

Crow Orchard Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119334
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	301953
Inspection dates	11–12 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Jean Kendall HMI

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	160
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Audrey Bridson
Headteacher	Miss Ann Hedges
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	School Lane Skelmersdale Lancashire WN8 8QG
Telephone number	01695 724046
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Crow Orchard is a smaller than average primary school serving a built up area in Skelmersdale. It is situated in an area of relatively high social deprivation which includes a mix of private and rented housing. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average and an above average number of pupils have a statement of special educational need. All pupils are of White British heritage; there are very few looked-after children. The school has been awarded the Healthy Schools Standard and it achieved the ActiveMark in 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Crow Orchard Primary School provides a satisfactory quality of education with some good features and provides satisfactory value for money. It has a caring ethos which promotes a joy of learning and provides its pupils with a safe and secure environment. Staff work well in partnership with parents and governors. Parents are highly supportive of the school and have full confidence in the recently appointed headteacher and deputy headteacher. Pupils are proud of their school; they behave well, show consideration for each other and try their best with their school work.

Teaching is broadly satisfactory with some good teaching across the whole school. There is no unsatisfactory teaching and pupils are currently making at least satisfactory progress in their work. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are broadly average in English, science and mathematics. This is an improvement since last year when standards at the end of Key Stage 2 declined to below the national average. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because provision is good. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress because teaching and learning is consistently good.

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The school is well led and managed by the headteacher and deputy headteacher. They have brought enthusiasm, energy and vitality to the school and are working effectively with staff to bring about improvement. Leaders have taken judicious action to bring about improvement but are not yet systematically monitoring the quality of provision or evaluating the impact of actions. Leadership by other staff in the school is at an early stage of development. Staff show commitment and a strong will to develop their own leadership skills and improve the quality of provision. They are taking every opportunity to develop their professional expertise and bring about changes to benefit pupils in the school. Staff are fully supportive of the senior leadership team and they have good capacity to improve the school further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve achievement for all pupils.
- Improve the way the school reviews progress against priorities and ensure that action planning informs next steps.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children start school with varying levels of skill, some of which are below those expected for their age in speaking and listening, personal and social development and knowledge and understanding. Children settle into the Reception class well; most children make good progress and are ready to begin the National Curriculum by the time they start Year 1. They make at least satisfactory progress across Years 1 and 2 to attain above average standards in reading and mathematics and broadly average standards in writing. Standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 fell significantly in 2006 and were below average. Pupils, particularly middle ability boys, did not achieve as well

as expected. This was partly due to disruptions to the teaching of particular groups, and partly because of unusually high numbers of pupils entering or leaving Year 6. Current standards are broadly in line with the national average and most pupils are making at least satisfactory progress across Years 3 to 6. Recently introduced systems for tracking pupils' progress are enabling staff to identify any underachievement early, and good support is being put in place. These systems are beginning to impact positively on achievement. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because they receive good quality support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Good induction procedures help children in the Foundation Stage settle well and they make good progress in personal, social and emotional development. The 'Golden Rules' for behaviour, devised with pupils, are well understood and enthusiastically upheld. Pupils behave very well; they are able to make the right choices and show courtesy and respect for others. Pupils settle well to work, concentrate and persevere when tasks are difficult. They enjoy school and are excited by the range of activities provided for them. Attendance remains just below the average level because some families choose to take children on holiday during term time. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools award and pupils know that a healthy lifestyle such as regular exercise and a good, balanced diet is important. Pupils play safely together and have a clear idea of what is right and wrong. Bullying or racial harassment are very rare and there are good procedures for dealing with incidents should they occur.

Through the effective school council and its procedures, pupils are developing as good citizens. They are encouraged to take responsibility and make good contributions to the school and community. The structured development of basic skills means that children are soundly placed for their ongoing education and eventually the world of work. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on a wide range of issues. They know about their local culture and have a growing understanding of other traditions.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Some good lessons were observed during the inspection and teaching is satisfactory across all subjects. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed. Pupils make good progress in lessons where they are actively engaged in challenging tasks and are able to interact with each other. In the best lessons, time is used effectively and there is a good balance between teacher led and independent learning, which is well matched to pupils' learning needs. In less effective lessons, the pace of learning is slower and some tasks are too easy or too difficult for some pupils. The school has identified where improvement is needed and is rightly focusing on involving pupils more in explaining what they have learned in lessons. Teachers are actively seeking out and putting into practice approaches designed to make learning more effective. They are making good use of ICT to support teaching and learning. Teaching assistants are providing good quality support for small groups of pupils across the ability range, both within lessons and in withdrawal groups. Teaching and learning is good in the Foundation Stage and children make good progress from their starting points.

New assessment procedures were introduced at the start of the school year and are beginning to have a positive impact on learning. The majority of pupils know intended learning outcomes of lessons and teachers use effective questioning to review their learning and identify gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Marking is positive and encouraging but it does not give sufficient feedback on how the quality of work can be improved in some subjects and year groups.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught and the school meets all its responsibilities. Curriculum resources have been updated and meet pupils' needs well. The school provides a well-rounded education and promotes personal fulfilment and enjoyment across the curriculum. Pupils particularly enjoy learning Tai Chi and Spanish, both of which are incorporated into the curriculum from the Reception class onwards. Work in personal, social and health education is helping pupils develop as responsible young citizens and building their confidence to express views and make choices. At present, morning lessons are usually devoted to literacy and numeracy. Some of these lessons are long and time is not always used to best effect. School leaders have mapped provision across the school and are moving towards a more flexible approach to timetabling to develop cross curricular links and make better use of time. There is good additional support for pupils across the ability range through small group work matched to their needs. The Foundation Stage curriculum is good. Although the building prevents continuous access to the outdoors, staff do everything possible to ensure children receive their full entitlement.

An extensive programme of enrichment enhances pupils' experience, and provides good opportunities for them to develop skills in music and sports. There are frequent visitors to the school and a good range of school trips and visits. The out-of-hours activities provide further opportunities for pupils to extend their knowledge and skills. Many enjoy the range of physical activities, music, games and craft as well as the additional academic support offered.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support is good with particular strengths in pupils' pastoral care. The school aims to create a happy environment where pupils are listened to and their concerns are addressed. It has succeeded in this aim. It provides a welcoming community where pupils feel safe and well cared for. The school works well with parents and other agencies. Child protection procedures are in place and risk assessments are carried out rigorously. Whenever any inappropriate behaviour occurs, pupils state that teachers listen to their needs and deal with issues quickly and effectively. In the Foundation Stage children are assessed effectively on entry and are helped to settle well into routines.

The school recognises the need to improve academic guidance for pupils and is developing better assessment procedures. Additional work including practical activities has begun to lift standards in mathematics and science. Across the school pupils are working towards shared targets for mathematics and English and this is helping them to understand what they need to do to improve their work and achievements. Children with learning, behavioural or emotional difficulties have good care and support which enables them to be fully included in lessons.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new headteacher and her deputy are providing good leadership and have established a strong working partnership and a shared vision for the school. They have taken swift action to make best use of staff expertise and restore the academic standards that slipped last year. Until recently, staff have had limited opportunities to develop their leadership skills and their role in developing policy and monitoring performance is underdeveloped. Current work to raise standards through the development of the staff as subject leaders is starting to tackle the most important things to improve the school. The Foundation Stage and provision for pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties are well managed. Performance management is being effectively linked to priorities for improvement and the professional development needs of individuals.

School leaders have introduced a number of new initiatives to improve the quality of provision and raise standards. The recent introduction of systems to assess and track pupils' progress is helping teachers to identify underachievement early and put effective support in place. The development of a programme of work to link subjects using skills learned in literacy and numeracy is well founded. However, more time is needed for these initiatives to be fully established and for a full evaluation of their impact. This new work has the support of all staff and is being well managed as part of the whole school plan to raise standards. Plans to develop a more rigorous and systematic monitoring cycle and evaluations built into the school improvement plan provide a good basis for future development.

Governors are supportive and ensure that all statutory requirements are met. They are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are beginning to share more fully in monitoring the school's academic performance and take part in its improvement. Effective steps have been taken since the last inspection. With good guidance the highly committed staff have good capacity to improve the school 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?	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	2
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	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	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	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	3

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?	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.

Annex A**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

13 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Crow Orchard Primary School, Skelmersdale, WN8 8QG

Thank you for welcoming us into Crow Orchard Primary. We enjoyed talking with you and looking at your work. You were polite and helpful and are a credit to your school. You told us that you enjoy school and feel safe and well looked after. We can see why you do. Your teachers are kind and caring and want to do their best for you. They work very hard to make lessons enjoyable and help you achieve your best.

We were impressed by the way you help each other out in lessons and in the playground. You clearly enjoy the many opportunities you have to take responsibility and rise to the challenges. We think your 'Golden Rules' are good and that you behave very well. Your new school council is well run and has already made some good suggestions to improve your school. We think you make good contributions to your school and the local community.

We know that your headteacher, deputy headteacher and all staff in the school are working hard to help you achieve higher standards in your work. We think you work very hard and that you could achieve even more with good guidance. We have asked your teachers to make sure they regularly review how well you are doing and how well they are providing you with good learning opportunities.

Please thank your parents for sending back so many of the questionnaires. They are very happy with the school.

We wish you every success for the future.

Jean Kendall, HMI

Heather Evans

P.S. I really enjoyed the spontaneous demonstration of Tai Chi by the pupils I met at lunchtime.