

Crossgates Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105846
Local Authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	308970
Inspection dates	24–25 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Susan Walsh

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	254
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Steve Heywood
Headteacher	Mr Edward Aadahl
Date of previous school inspection	9 December 2003
School address	Kiln Lane Milnrow Rochdale Lancashire OL16 3HB
Telephone number	01706 654573
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is slightly larger than average and serves its local community. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, although it varies widely between year groups. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils' personal development and well-being is outstanding as a result of an outstanding curriculum and very good personal support. Pupils have access to a terrific range of exciting activities that make learning a lot of fun. The range of enrichment activities, including extensive opportunities for learning about history, music and art, is marvellous. Consequently, pupils really enjoy school. A typical parent comment was that, 'my child goes to school happy and comes back happy'. Both children and parents find school a very positive experience and because of this, attendance rates are well above average. The personal support for individual pupils is very good. Many parents comment that staff are very caring and understanding. Pupils have a very good knowledge of how to stay healthy, fit and well. They have a very good regard for their safety and the safety of others. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school community. Both pupils and parents say that the 'Best Buds' system works well and older and younger pupils mix well together. Pupils work very hard in lessons and their behaviour is outstanding.

Standards are above average and pupils' achievement is good. Children get off to a good start in the Reception classes because of good teaching and interesting activities that make learning fun. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have fallen recently, but the school is successfully addressing this issue through strengthening the way reading and writing are taught. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2, particularly in English, to reach standards that are above average. This is a result of good teaching, an outstanding curriculum and pupils' very positive attitudes. The proportion of pupils who reach the higher levels in English is well above average, but the proportions who reach the higher levels in mathematics and science are very similar to the national average. This is because higher attaining pupils are not always provided with work that is challenging enough in mathematics and science lessons. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because they are well supported. Although teaching is good, teachers' marking does not always tell pupils how to improve their work or refer to pupils' targets.

The headteacher's compelling leadership has been instrumental in ensuring that the school provides a very positive, supportive environment where pupils can flourish. The staff work very well as a team and their hard work and commitment is very much appreciated by parents. Leadership and management are good, particularly in ensuring pupils' well-being. However, the school does not always effectively analyse data and use it as a tool to check the impact of provision. This clouds the school's perception of the big picture and contributes to over-positive self-evaluation. Nevertheless, the school has recently made big strides in improving provision in the Foundation Stage and standards in English, particularly in writing. This demonstrates the school's good capacity for improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Parents are very pleased with the provision in the Foundation Stage and many say they are amazed with what their children have learnt in such a short time. Very good care is taken of children and parents very much appreciate the good induction procedures that ensure their children settle quickly into school. Relationships between children and staff are especially warm and supportive. Children have a great time because exciting activities are combined with lively teaching. This interests and enthuses children, ensuring that they learn well. Very good use is

made of the outside area, which adds to pupils' enjoyment. Children make good progress, particularly in their personal development, but their progress is a little slower in linking sounds and letters and writing. The school has recognised this and has introduced a more structured approach to the teaching of phonics, reading and writing. Although assessment procedures are generally good, the school does not make full use of its data.

What the school should do to improve further

- Plan work more effectively to meet the needs of higher attaining pupils, particularly in mathematics and science lessons in Key Stage 2.
- Ensure that teachers' marking is linked to pupils' targets and tells them how to improve their work more consistently.
- Improve the analysis of data and self-review so that evaluation focuses on the impact of provision on standards and achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children's skills on entry to the Reception class are generally average. Improvements in the Foundation Stage have resulted in children making good progress and they are now joining Year 1 with standards that are above average. Early indications are that standards in 2007 at the end of Year 2 were broadly average and appeared to have declined from previous years. The school indicates that this is partly due to over positive assessments in the past but also to changes in the curriculum, which have not been completely successful. The school has taken decisive action to rectify this situation and has kept the best of the new curriculum while reintroducing a very structured programme for the teaching of reading and writing. This is already reaping dividends. Pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress, particularly in English. The proportion of pupils gaining the expected Level 4 is above average in English, mathematics and science. The proportion of pupils who gain the higher Level 5 is well above average in English because the school has successfully focused on improving the standard of pupils' writing. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels in mathematics and science is not as high. While the school has started to take action to improve the progress of higher attaining pupils in mathematics through focusing on problem solving, it has not yet fully considered why more higher attaining pupils are not gaining above average standards in science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development means that pupils show high levels of concern for each other and have a very strong sense of right and wrong. Pupils love coming to school and they work very hard indeed. Their behaviour is of a very high standard, especially during lessons and during formal occasions such as assemblies. Pupils feel very safe and know who to go to if they have a problem. Bullying is rare and pupils are confident that teachers will deal with any minor issues quickly. Pupils say that 'everyone has friends'. Pupils' good knowledge about keeping fit and healthy is reflected in the sensible choices they make at lunchtime and the high take up of sport. Pupils' positive contributions extend beyond the school community with many being actively involved in events such as national music competitions and fund-raising for local charities. Very positive attitudes to learning and the ability to work well with others, combined with good standards of literacy and confidence in

using information and communication technology (ICT), result in pupils being very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good and there is some outstanding teaching in upper Key Stage 2. Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of their subjects, which they clearly share with pupils. They are well organised and lessons run very smoothly. Good classroom and behaviour management ensures that there is a calm, purposeful learning environment. Relationships are very good indeed and this gives pupils confidence. The delivery of lessons is often very lively and teachers' enthusiasm for learning is infectious, resulting in pupils being extremely well motivated. Support for lower attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good and the work set is usually carefully planned to meet their needs. Not as much attention is paid to challenging the high fliers. They are sometimes set the same work as average ability pupils, which means that work is too easy for them.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides a superb range of stimulating activities that underpin pupils' excellent personal development. There is a strong emphasis of developing empathy for others, for example, relating to the feelings of evacuees in the Second World War. The teaching of English through a wide range of interesting topics makes learning relevant and fun. It is particularly successful in encouraging boys to produce high quality extended pieces of writing and this was reflected in the high number of boys who gained above average levels in their writing in 2007. The use of ICT is a real strength. Pupils are actively encouraged to complete independent research, improving both their ICT skills and their general knowledge. Pupils also have extensive opportunities to study history and geography, and develop their talents in music and art. The local environment is used extremely well to add relevance to the curriculum. The range of enrichment activities is outstanding. Theme days, visitors and visits bringing learning alive, and there is a marvellous range of clubs, including extensive opportunities to learn to play a musical instrument or to be involved in sport.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Very good pastoral care contributes significantly to pupils' enjoyment of school and their personal development. The school is a very caring community where relationships between adults and pupils are very good indeed. Consequently, pupils feel valued and secure. Vulnerable pupils are well supported. Child protection and health and safety arrangements are fully in place. Pupils' progress is checked but the systems for doing so are not sophisticated and data are not used effectively to ensure that the highest attaining pupils are sufficiently challenged. The guidance teachers offer pupils through marking their work is sometimes not precise enough and not all teachers refer to pupils' targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The whole-staff team and the governors make an important contribution to ensuring the school is effective. They have established important improvements, especially to the Foundation Stage, since the previous inspection. The headteacher has been the driving force in securing pupils' outstanding personal development and establishing a terrific curriculum. He brings to the school a very individual philosophy about learning which focuses on the education of the whole child. This results in very confident articulate children who are very well prepared for their next stage of education. There are very good links with parents, outside agencies and the wider community and this further supports pupils' well-being. Even though school leaders and governors are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses, self-evaluation judgements are often too positive. This is because the school has not thoroughly analysed all its data and, as a result, some of its processes for monitoring and evaluation and setting targets lack rigour.

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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	2

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?	2
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?	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?	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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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

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

It was a delight and a privilege to visit your school. The inspection team really enjoyed talking to you all and listened very carefully to what you had to say. You go to a good school that has some outstanding features. It's clear that you have a very good time at school because of all the fun things you have to do. It was good to hear that you know lots about keeping healthy and safe. We thought your behaviour was excellent. You have good manners and make visitors very welcome indeed. We know you always try hard to help each other, and the school council and 'Best Buds' are doing a very good job. You told us that your teachers look after you well and that they always try to help you. Children in the Reception class have a great time at school and are doing well because they have exciting lessons. We really enjoyed listening to your steel band - they are fantastic!

You are making good progress and by the end of Year 6, many of you reach higher standards than other children of that age. You are making really good progress in English. We very much enjoyed reading all the letters you have written as part of your Second World War topic and we also liked looking at your super artwork. Your teachers work very hard, and teaching is good. You are doing well, but some of the more able older pupils could do even better in mathematics and science if they were set harder work. When we looked at your books, we noticed that teachers do not always tell you how to make your work better so we have asked teachers to improve their marking and refer to your targets more often.

The managers in your school are doing a good job. They have lots of information about how you are doing at school and we have suggested that they look more carefully at that information in order to help them improve the school.

Thank you again for being such good company.

I wish you well for the future.