

Cramlington Northburn Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122269
Local Authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	301699
Inspection dates	25–26 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Sue Sharkey

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	3–10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	286
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Susan Mitchell
Headteacher	Mrs Gillian Tawse
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2003
School address	Horton Drive Cramlington Northumberland NE23 3QS
Telephone number	01670 739111
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Age group	3–10
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is situated in an urban community where the majority of parents are in employment. The school opened as a primary school in September 2007 and prior to this was a first school. Due to local authority reorganisation the school is undergoing an extensive building programme. Pupils in Year 5 who would previously have transferred to middle school are now the oldest pupils in school. The school's provision for learning difficulties and/or disabilities has a good reputation and as a result the school attracts many pupils from out of the immediate area. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average. A small proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and a very small minority speak English as an additional language. Children's skills on entry to Foundation Stage are below those typical of their age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Cramlington Northburn Primary School provides a good education. Some aspects of its work are outstanding. It actively welcomes pupils of all abilities, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and all are fully involved in the life of the school. They learn to play, act safely, live healthily and enjoy what the school offers and does for them. There is a calm, purposeful, caring environment in which pupils enjoy learning, develop their personal qualities well and make good progress with their work. A typical comment from parents is ‘my child always wants to go to school; he enjoys the environment and the teaching’. Teachers know their pupils well. Work is generally well planned carefully to match their varying needs. Good relationships between staff and pupils underpin the exceedingly good behaviour. This has meant that pupils are confident to express their views and have good personal skills that equip them well for the future.

The work of the staff is closely monitored, evaluated and supported. This ensures that any weaknesses in provision are quickly identified and rectified. The results of assessments in 2006 at the end of Key Stage 1 were significantly above average and the pupils in Year 5 are also achieving similarly high standards. Pupils achieve well because of the effective teaching, guidance and support. The most able pupils in mathematics, however, are not being sufficiently challenged to enable them to reach their potential.

Pupil’s personal development and well-being including their spiritual, moral social and cultural development are good. Pupils say they enjoy school; they feel safe and well cared for. They have many opportunities to contribute to the community, and are well prepared for their future economic well-being. Attendance is good and the school has systems in place to continue to improve this.

Teaching and learning are good and sometimes outstanding. This includes very good support from teaching assistants for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Enthusiastic teachers deliver exciting lessons, which capture the imagination of pupils so that they are interested and engaged. Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to extend learning beyond the classroom as well as having a good focus on developing literacy, numeracy and information technology skills. The care, guidance and support of pupils are outstanding.

The school’s success is founded in good leadership and management. The headteacher is well supported by her leadership team, an effective governing body and a highly motivated and capable staff. Together they are clear in what needs to be improved so the quality of pupils’ learning is getting better all the time. The contribution of subject leaders and key stage managers is good but is not yet sufficiently developed to ensure that all play a key role in the leadership of the school. Because of efficient financial management and good outcomes achieved, the school is well placed to improve and provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The provision in the Foundation Stage is good and children make good progress. Children are very well nurtured and cared for in a safe and stimulating environment. Parental involvement is strongly encouraged. Home visits ensure that staff get to know the children before they start school and parents are welcome to stay and settle their children. As a result, children show increasing levels of confidence and independence and make particularly good progress in their

personal development. Teaching and learning are good because adults assess children regularly and plan exciting activities that closely match children's needs. Consequently, children show increasing levels of interest and concentration. They make good gains in their early literacy skills and mathematical concepts because adults are particularly talented at providing practical play activities that captivate children. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make outstanding progress because early assessment highlights their needs and very good teaching assistant support is provided. The indoor curriculum, in particular, is well planned with a range of games that consolidate and support new learning. Adults make best use of the current facilities when planning outdoor learning activities and plans are in place for use when the current building programme is completed. Leadership and management are good and ensure that adults plan together as a team and have a clear understanding about how young children learn.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make better use of middle managers so that they can play a greater role in the leadership of the school.
- Ensure that higher attaining pupils are sufficiently challenged in mathematics.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and standards are significantly above average. Attainment on entry to the Nursery is below expectations, particularly in children's personal development, early literacy skills and in their mathematical understanding. They make very good progress and are well prepared for Year 1 with levels of attainment that exceed national expectations. This is because good teaching identifies what they need to learn and provides the right activities to help them succeed.

Pupils continue this good progress in Years 1 and 2, where standards achieved by pupils are significantly above the national average. Teachers are continually working to raise standards and significant improvements are particularly noticeable in reading and writing.

The 2006 results showed significant improvement compared to the 2005 results, and 2007 data indicates that standards are being maintained. Standards in mathematics are not as high as in English and science, but are still above the national average. Some of the more able pupils are not reaching their full potential in mathematics as they do in other areas.

Pupils' progress in Years 3 and 4 is continually improving and teachers have good systems in place to ensure that these pupils, who will now stay in the school, are fully prepared for the work they will have to do as Years 5 and 6 pupils.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve exceptionally well and make excellent progress. The school quickly and successfully puts support in place to raise the attainment of specific pupils when needed.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Throughout their time at Northburn, pupils make good progress in developing the personal skills and attributes that help them develop into thoughtful and mature young people. They know how to keep themselves safe and healthy

and promote the health and fitness of others. They say they enjoy their education and appreciate the good opportunities they have to learn a wide range of subjects.

Pupils attend well, behave extremely well and have helped establish a strong ethos for learning in the school community. The good progress they make in their learning means they are well equipped for the next stage of their education and beyond. Learners' social, moral, cultural and spiritual development is good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good with some outstanding features. This accounts for the impressive outcomes achieved by pupils. Teachers throughout the school consistently make sure pupils are clear about what they are going to learn and what they have to do to be successful. Planning is thorough and takes careful account of pupils' previous learning. Teachers set work that provides challenge and enjoyment, although the most able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged in mathematics. Explanations, demonstrations and instructions are clear and effective in promoting good learning. Lessons have a brisk pace and the time spent in the classroom is used well. Teachers question the pupils effectively to promote discussions and they encourage the children to think about their responses. As a consequence, pupils listen carefully and articulate their answers clearly and accurately. Relationships in class both with their teachers and with other pupils are excellent, so pupils work hard. A particular strength is the very good support that the knowledgeable teaching assistants provide in the classrooms. The increasing use of interactive whiteboards provides interesting learning experiences and pupils enjoy regular use of computers to support their learning and help to make it fun. Marking is good in literacy and the supportive comments ensure pupils are clear about how to improve their work. In mathematics, however, marking is less effective. Transition of pupils through the school is smooth because the school has a network that effectively communicates pupils' strengths and weaknesses to subsequent teachers.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It meets requirements and takes account of national initiatives and guidance. It responds successfully to the challenge of mixed-age classes. This includes grouping pupils according to ability. This provides enjoyable opportunities for all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make good progress in literacy and numeracy. Further, an increase in opportunities to use information and communication technology, and other aspects of modern technology, has improved basic skills for all pupils. The recently started Young Enterprise project is a direct result of opportunities offered by the local community. This strongly supports pupils' personal development and overall progress.

The curriculum offers a rich range of opportunities both in and out of the classroom, during and after school. These range from Spanish to yoga and to enterprise topics supported well from the local business community. The range of out-of-school activities, in sport and the arts, caters well for pupils' various needs, talents and ages and contributes to their achievement. The range of visits out of school and visitors into school is good, and a visit during the inspection from the Fire Service showed how well the pupils respond. The school is working effectively towards seeking greater opportunities for creativity in the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Child protection procedures, safeguarding systems and risk assessment meet national guidelines to ensure the health and safety of children. Relationships throughout the school are excellent, so pupils confirm that they feel safe and are very happy to come to school because they feel valued and supported. Excellent induction procedures ensure that children's strengths and needs are identified early and well catered for. The support and guidance provided for pupils' academic progress is outstanding. In lessons teachers provide pupils with criteria for how they can be successful. They closely monitor the progress of every pupil each term. Consequently standards are high. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make excellent progress because of high quality learning support and the close links with outside agencies. Pupils confirm that they have ample opportunities to consider and discuss issues relating to staying healthy and safe.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good throughout the school. The headteacher provides strong leadership and has a clear vision of what the school needs to do to improve. The senior management team, governors and staff work well as a team to raise standards and set a good tone and atmosphere for learning. This ensures that all pupils are fully included in what the school offers. Working as a strong team has helped in ensuring a seamless transition from being a first school to becoming a primary school.

Governors know the school well and are helping to shape its direction, for the future, particularly as a primary school. Management decisions are driven at all times by the needs of the pupils, and a great deal of thinking goes into ensuring the very best use of resources.

The school's systems for checking the quality of teaching and learning are good. Subject coordinators are involved in the monitoring of performance within their specialist areas. However, middle managers are not yet fully involved in monitoring the quality of the school's work. Leaders ensure that pupils are well cared for, as well as setting high expectations for their academic achievement. The school has just begun to seek the views of parents. The school's self-evaluation is effective and accurately highlights areas for development, which the school will share with parents. Most parents have positive views about the school. Improvement since the last inspection is good and the school has good capacity to improve further.

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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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

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

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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?	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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

27 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cramlington Northburn Primary School, Northumberland, NE23 3QS

We are writing to thank you for making us feel extremely welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed talking to you and were very impressed by how friendly you are, not just towards us but also towards each other and your teachers. We were impressed with how keen you were to talk to us, telling us how much you enjoy school and how you help other people and raise money for charities. We saw how well behaved you are in lessons, in the playground and as you move around school.

We looked at other parts of school life, including how teachers help you to understand about being healthy. When we asked you about this you knew the importance of the right food and exercise. We agree with you that your headteacher and staff help you feel safe and secure in school and help you when you have problems.

When we came into lessons we looked at the work you were doing and were very impressed. I particularly thought that the way you used computers helped you in your learning. We have suggested to your teachers that you are given harder work in mathematics so that some of you can reach higher standards. Some of you can help your teachers with this by asking questions which make you think harder. The staff work well together and are all constantly looking at ways to make your school even better.

We did enjoy your assembly and thought the singing and dancing were excellent. It must be very exciting for you all with the new classrooms and the new areas outside. Congratulations to Year 5 children for being the first ever in the school. Well done!

Yours sincerely

Sue Sharkey

Lead Inspector