

Crowton Christ Church CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111336
Local Authority	Cheshire
Inspection number	325355
Inspection date	17 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Kevin Johnson

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	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	64
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	Mrs R Downes
Headteacher	Mrs H Harrison
Date of previous school inspection	12 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Kingsley Road Crowton Northwich Cheshire CW8 2RW

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	17 September 2008
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The overall effectiveness of the school was evaluated and the following areas were investigated: the standards reached by pupils and their achievement, particularly in English; the quality of the curriculum and how effectively it promotes writing; the safeguarding of pupils and the academic guidance they receive; the effectiveness of the Foundation Stage; and the leadership and management of the school. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records, policies and minutes, observation of the school at work, discussions with staff, governors and pupils and the parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest the school's own assessments, as given in the self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included, where appropriate, in the report.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized school. Almost all pupils who attend are White British. Fewer pupils than average are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also lower than average. The school has achieved Healthy Schools status, the Activemark award and holds the Green Flag Award for its promotion of and work on environmental issues. The headteacher has been in post since September 2008.

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. Pupils are extremely well cared for. Their outstanding personal development thrives in the caring family environment and as a result, they achieve well.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Relationships are excellent and pupils adapt their exemplary behaviour readily to suit different occasions. Pupils develop a very good understanding of different world cultures. As well as learning about world religions, pupils are in regular contact with schools in Japan and France. Jumpers have been sent to a Ugandan orphanage from the school's knitting club and pupils are currently raising funds to provide the orphanage with further support. Pupils' well above average attendance and very good punctuality are measures of their enjoyment of school. They enjoy lessons because, they say, they are fun. Pupils are equally enthusiastic about activities outside of the classroom. Apart from sports activities the popular eco-gardening club, for example, one of the school council's many successful projects, contributes very effectively to pupils' pursuit of healthy lifestyles. It is not unusual for vegetables to be harvested and eaten for lunch on the same day. Pupils are extremely conscientious about carrying out their responsibilities. The very strong links with schools overseas as well as local school networks and community groups effectively help to provide pupils with the skills they will need to secure their future economic well-being. Pupils are invariably polite and well mannered and by the time they leave Year 6 they are sensible, self-assured young people, very well prepared to move on to the next stage of their education.

From broadly expected skills for their age when they enter Reception class, pupils achieve well across the school to reach above average standards by the end of Year 6. Indeed, standards are above average at both key stages. This has been the case over the past three years. Teachers' assessments show that standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 improved in 2008. This is because of a better performance in writing at the end of Year 2 and much improved science results in Year 6. Nevertheless, pupils' achievement is not consistent across all subjects. Analysis shows that achievement in English at Key Stage 2 is not as high as in mathematics and science, due to some underachievement in writing. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities at times make rapid progress, because of the high quality of support they receive. Pupils achieve well because teaching is consistently good. Relationships in lessons are exceptionally good and these create a climate for learning where pupils feel safe and valued. Recently introduced teaching methods to promote independent problem-solving have had a strong impact on learning. In one lesson, for example, pupils working in teams, each with responsibility for a different aspect, made full use of the available computers to research facts about Roman history. They enjoyed both the level of independent learning, and sharing their recorded findings with others. 'Such lessons are popular,' say pupils because 'teachers give you time to think things through'. Pupils find teachers' marking helpful because it points out what they have done well and what they need to do to improve further.

The curriculum challenges pupils and meets their needs well. Provision has improved since the previous inspection, most notably in information and communication technology (ICT), design technology and with the introduction of French. Pupils have opportunities to apply their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in a variety of ways across the curriculum. Planning to teach personal health, social education and citizenship is well established. An impressive range of after-school clubs, visits and visitors enriches pupils' learning. There are excellent links with the local high

school, where, for example, gifted and talented pupils are offered additional challenges in English, German and mathematics.

Outstanding care, guidance and support are hallmarks of the school. Parents and pupils alike overwhelmingly agree that the safety and welfare of pupils are given the highest priority. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements. Support for the most vulnerable pupils is exceptional. Whether through provision of extra learning resources or time to help pupils with emotional difficulties, pupils receive all the support they need to help them achieve well alongside others. Pupils feel safe in school. There are clear expectations with regard to behaviour and relationships. As a result, pupils strongly oppose any forms of bullying or racism. Systems for tracking pupils' academic progress are robust and provide teachers with a clear basis for setting challenging targets. Teachers involve pupils in assessing their own work and give clear direction to pupils through their marking.

Good leadership and management have enabled the school to improve on its academic targets and maintain the quality of care. Sustainable systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance are in place. These provide a strong platform for continued development and ensure the school's good capacity to improve. Senior teachers carry out their supportive role effectively, for example, by discussing strategic planning with the headteacher, and also mentoring teaching and non-teaching staff. The inclusive management style of the newly appointed headteacher is already beginning to have an impact in the way all staff are becoming more rigorously involved in the assessment, monitoring and development planning of subjects. A strength of leadership and management is the way in which the school is involved in the community. For example, by offering 'back to work' opportunities for adults through a government sponsored scheme, encouraging pupils to be active in village events, and using only fresh local produce in the school kitchen. Governors are very supportive of the school and have been active in curriculum developments and in overseeing improvements to the school building. Governors manage finances well to ensure the school provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

There is good provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and they make good progress. Children's skills are broadly in line with expectations for their age when they enter Reception. By the end of their Reception year most are working at a good level of development in nearly all areas of learning. Early reading and writing skills are boosted well by daily work on letters and sounds. The exception is children's personal, social and emotional development, where they make exceptional progress. They develop good levels of confidence, make choices about activities and behave extremely well. Children's social development also benefits from opportunities to work alongside older children when provision is extended to Year 1. There is a well planned range of adult-led activities, based on teachers' assessments of what children need to learn next. This is balanced by activities chosen by the children themselves. The outdoor area is used well as an extension to the classroom. Children can engage in role playing, such as washing the clothes and pegging them onto the clothes line, or follow up number activities which they began in the classroom. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader manages provision well. Very good links have been established with pre-school groups so there is a smooth transition into Reception. Parents are made to feel welcome and are happy that their children get off to such a good start.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of pupils' writing at Key Stage 2.

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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	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?	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?	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?	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	1
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?	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 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**

Thank you very much for the splendid welcome you gave me when I inspected your school recently. I enjoyed talking to you about your school and visiting your classrooms. It was nice to see children in Reception class 'washing their socks' in the outdoor area and I thought your singing during assembly was beautiful. It was very clear that you all love your school. I wonder if that has anything to do with those wonderful school lunches!

The report I have written will tell you that you have a good school and that some things about it are outstanding. For example, the way the grown-ups in school take care of you and the way you are extremely well behaved and always polite and well mannered. Your attendance is very good. Well done for that, and keep it up because it is very important.

You make good progress and achieve well. You told me your lessons were fun and I agree with you. Your headteacher has some smashing ideas about how lessons might be even more fun. You reach good standards in your work and it is very good that you work so well with pupils from other schools. At the end of Year 6, however, standards of writing are not as high as they could be. Everyone in school is going to help try to change that so that your standards and achievement can be even better. You can help by continuing to work as hard as you can and smiling as much as you do.