

Criftins CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123472
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	314606
Inspection date	10 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Mary Hamby HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	79
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon Pope
Headteacher	John Roberts
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2005
School address	Criftins Ellesmere SY12 9LT
Telephone number	01691 690207
Fax number	01691 690207

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Criftins is a small rural school. It has three classes, each of which contains pupils from three year groups. Children start school in September or January of the Reception year, depending on when their birthday falls. Most of the pupils are from White British backgrounds and the percentage entitled to receive a free school meal is much lower than average. The school has had a new headteacher since the previous inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This good school is managed well by an enthusiastic headteacher. Together with staff and governors, he is building well on the school's successful past and has a good capacity to lead it further. Parents are right to be pleased with what the school provides, describing the school as 'one big happy family'. The pupils enjoy school very much and live up to their motto to be 'caring and achieving'. The pupils achieve well and reach standards above the national average. Their positive attitudes, good attendance and encouragement from home, combined with good teaching, are a recipe for success. The pupils achieve particularly well in reading and information and communication technology (ICT) and this helps them to become independent learners. Achievement in the basic mathematical skills is good, but is slower when pupils have to apply these skills to solve problems and use their knowledge in a range of different contexts. The personal development of the pupils is good. They understand right and wrong and their good behaviour means that lessons run smoothly and are enjoyable for all. The pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles is outstanding and they make a good contribution to their community by such things as their commitment to energy conservation. They have less understanding of how well they are getting on in lessons because there are not enough opportunities for them to assess their own work or be involved in setting their targets. The staff work well together and make good use of each other's talents to provide the pupils with a good curriculum. Teaching is good and the staff know each pupil very well. Work is well matched to the level of ability of most pupils, but marking does not pinpoint the next steps for learning sufficiently well. Care and guidance are good and this helps all the pupils to grow in confidence and achieve well. The staff take on a range of leadership roles to help support the headteacher, and these are developing well. Together with governors, the staff prioritise the agenda for school improvement and have identified suitable areas for development. However, their ability to evaluate their actions is not yet strong enough and does not yet link actions to outcomes.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision is good. Children enter the school with attainment around the nationally expected levels. However, those who join in January, being that bit younger, are not quite as far forward in their learning as the others. Nevertheless, they all achieve well and are on course to meet the expected learning goals. The children make particularly good progress in personal, social and emotional development because the school provides them with the encouragement they need to become confident, independent learners. Parents are pleased with what is provided and appreciate the opportunity for informal discussions with the staff. The teaching is good and skilfully provides the children with a rich and appropriate curriculum. There are suitable opportunities for the children to make choices and they benefit from the challenge of working alongside the older pupils. The leadership of the Foundation Stage is good and ensures that the children are safe and that their well-being is nurtured. The emphasis on healthy lifestyles encourages children to make good choices at snack time and enjoy opportunities for exercise and outdoor play.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement in problem solving and extend opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical knowledge in a wide range of contexts.

- Improve assessment by ensuring that marking is consistently helpful, and by extending opportunities for pupils to be involved in assessment and target setting.
- Sharpen the evaluation of policies and practices so that their impact is clear on outcomes for pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The children enter school with standards at the expected levels and they get off to a good start in Class 1. Achievement in the two subsequent classes is also good and enables the pupils to reach challenging targets. Achievement in reading and ICT is particularly good and the pupils talk enthusiastically about their enjoyment of these two subjects. Achievement in mathematics, though good overall, is slower when the pupils have to apply their numerical understanding in different contexts and think for themselves about how to solve problems. Standards, when compared to national averages, fluctuate each year because of the small numbers of pupils involved in the tests. Last year, for example, standards in the Year 6 national tests were lower than usual because over a third of the pupils had an identified learning difficulty. Standards are higher this year and reflect the trend over the last few years, which shows that standards have been above average.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral and social development, is good. Pupils thrive well in the secure surroundings of this small school where enjoyment and achievement is plain to see. Their involvement in setting rules helps them to develop a keen sense of justice and fair play. Behaviour is good and the pupils are courteous and kind. The Christian ethos of the school helps pupils to have a good understanding of morality and to respect one another's viewpoints. They show a developing awareness of other religions and cultures, but are not as aware as they should be of the nature of a multicultural society. Their understanding of healthy lifestyles is excellent. The pupils are reaping the benefits of the efforts that they have put in to making exercise central to playtimes, by designing the fitness trail and organising a rota of games. The broad range of opportunities they have to contribute to their community and develop entrepreneurship helps them to show initiative, and understand how to become good citizens of the future. The pupils are keen to assess their work but do not yet have a clear understanding about how their learning has developed and how it might improve further.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

A clear benefit in this small school is that staff know the pupils extremely well. The continuum of teaching from one year to the next is seamless and this helps the pupils to achieve well each year. Relationships are excellent and this helps pupils of all abilities to contribute to lessons. Pupils' ideas are valued and there are good opportunities for them to develop their thinking skills through question-and-answer sessions. Questioning is usually good, but occasionally is not targeted well enough to the specific needs of individuals. Assessment is developing well; staff use their knowledge to plan work that is a good match to the pupils' abilities. Targets are

appropriately challenging and most of the pupils are on track to achieve them. However, the pupils are not clear enough about their own learning targets or the steps they need to take to reach them. This is because the teaching does not refer frequently enough to learning targets and marking does not pinpoint the next steps well enough.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A strong feature of the curriculum is the emphasis on environmental awareness, which is helping the pupils to become keen eco-warriors. A range of visits to places of interest contributes enormously to pupils' enjoyment of learning. Problem-solving and investigative work is developing, but is given too little emphasis to provide all pupils with sufficient challenge. Discussion with the pupils reveals that their individual interests are developed well through the curriculum; one pupil talked avidly about her love of the arts, while another enjoyed opportunities to learn through the use of ICT. Skill development is planned well between the three classes so that pupils learn progressively in each subject.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The good quality of care for all the pupils is demonstrated by every member of staff and so pupils feel secure, helping them to achieve well. Guidance given to help pupils to understand how to lead a healthy lifestyle is outstanding and so all the pupils have a clear understanding of how to keep fit and stay healthy. This extends to emotional guidance so that pupils are crystal clear what to do if they have a concern. Links with other professionals are good and their work results in benefits such as improved attendance and effective support for vulnerable pupils. Effective induction arrangements help pupils to feel welcomed into school and settle into good learning habits. The tracking of academic progress is developing well and is pinpointing potential underperformance so that the school can act quickly on such information. The support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities helps them to have confidence in themselves. However, individual plans for these pupils are not always evaluated regularly or effectively enough.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The good leadership and management of the school are exemplified by the strong teamwork, where all are clear about their particular role in school development. Parents appreciate the hard work of staff, who use their various talents well to provide the pupils with a well-rounded education. The headteacher's enthusiasm is shared by staff and together they are developing suitable plans for school improvement. Their capacity to improve the school is good because they have the necessary skills and have a good track record of improvement since the last inspection. For example, the curriculum for writing has recently improved and the steps to engage boys in reading more widely have been very successful. There is a strong commitment to equality in the day-to-day provision for individual pupils. However, in common with some other aspects of school improvement, the policy for equality and diversity has not been evaluated rigorously enough. Selfevaluation is developing. It is accurate and fair, but does not go far enough in linking actions to outcomes consistently well. Governors continue to provide the school with a good range of expertise and have improved their critical overview of the school.

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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?	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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	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?	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?	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	2
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

11 June 2008 Dear Children Inspection of Criftins C of E Primary School, Ellesmere SY12 9LT
Thank you for making my colleague and me so welcome when we came to see your school. We came to find out all we could about the school in our day there and we decided that Criftins is a good school. We were pleased to see you working so well together and your enjoyment of school was plain to see. The staff work well together too, and along with supportive governors, have clear ideas about what they need to do to make the school even better. One of the wonderful things about your school is that everyone cares for you and provides you with the guidance that you need to grow into good citizens of the future. You have made a head start with this by your excellent understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and protect the environment. You are getting on well in your lessons. All the adults help you to learn so that you make good progress and achieve well. It was good to see that you enjoy reading and using the computers because this means that you can learn for yourselves. You are starting to know what you need to learn next, but you need a bit more help with this. We have asked your teachers to make it very clear what your targets are and to give you more opportunities to assess your own and each other's work. To help you with this we think they need to mark your work more clearly and write down what you have done well and what you need to learn next. We have also asked them to give you more problems to tackle in mathematics and more opportunities to use your mathematical skills. Mr Roberts is a good headteacher and makes efficient use of his time between doing things in his office and in the classroom. He makes sure that the staff and governors take a share in managing the school and together they make a good team. They know how to make your school even better and agree with us that assessment could be sharpened up. We have also asked them to think hard about how they weigh up the things that they have already done to make sure that it is clear how these things have helped you. This is quite a hard thing, but we are sure that the staff are clever enough to make a good job of it, because of the success of the things they have done in the past. Good luck for the future to each and every one of you. Best wishes Mrs Hamby Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex B

11 June 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Criftins C of E Primary School, Ellesmere SY12 9LT

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Good luck for the future to each and every one of you.

Best wishes

Mrs Hamby
Her Majesty's Inspector