

Cromwell Park Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132071
Local Authority	CAMBRIDGESHIRE LA
Inspection number	315914
Inspection date	17 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Keith Sadler

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	203
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr James Bewsher
Headteacher	Mrs Stephanie Barnard-Steward
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2003
School address	Parkway Hinchingsbrooke Park Huntingdon PE29 6JA
Telephone number	01480 437830
Fax number	01480 437857

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school, standards and achievement, the quality of teaching and learning and in particular investigated the following issues:

- Does the progress of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities match that of other pupils in the school?
- Why are standards and progress in mathematics relatively worse than that of English and science?
- How successful is the school in raising the quality of satisfactory teaching to good?

The inspector gathered evidence from an analysis of information and data about pupils' achievement provided by the school, observations of parts of lessons, parents' questionnaires and discussions with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, the Foundation Stage leader, the school's Inclusion manager, a group of governors and a representative from Cambridgeshire local authority.

The inspector did not investigate other aspects of the school's work in detail, but found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These judgements have been included in the report.

Description of the school

Cromwell Park is an average sized primary school that serves the new community of Hinchbrook Park on the outskirts of Huntingdon although about one third of the pupils come from outside the area. The school opened in 2002 and has grown rapidly since then and is currently full in most year groups. The local community comprises of a mixture of private housing, social and affordable housing. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage and there are a few pupils from each of 11 other ethnic backgrounds. Pupils' social circumstances are, overall, typical of those found nationally. Although the total number of pupils that have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below that found nationally there is a very high number, currently 11, who have statements of special educational needs. Many of these pupils choose to attend the school from outside the local area. The school holds the following awards: National ICT Mark, Basic Skills Quality Mark, National Healthy Schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'Cromwell Park always feels warm, approachable and very friendly. It is a lovely school with a calm enriching environment.' This comment typifies the overwhelming support that the school has from its parents. They are right to be pleased. This is a good school with some outstanding features. It has maintained its strengths since the previous inspection and has made improvements since that time especially in the rigour of the school's self-evaluation and its provision for children in the Reception class.

The school's success is underpinned by the commitment of the headteacher and staff to ensure that the pupils receive an outstanding level of care, guidance and support. This helps to develop the pupils' self-confidence and thorough enjoyment of school and learning. As a result, their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils are well prepared for their move to secondary education. They relish the many opportunities to take responsibility such as being house captains, being part of the effective school council, being 'play police' and raising money for a wide range of charities. In addition, the school's arrangements for safeguarding the pupils' health, safety and well-being are thorough and rigorous. In consequence, pupils arrive at school happy and enthusiastic. Teachers' friendly approach and clear expectations lead to positive relationships and excellent behaviour. Pupils feel safe and know that they benefit from healthy eating and regular exercise.

One focus of the inspection was the progress that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make. This is good and these pupils, along with their classmates, achieve well. The school has an unusually high number of pupils with statements of special educational needs. This is due, in the main, to many parents of these pupils choosing for them attend Cromwell Park rather than their local school. Provision and support for all pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is of good quality. Well-trained and effective teaching assistants work closely with teachers to give skilful support. This is helped by the school's good assessment arrangements that identify any learning needs early. This means that individual learning plans are of good quality and enables these pupils to make good progress towards their learning targets.

Achievement is good. In the past, progress in Years 1 and 2 has not been as effective as in Key Stage 2 particularly in mathematics. This is not now the case. The school's focus on boosting attainment in both year groups has paid dividends. The quality of teaching and learning in both Year 1 and 2 is now effective and this helps to ensure progress is good. Current Year 2 pupils are on course to attain above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. A further focus of the inspection was to evaluate pupils' progress in mathematics because standards at the end of Year 6 although good have not been as high as in science or English over time. Senior staff have placed a strong emphasis on improving standards in mathematics which has been based on a thorough analysis of the school's provision, achievement in mathematics has improved and pupils now make good progress in all year groups. By the time that they leave school, standards are significantly above average in English, mathematics and science. This marks good achievement from average starting points.

The quality of teaching and learning is good and there are some outstanding features. Classrooms are calm and have a positive atmosphere of industry and enjoyment. Pupils concentrate well and provide thoughtful responses to the teachers' good quality questioning. Teachers generally make lessons interesting with good quality activities that are matched well to pupils' abilities.

But senior staff are aware that this good practice is not consistent in all lessons. Teachers mark pupils' work well and help them to have a good understanding of what their targets are and how to improve. One particularly strong feature is the good use that teachers make of information and communication technology. The school has an unusually large resource of laptop computers in each classroom and they are used well. Many pupils commented on how this helped their learning.

The school believes that the most effective learning is experienced at first hand and hence a full programme of educational visits and visitors to the school support most topics. This broadens pupils' experiences and enlivens learning. Staff also ensure that subjects are linked together when planning topics. For example in a recent Year 2 topic focusing on Victorian life based on the work of Florence Nightingale, as well as history, teachers planned drama activities, writing, children's playground games and a study of diet. Music has a high profile in the school with many pupils playing an instrument from the wide range on offer. Pupils in the choir enjoy singing both in and out of the school. There is a satisfactory range of after school activities, mainly based on sport.

All these things do not happen by chance! Leadership and management are good. The school has had a much higher than normal turnover of staff and governors in the past two years. This has not adversely affected the school's provision. The leadership team is well organised and works closely together. There are good and much improved systems in place to check both the school's provision and pupils' progress. Information from this thorough evaluation process is used well to determine whole school priorities for improvement and also gives detail to action plans for subject leaders. The headteacher's commitment to improvement and her clear vision for the future ensures that there is a school-wide emphasis on the further strengthening of the curriculum and teaching and learning. There has been a positive impact in, for example, the priority to improve pupils' progress in mathematics and standards at Key Stage 1. This demonstrates a good capacity for further improvement. Governance is good. Although there have been many changes in the governing body in the past year, governors are committed to the success of the school and they support the school well.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

At the time of the previous inspection there was a weakness in the outdoor learning environment. This is not now the case due to the good leadership of the Foundation Stage. The curriculum is firmly established and outdoor provision is now good. Good links with pre-school providers and home visits by school staff ensure that children settle quickly and well. Children are given many opportunities to use the wide range of good quality activities that are prepared for them both outdoors and in the classroom.

The skills of children entering the Reception class are similar to those typically found. They make good progress and by the time that they enter Year 1 a large majority meet the expected goals and a significant minority exceed them. Current day-to-day assessments of the children maintained by Reception staff show that the progress of both boys and girls is good, particularly in their communication, language and literacy skills.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop more consistency in the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that lesson plans effectively provide for the differing needs of all pupils.

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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?	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	1
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	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?	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?	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	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

21 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cromwell Park Primary School, Hinchingsbrooke Park, Huntingdon, PE29 6JA

Thank you for welcoming me to your school when I visited you recently. I enjoyed meeting you and watching you learn and play. I was pleased to hear that you really enjoy school and learning. Your parents also told me that you like school.

Cromwell Park is a good school. You told me that you feel safe in school and I can see that this is because the staff take excellent care of you. The adults work hard for you and the teaching is good. I was impressed with your behaviour around school and in lessons and also how well you learned. You know your targets and how to improve your work. As a result you achieve well in English, mathematics and science. Your progress overall is good.

I have asked your headteacher and teachers to ensure that all teachers plan lessons that give you challenging activities and help you learn as well as you can.

Best wishes for the future.

Keith Sadler

Lead inspector