

Cranmore Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104042
Local Authority	Solihull
Inspection number	308490
Inspection date	15 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Laurie Lewin

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	149
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephanie Ward
Headteacher	Brenda Jones
Date of previous school inspection	1 April 2003
School address	Northland Road Shirley Solihull B90 4SA
Telephone number	01217 053443
Fax number	01217 055420

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: children's attainment when they start school and their progress from there onwards; pupils' involvement in assessing their own progress; the development of the curriculum; and the provision for gifted and talented pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector 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 where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school is of below average size. Whilst the large majority of pupils are White British, just below a third come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below that found in most other schools nationally. The attainment of children starting school is in line with the expected level for this age group.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This outstanding school has an innovative and exciting approach towards constantly improving pupils' education. Parents are very impressed by the work of the headteacher and staff. They say things such as 'What a super, friendly and encouraging place... The children make fantastic progress... There's a wonderful community spirit... It has a caring and nurturing environment and values each child as an individual.' The parents are right! A visitor to the building is immediately struck by the welcoming atmosphere and the buzz of excitement in learning that pervades all activities and sessions. Pupils have excellent relationships with each other and all of the staff. They like the adults who work with them a lot. They say, 'Our teachers are really kind and funny and make our work lots of fun!' Working in this mode, teachers and teaching assistants are very skilled at developing pupils' confidence and desire to learn. Initiatives such as 'Building Learning Power' have sharpened the quality of lessons. This results in pupils increasingly taking responsibility for their own learning and having the confidence to make mistakes, knowing that this is sometimes how you learn. Pupils' confidence in learning is further boosted by the excellent pastoral care and the well-thought-out systems to guide and support all individuals academically. High quality teaching ensures that pupils make excellent progress and attain standards that are exceptionally high by the end of Year 2. Pupils develop fully the skills they need to build their future success. Exceptionally good provision in the Foundation Stage ensures that children get off to a top-notch start. It is in this part of the school that children discover that learning is a very enjoyable experience and this impression is carried with them as they progress through the school. Staff make use of every nook and cranny in the building to celebrate pupils' work through attractive displays and this further encourages pupils. Teachers exhibit a great deal of skill in making the very most of all assessment information to tailor their planning to suit the needs of the pupils precisely. As a result, all groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those who speak English as an additional language and individuals identified as being gifted or talented, make rapid progress. Part of the reason for this rapid progress is that pupils are fully involved in assessing how well they do. They have a good knowledge of what it takes to improve their work.

The school builds pupils' strong achievement on the basis of creating an environment where the personal development of all individuals flourishes. The excellent behaviour and very positive attitudes are key elements in promoting the high levels of achievement. Pupils have a first-class understanding of how to keep themselves fit, healthy and safe and have no qualms about seeking help should they need it. Healthy snacks and regular water intake are the order of the day and the pupils fully understand the reasons for this. Wide-ranging fundraising for charity and school performances make sure pupils have a strong awareness of contributing to the immediate and wider community. They have very strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. For example, during an assembly, pupils gained a sensitive awareness of how children in other parts of the world manage in sometimes very difficult circumstances. Their full involvement in carrying out lots of responsibilities around the school and clear voice in school affairs through their school council ensure that pupils are well on their way to becoming responsible citizens.

The school has an exciting curriculum that boosts pupils' interest in learning. This is enhanced by the wide range of extra activities, trips and visitors and the school's successful participation in national projects and competitions. Nonetheless, with its desire to pursue 'constant and never-ending improvement' the school is rightly pursuing more innovation through developing

a greater thematic approach towards curriculum planning. The school has also done much excellent work with developing pupils' skills to raise questions when considering different subjects. This is resulting in pupils developing a heightened sense of enquiry and deeper thinking during their work.

The school's leadership and management are excellent. Staff and governors have a clear understanding of what is working well and what needs improvement. The headteacher's work is inspirational in terms of creating a school vision and an atmosphere in which staff and governors work as a top quality team. Given their success in moving the school from strength to strength since the last inspection, they are in a very strong position to keep things improving at a good rate in the future.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The day is full of exciting and interesting activities for the children in the Nursery and Reception classes. Curriculum planning is outstanding and provides the children with an excellent range of opportunities. This, plus the high quality teaching and the excellent care, support and guidance, ensures that not only do the children reach good standards but they also acquire a very wide breadth of skills, knowledge and understanding. By the time they are ready to start Year 1, most of them reach levels that exceed those expected nationally. The strong provision in this part of the school is enabled by the excellent teamwork of the staff. Their very effective organisation of all sessions means that activities flow seamlessly through a range of class-based activities and intensive group activities. There are also excellent opportunities for children to plan what they want to do and develop good quality skills to learn independently. As a result, children develop a highly confident approach to learning and are very well prepared to move on at a good rate in the future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Boost the depth and diversity of provision for pupils even more by constructing a more thematic approach that is more in line with and builds even more successfully on the Foundation Stage provision.

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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
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

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

16 November 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Cranmore Infant School, Solihull, West Midlands, B90 4SA

- It was really good fun coming to see you at your school! Thank you for making me so welcome, talking to me and helping me during the school's inspection. I especially enjoyed the good discussion I had with some of you from Year 2. I learned a lot... I think you would all make very good future inspectors! You will be pleased to know that the school is doing an outstanding job. You need to give a big round of applause to your headteacher and staff for all that they have done to improve things for you (if this is being read out to you in assembly – give them all a big clap and a cheer now). Here are some of the most important bits of the inspection report that I thought you might like to know about:
 - You work really hard in lessons and your achievement as you move through the school is excellent. This helps you to reach really high standards.
 - Your personal development is outstanding. You clearly enjoy your time in school and I was very impressed by your excellent behaviour.
 - You have really good work planned for you and your teachers work hard to make it all as exciting and interesting as possible.
 - You told me that your teachers and teaching assistants are doing a great job and are lots of fun – I agree with you. You are lucky to have such talented people working with you.
 - The school does a top quality job of looking after you and making sure that there is always someone available to help with any problems.
 - Your headteacher does a tremendous job of helping everyone work together to make the school as good as it is.
- To improve further the school should now:
 - move ahead with its plans to make the curriculum even more interesting for you by organising the work around particular themes that help teachers link work across the school.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when I came to see you. Laurie Lewin ? Lead inspector

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Lead inspector