

Hatfield Crookesbroom Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106705
Local Authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	309204
Inspection date	27 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Joyce Taylor

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	193
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs B Young
Headteacher	Mrs C Herring
Date of previous school inspection	29 September 2003
School address	Crookesbroom Lane Hatfield Doncaster South Yorkshire DN7 6JP
Telephone number	01302 841337
Fax number	01302 351727

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector investigated the following issues: the standards achieved and pupils' progress, especially in writing; the quality of teaching and learning, particularly the use made of assessment information; the capacity of the leadership to move the school forward. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation; national published assessment data; the school's own assessment records; policies; observation of the school at work; interviews with senior members of staff, pupils and the chair of governors; the questionnaires returned by parents, and parents who called in to offer comments. 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

This is a small school serving an area with considerable social and economic deprivation. More pupils than average are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly higher than average. Almost a quarter of the pupils did not start in Reception but arrived in the school when they were older. Nineteen pupils have joined classes across the age range this term. Most pupils are of White British heritage and all speak English at home. The school has gained the Healthy Schools Award, Activemark, and Investors in People status and The Basic Skills Quality Mark. The school provides a breakfast club and liaises with a charitable group that provides a toddler group on site. There has been a rapid turnover of staff, including deputy headteachers, due to promotion.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Crookesbroom Primary School provides an outstanding education for its pupils because it enables pupils to achieve very well academically and develop very well personally. Parents recognise and appreciate this, saying, 'I would select this school over and over again', and, 'the teachers are brilliant'.

Pupils achieve extremely well, helped by very effective teaching. Children start in Nursery with skills well below those expected for their age, especially in communication, language and literacy. They progress well in the Foundation Stage and by the time they leave Reception, their standards have risen but are below expectations overall because of continuing weaknesses in communication, language and literacy. At the end of Year 2, standards are close to average. By the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average and sometimes higher. The current Year 6 pupils are working at an average level in mathematics but are already above average in most aspects of English. A weakness, evident throughout the school, is the reluctance of some pupils to contribute in discussions and the difficulty they have talking confidently about their work and using the vocabulary relating to different subjects.

In 2007, standards in writing dipped at Key Stage 2 because pupils found the writing task unfamiliar and could not readily transfer their learning from aspects in which they felt confident to the new context. To remedy the concern, teachers have adopted excellent assessment procedures that closely monitor the learning of individuals and show exactly how well they are doing and what their weaknesses are. Staff intervene immediately progress falters to ensure a rapid pace of learning. Teachers' excellent relationships with pupils ensure that this does not make pupils feel anxious. As a result, writing has improved. Pupils' involvement in the assessments, their knowledge of how fast they are moving forward and their pride in their own progress are key factors in their rapid achievement. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those who find it hard to settle to their tasks and those who are newly arrived at the school also make outstanding progress. They benefit from a range of well designed, sometimes personalised programmes to accelerate their learning and help them catch up with others. Teaching assistants make a very strong contribution through expert support to individuals and groups.

The very high quality of care, guidance and support for pupils and the excellent relationships within the school contribute to the pupils' outstanding personal development. They are developing good citizenship skills and have an extremely good attitude to their work. They throw themselves into their learning with enthusiasm, saying, 'I like my work because it's hard', and, 'I like a challenge'. Work towards recognising the need for a healthy lifestyle is progressing particularly well. Pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development means they take wider responsibilities seriously. For example, they grow vegetables on their allotment for the harvest festival and then help distribute the produce to local pensioners. The school council members are very proud of their role and feel in a position to challenge the headteacher when they want changes. 'We want the children who have school dinners to sit with those who bring packed lunches,' they said. 'Our headteacher says there isn't enough room. But we'll keep asking.' Procedures are in place to promote health and safety, and child protection. Pupils say they are happy and feel secure in school. They like the way they all look after each other. Their behaviour is good. As a result, pupils concentrate fully on their work and try extremely hard with all their tasks.

The school has given a great deal of thought to extending the curriculum and now provides very interesting and lively learning opportunities that have increased pupils' enjoyment of lessons. Literacy and numeracy are given priority in a bid to raise standards but there are many other opportunities for pupils' to explore new and exciting experiences. Subjects are linked into themes to increase their relevance and they are given tasks that enable them to become actively involved. Additional opportunities include French lessons and very good opportunities to play a musical instrument. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed the guitar lesson seen during the inspection in which staff learned alongside them. Their rapt concentration on reading the music and playing together was breathtaking.

The headteacher and senior staff have implemented extremely successful plans for school improvement which have ensured standards are at least average and sometimes higher. Their thoughtful and effective influence is evident in a wide range of developments designed to help pupils learn well. Checks on pupils' achievement are meticulous. Standards in writing have been raised through an extremely rigorous whole-school approach. The headteacher knows exactly how well the school is doing and sets a clear direction for improvement which is openly and regularly discussed by all staff and governors. Modesty on the part of the school caused it to judge its provision as good. The headteacher explained that, although they know what they do is extremely effective, it is sometimes hard to be objective without knowing the work of other schools in more detail. The school has very strong and productive links with neighbouring schools and has sought and implemented advice from schools overseas. Many governors are new and are working well to become more involved in school life. They are beginning to challenge as well as support the leadership. Strong teamwork is a significant factor in the school's outstanding capacity for further improvement. The school gives excellent value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Most children join the Foundation Stage with particularly low skills in communication, language and literacy, and personal development. Nursery children, for example, found working together to place a large blanket over their brick building beyond them. Amidst many giggles, they dropped the blanket, fell, wandered off or crawled under the blanket to play. Gentle persistence and a demonstration from a member of staff enabled the task to be completed in the end, even though the children did not understand all of the instructions. By the time they move into Year 1, children are working within the expected goals in most areas, apart from communication, language and literacy which remain a weakness. Learning opportunities in the Foundation Stage are stimulating and challenging. For example, Reception children discovered all manner of goodies hidden under a blacked out table when they ventured into the dark with torches. These thoughtful activities and the outstanding teaching ensure that children achieve well. Their progress is tracked extremely closely and lessons are planned to support identified areas of weakness. There is an appropriate range of resources, inside and outside the classroom.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils develop their ability to discuss and converse with greater confidence and using a wider vocabulary.

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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	3
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	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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 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	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

Inspection of Hatfield Crookesbroom Primary School, Doncaster, DN7 6JP

Thank you for your help when I visited your school recently. I very much enjoyed watching you work and talking with you in your classes and around school. Special thanks should go to the school council, who gave up some of their lunch break to talk with me. They told me that your school is brilliant and I agree with them. It gives you wonderful opportunities for learning, shows you how subjects link together and provides you with a huge range of interesting and lively activities.

One of the really good things about your school is the way many of you know exactly how well you are doing and know what you need to learn next in order to get even better. You try hard in lessons and concentrate extremely well even though your work is difficult. Your teachers and classroom assistants are dedicated and extremely hardworking and they constantly try out new ideas to make learning interesting for you. I particularly enjoyed watching the guitar lesson and seeing your beautiful and interesting work on Africa.

Your parents say they are pleased you come to this school because it takes such good care of you and helps you learn. You told me you like looking after each other and I could see that you enjoy your lessons, you behave well, are polite and show genuine concern for each other. Your headteacher knows how well the school is doing and she knows exactly what to do to make things better. I know you like to take part in improving the school so I have suggested an improvement that involves you. Some of you find it hard to explain what you mean and do not give very detailed answers during class discussions. This needs to be improved and I have asked your school to think of ways to help you get better.

You are enthusiastic about your school and I hope you carry on making Crookesbroom Primary School a happy place to learn.