

Cromer Road Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101272
Local Authority	Barnet
Inspection number	323435
Inspection date	19 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Mike Thompson

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	407
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	58
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Tony Vourou
Headteacher	Ms Helen Schmitz
Date of previous school inspection	22 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Cromer Road New Barnet Barnet EN5 5HT
Telephone number	020 8449 3492
Fax number	020 8440 0580

Age group	5–11
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Introduction

Two Additional Inspectors carried out this inspection. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

- How effective is the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision?
- How effective are procedures to ensure good behaviour?
- How effective is the academic guidance provided for pupils?

The inspectors gathered evidence from performance data, observations of teaching, the work produced by pupils, and observations of the pupils at play and at lunch. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with pupils, representatives of the governing body, and some members of staff also contributed to the judgements. The inspectors did not investigate other aspects of the school's work in detail. Where the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Cromer Road is a large primary school. The school population is culturally diverse; however, the majority of pupils, comprising almost two-thirds of the roll, are of White British heritage. Although about one in six pupils has English as an additional language, there are few in the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) is broadly average. The needs of these pupils are wide-ranging, and include specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school has the Active Mark accreditation for its commitment to promoting physical exercise and school sport, and has Healthy School status. The school's provision for the EYFS comprises the Foundation Unit for children of Reception age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Cromer Road Primary provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Its strengths lie in the good teaching and curriculum, which result in pupils achieving well academically and attaining standards that are consistently above, or well above, the national averages in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave at the end of Year 6.

Parents have widely differing views of the school. Just over half of those who returned their inspection questionnaires were largely positive about all aspects of the school's work, and some appended appreciative comments. One parent accurately summarised the situation found by inspectors when commenting, 'There are the makings of a good school, with good leadership by the headteacher who has done many good things, such as bringing in numerous extra-curricular activities'. However, other parents were largely negative and highly critical about the standards of behaviour and the school's partnership with parents.

In response to parents' concerns, inspectors looked closely at the standards of behaviour. They found that in lessons and in closely supervised situations, such as when pupils move around the school or go into and out of assembly, behaviour is most often good. This reflects well on teachers' generally good skills in managing their pupils. Pupils' good behaviour in lessons contributes to the good learning that takes place. However, in less structured situations, such as at lunchtime and at morning break, a small yet significant minority of pupils lack sufficient self-control and do not display enough consideration towards others. This poor behaviour sometimes goes unnoticed and unchecked by the adults present. The pupils report that most of their classmates are considerate and generally behave well, but instances of unacceptable behaviour by a small minority remain a regular occurrence. The school is aware of this and has recently appointed a learning mentor as part of a strategy to improve matters. However, the impact of this initiative is not yet evident.

The school prides itself on its caring and inclusive ethos and, for example in the one-to-one help provided for pupils with learning difficulties, this is often the case. One parent commented: 'Teaching and welfare staff are kind and helpful in dealing with children who have medical conditions or emotional problems'. The school is also good at providing intensive support for pupils to ensure that they meet and, in some cases exceed, the nationally expected levels by the end of Year 6. This targeting of pupils, together with good teaching contributes to the more rapid progress made by pupils towards the end of Key Stage 2 and the school's above average performance in the national tests. Another factor underpinning the pupils' academic performance is the good quality guidance provided by teachers. This is evident in examples of marking of pupils' work and in the ways in which teachers' effective dialogue with their pupils in lessons helps clarify points that pupils find difficult to understand. This good quality help enables pupils with LDD to make good progress. However, some of the procedures relating to the day-to-day care of pupils, such as the quality of supervision at playtimes, the record-keeping relating to safeguarding documentation, and staff awareness of requirements lack rigour.

Attendance has improved since the last inspection. The broadly average attendance rate illustrates pupils' satisfactory attitudes towards their education. They show a reasonable appreciation of the importance of healthy lifestyles and of how to keep safe, and are satisfactorily prepared for a future as life-long learners. Pupils appreciate the good range of activities provided for them and the ways in which teachers try to make the curriculum more interesting through visits to places of interest or by inviting visitors to the school to share their

expertise. Pupils and staff greatly enjoyed the fundraising 'Pirate' theme on the day of inspection, and donated the money raised to Great Ormond Street Hospital.

Senior managers have successfully improved the school in many ways since its last inspection. The quality of the buildings leaves much to be desired, and is under review by the local authority. The weaknesses in systems relating to the care and welfare of pupils and the lack of confidence in the school expressed by a significant number of parents mean that leadership cannot be judged as any better than satisfactory. This lack of confidence stems not only from concerns about inconsistencies in managing pupils' behaviour, but also from a perception that managers are not as effective as they should be in responding to concerns expressed by parents, communicating with them and involving them in the development of policies and practices. However, a number of parents were appreciative of the friendliness and day-to-day accessibility of teachers. Despite senior managers' clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the school's good academic provision and performance, the lack of a secure partnership with all parents means that at present the school has only a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The headteacher has been the driving force behind the improvements made in provision for the Foundation Unit. Good leadership of the unit ensures that from broadly average starting points, children make good progress. By the time they transfer to Key Stage 1, most achieve the goals expected of them. This occurs because the teachers have a very secure understanding of how very young children learn and provide children with exciting activities that capture their interest and help make learning fun. An important factor in ensuring that good learning takes place is the dialogue between adults and children. Staff are skilled in using questions to make children think and in explaining new learning very clearly. However, they sometimes miss opportunities to improve the quality of children's spoken responses by modelling good speech. Among the outstanding features of provision are the safe and caring environment and the very clear focus placed on each individual's learning needs. A new 'key worker' system, designed to improve the already good quality of assessment and academic guidance is not yet fully embedded and has yet to make an impact on children's achievement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve procedures relating to the day-to-day care and welfare of pupils. In particular, ensure greater consistency in managing pupils' behaviour at play.
- Improve the partnership with parents through better communication and consultation.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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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?	3
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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
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 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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

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

02 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cromer Road Primary School, Barnet, EN5 5HT

I would like to thank you very much for being so helpful when your inspectors came to visit your school. We really enjoyed meeting you.

We think that your school is satisfactory overall, with some things that are good. Here are some of the things we liked best about your school.

- Children in the Foundation Unit get a good start to their education.
- You make good progress.
- When you leave at the end of Year 6, your results are often above average. You should be proud of this.
- You often learn well in lessons because your teachers teach you well.
- You have lots of interesting things to do in school time, and a good range of other activities such as sports to do after school.
- When you need help with your work or have a problem, your teachers do their best to help you.

We were pleased to see how well almost all of you behave. However, we were disappointed to find that a few of you do not always obey the rules. When this happens, these pupils cause a lot of upset. We would like the school to do something about this by making sure that all adults keep a very careful lookout for bad behaviour, and apply the rules fairly and in the same way for everyone, particularly at playtimes. To help the school look after you well at all times, it also needs to improve staff skills and some of the records it has to keep. Many of your parents told us that they would like to know more about what the school is doing to help you learn and would like to work with the school to help make it better than it is so that you all enjoy it more. We think that this is a very good idea.

We wish you lots of success in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Mike Thompson

Lead Inspector