be pleased. This is a good school that has made important improvements since the last inspection, especially in relation to provision in the Foundation Stage, and is well positioned for the future.

The bedrock of the school's success is the passionate commitment of the headteacher and her staff to the development of the educational partnership between home and school. Parents are delighted about the ease with which they can contact the staff to discuss any aspect of their child's development and many recognise the good support provided for pupils with LDD and SEN. Regular newsletters, home-school communication books, and a range of meetings and courses for parents all help them to support learning at home. The children thrive in this positive environment and their personal development is outstanding. They arrive at school happy and enthusiastic. The teachers' friendly approach and clear expectations lead to positive relationships and excellent behaviour. The children know that they benefit from regular exercise and healthy eating and are making the most of the school's good provision. The school's close links with a local consortium have also been extremely helpful in strengthening still further the excellent levels of care and support.

The inspection also focused, in part, upon pupils' writing. The school has rightly identified that the national assessments of seven-year-olds in 2007 show that whilst overall standards in writing were in line with the national average, the boys were not doing as well as the girls. Closer analysis of these results shows that boys heavily outnumbered the girls and a significant number had LDD and SEN. Although some of these struggled to reach the expected level in writing, they made good progress in relation to their starting points in Year 1. The inspector's analysis of the current Year 2 shows that children are achieving well and that more boys are reaching the expected levels. However, the few pupils who exceed the expected levels are mostly girls and the school is now concentrating on improvements in this area.

The inspectors' sampling of teaching reflects the close teamwork of the staff team. Lessons are thoroughly planned and cater effectively for the wide range of needs in each class. A significant feature of literacy sessions is the way that adults help the children to learn about the sounds of letters (phonics). The teachers' systematic approach is of particular benefit to the boys because the physical actions and rhymes used as part of each lesson reinforce learning. It is also possible to observe the benefits of this approach when children are writing because most feel confident in using their phonic knowledge to tackle unfamiliar spellings.

The inspector's analysis of children's previous work reveals that they are producing a good volume of writing. They write for a variety of purposes, but are sometimes constrained from developing greater independence as a result of the use of exercises and worksheets. The new curriculum framework devised by staff offers increased opportunity for pupils to make links in their learning between the subjects of the National Curriculum. However, the detail of how further improvement in pupils' writing can be managed within this is not yet in place.

The leadership team are well organised and thorough. Those middle managers such as the English co-ordinator have good oversight of their responsibilities. They maintain comprehensive records of what is being taught and keep careful checks on the quality of pupils' work.

Assessment information is well used to support teachers' planning and in setting targets for individual pupils that further support the home-school partnership.

A committed governing body successfully supports the headteacher and her team. Together, they know their school well and have made accurate assessment of its performance. They manage their budget prudently and with a sharp eye on long-term trends. Thus although a fall in the number of pupils has resulted in a reduction in the amount of Foundation Stage teachers, the revised arrangements in Reception classes are working well.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Since the last inspection, the leadership of the Foundation Stage has brought about important improvements to provision for children in the Reception classes. The curriculum is firmly established and following the creation of an excellent and well resourced outside environment, the children now benefit from regular physical exercise and exciting new dimensions to their learning.

Children entering the Reception class arrive with wide ranging abilities, but overall their levels of attainment are below national expectations. They make good progress so that by the time they enter Year 1 the majority are working within the nationally expected goals for five-year-olds. Past records suggest that girls have tended to achieve more swiftly than boys, especially in communication, language and literacy. The current day-to-day assessments of the children maintained by Reception staff are building into comprehensive records of individual progress. A recent set of early writing assessments offers an excellent baseline from which to judge pupils' writing development and includes promising samples of boys' early writing. Other informal observations during the inspection also indicate that in terms of using language to organise and clarify thinking boys are performing better than last year.

New teaching arrangements introduced in September are working well. The teachers' precise planning and daily assessment sheets ensure that all adults working in the Reception bases understand the focus of their work and that children experience a good balance of directed and child initiated experiences. As a result the children have settled happily into the routines of school. Many spoke readily with the inspector about their work and demonstrated confidence when choosing activities to pursue.

What the school should do to improve further

- Define the detail of how pupils can improve their writing within the school's new curriculum framework.

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Annex A

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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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

29 November 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Crownfield Infant School, Romford, RM7 8JB

I promised the school council that I would write a letter to you after my visit to tell you what I thought of your school. Here it is!

First, I want to thank you very much for making me so welcome. I had a busy and exciting day.

I think Crownfield Infants is a good school. You told me that your teachers make your lessons fun and that you have lots of exciting clubs that you enjoy. I agree. I also like the way you all take care of each other and behave sensibly around the school. Another thing that makes your school special is the way that your teachers and parents work together to help you to do as well as you can.

It was good to see you working hard and doing well in so many things; writing story-boards, learning your 'Jolly Phonics', sharing stories, and discovering all about 'The Great Fire of London,' (as well as splashing in puddles in the Reception play area!)

I think you are doing well in your work, but could do a bit better in your writing, (especially the boys!). I have asked your teachers to finish planning their new ideas that will give you even more interesting things to write about.

With best wishes

Hugh Protherough

Lead Inspector