



Crosscrake C of E Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112316
Local Authority Cumbria
Inspection number 289244
Inspection dates 14–15 November 2006
Reporting inspector Pat Kime HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Stainton
School category	Voluntary aided		Kendal, Cumbria
Age range of pupils	3–11		LA8 0LB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01539 560410
Number on roll (school)	104	Fax number	01539 560410
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Simon Lewis
		Headteacher	Mrs Linda Fletcher
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2001		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 14–15 November 2006	Inspection number 289244
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

This smaller than average school, a few miles south of Kendal, is attended by pupils from the immediate rural area and beyond. Many pupils are collected by bus. The area is socially and economically advantaged. All the pupils are of White British heritage with English as their first language. The proportion of pupils in receipt of free school meals is very low. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average but a higher than average proportion has statements of special educational needs. Five of the pupils are in Nursery. They attend part-time, joining the Reception pupils in the afternoons. A new headteacher started in September 2006, after four years of short-lived arrangements. The school holds several awards including Healthy Schools accreditation.

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 has suffered from the lack of continuity in leadership and management. There is now a permanent headteacher who has gained the confidence of staff, parents and governors and got the school back on track. The school now has good capacity for improvement. The parents' and carers' confidence in the potential for improvement is summed up by one who wrote of the headteacher, 'She will help our school go forward positively'.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, given their starting points, but their rate of progress varies between classes, reflecting the quality of teaching. Taken overall, the teaching is satisfactory. It is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) and in Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2), except for writing where it is inadequate. In Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6) teaching is very good with much that is of outstanding quality.

Pupils make sound progress in the Foundation Stage. In Key Stage 1 progress is satisfactory in reading and mathematics but writing standards are too low and have been so for a few years. Progress is more rapid in Key Stage 2 so that by the time pupils leave the school they generally reach high standards. At Year 6 standards are consistently very high in science. In English and mathematics there has been more variation over the years. The school's curriculum is planned carefully to ensure pupils cover all the required work. However, in several subjects, planning is not rigorous enough to ensure work becomes more demanding from one year to the next.

Pupils' personal development is good. They enjoy school and have positive attitudes to learning. Their behaviour in lessons and at other times in school is good. Lunchtimes, for instance, are pleasant social occasions. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. They make a positive contribution to school life, with even the youngest carrying out jobs in the classroom. They also contribute positively to the wider community. Pastoral care is very good but the academic guidance and support provided for pupils varies. It is not adequately underpinned by systems to keep track of pupils' progress. The school harnesses support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities well. This, together with good support from teaching assistants enables them to make good progress. Several parents wrote praising the quality of support for these pupils and the way the school includes them fully.

The headteacher is providing good leadership for the school. She has a clear sense of direction and understands the issues the school faces. She has made a good start on tackling these and has promoted teamwork well. The leadership of subjects of the curriculum has not been developed sufficiently and in some subjects it has suffered from discontinuity. Governors work in partnership with the headteacher and share her determination to improve the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the teaching of writing in Key Stage 1 so that pupils reach higher standards by the end of Year 2.
- Establish effective systems which enable staff to:

- keep track of pupils' progress as they move up the school
- know whether all pupils are doing as well as they can
- nip any underachievement in the bud.
- Develop the role of subject leaders in improving pupils' achievement and developing teaching and the curriculum.
- Plan more systematically to ensure pupils make progress in developing understanding and skills across subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Year groups are small and what pupils can do when they start school varies considerably but, taken overall, attainment on entry is above average. By the end of the Reception year, standards are above average and this represents satisfactory achievement for the pupils. In 2006, results in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 picked up after a three year decline. However, writing standards remained at a low level and they are not yet high enough in the present Year 2. Pupils do well in Key Stage 2 and usually reach high standards. In English and mathematics standards have fluctuated a lot over the years whereas in science they have been consistently well above average over the same period. This shows just how well the pupils can achieve when the curriculum is well-planned and teaching is really good. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well by skilled support staff. As a result they are able to join in normal lessons and they make good progress towards their clear and appropriate personal targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. This is seen in their good spiritual, moral and social development and satisfactory cultural development. Pupils develop personal skills, such as responsibility and independence, which set them up well to benefit from the next stage of their education and to contribute to the community. For example, they manage the sale of healthy snacks at break times, ensuring a profit which goes to support a child in Nepal. Pupils are well-informed about how to stay safe and they appreciate the importance of a healthy diet. They make a good contribution to decisions about school life, through the recently re-instated school council. Pupils' well above average rate of attendance reflects their enjoyment of school. They are well-behaved and they try very hard with their work, except when lessons are mundane. By the time they are in Key Stage 2 pupils have the confidence to tackle demanding work. Relationships are good and pupils work well together. They confirm that staff deal rapidly and effectively with the few minor incidents of bullying.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall but it varies from outstanding to inadequate. This was evident from the lessons seen, pupils' achievement and the work in their books.

Staff have positive relationships with pupils and lessons are usually enjoyable. Indeed pupils say that their teachers 'make lessons fun'. In the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 the bulk of teaching is satisfactory. However, in the Foundation Stage staff do not always expect enough of the pupils, especially the more able older ones. In Key Stage 1 the teaching of writing is not good enough. Over-reliance on worksheets means that pupils have too few opportunities to develop the skills of independent writing and the more able are not challenged to work at a high level. In Key Stage 2 teaching is consistently of at least a good quality and a significant amount is outstanding. Consequently, pupils make rapid progress and achieve very well in this key stage. The key differences between the satisfactory teaching and that of a high quality are in:

- the depth and extent of teachers' knowledge of the subjects they teach
- the expectations of what pupils can achieve
- the pace at which teachers push learning on within lessons
- the match of work to pupils' different learning needs.

In the best lessons, all these elements come together with the result that every pupil thoroughly enjoys working intensively and producing their very best.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school offers a satisfactory curriculum which covers all that is required. It is organised to avoid repetition in the mixed-age classes. However, the school's planning for pupils to acquire new skills and develop their understanding across all subjects as they get older is not sufficiently robust. It depends too much on teachers building this into their daily lesson planning. The curriculum is enriched with a range of educational visits and visitors and there is a good emphasis on teaching pupils how to keep healthy and safe. Some additional activities and clubs are offered. A few are at lunchtime but most are in association with the after-school care provider and, because of transport arrangements, not all pupils can attend.

The provision of pupils' personal development is good. Pupils have good opportunities to take responsibility, develop independence, and contribute to the life of the school community. They are taught about different lifestyles and have many opportunities to respond to the needs of others, for instance through raising funds for charitable causes.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Overall, the care, guidance and support provided for pupils are good. Pastoral care is very good whilst academic guidance and support are satisfactory.

The arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements fully. The school works well in partnership with other agencies to support pupils, especially those who need extra help. Staff know their pupils well and generally meet their needs. But the systems for checking on progress are at an early stage of development and at present do little to help the school ensure that all pupils do well enough. Teachers practice in setting targets for pupils is inconsistent. Consequently, some pupils are not sure what they need to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The succession of short-lived arrangements for the leadership and management of the school over the last four years have had a detrimental effect. The new headteacher has already had a positive impact. Her picture of the school is accurate in most respects. She has identified what needs to be done and started tackling shortcomings, such as the absence of an adequate system to keep track of pupils' progress. In this she has been aided by the action plan produced by the last acting headteacher and the local authority's review of the school in January 2006. Additionally, she has raised morale and gained the confidence and support of staff, governors and parents. Typical parental comments included, 'we feel that the new permanent headteacher has had a positive impact even at this early stage'. All this shows good leadership and puts the school in a good position to improve.

The headteacher has analysed pupils' test results carefully and accurately and she has a good idea of how well pupils are doing because she teaches each week in every class. She has planned a programme for checking the quality of teaching and the planning of work. The role of subject leader is generally underdeveloped and other staff have not been as fully involved in the processes of monitoring and evaluating the school's performance as they could be. Nonetheless, there are strengths in the leadership of science. In September, new teachers took on the leadership of English and mathematics and they have good plans which have the potential to enable them to make a positive impact on these subjects throughout the school.

Governance is satisfactory and shows good potential. There have been many changes to the membership of the governing body in recent years. Governors have developed their awareness of their role and improved the way they carry it out. They have effective ways of finding out how well the school is doing and they raise relevant questions. They have undertaken training and they receive appropriate information from the headteacher. Governors and headteacher work in a good partnership and share a determination to improve the school.

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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	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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	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	1
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?	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?	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?	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	3
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

The School Council

Crosscrake CofE Primary School

Stainton

Kendal

Cumbria

LA8 0LB

15 November 2006

Dear Councillors

As you know, I came to your school recently, with Alan Keenleyside, to find out how well all the children are learning. Everyone made us welcome and helped us to find out about your school. I was especially grateful to the children who talked to Alan and me about school and their work. Please thank them for us.

This letter tells you what I found out. Please make sure that all the children know what it says.

Since the last time inspectors came, five years ago, your school has been through some ups and downs and some things are not as good as they were. You are now getting a satisfactory education and things are improving. The grown ups know what should be better and I am sure they can do what is needed. So it looks as if you have a bright future.

These are the things that are good at your school:

- you rarely miss school. You seem to enjoy learning and you all get on well together
- you are well-behaved and you get on with your work. In some lessons children work extremely hard
- some of the teaching is really good, especially in the junior classes
- the school takes good care of you all. The staff make sure that children who find things hard get the extra help they need
- Mrs Fletcher has not been at Crosscrake very long but she has already found out a lot about the school and begun to make it better.

I have asked the staff and governors to do some things to help you get a better education.

- Make sure you do better in writing by the end of Year 2.
- Keep a check on how well you are learning as you move up the school. Then they will know if everyone is doing as well as they can.
- Help the teachers who are subject leaders to make work in every subject as good as it can possibly be.
- Make sure work in all subjects is planned to get harder as you get older.

I'm sure you will help with ideas about how to improve your school. You have my best wishes for the future. I hope you do as well as you can at Crosscrake and when you move on to secondary school.

Yours sincerely

Pat Kime

Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools