

Crowmoor Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123391
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	314587
Inspection dates	30–31 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Marion Thompson

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	223
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Riley
Headteacher	Alan Parkhurst
Date of previous school inspection	3 November 2003
School address	Crowmere Road Shrewsbury SY2 5JJ
Telephone number	01743 235549
Fax number	01743 243129

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	30–31 January 2008
Inspection number	314587

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large school, where most pupils come from White British backgrounds. Children's levels of skills on entry to Nursery, the Reception class and Year 1 are well below those expected for their age. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is higher than average. The current headteacher has been in post since January 2008.

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, which provides a good education for its pupils. Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and enables children to make sound progress. The school has the strong support of parents, who value the good levels of care and support provided for their children. They write comments such as, 'The staff know all the children really well. They make parents and children feel welcome. I feel I can discuss any worries when I've needed to.' As a result, pupils feel safe, behave well and develop a good deal of confidence, which helps them to make good progress.

Standards and achievement have improved over recent years, reversing a previous decline. In 2007, standards reached by pupils in the Year 6 national tests were broadly average, with pupils meeting challenging targets. Pupils currently reach broadly average standards, their achievement is good, and very good in science. The strategies the school has put in place to improve the quality of writing and mathematics have had a positive effect and standards have risen in these two subjects. Standards in speaking and listening have improved, because they are developed well in all lessons. Progress in reading is satisfactory, but a small minority of pupils, especially boys, and particularly the higher attainers, do not make as much progress as they should. Pupils with learning difficulties make the same progress as their classmates as they are supported well.

Demanding teaching has had a positive impact on improving pupils' achievement. Lessons provide all pupils, including those with learning difficulties, with good levels of challenge, which they enjoy. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, pupils enjoyed solving complex mathematical problems involving fractions, despite finding the work difficult. A small minority of lessons, especially in reading, lack pace and challenge. Insufficient use is made of individual pupils' targets, marking and feedback in class, to help pupils to improve their work. Targets are often not expressed simply enough for pupils to understand.

A stimulating curriculum is a major contributory factor to pupils' good achievement and personal development, including their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils develop a good awareness of how to live a healthy lifestyle and respond maturely to the rather limited opportunities to assume responsibilities. Their sound basic skills and well developed social skills, such as teamwork, prepare them well for the future.

Children's progress in the Foundation Stage is occasionally limited, because teachers do not make clear the purpose of learning. For example, children enjoy games, but teachers do not make explicit the need to learn how to take turns. This lack of clarity is occasionally reflected in teachers' planning. Over time, children experience a balance of independently chosen activities and those directed by the teacher, but balance is sometimes lacking within a day.

The headteacher, supported by the senior team, provides a strong sense of direction for the school. Some recently introduced strategies are already beginning to have an impact. For example, rates of attendance, whilst still a little below average, are improving, because robust action is being taken to follow up persistent absenteeism. After consultation with parents and staff, a carefully prioritised action plan, based on an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas for development, has been put in place. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and has resulted in satisfactory progress since the previous inspection. Progress elsewhere has been good and the school is well placed to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Most children settle quite quickly into Nursery, as arrangements for transition are sound. Teaching focuses on developing children's language and social skills, which are well below those expected for their age. Children make satisfactory progress, because teaching adequately meets their needs. Most children learn how to listen and take part in class discussions, but some find this difficult. Short-term planning does not always focus sufficiently on learning intentions and these are not always shared and reinforced with the children. There is a reasonable balance of activities led by an adult and those chosen by children over a week, but not always within each day. In the Reception class, there is no direct access to an outdoor play area, and opportunities for children to choose to play outside are limited.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement in reading, particularly for boys, and especially the highest attainers, by ensuring that work is consistently challenging and interesting.
- Increase the rate of progress in the Foundation Stage by improving the quality of short-term planning, so that the purpose of learning is made clear to children and they have a good balance of activities each day.
- Ensure that targets, marking and feedback in class provide clear guidance to pupils on how to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Although children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage, their levels of skills remain well below those expected by the time they start in Year 1. Pupils make good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 and reach broadly average standards by the time they leave. 'Booster classes' in Year 6 science are very effective in helping pupils who are experiencing difficulties to catch up. Standards in mathematics and English have risen sharply and are now broadly average. Areas of weakness, such as subtraction, have improved. Writing is much improved, because pupils discuss their ideas in detail, before they begin to write. Reading comprehension is an area of relative weakness, especially for boys, and particularly the highest attainers. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress because of well organised support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils respond enthusiastically to challenging work, behave well and enjoy school. Playground activities, such as football, are very occasionally too boisterous. However, this has been better controlled over recent weeks. Pupils feel safe, because rare instances of bullying are dealt with effectively. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, enhanced by pupils' enjoyment of art. School council members take their considerable responsibilities seriously, such as spending £25,000 on equipping the playground. Aside from this, opportunities to take responsibilities are limited. The importance of healthy lifestyles is well understood and pupils do their best to eat healthily and take exercise. Attendance is barely average, because a small number of pupils do not attend regularly, though it is beginning to improve. Pupils' sound academic and good social skills are a sound preparation for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Lessons have challenging learning objectives, which are readily understood by pupils. Respectful relationships with teachers build pupils' self-assurance. As a result, they participate actively in lessons, voicing their opinions confidently in discussions. Speaking and listening skills are developed well in most lessons. In the main, lessons present a good level of challenge to all pupils, including those with learning difficulties. Pupils respond by working with concentration. In the small minority of lessons where the level of challenge is lower and the pace is slower, a few pupils, especially boys, are easily distracted. Feedback in class and marking is positive in tone, but does not consistently provide guidance to pupils on how to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and balanced and provides most pupils, including those with learning difficulties, with a good level of challenge. Opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills are now well planned and this is contributing to improvements in pupils' writing. However, the curriculum for reading does not always engage pupils' interests, especially boys', and occasionally lacks challenge. Planned links between different subject areas are at an early stage of development. The curriculum is enhanced by an exciting range of activities, such as residential visits, the Forest school project, where pupils learn outdoors, and an artist in residence. These develop pupils' independence and creativity. The Foundation Stage curriculum adequately meets children's needs, but does not always provide children with a balanced range of experiences each day, and short-term planning occasionally lacks focus.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Relationships between pupils and adults in school are characterised by trust, so pupils feel there is always someone they can confide in when they feel troubled. Good procedures are in place to ensure that pupils are safe and healthy and to promote their social and emotional health. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Targets set for individual pupils are challenging, but are shared with parents only once a year. Pupils do not use them routinely to improve their work. Often they are phrased in ways that make them difficult for pupils to understand.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has already begun to establish a good reputation in the local community. Parents value the weekly newsletter and improved behaviour in the playground. They are impressed by his drive to include them more fully in their children's education. Development planning is good and based on an accurate evaluation of the work of the school. This includes a recognition of the need to review the staffing structure to best meet the future needs of the school. Challenging whole school targets have been used effectively to raise expectations about what pupils can achieve. Middle leaders provide a good lead in the areas for which they are responsible. This has led to improvements in standards and achievement in English and

mathematics. Governors provide good support for the school, but their overall effectiveness is satisfactory as they recognize the need for closer monitoring, in order to be able to provide a higher level of challenge.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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

1 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Crowmoor Primary School, Shrewsbury SY2 5JJ

Thank you so much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and hearing how much you enjoy your learning. You were all very positive, so you will not be surprised that we found that your school provides you with a good education. You make a satisfactory start to learning in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stages 1 and 2 you make good progress.

These are the things we found the school does best.

- In Years 1–6:
 - standards have risen and you make good progress, especially in science; standards in writing and mathematics, and listening and speaking skills have also improved
 - a lot of this improvement is due to your positive attitudes to learning; you work hard because you enjoy challenging work
 - good teaching has also helped you to improve your work; teachers plan work that demands a lot of you and you respond well
 - you have an exciting programme of work that motivates you; you enjoy residential visits, the artist in residence and the Forest School project.
- Throughout the school:
 - the adults take good care of you, so you feel safe and develop confidence
 - the headteacher and staff are working really hard to ensure the school keeps getting better; they are keen to involve your parents as much as they can.
- To improve things further, we have asked the school to:
 - improve reading, particularly of boys, especially for the most able, by making sure that work is always interesting and challenging
 - help children in the Foundation Stage to learn more quickly, making sure that they have more variety each day and understand what they need to learn and why
 - make sure you understand your targets and that the marking and feedback you get in class, gives you clear guidance on how to improve your work.

I feel sure that if you all try hard, you can improve your reading really quickly.

Best wishes

Marion Thompson Lead inspector

Annex B



1 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Crowmoor Primary School, Shrewsbury SY2 5JJ

Thank you so much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and hearing how much you enjoy your learning. You were all very positive, so you will not be surprised that we found that your school provides you with a good education. You make a satisfactory start to learning in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stages 1 and 2 you make good progress.

These are the things we found the school does best.

In Years 1-6:

- standards have risen and you make good progress, especially in science; standards in writing and mathematics, and listening and speaking skills have also improved
- a lot of this improvement is due to your positive attitudes to learning; you work hard because you enjoy challenging work
- good teaching has also helped you to improve your work; teachers plan work that demands a lot of you and you respond well
- you have an exciting programme of work that motivates you; you enjoy residential visits, the artist in residence and the Forest School project.

Throughout the school:

- the adults take good care of you, so you feel safe and develop confidence
- the headteacher and staff are working really hard to ensure the school keeps getting better; they are keen to involve your parents as much as they can.

To improve things further, we have asked the school to:

- improve reading, particularly of boys, especially for the most able, by making sure that work is always interesting and challenging
- help children in the Foundation Stage to learn more quickly, making sure that they have more variety each day and understand what they need to learn and why
- make sure you understand your targets and that the marking and feedback you get in class, gives you clear guidance on how to improve your work.

I feel sure that if you all try hard, you can improve your reading really quickly.

Best wishes

Marion Thompson
Lead inspector