



Crockenhill Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 118254
Local Authority Kent
Inspection number 291064
Inspection dates 30 November –1 December 2006
Reporting inspector Selwyn Ward

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	The Green
School category	Community		Crockenhill
Age range of pupils	4–11		Swanley BR8 8JG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01322 662179
Number on roll (school)	202	Fax number	01322 662179
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Kevin Waller
		Headteacher	Susan Norwell
Date of previous school inspection	25 June 2001		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 30 November –1 December 2006	Inspection number 291064
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average-sized school with one class for each year group. Half the children join the Reception class in September and half the following January. An average number of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities. The school has been through a period of staffing instability in recent years but staffing is now much more settled.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Crockenhill Primary provides a satisfactory education for its pupils and the school is improving, with much about it that is good. Despite its many strengths, it is not yet a good school because many of the improvements are still recent and have not yet been shown to have had a sustained impact on standards. By contrast, standards in recent years have been too low and pupils in Year 6 have not always achieved their full potential.

Children get off to a steady start in the Reception class. They quickly learn the orderly routines that will serve them well as they move through the school. Standards by the start of Year 1 are broadly average. Standards in English and mathematics at the end of Years 2 and 6 have fluctuated from year to year but were broadly average in 2006, arresting the sharp decline in the Year 6 test results of the previous two years. Standards are now improving, and pupils in the current Year 6 look on track to attain significantly higher standards than in the recent past.

Achievement is satisfactory, taking account of both the lower standards in national tests and the improving standards seen in the school at the present time. Pupils are generally making good progress in lessons. They do particularly well at the top of the school. This contrasts with recent years when progress has been much more uneven because of the disruptive effect of staff changes. Teaching and learning are good because teachers engage pupils' interest and make learning fun. Teachers do not, however, always match the work in lessons closely enough to pupils' widely different abilities. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities do well because they benefit from good support but some more-able pupils could do better if they were set more challenging work.

The school's motto is 'Working together getting better and better'. That is certainly reflected both among the pupils and the staff. Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and leave at the end of Year 6 as confident young people who get on and work well together and who are keen to do well. Leadership and management are good because they have helped to improve teaching and build a strong staff team with a shared commitment to school improvement. They have maintained the full confidence of parents, many of whom wrote to praise the work of the school, which they describe as a 'very happy, friendly environment'. School leaders have a sometimes overly favourable view of how well the school is doing, but their assessment of the school's strengths and of those areas that could be improved is otherwise accurate and has resulted in good recent improvement. This shows that the school has good capacity to build on its successes and continue to improve.

The school has been successful in building a good curriculum that captures pupils' interest and imagination. Especially good use is made of after-school clubs and visits to broaden pupils' experiences.

As a parent pointed out, 'Real effort is made to include all children in activities'. Pupils also benefit from good care, guidance and support. This not only ensures their welfare but also results in their having individual targets that show them what they need to

do to improve their work. Marking, however, does not always give such clear guidance. There are examples of very good marking but some does little more than acknowledge that work has been done.

What the school should do to improve further

- Better match work in lessons to pupils' different abilities, and particularly to provide more challenge for able pupils.
- Ensure that marking gives more consistent feedback to pupils on what they need to do to do better.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children join the school with a range of experiences and abilities but their attainment is average overall. They make steady progress in their time in the Reception Year, although, for half the class, this is only two terms. Standards by the end of the Reception Year are average. In Years 1 to 6, standards overall are average and achievement is satisfactory. Standards have been broadly average in most years in the assessments taken at the end of Year 2. Writing has shown particular improvement as a result of the whole-school focus on this following the last inspection. There has been greater variation in the results in the tests taken at the end of Year 6. They have not been high enough in recent years and some pupils have made less progress than they should because their education has been disrupted by the school's previous staffing difficulties. More stable staffing has led to improved teaching and pupils are now making much more consistent progress. Older pupils do particularly well and the work seen in the current Year 6 is above average. The school has set exceptionally challenging targets for these pupils and they appear on track to achieve them. Throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because they benefit from good support. Although there are some extra lessons provided for the more able, these pupils are not all doing as well as they could in every class because the work set in lessons is not always matched to their abilities.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils really enjoy school and are keen to learn. By Year 6, they are mature and thoughtful young people; a credit to themselves and their families and fine ambassadors for the school. Attendance is good. Pupils are very aware of the value of healthy lifestyles and take plenty of exercise, both in physical education lessons and through after-school clubs. They say they feel safe at school and that any rare incidents of bullying are 'sorted out very quickly'. The pupils are proud to serve on the school council and it provides a very good forum for them to express their views, which are taken very seriously. 'At council meetings we discuss anything that could be improved. For example, the pond area is overgrown and Year 6 are going to help to weed it.' Strong community links, including raising money for charities and performing in

concerts, help to develop appreciation of the skills needed in the workplace. Pupils are well prepared for life at secondary school, but their basic skills in literacy and numeracy have been no better than satisfactory in recent years.

As a result of the good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, pupils acquire an effective understanding of different faiths and cultures and an awareness of the world around them. Assemblies reinforce the school's values, and music and art are very effective at developing pupils' spirituality.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching has improved as a result of effective monitoring, training and support, and as the staffing has stabilised. Pupils are now making good progress in most lessons because teachers engage their interest and make learning fun, often making good use of the interactive whiteboards which are in every classroom. Teachers get on very well with their pupils. These good relationships mean that pupils often work hard because they are keen to please their teachers. In a Year 5 mathematics lesson, some boys chose larger numbers to work with because they wanted to impress the teacher and because 'we want to challenge ourselves'. Teachers make good use of questioning to check on pupils' understanding, and pupils have the confidence to politely challenge their teachers, for example, over the meaning of archaic words in the Good King Wenceslas carol. Teaching assistants work in close partnership with class teachers, particularly to support pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. However, work in lessons is not always matched as closely as it could be to the wide range of abilities in each class. More-able pupils, in particular, could sometimes be set more difficult work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The success of the curriculum is that the productive links made between different subjects and the wide range of clubs and other activities help make learning interesting and fun. The curriculum is enhanced in Years 3 to 5 by French, which is taught by specialists, including a visiting teacher from a local secondary school. This provision is not currently extended to Year 6, however, which means that the progress pupils have made is brought to a rather abrupt halt. The Foundation Stage curriculum is suitably planned for both indoor and outdoor activities. The secure learning environment enables the children to become confident and independent learners.

Pupils respond enthusiastically to the good range of clubs, including many sports, provided for them at lunchtime and after school. They also benefit from the many trips, visits and other events organised to extend and develop learning in class. Through the school's programme of personal, social and health education, pupils develop a

good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, how to choose a healthy diet and how to keep fit.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Teachers know their pupils well and parents are confident that their children are well cared for and that the school will deal effectively with any worries or concerns. As one parent explained, 'Teachers are very approachable and will always take time to answer any queries'. Arrangements for ensuring pupils' safety and welfare, including child protection arrangements and risk assessments, are robust. The school's very caring ethos means that pupils are valued as individuals and thrive, growing in confidence. Staff are very well trained in managing behaviour and dealing with learning difficulties and disabilities and they draw effectively on links with outside agencies. Assessments are frequent, thorough and accurate. There is a good system for checking and recording how well pupils are doing and for tracking their performance over time. All pupils are given individual targets in reading, writing and mathematics that show them what they need to focus on to do better. Marking, however, does not always give pupils such clear guidance on how they can improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and leadership team have succeeded in managing the school through an unsettled period where the number of long-term staffing absences and staff changes had an adverse effect on standards and achievement. They have maintained the full confidence of parents and have created a climate for learning where pupils want to do well. Parents comment that 'staff work well together as a team' and this is certainly the case. All share in the commitment to school improvement. This is particularly evident in the work done to improve the quality of teaching and in the range of out-of-school activities they provide for pupils. The effective systems for monitoring teaching and tracking pupils' progress through the school have contributed strongly to the recent improvements. Governors are very supportive of the school. They now have an accurate picture of the school but they have not always done enough to hold the school to account, for example, in years when standards declined.

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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	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?	3
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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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	1
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	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

I am writing to let you know how much we enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you all for making us so welcome and helping us.

Here are the things that we think are best about your school:

- This is a school where things are getting better. Although children haven't always done as well as they should in the past, you are now making good progress because the teaching is good.
- You are all learning to become confident young people who are keen to learn and to do as well as you can.
- The school looks after you well and makes it a happy place for you to be.
- You are given lots of interesting things to do and that helps make lessons fun.

These are the things that we think could be better:

- Some of you are capable of doing more difficult work in lessons.
- Marking does not always show you what you need to do to do better.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when we came to see you.