

Crofton Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101660
Local Authority	Bromley
Inspection number	307769
Inspection date	5 November 2008
Reporting inspector	David Whatson

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	702
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Diane Moss
Headteacher	Mr Richard Sammonds
Date of previous school inspection	20 June 2005
School address	Towncourt Lane Orpington BR5 1EL
Telephone number	01689 821716
Fax number	01689 896506

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. He evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

- How well do pupils achieve in reading, writing, mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6?
- How effective are leadership and management in bringing about improvements in standards and achievement, especially in writing and science?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning, and what impact does this have on pupil progress?

The inspector gathered evidence from performance data, observations of teaching and the work produced by pupils; from 170 parents' questionnaires and discussions with pupils, representatives of the governing body, and some members of staff also contributed to the judgements.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspection found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included in this report.

Description of the school

The school is much larger than most other schools. Few pupils are eligible for free school meals. A similarly small proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, or are learning English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and with statements of special educational needs is lower than the national average. The school has recently received the Activemark, the Healthy School Award and the Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Parents correctly say that Crofton Junior School is a good school, where pupils achieve well because of the good provision. In one of the many ringing endorsements, a parent wrote, 'My son...has excelled in all of his endeavours and become a wonderful caring and responsible individual.' Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding because of the excellent support and guidance they receive. The views of one parent summed up those of many others when they said, 'The care given to each child is second to none.'

For the last few years, standards in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 have been above the national average. Progress made by pupils is best in mathematics and reading, as a result of good teaching in these subjects. The school is fully aware that progress in writing is not as good. The school introduced a new curriculum that has successfully developed the quality of pupils' ideas in literacy. One pupil spoke excitedly about the day the hall was turned into an airport and he flew around the world visiting different countries. Activities of this kind motivate and generate the interest of boys, as well as of girls, to write. Consequently, the school is successfully closing the gap between their achievements. The school's recent analysis of pupils' writing identified that they do not always plan and structure their work carefully enough. This is now a focus of school improvement but has not yet had enough time to raise standards further. In the last couple of years, science standards in Year 6 have fallen and are now average, and pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

Many of the strengths in teaching, accurately identified by the headteacher, were evident during the inspection. Teachers are clear about what they expect pupils to learn, and plan well to meet their differing needs. They share objectives with their pupils and a 'checklist' with them at the start of lessons to assist pupils in structuring and assessing their own work. Many teachers are good at providing activities that excite and interest their pupils, and have high expectations of what their pupils can achieve. This was observed in a lesson in which pupils were expected to write a news bulletin on local events just minutes before the news programme was to be aired. The school's leadership acknowledges that teaching varies in quality from satisfactory to outstanding, and that this accounts for some variation in pupils' progress. They are working hard through carefully planned monitoring, support and guidance to achieve even greater consistency.

The introduction of a new curriculum that builds on pupils' interests, and includes subjects such as philosophy, is increasing pupils' enjoyment and their understanding of the wider world. Careful planning in most subjects ensures that pupils build on their knowledge, skills and understanding as they move from year to year. Work is not planned as precisely in science. Good progress in basic skills means that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. A very good range of extra curricular clubs gives pupils the opportunity to experience a variety of sporting and cultural activities.

The care, guidance and support offered to pupils are outstanding. At the heart of this are robust systems that promote pupils' safety and their pastoral care very effectively. Staff know each pupil very well. The school prides itself on being inclusive and this is much appreciated by the parents. One echoed the comments of others when they wrote that at Crofton, 'Every child really does matter...every day.' Pupils feel extremely safe in this caring and supportive environment. Staff keep a very close check on their learning, especially in English and mathematics, and provide guidance and support. In science, monitoring is not as robust. The

systems for setting targets for pupils to achieve are clear and well understood. Pupils appreciate their individual 'progress meetings' with their teachers, which give them a very clear view of precisely what they need to do next in order to improve. The school has increased the resources for pupils with learning difficulties and these pupils make good progress. The school has established 'academies' in areas such as art, music and dance for pupils identified as gifted and talented. Pupils benefit greatly from very stimulating projects that have resulted in some excellent artwork that is displayed around the school.

For their part, pupils behave exceptionally well and are eager to learn. Pupils were fascinated by the assembly theme 'Isn't nature amazing!' and hearing about the life cycle of the sea horse. Attendance is good. Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy life and enjoy very positive relationships with adults and other pupils alike. Pupils are given an excellent grounding in good citizenship and in contributing to the community, through responsibilities such as being 'peer mentors' (class partners who support each other's learning) and involvement in local citizen projects. Pupils are proud of their recent recycling award. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.

The driving force behind the school's continued success is the quality of leadership. A good team supports the headteacher's strong leadership. The team has recently been restructured so that in this large school more of its members share the responsibilities for monitoring the school and improving provision. To date this has been more effective in English and mathematics than in science. The team is currently focusing on information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils make good use of the school's excellent computer facilities to enhance their skills across the curriculum. This was clearly demonstrated in a lesson where pupils were digitally recording their instructions on how to measure the depth of a local river. Achievement in ICT has improved since the last inspection; it is now good, and standards exceed expectations. The school has established good links with other agencies to support pupils' learning.

Through their well-established systems, governors make an important contribution to supporting the school and its priorities. They are fully committed to providing the best for every child in their care. They and the other school leaders know the school well and, in most areas, evaluate it accurately, have a clear understanding of what is working well and a detailed plan for what needs to be improved. Challenging targets are being used to improve the school's performance. The leaders' record of accomplishment shows that they are well placed to continue to do so.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in science by improving the quality of science curriculum and assessment.
- Raise standards in writing across the school by providing pupils with more guidance on how to plan and structure their written work.

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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 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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

18 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Crofton Junior School, Orpington, BR5 1EL

This letter is to tell you about the findings of the recent inspection and to thank you for making me feel so welcome in your school. I was very pleased to be able to speak to so many of you and watch you in lessons and on the playground. I particularly enjoyed the assembly and your artwork. A special 'thank you' goes to those of you who met with me to give your views. You were all very polite and helpful.

Here is a list of what I think are the best things about your school.

- You make good progress. By the time you leave at the end of Year 6, standards are better than in most other schools. You should be proud of what you do, especially in reading and mathematics.
- Your teachers are good at planning a lot of exciting and interesting things for you to do. Many of them are particularly good at making learning fun.
- You behave extremely well, get along with each other and feel safe in school.
- You thoroughly enjoy learning and the many exciting things on offer to you in school, on visits and in clubs.
- The school looks after you extremely well and shows you how to improve your work.
- The people who help run your school, especially your headteacher, do a good job in making sure that you get a good education.

Even in a good school like yours there is always something that could be better. I have suggested two areas that I think will make a real difference. I have asked the school to find ways for you to do as well in writing and science as you do in reading and mathematics.

Keep up the good work!

Yours sincerely

David Watson

Lead Inspector