

Croxteth Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104612
Local Authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	324077
Inspection dates	17–18 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Marguerite McCloy HMI

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	207
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev I Brooks
Headteacher	Mrs Karen McBride
Date of previous school inspection	13 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Moss Way Liverpool Merseyside L11 0BP

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	17–18 November 2008
Inspection number	324077

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Age group 3–11

Inspection dates 17–18 November 2008

Inspection number 324077

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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

Croxteth Community Primary School is a slightly smaller than average sized primary school situated outside the centre of the city of Liverpool. The school serves a local community in an area of significant social and economic disadvantage. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, with very few of minority ethnic heritage. Virtually all speak English as their first language. A much higher than average proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals. Almost a third have learning difficulties and/or disabilities; this is also well above average. There has recently been an increase in the proportion of pupils who leave or join the school other than at the usual times. There is Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision for children aged from three to five years. The playgroup adjacent to the school, the Croxteth Child Development Service, is independently run and was inspected separately.

The school holds awards for: Healthy Schools, Basic Skills, Investors in People status Dyslexia-friendly status and the Inclusive School Charter Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Croxteth Community Primary School provides a satisfactory and improving education for its pupils. The school's positive ethos and high levels of care, guidance and support make a significant contribution to pupils' good behaviour and personal development.

Pupils enter the school with skills and knowledge that are generally well below those expected for children of their age. When they leave, they have reached standards that, while below average, indicate satisfactory progress. This reflects the significant improvement which has taken place during the last academic year, after results had shown a downward trend over the previous five years leading up to 2007. The new headteacher is building successfully upon the improvements made in pupils' achievement this year, with good support and challenge from the local authority. Middle leaders are beginning to develop a clearer understanding of their own role in raising standards, although their involvement in and contribution to, whole-school evaluation and development planning is at an early stage.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and there are examples of good practice. Teachers are improving their skills through well-focused training and opportunities provided to share best practice. There are particular strengths in the way the school's curriculum promotes pupils' personal, social and emotional development. The curriculum overall is satisfactory and the school is aware of the need to develop it in a more imaginative way in order to support improvements in teaching and learning. Lessons do not always make the most of opportunities to capitalise on what leaders rightly describe as 'children buzzing about their learning!' The school is at the early stages of reviewing its provision to develop a more creative and exciting curriculum to strengthen pupils' key skills across a wider range of subjects and themes.

The school is at the centre of its local community and demonstrates this in the successful promotion of positive relationships and mutual support within and around its immediate vicinity. The school itself provides a safe and welcoming community to which pupils feel a strong sense of belonging. There are very good links with a number of agencies to promote pupils' health and welfare. Pupils respond well to the opportunities provided for them to understand and contribute to the community. However, there has been limited action to form more cohesive links with contacts beyond the immediate community.

The school provides satisfactory value for money. The strategies which were put in place last year had a positive impact on pupils' achievement. These measures have been further strengthened by effective leadership and accurate self-evaluation. Consequently, the school demonstrates a good capacity for continuing improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The EYFS includes the Nursery and Reception classes. A high proportion of children enter the Nursery with skills significantly below those typical for their age. They settle in quickly, enjoy their learning and grow in confidence and independence.

By the end of Reception year, a significantly lower than average proportion of children reaches the expected early learning goals, although, overall, children make satisfactory progress. Their skills in all areas of learning, apart from physical development, remain below average. This is particularly so in communication, language and literacy, and in their mathematical development.

It is also true of their personal and social development, despite children making good progress in this area due to the school's strong emphasis on meeting their social and emotional needs.

The EYFS leader has a good understanding of the learning and developmental needs of young children. She is aware of the strengths and areas for development in the school's provision and ensures that it meets the national requirements of the EYFS. Staff work effectively as a team to promote children's personal development and secure their well-being. Children's behaviour is good and they play well together, generally showing thoughtfulness and consideration towards each other. An appropriate range of activities is provided within a well-planned learning environment. Adults make good use of opportunities to engage children in speaking and listening in order to promote the development of their language skills.

The school is aware that the use of its outdoor learning area could be developed further to ensure that children have a good range of continuous learning activities outside as well as those provided indoors. The leadership team are also developing the planning and tracking of children's achievements in the EYFS to bring about more rapid progress in the development of those skills necessary for them to access the Key Stage 1 curriculum.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build on the significant improvements made this year to maintain a consistent rise in standards in English, mathematics and science for all year groups across the school.
- Improve the quality and balance of the curriculum to ensure that it meets the needs of all learners and promotes more rapid progress in their key skills.
- Increase the proportion of teaching that is good or better.
- Strengthen the knowledge and skills of middle leaders to develop their role, particularly their contribution to whole-school leadership and improvement.

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.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Action taken by the school contributed to a significant rise in standards at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2008, which is demonstrated by the provisional test results and inspection evidence. Standards show a considerable improvement in each subject, particularly in English. Although a smaller than average number of pupils reached the higher level in English, mathematics or science, the fact that one-fifth of Year 6 pupils achieved this in 2008 is also indicative of good improvement over that of previous years. The overall progress made by pupils during Key Stage 2 was inadequate in 2007. Test results for 11 year olds showed that standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science were exceptionally low. The attainment of 7 year olds in reading, writing and mathematics was also significantly below average. Although this remains below average, the results of assessments of Year 2 pupils also showed some improvement in 2008 to indicate satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1.

There are slight fluctuations between the performances of different groups of pupils in some year groups. For example, in 2008, girls achieved slightly better than boys in Key Stage 1 assessments and in English in Key Stage 2. Overall, however, all groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those entitled to a free school meal, make satisfactory progress in their learning.

Pupils' work during the inspection and the school's system to track the progress being made by the current Year 6, shows that its challenging targets for 2009 are within reach. This represents a further indication of the school having reversed the downward trend in achievement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils enjoy life at school. They are proud of the recent improvements to the school d,cor, noting with approval that 'the school looks brighter'. They like the increase in educational visits, where they encounter what one described as 'learning in different environments'. Around the school, their behaviour reflects the very good guidance they receive about how to relate to each to other. They support and respect one another well, behave responsibly and are pleased to be well thought of by adults in the school. Their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good overall, based on a reliable sense of right and wrong. The pupils have a good understanding of health related matters, for example, which foods provide a healthy diet. Movement around the school is sensible and shows awareness of the safety of the school community. Overall, pupils make a good contribution to the smooth working of the school. Those appointed to posts, such as play supervisors or answering the school telephone, take their responsibilities very seriously. Pupils show a good commitment to helping those in need through successful charity fundraising. Attendance is now closer to, although still below, the national average. It has improved consistently since the previous inspection, reflecting the school's well-focused efforts on this issue. Improving standards in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) are helping pupils secure a sounder basis for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

There is some good practice in teaching, but it is not consistently good enough to accelerate pupils' progress across all year groups. Relationships between teachers, support staff and pupils are good in all lessons. The pupils show an enthusiasm for learning. They particularly enjoy lessons where there is a range of practical activities. In the very best lessons, the pace of learning is fast. The pupils' attention is closely focused on achieving learning targets that match their abilities. In such lessons, pupils have a secure understanding of what level they are working at and what they must do to move onto the next. In less effective lessons, the time available for learning is not managed as well and pupils do not learn as much as they could. Teachers plan some motivating and enjoyable activities, but are not consistently making use of assessment information to make sure tasks challenge all pupils, especially the more able. Questions are not always planned carefully enough to make sure that pupils' thinking and reasoning are stimulated and not merely their recall of information. Occasionally, progress is hindered because pupils are not always clear about what to do. Recent guidelines to improve teachers' marking are beginning to take effect. There is some very helpful marking. It points out clearly what has been done well and what needs to be better if the pupil is to reach his or her target level, but this quality is not yet consistently established.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The major strength of the curriculum is its support for pupils' emotional and personal development through a wide range of courses. These help pupils become more self-assured and increase their readiness to learn. They also provide valuable information about important issues such as keeping healthy. Pupils enjoy some good enrichment activities such as clubs and educational visits that are starting to give them a sense of the world beyond their immediate community. The school has started to improve the quality of the curriculum and the way in which subjects are taught, but this process is not securely embedded. Current planning does not ensure that pupils consistently have the opportunities to apply and develop their skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT to different subjects or topics. Planning does not ensure that all pupils acquire at the right time the skills they need for future progress in their learning. As yet, the school has not taken enough advantage of opportunities to form a more engaging and innovative curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

There are some outstanding elements in the care provided for the pupils. Adults in the school share a very high commitment to pupils' welfare. Parents recognise and value the 'dedicated staff'. The work of the learning mentor and the coordinator for special educational needs makes sure a wide range of outside agencies is effectively involved in providing guidance where it is needed. A notable strength of the support is the way in which it guides pupils to take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour. There are effective and frequent contacts with parents and carers. Safeguarding procedures are in place. Good support is provided to pupils who join the school late and arrangements for transition to secondary education are good. Arrangements to provide academic guidance for pupils are developing, but not yet securely embedded enough to make sure that all pupils know their potential and how to achieve it.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The newly appointed headteacher is an effective and experienced leader. Since her appointment in September 2008 she has quickly assimilated a considerable amount of information about the school to form a clear and accurate picture of its strengths and areas for development.

Local authority support following the poor performance at Key Stage 2 in 2007 led to swift action being taken by the school. All staff worked as a team to organise a good range of intervention and 'booster' activities, which was a key factor in the improved achievement in 2008. The school has learned from this successful approach and leaders and staff have raised their expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving. Teachers in all key stages are held to account for the progress made by pupils in their class. The sharing and analysis of key assessment information is used as the basis for discussions between the headteacher and class teachers. Although in the early stages of development, this system of professional discussion and accountability for setting and meeting challenging targets is reflecting the school's raised expectations.

The school's self-evaluation of its effectiveness is accurate and based on a range of monitoring activities carried out by the headteacher, local authority advisers and the school improvement partner. Members of the leadership team receive useful support and training to develop their own skills in self-evaluation. Nevertheless, there is scope for further development of the roles of middle managers, particularly in relation to the part they play in whole school self-evaluation.

Improvement planning is well focused on the key areas for development identified in the school's self-evaluation. Governance is satisfactory. Following a prolonged period when the school was managing a deficit budget, due to reduced pupil numbers and a staffing reorganisation, its finances are now secure. Governors provide loyal support for the school and its community and are beginning to hold it to account more rigorously for its performance.

The school works hard to compensate for the poor condition of the building, with an ongoing programme of refurbishment that is much appreciated by pupils and parents. The local authority has recently confirmed its plans to provide a new school building on the current site in 2010.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
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?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which 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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
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**

Inspection of Croxteth Community Primary School, Liverpool, L11 0BP

Thank you for your help and for making us feel welcome in your school when we visited recently. We enjoyed seeing you at work and speaking to you in classes and around the school. Mr Griffin also enjoyed meeting with the school council.

We were impressed to see how happy you are in school and how much you enjoy your learning. It was good to see how well behaved you are and how you are thoughtful and helpful towards others. This is because all the adults in the school (supported by regular visitors, like Robbie the Bobby!) look after you very well and offer lots of care and support when you need it. They also help you to understand your feelings and make sensible decisions.

We found that your school is satisfactory overall and that it is improving. We talked with leaders and staff about the important things that will make sure that each of you achieves the best you can. These are to:

- continue working hard to improve everyone's standards in English, mathematics and science
- improve the curriculum and teaching so that more lessons are exciting and you make more progress
- develop the skills of everyone on the leadership team so that they can make sure your school carries on with the improvements that started last year, making them stronger and even better in the future.

You can play your part by carrying on enjoying school and making sure you attend every day so that your learning can continue getting stronger.

With best wishes for the future.