

Cragside Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108465
Local Authority	Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number	324775
Inspection date	8 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Gordon Potter

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)	412
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	Mr Geoff Hughes
Headteacher	Mr Mike Howard
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Cragside High Heaton Newcastle upon Tyne Tyne and Wear NE7 7EL
Telephone number	0191 2668389
Fax number	0191 2151611

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 current rate of pupils' progress across school
- whether the quality of teaching and learning is strong enough to ensure that pupils make good progress throughout the school, especially in Key Stage 2
- the impact recent initiatives have had on progress, including in writing, across the school.

Evidence was collected from discussions with pupils, members of staff and governors, observations of teaching and learning, views of parents, and a scrutiny of pupils' work and school documentation. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but 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

Cragside is a large primary school. Socio-economic circumstances locally are above national average and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is average and the proportion with English as an additional language is above average. The number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average and the number of pupils with a statement of special educational need is average. Fewer pupils leave or join the school during the school year than is usual. Children enter the Reception classes in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the autumn term. The school has Healthy Schools Status and the Activemark Gold Award. A privately run before and after school club is available on site, and was inspected separately by Ofsted.

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 where pupils attain high standards. This is because teaching is good and a good and improving curriculum offers pupils a range of exciting and stimulating activities which have helped to raise standards in writing. The headteacher and the senior leadership team have a very clear view of what needs to be done to make the school even better. As parents say, 'This is a welcoming and supportive school. Children are able to thrive in a warm caring environment and parents are embraced in various aspects of school life.'

Children enter the Reception class with skills which are typical for their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and enter Key Stage 1 with skills which are above average. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are well above average and reflect further good progress. At Key Stage 2, good progress continues and pupils consistently reach standards that are well above average in the national tests. Given their starting points, these results demonstrate good achievement. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make good progress. Writing has been a weaker aspect of pupils' attainment but the strategies adopted by the school have had an impact on standards. Pupils are now encouraged to write in subjects across the curriculum, for example, in science where report writing shows clear use of connectives and sentence structures.

Pupils' personal development is good. From an early age, pupils are very well aware of how to eat healthily and they speak enthusiastically about the many opportunities to take exercise. They also appreciate the opportunities to learn a musical instrument and take part in the many sporting and arts clubs available to them, although younger pupils would appreciate more access to these activities. Very positive relationships and good behaviour and attitudes contribute to pupils' good progress in lessons and their enjoyment of school, especially when they are actively involved in their learning. Pupils' moral and social awareness is well developed. Pupils care for one another and feel safe and secure in the school community, where pupils from a range of faiths and ethnic backgrounds learn well together. This awareness of their own different cultural backgrounds, a very strong sense of the local community and developing international links underpin the school's good contribution to community cohesion. Attendance is above average because pupils enjoy their learning and because families recognise the influential part the school plays in their children's lives.

Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned with a good range of stimulating activities and sufficient pace to allow pupils to understand clearly what they are learning. Good use is made of 'talk partners' and group work so that pupils can learn together and develop their speaking and listening skills which they use with great confidence. Lessons have clear learning objectives and teachers use questions well to check what pupils have learned. In the few less successful, though nonetheless satisfactory lessons, teachers intervene too often and do not allow pupils time to work together or independently. Occasionally, the pace of lessons drops and progress slows.

The developing creative curriculum is a strength of the school. It allows pupils to see the links between subjects which enhances pupils' enjoyment and raises standards in a range of subjects. For example, work on pirates contributed to geographical map-making skills, as well as writing and construction skills in boat-building. While the range of activities enthralls pupils, occasionally, activities are not well-enough targeted at the needs of the most able pupils and work for them can lack challenge. A comprehensive programme of personal, social and health

education, including theme weeks which focus on a variety of skills and interests, supports pupils' good personal development. The very good development of skills in information and communication technology together with pupils' strong interpersonal skills and high attainment, ensures they are exceptionally well placed to face life's future challenges.

Care, guidance and support is good. The school works very closely with outside agencies to meet the diverse needs of pupils and all adults in school provide high levels of care. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are quickly identified and appropriate strategies adopted to ensure that they thrive in school. All procedures related to safeguarding and child protection meet current requirements. Effective transition arrangements ensure pupils are well prepared for the next phase of education. Teachers' marking helps pupils to understand what they need to do to improve their work. Effective procedures for setting targets for pupils and tracking improvement in their work ensure that pupils make good progress. Pupils in Year 6 further benefit from knowing at what level they are working and what they need to do to take the next steps in their learning.

Leadership and management are good. The strongly focused leadership of the experienced and respected headteacher ensures that the school continually strives to improve. There are very clear priorities to achieve this based on an outstanding self-evaluation of the school. With very able support from the senior leadership team, he has offered all teachers more responsibility and more accountability and they are relishing the challenge. An emphatic focus on pupils' learning, the developing use of data to plan work, the setting of challenging targets and detailed analysis of what happens in classrooms have led to improvements in the curriculum, in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in standards in writing. There is an impressive focus on equality of opportunity in this inclusive school. Governors offer good levels of support and challenge to the school. Based on the improvements already made, the school has a good capacity to improve

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Reception classes from a range of social backgrounds. Although some have higher starting points, most enter with skills and abilities that are typical for their age. Parents comment that the induction process helps their children to 'settle in quickly'. By the time they join Year 1, children have made good progress and standards are above average. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and make similar progress to their peers. Children benefit from the good routines such as circle time at the beginning of the school day. They settle quickly into activities because they feel secure and there is a happy atmosphere in this safe and caring environment. Children's personal development and the promotion of their welfare are good. They behave well, respond to instructions promptly, cooperate with each other readily and show positive attitudes to learning. Children's learning and development are promoted well within the well resourced indoor and outdoor classrooms which are used effectively to foster children's development in all areas of learning. Leadership and management are good. Teaching addresses the needs of children well and planning successfully ensures the learning is balanced between adult-led and child-selected activities. The process of observing and recording children's development is in place. The school recognises that there are some inconsistencies in assessments across the Reception classes. Not enough care is taken to monitor the progress and achievement of children when they have chosen their own activities. There are comprehensive plans in place to refine this observation process and develop further partnerships with parents.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the best practice in involving pupils in their own learning is used across school, especially in offering challenge to the most able pupils.
- Refine observation processes in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that assessment more accurately monitors children's development in activities which children choose for themselves.

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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 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?	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	1
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?	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	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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	1

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?	2

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	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

9 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cragside Primary School, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE7 7EL

Thank you so much for making us welcome when we inspected your school. Cragside Primary School is a good school. The staff care for you extremely well. They help you to enjoy your learning because they try to make your lessons fun and effective. They encourage you to know what you need to learn in each lesson.

We think that you are a credit to the school. We were pleased to see that you work hard and do your best. We think that you behave well and you look after one another admirably. You are very polite and helpful, and we enjoyed talking to you about your school. You told us that you look forward to coming to school because you enjoy your lessons, especially when you are actively involved in your learning, and appreciate the activities the school provides for you, such as visits and sports activities. You particularly enjoy activities which involve you in the local community and on residential visits. Your parents and carers like the school very much, especially the way in which your teachers care for you and help you to enjoy your learning.

The way your school, including the Reception classes, is led and managed is good. Leaders and staff know the school extremely well and their work is making the school become even more effective. We have asked the school to do two things to make your school even better.

- Make sure that the work you are asked to do is challenging enough, especially for those of you who find learning easier, and that you are more involved in your learning.
- Make sure that teachers check how well children in the Reception class are learning when they have chosen their own activities.

You can help by continuing to do your very best and by continuing to attend regularly. We are sure you will!

Thank you for all your help and we wish you every success in all you do in the future.

Yours sincerely

Gordon Potter

Lead inspector