



Crocketts Lane Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103941
Local Authority Sandwell
Inspection number 286814
Inspection dates 8–9 November 2006
Reporting inspector Paul Edwards

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Crocketts Lane
School category	Community		Smethwick
Age range of pupils	3–11		B66 3BX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 5581659
Number on roll (school)	270	Fax number	0121 5655045
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Karen Thorne
		Headteacher	V Kavanagh
Date of previous school inspection	11 June 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Crocketts Lane is an averaged sized primary school serving an area of significant disadvantage. Just under 75% of the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and approximately a quarter are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is similar to that seen nationally. The first Year 6 pupils left the school in 2006, following the school's change from an infant school to an all-through primary school in 2002.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Crocketts Lane is a good school. Parents are rightly very happy with the quality of education the school provides and this is evident in one of the many positive comments from parents who said, 'We applaud and thank the staff for their efforts and commitment on behalf of our children'. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their work and this can be seen in their much improved attendance and in their participation in the wide range of out of school activities.

Children are provided with a good start to their education in the Nursery and Reception classes. Good emphasis is placed on developing their communication, language and literacy skills, which are particularly low when they join the school. The good support for those at an early stage of learning English enables them to make rapid progress in their acquisition of English.

When taking account of their starting points, pupils achieve well throughout the school. At the end of both Year 2 and Year 6, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly average. However, the school has rightly recognised that pupils could do even better in mathematics and has introduced strategies to ensure teachers challenge the pupils more effectively. Whilst teaching and learning are good, some teachers do not make the best use of assessment to plan challenging numeracy lessons and to promote the use of numeracy skills in other subjects. Pupils achieve particularly well in information and communication technology (ICT) because of the high quality of provision and teaching in this subject.

Pupils' personal and social development is good. They behave well and are enthusiastic in lessons. This enthusiasm is engendered because the school provides a good curriculum where subjects are taught in an interesting and innovative manner. For example, the way in which Year 6 pupils used computers to compose music to accompany a film script as part of their work on the Second World War. Excellent links with a language college have effectively developed the pupils' ICT and foreign language skills. Pupils are happy because of the good care they receive and the way in which all staff support them, both in and out of lessons. There is a strong emphasis on celebrating the wide range of cultures and backgrounds in the school and this is very effective in developing the confidence of pupils.

Leadership and management are good. The introduction of good tracking and assessment procedures is helping to drive up standards. Senior staff have created a climate where teachers have a strong desire to improve standards and where pupils are keen to do their best. There is a recognition that senior staff could improve pupils' achievement in mathematics through even more effective monitoring of lessons. However, improvement in teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics, an area the school identified for improvement, is already helping to raise standards in the subject.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise pupils' achievement in mathematics even further.

- Ensure teachers set work that is sufficiently challenging for all pupils and plan opportunities for pupils to practise numeracy skills in other subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils of all abilities achieve well throughout the school and standards are average by the end of Year 6. In the 2006 national tests at both Year 2 and Year 6, pupils attained broadly average standards in English and mathematics. However, pupils' skills in reading and writing are still better than their mathematical skills and the school has recognised standards in mathematics could be higher.

When children enter the Nursery class their overall attainment is much lower than that seen in most schools and their literacy skills are particularly low. They make good progress but their skills on entry to Year 1 are below those expected for children of their age. Pupils make good progress in their reading and writing because teachers are confident in the subject and they plan very well to develop literacy skills in other subjects. This also applies to ICT. Pupils develop impressive skills because teachers themselves have good skills and computers are an integral part of all aspects of learning. Pupils do not do quite as well as they could in mathematics. Work is not always sufficiently challenging and there are insufficient opportunities to use numeracy skills in other subjects. Pupils learning English as an additional language make rapid gains in their acquisition of English because of the good support and guidance they receive. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are identified early, they are well supported and they achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school as shown in the improving attendance rates, which are now in line with those seen nationally. The school is working hard to improve punctuality, which is not as good as it should be. Pupils develop a good knowledge of cultural diversity in art and music, and they understand the contributions made by those from a range of cultural backgrounds to science, the arts and politics. Responding to high expectations, pupils mostly behave well. From an early age, children learn to take responsibility and to respect one another. Pupils play an active part in running their school. For example, as a result of suggestions made by members of the school council, improvements have been made to toilet and playground facilities. Further initiatives of the school council have encouraged all pupils to show a good concern for the welfare and well-being of others, for example encouraging them to raise funds for a number of charities.

Pupils are developing a good awareness of how to be healthy and stay safe. They keep the school environment tidy. They regularly contribute to the wider community, for example when representing the school at local conferences and when sharing their

learning successes in language learning with others further afield. These activities, together with their well developed social skills and information processing skills, and their developing competency in literacy and numeracy, give them a good grounding for their future education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Good teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes provide children with a good start to their schooling and they develop good working habits. In all classes, teaching of ICT is a strength, enabling a significant number of pupils to attain standards above those expected. Teachers are confident working with new technology and this makes a significant contribution to learning. Recent concerns in the teaching of mathematics are being addressed resulting in most teachers displaying good mathematical knowledge and planning appropriate tasks for all pupils. This improvement is helping to raise standards. However, the practice is not yet consistent in all classes. Teachers occasionally miss opportunities for pupils to practise mathematical skills in other subjects. Support assistants are deployed well throughout the school using their good skills effectively, making a significant contribution to learning. Those supporting pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English contribute well to the good progress these pupils make. Teachers use assessment well to determine the level of pupils' learning and what it is they need to do next. However, this practice is inconsistent in mathematics.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. A particular strength is the provision for ICT through the 'Learning Gateway' scheme. The provision of home computers for pupils and facilities in the ICT suite for Year 6 to revise before the school day starts are excellent. Work in science and personal, social and health education (PSHE) promotes safe and healthy lifestyles. Language teaching has earned national recognition and significantly enriches the curriculum. Pupils say lessons are enjoyable and interesting. A good range of visits, visitors and community links extend opportunities for pupils. After school clubs promoting arts and sports activities are very well attended. The school recognises the need to provide mathematics that is more relevant and purposeful in order to further raise standards. Awards such as Platinum Healthy Schools and Basic Skills Quality Mark are indicators of the broad and interesting curriculum offered to pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The school has effective arrangements in place for ensuring pupils are well looked after. Pupils are 'absolutely sure' that there are

adults they can trust if upset or worried. They feel strongly that their environment is safe and supportive. Pupils with emotional needs are identified early and strategies such as anger management, supported by the learning mentor, work well. Teaching assistants are used effectively and sensitively to support those with learning difficulties or disabilities and those whose first language is not English. Guidance for academic progress is good. Teachers consistently explain what will be learnt so pupils understand the purpose of their lessons and what they need to do to improve. There are examples of very good marking in pupils' books but marking does not always identify how pupils might improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is well led and managed. Regular monitoring of the quality of teaching, a very clear understanding of how well the school is doing and a strong drive for further improvement ensure that the school provides a good quality of education. As a result of the effective monitoring, staff have been provided with very clear support and guidance that have enabled them to improve their subject knowledge and the quality of their teaching. This in turn has raised the morale of staff which is now very high. It is well placed for further improvement. The leadership has developed very effective procedures to monitor how well the pupils are doing. More importantly, staff are using these procedures effectively to raise standards. Senior staff recognise they need to be even sharper in identifying where teachers could be challenging pupils more in mathematics. Their intervention is showing a steady improvement in pupils' achievement. Excellent links have been developed with the local language college and they contribute significantly to the pupils' self-esteem as they gain confidence in their use of ICT and skills in foreign languages. The governors visit the school regularly and fulfil their duties effectively, supporting where needed but asking challenging questions to help in the drive for further improvements.

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

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?	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	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?	2

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?	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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	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

We thoroughly enjoyed our visit to see how well your school is doing. Thank you for talking to us. We know most of you and your parents think that Crocketts Lane Primary is a good school and we agree. These are the things that the school is doing well:

- You are making good progress in your work, particularly in reading and writing.
- You are developing good skills in information and communication technology (ICT).
- You thoroughly enjoy school, behave well and work hard.
- You are developing a good understanding of how to keep healthy and safe.
- The teachers provide you with good lessons and a lot of interesting activities.
- The school takes good care of you and provides good support for those of you who need extra help.

We have asked those in charge of the school to help you improve your work in mathematics by making sure work is sufficiently challenging for all of you and that you have the chance to practise numeracy skills in other subjects.

I hope you continue to work hard and enjoy school. Thank you again for helping us with our work.