

Crowcroft Park Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105413
Local Authority	Manchester
Inspection number	287221
Inspection dates	14–15 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Geoffrey Yates

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	242
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Pauline Sergeant
Headteacher	Mrs Danuta Brightwell
Date of previous school inspection	25 November 2002
School address	Northmoor Road Longsight Manchester M12 5SY
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school situated in an inner city area. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. Pupils are predominantly from minority ethnic backgrounds representing 14 different nationalities. The school has a well above average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and of pupils at an early stage of learning English. The school has the Healthy Schools Gold Award and National Healthy School Status.

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 and its own overall self-evaluation is accurate. There is a warm, inviting and supportive atmosphere where pupils feel safe and know staff will deal with any concerns they have. The school ensures that pupils from many different nationalities are supported and included in all aspects of school life. Parents are pleased with all that the school provides and say that the staff could not do more for their children. Pupils say how much they enjoy coming to school and this is shown by their regular attendance. Pupils' personal development is good. The careful attention to personal and social education, together with the good range of additional curriculum activities such as 'round the world week' and plenty of opportunities for pupils to develop their musical skills, ensure they develop an enjoyment of learning. However, the school does not provide enough opportunities for older pupils to use and develop their writing skills in subjects across the curriculum.

Pupils behave well and feel safe and secure in school. They know well the choices required to be healthy and safe. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community by participating in the school council and by caring for the environment, for example, as junior wardens. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. However, there is inconsistency in the way assessment information is used to plan pupils' future learning. Teachers work closely with teaching assistants to provide effective support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language. Classrooms are managed well. However, when pupils' work is marked, opportunities are missed to provide pointers to help pupils improve further. Good teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes ensures that children experience a wide range of exciting learning opportunities.

Children start in the Nursery with skills that are well below those expected for their age. They make good progress but do not reach the standards typical for their age by the time they enter Year 1. National assessment results at the end of Year 2 in reading and writing were average in 2006 but slightly below average in mathematics. Given their starting points in Year 1, pupils made good progress. At the end of Year 6 in 2006, pupils' test results were in line with those expected nationally in mathematics and science, but below in English, especially writing. The 2006 results were significantly better in mathematics and science than in previous years and also reflected some improvement in English. However, standards in writing were not high enough. Given pupils' below average starting point, the school's performance data indicates satisfactory achievement. Current standards by the end of Year 6 are not as good as those attained in last year's test results. Overall, standards are affected by the above average number of pupils with learning difficulties in the current Year 6 and the number of pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. However, in relation to pupils' earlier attainment, their achievement remains satisfactory, although writing continues to be an issue.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The relatively new leadership team has worked closely with the local authority to establish a clear vision for raising pupils' achievement. As a result, the school has accurately identified the right priorities for improvement and success is already evident in pupils' better progress in Years 1 and 2. The school's systems for monitoring how well it is doing are satisfactory and identify where further refinements are necessary. Satisfactory systems are in place to bring together information about what pupils know, understand and can do. However, this information is not used effectively to ensure that pupils are challenged consistently to improve on their previous best. Governance is satisfactory. The school gives satisfactory value for money and has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing in Key Stage 2 and provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in all subjects.
- Ensure that teachers use assessment information more effectively to plan pupils' learning.
- Ensure that the marking of pupils' written work shows them how to improve.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory but with areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before the next Section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory but inspection evidence shows attainment by the end of Year 6 is below average in English, mathematics and science. The weakness in pupils' writing continues to be an issue. This is because pupils are not given enough opportunities to use and develop their writing skills. Children enter the Foundation Stage with skills lower than those expected of children their age, particularly in their social and communication skills. Progress in the Foundation Stage is good and, by the end of Reception, children have gained valuable skills and knowledge, although their attainment is below the expected levels. In Key Stage 1, standards are improving because of better teaching. As a result, standards are average in reading, writing and mathematics. Staffing difficulties slowed progress in Key Stage 2 over recent years but now this situation has been resolved achievement is satisfactory. In the 2006 national tests, results were average in mathematics and science and the challenging targets set in mathematics were met. Results in English were below average and targets here were not met. There are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress through the school, as do those who are learning to speak English as an additional language.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school places high emphasis on raising the pupils' self-esteem and giving them confidence. As a result, pupils are proud of their school. They enjoy their learning and say that 'the teachers are great because they help you'. Pupils have very good knowledge of what it means to lead a healthy lifestyle, and the school has just achieved the Healthy Schools Gold Award. Assessors praised the school's 'can-do' approach which involved all staff helping pupils to become good citizens. Pupils enjoy school and behave well as a result of a good range of positive strategies, such as the 'golden tickets' that are given to them for behaving well. Pupils appreciate the many opportunities to have their achievements recognised, such as 'golden time' and the recently introduced 'house' system. Good progress has been made in improving attendance levels, which are now satisfactory, with a decreasing number of absences for religious and cultural reasons sanctioned by the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils feel very safe in school, and they say initiatives such as the 'friendship stop' and lunchtime buddies are really helpful. Money is raised for local and national charities using the pupils' ideas and, as a result, pupils develop good attitudes with regard to the importance of community involvement. Pupils are given special responsibilities which provide them with opportunities to develop responsible attitudes in preparation for adult life. For example, working

with the community wardens as junior wardens gives them a real insight into what the social problems are in the local area.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. All teachers have a secure knowledge of the curriculum and how pupils learn best. In the Foundation Stage, pupils get off to a good start because of effective teaching. Throughout the school, teachers make good use of interesting resources and have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Lessons move at a satisfactory pace, with teaching assistants fully used to support pupils at an early stage of learning English or to support those with learning difficulties. In less effective lessons, teachers do not attempt to involve all pupils in answering questions directed at them. Teachers' marking does not tell pupils clearly enough how well they have done or what they need to do to improve. Teachers do not make good enough use of information about pupils' progress to set specific targets for pupils in order to move them on faster.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' progress and personal development. In planning the curriculum, a start has been made on identifying links between subjects but the school's view that the curriculum is good is too generous. In classes for older pupils, opportunities are missed for them to use and develop their writing skills in subjects across the curriculum. There is a good range of curriculum enrichment. Work is planned well to meet the diverse personal needs of the pupils. For example, a very good focus on celebrating the achievements of those from Black African backgrounds really captured the interests of the boys of the school of African Caribbean heritage. Pupils appreciate the good range of additional opportunities beyond the school day for them to develop their skills. The Foundation Stage provides very well for all areas of learning and the outdoor area offers scope to provide a good range of experiences, particularly in physical development. Areas such as the mini beast garden provide valuable first-hand learning opportunities. Children learn to play and share well together because of the school's focus on developing social skills. Residential trips and visits to places such as the Stockport air raid shelters reinforce well what is being taught in school and contribute to pupils' personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Although the school evaluates this aspect of its work to be good, inspectors judge it to be satisfactory. The school is successful in providing a welcoming atmosphere and all members of staff are committed to pupils' well-being, providing good personal support and care. However, while procedures for tracking pupils' academic progress have recently been revised, the information gathered is not used effectively enough to monitor pupils' progress within the school year. It is not used enough to provide guidance for pupils so that they know exactly what they need to learn next.

Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet current requirements and health and safety matters are dealt with appropriately. Good home-school relationships enable parents to support their

children's learning, especially in the Foundation Stage where parents are encouraged to become fully involved, for example, by supporting them at the start of the day. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported, as are pupils who are learning English as an additional language. As a result, both groups are fully included in all aspects of school life. Good induction procedures help the Nursery children and those who join the school partway through their education to settle happily into new routines.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management, including governance, are satisfactory. The school is highly effective in promoting the inclusion of all children. Both pupils and parents are consulted on a regular basis. The leadership team ensures that personal development has a high priority and now better attention is given to pupils' academic development. The governors' firm stance on parents taking children away from school for more than 10 days has been successful and has brought attendance levels up to the national average. With the creation of a new senior leadership team and the effective support of the local authority, the school is now more focused on raising standards. The improved performance data for both Year 2 and Year 6 pupils in 2006 show that success is starting to come through but the impact of some initiatives has yet to be realised. The satisfactory systems for checking on school effectiveness provide school leaders with a mostly accurate view of how well the school is doing but judgements about the curriculum and care, guidance and support are too generous. There are satisfactory systems to gather information on pupils' progress but information is not used consistently well to further raise the attainment of pupils. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection but a weakness in pupils' writing remains an issue. Given the school's current educational direction, it has the capacity to continue to improve in future. It gives satisfactory value for money.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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	2
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	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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.

Annex A

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	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for the very friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. I really enjoyed my time with you and seeing you in lessons and around the school. It was good to see the 'around the world' project activities and to listen to the wonderful sounds of the Samba band for the percussion band. I am pleased to tell you that I agree with your headteacher that your school gives you a satisfactory standard of education.

I agree with you that your teachers and other adults make lessons interesting and that if you need help you get it. You work hard in lessons and behave well. There is one very special thing I would like you to do and that is to work extra hard so that you do even better when writing. I have asked all your teachers to make sure that the information they have about your progress is used to make sure that you are always challenged to do your best. You can all help your teachers and yourselves by writing neatly and by taking notice of any comments they write in your books to help you to improve.

I was very impressed with how polite you were. You told me that you feel safe in school and that if problems occur an adult will sort it out quickly when you tell them about it. The school council is busy on your behalf and members enjoy being able to take new things forward to make life better for you.

Keep on working hard so you can continue to play a big part in ensuring that your school continues to improve.