

Crockerton CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126318
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	293523
Inspection date	20 March 2007
Reporting inspector	David Curtis

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	74
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Howe
Headteacher	Val Culff
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2002
School address	Potters Hill Crockerton Warminster BA12 8AB
Telephone number	01985 212168
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a very small village school. The majority of pupils come from outside the school's catchment area because of parental choice. Nearly all pupils are of White British origin. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below the national average. With very small numbers in each year group, attainment on entry varies considerably from year to year but trends indicate that it is at least average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

'My firm trust in the school is unquestionable' and 'My children thrive in their classes' are examples of parental testimony to this outstanding school. At the heart of the school's success are outstanding leadership and management. The headteacher's vision for every child to achieve his or her potential, be it academic or in sports or the arts, is totally evident in the mature, confident and well-rounded pupils in the school. The school's analysis of its own performance is thorough and accurate, if a little conservative. It is constantly seeking how it can improve and takes effective action to remedy any potential areas of concern. Its capacity for further improvement is excellent.

Outstanding care, guidance and support are the key to pupils' outstanding personal development. Staff know pupils exceptionally well from meeting them and their families before they start school in Reception to wanting to know of their successes well into secondary school. One parent wrote of the way the school supported her son: 'The school's reaction showed me that, not only did they take my concerns seriously, but it demonstrated the lengths that they were prepared to go to, to deal with them effectively'. Behaviour in the school is exemplary and relationships at all levels are excellent. There is a real sense of 'family' in the school, with older pupils taking great care of younger ones. Pupils love sport and they are very knowledgeable about the importance of healthy eating. As one said, 'You'll find no chocolate in this school!' Pupils enjoy school. In lessons, there is a buzz of excitement and a thirst to learn. Equally, the take-up of chances to take part in sporting activities or events such as the Warminster Arts Festival is high. Pupils are prepared exceptionally well academically and socially for their future lives in society.

Pupils' achievement is outstanding because the quality of teaching is excellent. As a result, pupils reach standards which are well above average by the age of 11. Standards and provision in Reception (Foundation Stage) are outstanding. From the very first day in Reception, children make significant gains in knowledge, skills and understanding as they move up through the school. They enjoy lessons and work extremely hard because work is matched closely to their individual learning needs. Pupils say how much they appreciate that teachers explain things in a way which helps them understand. They appreciate that teachers tell them how well they are doing and how they can get better. Pupils particularly like their new individual targets for writing and say that they would like to have these in other subjects, especially science and ICT, as this would increase their involvement in stretching themselves.

The school's outstanding curriculum plays a very important part in pupils' successes in the school. The significant strength is the way in which the school works with partner institutions, the church and visitors, together with educational visits, to enrich pupils' experiences. The school makes no excuses in relation to its limited accommodation. It actively pursues every avenue to ensure pupils receive rich and exciting learning opportunities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Introduce individual targets for pupils in all subjects, starting with science and ICT, in order to help them plan their own learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement is outstanding and pupils reach standards in English, mathematics and science which are well above the national average by the time they leave the school. In many other subjects, standards are very high. For example, singing heard during the inspection was of a very high standard, including singing in three parts. Displays of work in design and technology are of a very good standard and demonstrate that pupils use and apply successfully key literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. Standards in ICT are now good, as a result of the school addressing the only key issue from the last inspection by improving the number and quality of computers.

Children make good progress in Reception. Most reach or exceed the goals they are expected to achieve in each of the six areas of learning. The few pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make outstanding progress and achieve as well as their peers in national tests.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Attendance is good. From the youngest child in Reception to the oldest in Year 6, there are smiles and a real enthusiasm for learning. Pupils are safe in school, all doing their bit to support each other. For example, they handle scissors sensibly in the youngest class and all carry laptop computers from the 'docking station' to classrooms with the utmost care. Pupils play a very strong part in community life, including taking a leading role in services at church and taking part readily in many fundraising activities. Pupils' views are listened to; they show not the slightest reticence in letting the headteacher know of their views orally or in writing. Many take part in sporting and cultural activities at every opportunity and know that it is the taking part that matters and not how well you do. Nevertheless, pupils from the school have achieved good successes in competitions and festivals. Their love of and joy in singing reflects their zest for life and all the school offers them.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

There is a high consistency in the quality of teaching across the school which contributes significantly to pupils' outstanding achievement. Lessons typically begin with teachers sharing the purpose of the lesson and what they expect pupils to have learned by the end. Planning is excellent and meets the learning needs of all pupils. A strength is that teachers readily amend their planning to take into account work from previous lessons. For example, in a literacy lesson sampled, the teacher gave the pupils a real 'blitz' because of their lackadaisical approach to the use of capital letters on the previous day.

Teaching assistants play a significant role in pupils' successful learning. For children in Reception, who are in a class with Year 1 and 2, there is a very good interchange between the class teacher and the teaching assistant. As a result, children make good progress. Pupils across the school praise their teachers and enjoy learning because they understand what they have to do and feel challenged.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is exciting and stimulates pupils' desire to learn. In Reception, it is planned so that children make good progress in all areas of learning. There is a very good focus on planning for the development of the early key skills in reading and writing. For pupils in Years 1 to 6, the curriculum is equally strong. Planning for pupils to use ICT and to apply key literacy and numeracy skills is especially good. Planning for pupils with learning difficulties and those that the school deems to be gifted and talented is excellent.

Curriculum enrichment is a major success of the school and is a vital part of pupils' high achievement. The school works exceptionally well with other schools to enhance its facilities, for example in ensuring that pupils have their full entitlement to physical education. An excellent range of after-school clubs gives pupils interesting new experiences, such as learning Latin.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

'My second child cannot wait to go to school' is a view expressed by one parent which highlights the school's strength in its induction procedures for children about to join Reception. The quality of pastoral care given by all staff is of the highest quality. The school is rigorous in ensuring that it meets all requirements for safeguarding pupils and child protection.

Pupils say that they know from teachers how well they are doing and how they could improve their work. They enjoy having group targets which tell them where they are in relation to targets based on 'must, should and could'. The recent decision to give them individual targets for writing has proved highly successful, so much so that pupils would like similar individual targets for their other subjects, especially science and ICT, to help them challenge themselves even further.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher has the absolute backing of staff, governors and parents in her vision that each pupil should achieve his or her potential. Whilst being totally committed to reaching high academic standards, the school recognises that for some pupils, high achievement in the arts or sports may be their goal. From day one in the school, children are encouraged to take part in all that the school offers in order to achieve their best.

The headteacher is prepared to make difficult decisions when necessary to ensure that pupils are achieving well. For example, in September 2006, she reorganised the deployment of teachers in order to remedy disappointing test results in English. Similarly, significant improvements to the tracking of pupils' progress in science across the school mean that any underachievement in the subject is now spotted sooner and effective support for pupils is put in place.

Governors are hardworking and very supportive of the school. They understand its strengths and areas for development and go to great lengths to have an impact on the provision. Many attend training courses in order to familiarise themselves with their roles so that they can give the school the best possible support and challenge.

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Annex A

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Thank you so much for the lovely welcome I received when I visited your school. I really wish I could have had longer to talk to you all. I would like to thank those of you from Year 6 who gave up part of their lunchtime to tell me so many wonderful things about your school. I am delighted to tell you that your school is outstanding and I have a sneaking feeling that many of you and your parents know that already. These are the things that most impressed me:

- the work you do in English, mathematics, science, design and technology and singing is much better than in many other primary schools
- your behaviour is exemplary and you all really do get on with each other exceptionally well
- excellent teaching helps you learn many new and exciting things and I know how highly you think of your teachers
- you are really enthusiastic in joining in after-school clubs and taking part in sports competitions and other festivals
- your school is exceptionally well led and managed and everyone wants you to do your very best in everything you do
- you were all brilliant in the singing assembly.

It is hard to find things that your school could do better. I do agree, though, with those of you who told me that you would like individual targets in all subjects similar to the ones you have just been given for writing, as these will help you push yourselves even harder.

You are a credit to yourselves, your teachers and your parents.