

Croyland Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133600
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	316162
Inspection dates	18–19 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Ruth Westbrook

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	322
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andy Caswell
Headteacher	Helen Tite
Date of previous school inspection	2 December 2003
School address	Croyland Road Wellingborough NN8 2AX
Telephone number	01933 224169
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Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large primary school has a designated special provision (DSP) for 10 places for speech and language difficulties. In September 2007, a designated special provision (the Rainbow Class) for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties opened with 12 places. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in the school as a whole is well above average. A small number of pupils are at an early stage of learning English but this number is increasing.

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. The headteacher's outstanding leadership has set clear direction that has resulted in substantial improvement since the school's last inspection. With effective senior leaders, she has established a very caring environment where everyone is encouraged and supported to do their best. Central to this has been the development of excellent provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This led one parent to comment, 'The integration of the special needs pupils with the rest of the school is fantastic.'

The specialist practices used in the DSP and the Rainbow Class have contributed significantly to improvements across the school. The clear emphasis on developing speech and listening skills has helped all pupils to improve their literacy skills. The school has adopted strategies to support positive behaviour used in the Rainbow Class. This has promoted significant improvements in behaviour in recent years.

Achievement is good and pupils leave Year 6 with standards that are at the national average. They make good progress from their below average starting point when they enter the school. Standards in all subjects have improved substantially since the last inspection. Good leadership and management have improved the quality of teaching and learning by introducing a range of effective strategies throughout the school. Improvements to provision in the Foundation Stage mean that most children enter Year 1 with skills and abilities that are close to those expected for their age. They are lower in communication, language and literacy where the starting point is lower.

Good teaching and learning ensure that there is usually a careful match between learning and a pupil's needs although, occasionally, the more able pupils do not receive work that is challenging enough. The school has established good systems throughout to set targets and keep track of pupils' progress. These have been a significant factor in raising standards. Pupils' work is marked regularly, but not all marking gives pupils sufficient feedback on their progress towards targets and information about what they need to learn next.

A strong feature of the good curriculum is an imaginative enrichment programme. This makes a strong contribution to outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and is a key factor in promoting pupils' good personal development and well-being. It helps pupils to be thoughtful about themselves and others.

The school has good links with external partners to enhance the curriculum and provide additional support. A link with a secondary school provides additional teaching for French. A special school has helped to develop ways of promoting positive behaviour. Partnerships with parents are strengthening and almost all parents are positive in their evaluation of the school's work. They value 'the happy place and the many opportunities children are given to learn.'

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children start school with a wide range of abilities, but overall, they are below the expected levels. Skills and abilities in communication, language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world are particularly low. All children benefit from the emphasis on language. Good modelling of speech by adults and the use of signing has a positive impact on developing speech and language skills.

The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good and results in good progress. Children make less progress in writing and linking sounds and letters, because of their lower starting points. This is a current focus for development through daily group activities matched carefully to children's different literacy needs. Well-planned lessons contain a good mix of child-chosen and adult-led activities.

Pupils are familiar with the well-thought-out routines. They move about the area confidently and independently. The strong emphasis on the development of personal and social skills supports children to relate well to both adults and children. They eat snacks together harmoniously without adult supervision and respond to encouragement to help each other peel the fruit. Outside at playtime, they form an orderly queue whilst waiting for their turn with the tricycles.

Regular monitoring and assessment of children's work ensure that staff match work accurately to individual needs. Communication with parents has been a focus for improvement this year. This has encouraged greater numbers to become involved in their children's work.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the ablest pupils are always set challenging work.
- Share good practice on setting targets for pupils and marking so that all pupils receive clear guidance on what they need to do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are average and pupils' achievement is good. Standards in all subjects have improved throughout the school since the time of the last inspection. The improvement has been most substantial at Key Stage 2. In 2007, in mathematics, Year 6 pupils made outstanding progress. The school recognises that achievement is weaker in writing at Key Stage 2. There has been much improvement and pupils are now reaching average standards, but fewer reach the highest levels in English than in mathematics and science. All pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the good support they receive from teaching assistants. Pupils in the Rainbow Class make good progress in basic skills and personal and social development. This enables them to return eventually to their mainstream class with confidence.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy lessons. They behave well and their attendance is satisfactory. Both these judgements show an improvement from the last inspection and the school has plans in place to improve attendance further. Pupils show by what they say and do that they trust and appreciate their teachers, particularly in the way they treat them with courtesy and respect. They learn how to keep themselves and others safe and healthy as shown by their commitment to eating and exercising sensibly and to looking out for each other in the playground and elsewhere. The school council actively represents pupils' views and sees through initiatives like improvements to playground facilities. Pupils make considerable efforts to raise money for a number of charities, and there is a particular commitment to supporting children in a school in Kenya. Many pupils take up an impressive range of responsibilities as playground buddies, as members of the eco awareness group, or as class and assembly monitors. In these ways, and

through the good progress they make in basic skills, pupils are prepared well for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers plan most lessons carefully, taking into account the different needs of learners. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' progress by providing thoughtful and well-directed support. This is most clearly the case in lessons where the learning objectives are clear and where everyone is certain about what will count for success. However, some lessons do not present the ablest of learners with clear challenges. Relationships between pupils and adults are very good and result in pleasant and welcoming classrooms. Pupils evidently like their teachers and are prepared to work hard for them. Usually expectations are high, and pupils make good progress and enjoy a real sense of achievement. On occasions however, because the pace of a lesson is too slow, or because the teacher talks for too long, opportunities for active learning are limited with a consequent slowing of progress. Marking also shows this inconsistency. There is exemplary practice that sets clear targets of what to do to improve. Some marking though does not give pupils enough help to move their learning on because it does not identify clearly enough what they need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's good curriculum meets most pupils' needs, including providing purposeful opportunities for them to use skills learnt in literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) in other subjects. Programmes of work are planned well but there are a few occasions when the work is not challenging for the ablest pupils. There is a very wide range of enrichment activities that includes the school's focus weeks. These make a strong contribution to pupils' outstanding cultural development. Foreign language teaching, school visits and visitors all have a positive impact on pupils' personal development and contribute to their considerable enjoyment of learning. As part of an effective programme of personal, social and health education, pupils learn about the importance of healthy lifestyles and staying safe. Many pupils take part in the good range of extra-curricular activities. The curriculum plans for the Rainbow Class and the DSP are very closely linked to the appropriate age group in main school and place an emphasis on relevant skill development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Providing effective additional support to pupils is a strong feature of the school's work. The care and support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are excellent. The training given to staff in meeting these needs has had a beneficial impact on the care and support of all pupils in the school. Arrangements to ensure the safety and protection of pupils are securely in place. Good levels of additional staff ensure that pupils are cared for well and as a result, both parents and pupils are confident that the school is a safe environment. The school has very clear systems in place for managing behaviour and absence from school and these have resulted in considerable improvements over the last few years. Most pupils are effectively guided in their learning by their personal targets. They help them to know how to

improve their work, particularly when teachers refer to them regularly in their marking. However, there are some inconsistencies in how well this is carried out.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Many of the plans implemented by the school's leadership are now well established. As a result, standards have improved and so have pupils' attitudes to learning. School leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, which also contributes to the school's good capacity for further improvement. Plans clearly identify improvements that are still to be made. They are well supported by the senior leadership's thorough use of data, which has been used to raise standards. There are good systems in place for sharing this information with all staff and it is used to set challenging targets that are regularly revised. Subject coordinators have varying levels of experience in using data in their subjects to inform planning, but senior leaders are well placed to help spread their good practice throughout the school. The school's leadership of its designated special provisions is excellent. The staff work together as one team exceptionally well and, as a result, pupils' needs are met effectively and efficiently. The contribution of this arrangement to whole-staff development is high. Governors have given sound support to the school, particularly in development of the premises, and in establishing policies to guide the school's work.

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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	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	1
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	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?	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	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

20 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Croyland Primary School, Wellingborough, NN8 2AX

Thank you for welcoming us so warmly on our recent visit to your school. We think it is a good school. We would like to share with you what we learned about it. There are lots of things we particularly liked.

- You make good progress in your work and reach average standards. Those of you in the designated special provision (DSP) and Rainbow Class make good progress too.
- You are happy at school and enjoy most of the activities available to you.
- The teaching you receive is good and this helps you to learn well.
- You particularly like the focus weeks, like your recent arts weeks. These help you to develop an excellent understanding of other people and other cultures. As a result, you work together extremely well and take responsibility for each other.
- Your understanding of how to be healthy and safe is good, and it is good to see you put what you have learnt into practice at breaks and lunchtimes.
- Your headteacher and staff care for you extremely well and give you plenty of support should you need it. You know where to go to get help if you need it. This makes you feel safe in school.
- Your behaviour is good and you are very welcoming to visitors.

I have asked the staff and governors to make sure that some of you are given work that would give you more of a challenge and help you reach the higher levels. I am also asking them to make sure that you know your targets for literacy and numeracy, and then when teachers check your work they give you very clear feedback on the progress you are making towards your target. You can help too by making good use of your targets and doing your very best to achieve them.

I hope you will help the staff to put these plans in place so that the school can keep on improving.

Ruth Westbrook Lead inspector



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