

Crooksbar Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111616
Local Authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	325415
Inspection date	10 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Joan Elton

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)	274
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 Andrew Ward
Headteacher	Mr Jonathan Twidle
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Petrel Crescent Crooksbar Estate Norton Stockton-on-Tees TS20 1SN
Telephone number	01642 531750
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- How successful has the school been at raising standards in pupils' writing? Do the strategies the school is using require further action?
- Is current provision good enough to sustain and extend the school's previous high standards?
- How effectively do leadership and management contribute to raising standards and improving provision?

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation document, national published assessment data, the school's records and procedures, observation of the school at work, parental questionnaires and discussions with pupils, staff and governors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school, where the majority of pupils are of White British origin, with few pupils from minority ethnic groups. Very few pupils are at the early stages of learning English. Currently, the majority of pupils live outside the admission zone. Although the number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average, in recent years socio-economic features have matched national averages. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. The school has both Nursery and Reception in its Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. It richly deserves the accolades of pupils and parents because it totally exemplifies its mission statement of 'Hand in hand, fulfilling our potential.' Pupils leave school with very effective basic skills, a great sense of community responsibility, highly positive learning attitudes and a secure understanding of all curricular subjects. These features result from very high standards of care, excellent teaching and learning and a vibrant, exciting curriculum. Parents rightly comment on 'the lovely, caring and calm atmosphere' and the fact that 'all learning is important, not only maths, English and science.' Staff, including teaching assistants, are described as 'passionate' about teaching and very sensitive to pupils' individual needs. Parents believe the school is well led and managed, thus providing an excellent standard of education.

Pupils' achievement is outstanding and most pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make very good progress. When they enter Nursery, children's skills, particularly in language and number, are below those typical for this age group. By the end of Reception, these are broadly typical with a small number exceeding them. The provisional 2008 Key Stage 1 results were broadly average but with more pupils than the national average reaching the higher levels in reading and mathematics. The provisional national test results in 2008 for Key Stage 2 reflected the success of the previous years, and represented outstanding achievement. Above average standards have been sustained over several years because the school tracks pupils' progress very well, using its information to check teaching, set pupils' targets and to ensure pupils benefit from appropriate personalised programmes. Writing has been an area for development since the last inspection; recent initiatives to improve standards across the school have been very effective. There is evidence of extended writing across the curriculum and an emphasis on structure and organisation as well as content. Marking also challenges pupils, not only on what they write but how it is expressed. Pupils now know the necessary features each piece of writing must contain and this is helping them be more evaluative about their own work. The school recognises that further challenge is needed for the more able pupils in Key Stage 1. At present, these pupils are not communicating their ideas using a wide variety of expression with more complex sentences to enable them to reach the higher attainment levels.

Teaching and learning are outstanding across the school. Regular systematic monitoring, swapping classes between year groups and regular staff discussion have achieved this consistency. As a result, staff share good practice and have an accurate view of progression across the school. Staff use time, resources and strategies very well to engage all abilities and interests. Their explanations are very clear, activities provide plenty of consolidation and staff make effective, creative links between subjects. In one mathematics lesson, the teacher sustained pupils' concentration by using data from cereal boxes not only to communicate information in tabular form but to draw nutritional comparisons between products. Lessons always extend previous learning and the school uses plenty of incentives to ensure progress. The curriculum is exciting. It has all the elements necessary for variety, relevance and high standards. Its effectiveness is shown in pupils' good attendance and enthusiastic comments across the full range of subjects. The curriculum rightly gives priority to basic skills but ensures these are extended creatively in interesting projects. Basic Skills awards confirm this success. Science is exceptionally well taught, emphasising practical, investigational work to ensure understanding and clear, precise explanation to communicate this. Visits from artists in residence, community

carol singing to raise money for charity, special weeks, such as Local Democracy Week, and links with other schools, both at home and abroad, all add to the general appreciation of cultural diversity and promotion of community cohesion. Pupils' emotional development is fostered effectively through the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) project and pupils act as ambassadors to other schools, returning with new ideas for development. As a result of such curricular opportunities and the school's high standards of care, support and guidance, pupils' personal development is excellent and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils are extremely confident expressing an opinion because they know their views will be heeded. They are exceptionally well behaved and very cooperative with other pupils. They have a very good understanding of healthy living and keeping safe, and are very relaxed about approaching staff if issues arise.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The school is very well run with efficient procedures and systems. Every aspect is kept under regular review in order to ensure pupils' safety, security and development. The headteacher is never complacent. He is highly committed to continuous improvement in order to raise achievement. He has built up excellent partnerships with the local authority, outside agencies, the community and many other educational institutions, both at home and abroad, so that pupils have greater access to resources and projects. In this, he is well supported by two very able assistant headteachers, who share his vision for pupils' overall development. Through support, encouragement and training, all staff are empowered to lead initiatives. This encourages individual staff development, promotes excellent teamwork and uses staff expertise across the school. Like staff, the governors have clearly identified roles, receive appropriate training and are well informed. They work well alongside individual staff members for the purpose of monitoring the school's effectiveness. Finance has been used efficiently to maintain effective staff-pupil ratios, to develop a well trained staff team and to support exciting new developments. As a result, pupils enjoy school, love the opportunities on offer and are motivated to succeed. Leadership and management have taken effective steps to promote improvement since the last inspection and have an excellent capacity to make further progress. The school currently provides excellent value for money and is oversubscribed in most year groups.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The effectiveness of the EYFS is good. Staff are in the early stages of making one unit to support the learning of the two different age groups and have made an effective start. Children achieve well. This is a result of the good learning and development. Staff work well together across the different age groups. Children enter the Nursery at lower levels than expected for their age and the majority leave Reception at the expected level. Some opportunities are missed to challenge, especially more able children, particularly in literacy. Staff organise the good quality resources and accommodation well to allow the different age groups to benefit from the shared activities. They are beginning to devise efficient systems to track children's progress. Planning does not consistently ensure that there are varying levels of challenge for the different age groups across children's independent activities. Staff promote children's welfare extremely well and this results in their personal development being outstanding. Children make choices confidently, working harmoniously in pairs or groups. They concentrate very well on their tasks. They are equally confident in the three different inside areas, in role-play, such as the baby clinic, in investigational skills using water and in using a range of software on the computers. The organisation does not ensure that children have enough time in the stimulating outdoor

area. This reduces children's learning. Leadership and management are good. There is a clear understanding of what needs to be done to further develop the EYFS unit.

What the school should do to improve further

Develop the success of the EYFS unit by:

- ensuring planning provides appropriate levels of challenge in independent activities for the different age groups;
- making sure all children, especially the more able, are challenged so that they learn as much as possible;
- using the outdoor learning area more frequently throughout the day.

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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?	1
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	1

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?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

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	2
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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**

11 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Crooksbar Primary School, Stockton-on-Tees, TS20 1SN

Thank you for the welcome and kindness you gave us during your recent inspection. You express yourself very well and we enjoyed hearing your opinions. We also enjoyed reading your parents' comments. Please thank them on our behalf. Their comments were very helpful.

You certainly enjoy your learning. You made such enthusiastic comments about many projects. We thought your school was outstanding. It helps you reach high standards, take responsibility seriously and gain knowledge and understanding about many things. The headteacher and staff take great care of you; they are excellent at helping you learn, organising interesting lesson activities and tracking your progress. They want you to succeed and ensure you receive whatever help you need. Their marking of your work is very helpful. Their instructions inform you how to make improvements. When we looked at your work, we saw that most of you are making good progress. Your writing has improved, particularly since September. You are expressing your ideas so much better! We noticed you have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and safe. We are very pleased to learn you can go to any member of staff, if worried or sad. You are very kind to each other in the playground. Your behaviour around the school is excellent. You seem to enjoy community projects, visits and visitors, after school clubs and information and communication technology (ICT) very much. We have recommended some changes in the work with younger children so that your school can be even better. We have asked your school:

- to ensure they provide the right level of challenge in independent activities for the different age groups;
- to make sure all children, especially the more able, are challenged so that they learn as much as possible;
- to use the outside learning area more frequently throughout the day.

We are confident your school will be successful with these improvements and wish you every success for the future. Please continue to enjoy your learning, to complete your homework and to attend school regularly.

Yours sincerely

J Elton and M Shepherd

Additional Inspectors