



Craneswater Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116223
Local Authority Portsmouth
Inspection number 290459
Inspection dates 8–9 March 2007
Reporting inspector Peter Thrussell

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	St Ronan's Road
School category	Community		Southsea
Age range of pupils	7–11		PO4 0PX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02392 734787
Number on roll (school)	333	Fax number	02392 296444
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs M Bunn
		Headteacher	Mr D Jones
Date of previous school inspection	18 November 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Craneswater is a larger than average junior school. Pupils come from a variety of backgrounds, some of which are disadvantaged. A higher than average proportion of pupils comes from minority ethnic backgrounds, of which a high proportion has English as an additional language.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Craneswater is a good school. Under the committed leadership of the headteacher, the school provides a good level of care for its pupils. Where necessary, it draws on its good links with local schools and other agencies to ensure pupils' well-being and safety. Parents are also encouraged to play a part in supporting their children's learning. There is a good level of personal development and academic achievement. Parents commented, 'My children are always enthusiastic to come to school' and 'I am superbly happy with my son's progress'. The headteacher, well supported by his deputy, has developed a leadership team that is growing in strength. Consequently, considerable improvement has been made in pupils' achievements in English and, more recently, in mathematics. Overall, progress is now good as a result of good teaching. Pupils' achieve standards in line with national expectations for their age by the time they leave school.

Good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning contribute to pupils' success in school. They greatly enjoy everything about school, especially lessons where they can be creative, such as art and music, and the opportunities offered through an enriched curriculum. Pupils are well aware that the different sporting activities help them to keep fit, and they benefit from the well planned and extensive outside play areas. These encourage them to look out for each other and think about their own safety. Pupils recognise the importance of a healthy diet and the need to 'eat three meals a day'. The school council appreciates its involvement in school life, particularly through the fund raising activities it organises.

Pupils are increasingly involved in their own learning. Lessons are planned with clear learning outcomes, which are discussed with pupils, providing a measure against which they can assess how well they are doing. Teachers use assessment information particularly well in English to plan work and set individual targets for pupils to aim for. Pupils understand that these targets help them to make their work even better. Assessment information is not yet used quite as well in mathematics. The work set does not always sufficiently match what pupils' need to learn next and as a result progress is slowed.

The school is accurate in the evaluation of its performance, and good improvement has been made since the last inspection. Particular attention has been made to developing a full and interesting curriculum with planned links between subjects. This makes learning purposeful and enjoyable, and reinforces basic skills well. Senior staff analyse data carefully and identify areas to work on. This had led to considerable improvements in English, with standards in writing now being above average. The planned improvements for mathematics, including a better match of work to pupils' abilities, are starting to impact on achievement. As the school has already identified, these and other improvements now need to be rigorously monitored to ensure their success. The school is well placed to tackle these issues and make further improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards, particularly in mathematics, by making fuller use of assessment information to plan appropriate and challenging work for all pupils.
- Ensure that the school's planned improvements, particularly in mathematics, are rigorously monitored and evaluated.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards overall are average and achievement is good. In the 2006 Year 6 tests, English results showed that pupils made excellent progress given their starting points in Year 3. This came about through very well focused action in recent years. This action has introduced a whole-school approach to teaching reading and writing, drawing on the ideas set out in a published programme. Regular assessments enable teachers to closely identify where pupils are in their learning and to plan the next steps. In mathematics, standards, although remaining broadly average, have been slowly declining in recent years. Action taken recently has started to impact on the progress made by pupils. The school has looked at the step-by-step development of pupils' skills so that necessary steps are not missed out. More attention to problem-solving is helping pupils to develop and apply these skills. Consequently, pupils generally are now making better progress in mathematics, and there are indications that standards by Year 6 are rising, particularly those of more able pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They develop a good understanding of how to deal with their own feelings and those of others. Relationships are good and pupils enjoy school. One pupil commented, 'Every one feels welcome, lots of good facilities and teachers are fair and friendly'. The school has worked hard to improve attendance and, at the time of inspection it was broadly in line with the national average. Pupils take their responsibilities as school council members seriously and, as 'big brothers and sisters', they take care of others by making suggestions to improve play time activities. Pupils are well aware of how to stay safe and appreciate the school's efforts to ensure this. Through the well thought out personal, social and health education curriculum, pupils are developing a good understanding of healthy eating. They appreciate the importance of exercise and many participate in the extensive range of clubs and sporting activities provided for them. There are good links with other schools both here and abroad, such as the one in Ghana. Along with the growing links with the local community, these are helping pupils to develop a good understanding of their responsibilities as citizens of a wider community. Pupils are well prepared for their future life and learning, with their abilities in basic skills contributing positively to their self-confidence.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall. Assessment, along with good subject knowledge, is used well by teachers in planning the next steps in pupils' learning, particularly in English. Although pupils are grouped according to ability for mathematics, their teaching is not always as well planned and they are not always challenged sufficiently. Questioning strategies are used well to extend pupils' learning and challenge their thinking. Relationships are positive. Teachers use a range of methods well to engage pupils' attention and to develop their personal skills. For example, pupils enjoy being given the opportunity to work independently and in groups on problem-solving tasks. The fun pupils had in a Year 6 set when learning about proportion and ratio is typical of how pupils enjoy and are involved in their learning in the best lessons. Teaching assistants provide good additional support, especially for pupils with learning difficulties and those who are learning English as an additional language. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is effective. Teachers provide evaluative comments showing pupils how well they have done and how they can improve their work. Pupils respond well to this guidance.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and generally well matched to pupils' learning needs. However, in mathematics not enough care is taken to ensure that the work planned is fully appropriate and builds upon previously taught skills. The curriculum is enriched well by a wide range of visits, visitors and a very good number of extra activities. A residential visit for each year group promotes pupils' personal development and positive attitudes to learning. As one parent commented, 'The residential field trips have enhanced the class-based teaching, boosted confidence and self esteem and have proved to be very enjoyable experiences.' The school's good provision for physical and health education, involving sports coaches from a nearby school, has been recognised by the achievement of national awards. There is a good range of equipment for information and communication technology. Opportunities to use these facilities to support teaching and learning are developing well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The school has a strong commitment to caring, which is reflected in the good arrangements for safeguarding the welfare of pupils. Pupils say that staff are friendly and fair and that they can talk to them if they have any worries. An effective inclusion manager ensures that there is good support for pupils at early stages of learning English, for those with particular learning difficulties, and for those with social and behavioural needs. This enables them to take a full part

in school life and achieve as well as their classmates. The academic guidance given to pupils is good, overall. There are good assessment procedures, particularly in English, that enable teachers to guide pupils well in their learning. Individual target setting is well established in English. Pupils understand that these targets, along with constructive marking, help them to improve their work and to move forward in their learning. The school recognises that further use should be made of assessments in mathematics to guide pupils in their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The school carefully monitors and accurately evaluates its work, identifying appropriate areas for action. As a result, an effective English coordinator has taken action that has raised achievement and standards in English. More recent action in mathematics, well planned by an enthusiastic coordinator, is yet to impact as fully. Both coordinators have been influential in developing teaching styles to bring about these improvements. They have looked at planning and pupils' work, but, along with other senior managers, are not yet more fully involved in monitoring, particularly in lessons, to ensure that any improvements are sustained. Governors are involved well in the life and work of the school and have a good understanding of its performance. Parents are generally supportive of the school. A very small minority is concerned that its views are not always listened to sufficiently, particularly in relation to the few incidents of inappropriate behaviour.

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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?	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

I am writing to let you know what we found when we visited your school. Thank you for taking part in the inspection. We spoke to some of you during our visit and you were interesting to talk to, very polite and helpful. You spoke enthusiastically about enjoying school and all of the things you take part in. We decided that Craneswater is a good school, which has a number of strengths.

We liked these things the most.

- You enjoy school and are keen to learn.
- You do particularly well in writing.
- You have many exciting and enjoyable things to do both in and out of lessons.
- The school is very caring and looks after you well.
- Teachers are good at sharing with you how well you have done and what you need to learn next.
- The school helps you to succeed when you find learning difficult.
- You understand the importance of taking plenty of exercise and eating the right things.
- You behave well and want to do your best in lessons.
- The school listens to you when you suggest how things could be better and you value being given responsibilities.
- Your headteacher, deputy and other staff do a good job.

We have asked the school to work on these things now.

- The school should plan work in mathematics even more carefully, so that you all have challenging work and do even better.
- The school knows where it needs to improve, particularly in mathematics, and should carefully check that any planned improvements are fully and successfully carried out.

Thank you again.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Thrussell

Lead Inspector