

North Crawley Church of England School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110406
Local Authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	310290
Inspection date	19 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Mike Thompson

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	26
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Kay Broughton
Headteacher	Mrs Kathryn Crompton
Date of previous school inspection	6 October 2003
School address	Church Walk North Crawley Newport Pagnell MK16 9LL
Telephone number	01234 391282
Fax number	0

Age group	4-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

North Crawley is a very small school in a village location to the north-east of Milton Keynes. Pupils are predominantly of White British heritage. There are very few with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The pupils are taught in two classes, one for Foundation Stage and one for Key Stage 1. In both classes, pupils are taught by teachers in job-share partnerships. In the Key Stage 1 class, there have been some difficulties in providing stability in staffing since a teacher left in December 2007. Since Easter 2008, the headteacher has been teaching in this class. For almost two years, the school has been linked with another local small school in a 'soft federation'. This arrangement means that the headteacher shares her time between both schools. The school has national Healthy School accreditation, the Primary Quality Mark, in recognition of its commitment to literacy and numeracy, and the Activemark for its promotion of physical education.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

North Crawley School provides an outstanding education for its pupils. The parents and pupils hold their school in very high regard. Their positive views are entirely justified. One parent summed up the views of many when writing, 'North Crawley is an exceptional school'. Another added, 'North Crawley is a school that excels in excellence.' The key to the school's success is its strong focus on developing its pupils as confident, caring, independent learners. Pupils' excellent all-round progress is the result of first-rate teaching, the wide range of stimulating and exciting activities and the close and rigorous monitoring of their performance.

When children start school at the beginning of the Reception year their attainment varies considerably but is, overall, above what is normally expected at this age. When they leave at the end of Year 2, standards are consistently exceptionally high in reading, writing and mathematics. The single most important factor in pupils' excellent achievement is the outstanding academic guidance provided. This stems from the exceptional adult to pupil ratio of one adult for every five pupils in both classes. Pupils enjoy a great deal of high quality individual attention. The needs of each individual are extremely well known and so teachers tailor learning precisely to ensure that everyone receives achievable challenges. Year 2 pupils confirmed this and said that the work they are given really makes them think. This year, the results of assessments in Year 2, which are yet to be validated, are likely to be just as good as in previous years.

A further important factor in the school's success is the excellent climate for learning evident in all classes. This stems from the outstanding personal development and well-being of the pupils. By the time they reach the end of Year 2, pupils have well-developed social skills. Their behaviour is good, and in closely supervised situations is usually exemplary. In September 2006, a survey of pupils' personal, social and health education by a member of Her Majesty's inspectorate noted, 'This is a school which practices what it preaches and where every child really does matter'. This continues to be the case. Pupils' individual talents are developed and celebrated in this very inclusive school. They are exceptionally well cared for and feel safe and happy.

The driving force behind the school's success is the very high quality of the headteacher's leadership. She receives excellent support from the committed and highly professional staff and governors. It is to the credit of the school that its provision was not significantly affected by the changes in staffing. The school is constantly seeking ways to become even better, and one of its current focuses is on improving pupils' understanding of our multi-cultural society. Pupils do have some understanding of religious faiths such as Hinduism and Judaism through their work in religious education. Their understanding, however, of different cultural backgrounds represented in this country is limited.

The school's evaluation of its performance is rigorous and helps ensure its continued excellence. The school's high quality commitment to continuous improvement leaves it exceptionally well placed to make future improvements.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children receive an excellent start to their education in the attractive environment of the Reception classroom. The school provides children with a high-quality diet of activities that

challenge and excite. This is because the adults concerned have a very good understanding of the ways in which very young children learn. Adults' expectations of children's conduct are very well established through secure routines. These enable children to learn safely through play and develop excellent social skills. The children become confident, articulate learners. By the time they transfer to Key Stage 1 all achieve, and many exceed, the goals expected for children of their age.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop pupils' understanding of cultural diversity.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils make excellent progress regardless of gender or levels of attainment and they reach exceptionally high standards. They use their excellent basic skills to good effect across the curriculum. They make good use of information and communication technology (ICT) in a number of ways including to help in recording their work. For example, during the inspection, pupils used computers competently to produce bar graphs, a dictaphone effectively to record their poetry, and a more able pupil used a calculator to help solve mathematical problems. In addition, pupils make use of a video camera, and web cams have been installed to help improve links with the partner school. Those identified as gifted or talented are challenged exceptionally well. Pupils meet the robust individual targets they are set.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils are extremely enthusiastic about all aspects of school. This is evident in the above average attendance rates. They particularly enjoy the challenges presented in lessons. One commented, 'I like the work because it's fun. Even though I make mistakes I keep on trying until I get it right.' They have an excellent understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and a good awareness of how to keep safe. Through their outstanding spiritual, moral and social development, pupils have a keen sense of right and wrong and an empathy with others. Consequently, behaviour is generally good. The pupils acknowledge that there are occasions when a few pupils misbehave, usually at playtimes, but they are mature enough to appreciate that this is part of learning to get on with others. Pupils' awareness of their own cultural traditions is good. Central to this is pupils' contribution to, and appreciation of, their village community. Regular visits into the village, for example to shop for ingredients, and visitors from the locality, many of whom are former pupils, help promote a strong sense of community. However, the staff are aware of the need to improve pupils' awareness of our multi-cultural society through more first-hand opportunities to learn about cultural traditions other than their own. Because of their excellent social skills, love of learning and outstanding academic achievements, the pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next phase of their education and a future as life-long learners.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Pupils' eagerness to learn is a key factor in the excellent learning that takes place, and this reflects the support for, and value placed on, education by their parents. Pupils enjoy challenge, and the excellent teaching that they receive ensures that they are not disappointed. There are very many strong technical aspects of teaching, such as the clear explanations provided for pupils and the way in which themes are progressively developed during the course of lessons. Teachers ensure that work is consistently challenging. For example, when setting the task of writing a poem in a Key Stage 1 lesson, the teacher made sure that a very able Year 2 pupil not only had to incorporate alliteration into each line, but also had to use a more adventurous choice of adjectives. Key partners in the teaching are the highly skilled teaching assistants. They provide effective help for individuals or small groups of pupils. Pupils' reflection on how well they are getting on with their studies and an appreciation of the efforts of others contributes strongly to the climate for learning. For instance, pupils in the Key Stage 1 class gave very good feedback about each other's speaking and listening skills. This helped focus their learning even more.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides an excellent range of exciting and challenging experiences for its pupils. The curriculum is well planned and makes very good use of themes so that teaching in a range of subjects is integrated. This helps develop pupils' appreciation of the relevance of their learning as they use skills in one subject when working in others. Underpinning all curriculum planning is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' skills as independent learners.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides excellent pastoral care for its pupils. Very close attention is given to ensuring the safety and well-being of the pupils, and a strong sense of family permeates the school. The school keeps thorough records of the checks made on the background of all adults who have contact with the pupils. The quality of academic guidance given to pupils is excellent. This is because all pupils' individual needs are extremely well known. As a result of the high quality of dialogue between adults and pupils and the large amount of individual attention possible within small classes, pupils clearly know how well they are getting on and precisely what they need to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher provides very clear direction for the school based on an extremely thorough analysis of its strengths and areas for further improvement. The staff work together as a strong team, and ensure that the school continues to run smoothly on the days when the headteacher is at the partner school. All staff play an important part in leadership. The headteacher ensures that they have the skills needed for this by ensuring that they have regular opportunities for

their own professional development. Governance is good. Governors are extremely well informed through the headteacher's comprehensive reports to them. They hold the school to account and play a good part in the self-evaluation process. Governors have thoroughly evaluated their own performance. This shows that they could play a more active role in monitoring the school through first-hand observations of it at work.

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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?	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	2
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	2
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	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

02 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of North Crawley Church of England School, Newport Pagnell, MK16 9LL

Thank you for being so helpful when I came to your school to find out how well you are getting on. I particularly enjoyed looking at your work and talking to some of you.

I agree with your parents that you go to an excellent school.

There is so much I like about your school that I cannot mention everything, so here is a list of what I think are the most important things.

- You make excellent progress. By the time you leave at the end of Year 2, the standards you achieve are very high. You should be very proud of all of this.
- Everyone in your school is friendly and welcoming, and your behaviour is usually good.
- You know a lot about how to be healthy and you are good at keeping safe.
- You learn a lot because your lessons are usually excellent.
- Your teachers plan lots of really interesting and exciting things for you to do.
- All of the adults in your school make sure that you are very well looked after.
- The people who help run your school do an excellent job in making sure that you get the very best education, especially your headteacher.

Even in an outstanding school like yours there is always something that could be better. Your headteacher agrees. She particularly wants you to learn a lot more about the different ways in which people live their lives. So that you will grow up to understand even more about the world we live in. I think that this is a very good idea.

I am sure that you will continue to have great success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mike Thompson

Lead Inspector