

The Craylands School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132764
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	316008
Inspection date	20 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Helen Hutchings

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	174
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	30
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrea Ferris
Headteacher	Christine Allsop
Date of previous school inspection	20 June 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Craylands Lane Swanscombe Swanscombe DA10 0LP
Telephone number	01322 388230
Fax number	01322 388231

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

The progress pupils make through the school.

The start children get in the Reception class.

The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Evidence was gathered from visits to lessons, analysis of school and nationally published data, school documents, the views of parents, and discussions with pupils, staff and the chair of governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors 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

The Craylands School is smaller than most primary schools. It currently has pupils from Reception, the last part of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), to Year 5. It opened in September 2003 and will reach its full capacity with a Year 6 class in the next academic year. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is high.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The Craylands School is a good and vibrant school, which is effectively fulfilling its vision for 'all members of the school, and the wider community, to work together to enable each child to achieve their full potential as unique individuals'. The school has built well on the good start made when it was last inspected in 2005. It has continued to thrive and improve because of the exceptional leadership of the headteacher and governing body, and a relentless ambition for pupils to succeed. The school now has some outstanding achievements. First-rate care, guidance and support mean that pupils feel valued, and a rich range of activities leads to their outstanding personal development and well-being. Parents are very positive about the school. Some comments summarise the views held by many: 'We are proud to be part of it', and 'We are incredibly pleased with the progress our children are making. It has exceeded our expectations and we feel very fortunate in having Craylands. We regularly recommend it to other parents. The school's commitment to providing the best possible education for pupils is evident in a 'can do' attitude by both adults and pupils alike.'

The school has an excellent understanding of its strengths and areas requiring further attention. Staff evaluate the effectiveness of all initiatives very closely and use this knowledge to develop their practice, so that good teaching and a good curriculum help pupils to achieve well and attain standards that are above average. Recent initiatives to improve pupils' literacy and science skills have been very successful and the school is now bringing the same commitment to improving mathematics further. From a below average start, particularly in children's language development on entry to the school, pupils make good progress to reach average standards in the Year 2 assessments. The school's tracking data shows that pupils continue to do well and that standards in English, mathematics and science in Years 4 and 5 are a little above those expected for their age. Pupils also have good computer skills. The school sets very challenging targets for pupils' performance each year and has regularly exceeded these.

Pupils' enjoyment of learning and their social development are fostered from their earliest days in the school, giving children a good start in the Reception class. Pupils throughout the school are exceptionally positive about their learning and say that 'lessons are fun and never boring', but also recognise that they need to work hard to succeed. They have a good understanding of how to improve their work because teachers give them opportunities for self-assessment against the learning objectives for the lesson, and guide them well when marking work. The curriculum is interesting and engaging, and lessons are stimulating because learning is 'hands on'. Staff are currently building on this good foundation by finding more ways for pupils to improve their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. Parents praise the wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer, and pupils' experiences are also enriched by many visitors to lessons and visits linked to ongoing learning, including regular residential visits. Staff described the day of the inspection as a normal day, and it included Year 5 pupils engaged in a project with representatives from the Royal Opera, the choir rehearsing carols at lunchtime to sing at the local shopping centre and a community chef cooking with a group of children and their parents after school.

Pupils have a good awareness of how to look after themselves, for example helping to grow vegetables on the school allotments, and of e-safety, covered as part of Anti-bullying Week. The school has plans in place to develop the extensive site as an outdoor classroom to enrich learning further, particularly in science. Pupils' personal development and well-being are promoted very well through a comprehensive personal, social and health education programme,

and have been recognised in awards including Healthy School, Active Schools Mark, Safe Cluster and an Eco Award. Pupils are confident and keen to engage politely in conversation. They enjoy very positive relationships with one another and with adults, so they feel safe. They contribute well to the school community and undertake various roles such as playground pals so that everyone is included. School councillors make a strong contribution in representing the views of their peers, organising activities and collating the ideas submitted in the suggestion box. Pupils say that they are usually able to resolve problems themselves but know that there is an adult to turn to if needed. Behaviour is excellent both in lessons and around the school, with pupils showing genuine concern and consideration for others.

Leadership and management have a persistent focus on ensuring that any possible barriers to learning are removed and, under the clear direction of the headteacher, that all pupils achieve well. Staff have high aspirations for their pupils and a strong shared view of future developments. Pupils' progress is monitored closely and prompt action taken if an individual is not making the expected rate of progress. Teaching and support staff are as enthusiastic learners as their pupils, and have been trained in the use of a wide range of programmes to give pupils extra support when needed. This provides pupils with valuable additional support to complement the work of external agencies and ensure that individuals' needs are met quickly. In addition to specific support programmes, the curriculum is designed well to promote literacy for all pupils and to support pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties. As a result, vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well. Governors have taken a strong strategic lead in the development of the school, for example in deploying the school's resources to best advantage. The governing body has committed appropriate funding to support the school's successful partnership with parents, particularly in improving the attendance of a few pupils or supporting parents when their children are experiencing difficulty. Parents, in turn, support the school. For example, during the inspection, members of the parents' association were preparing for the Christmas Fair. Other events that run throughout the year keep the school at the heart of the community as well as raising valuable additional funding. As the school is now at almost full capacity, accommodation is restricted. Governors have worked closely with the local authority to ensure the school has sufficient space to continue the breadth of additional support for small groups of pupils and community involvement in the school.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The careful attention given to knowing pupils as individuals throughout the school begins even before children join the Reception class. Close liaison with pre-schools and discussions with parents are used well, so that children settle quickly into the new routines of school. Children's welfare is promoted very well and their social and emotional needs are met outstandingly well. Children behave well and enjoy their activities. The good relationships between children and adults contribute significantly to children's outstanding personal development. Staff work very well together to make learning interesting and fun, which encourages children to become enthusiastic learners. The curriculum and learning activities are designed well so that children make good progress through the Reception Year. When they start school, children's skills and abilities are generally below those expected for their age, particularly in their communication and language. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified at an early stage, and they are given targeted support. A good adult to child ratio means that children are given high levels of individual attention, and an emphasis on speaking and listening skills helps

children to develop the early literacy skills as the basis for later learning. The EYFS is well led and managed. Communication with parents is good and they refer positively to the start their children have been given, and that their children are happy. The outdoor area is used well but is small for a wide variety of activities, and the school has rightly identified a need to improve this further to give children more opportunities for physical and creative development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Implement plans to make the curriculum even more effective by making better links between subjects.
- Develop the school site to broaden pupils' outdoor experiences and to give children in the EYFS better facilities.

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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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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	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 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

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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

21 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Craylands School, Dartford DA10 0LP

- Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited the school recently. We enjoyed speaking with you and seeing you working hard. As I promised you, I have written the main points of my report below.
- We agree with you that you attend a good school.
- You work very hard and make good progress in your work.
- Your behaviour in lessons and in the playground is excellent and this makes the school a happy place for you to learn.
- You say that learning is fun and enjoyable.
- Teachers plan very interesting activities for you and you take full advantage of the many extra-curricular activities.
- You are looked after extremely well and you know exactly how to stay safe, fit and healthy.
- You help others, such as working in the school allotments or as play pals.
- The headteacher and staff have very good ideas to make sure that the school continues to improve.
- The school council helps adults to know what you all think and you can help by continuing to put your ideas in the suggestion box.
- We agree with your teachers about the most important things to do next.
- Make learning even more interesting by making better links between subjects.
- Carry out the plans to improve the school field so that you can enjoy more lessons outside and children in the Reception class can have more outdoor activities.

Please thank your parents for returning the questionnaires. It was very helpful to hear their views about the school. We wish everyone at The Craylands every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Helen Hutchings Lead inspector