

# Crook Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114056
<b>Local Authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	325933
<b>Inspection dates</b>	29–30 April 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ann Muxworthy

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	332
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Dennis Halladay
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Antonella Lupton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 February 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Croft Avenue Crook County Durham DL15 8QG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01388 762400
<b>Fax number</b>	01388 765128

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school set in an area of high social and economic disadvantage. Most the pupils are of White British heritage. There are a small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above the average, while the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is just above the average. The school became a Creative Change school in 2008 which involves partnerships with cultural and creative professionals and other schools to ensure that young people have opportunities to develop their learning both across and beyond the formal curriculum.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Crook Primary School is outstanding. The school lives up to its motto of 'believe and achieve'. The great majority of parents are highly appreciative of the school's challenging, interesting and caring ethos, making comments like 'the whole staff are an inspiration to all the children and parents'.

The school is very well led by the headteacher and leadership team who communicate their enthusiasm and caring exceptionally well to parents. The school benefits from a hard working and very knowledgeable governing body. Leaders are committed to raising achievement and continual improvement through an innovative curriculum, flourishing international and community links and effective use of resources.

Pupils' achievement is excellent. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities below and, in some areas, well below those seen in others of their age. They leave the primary school having made outstanding progress overall. As a result of actions taken by leaders standards have risen and are on track to reach national averages in Key Stage 1, and in Year 6 pupils are currently on course to meet challenging targets and reach above average levels in English, mathematics and science.

Pupils love coming to school and would grade enjoyment as 'ten out of ten'. Their outstanding personal development makes a huge impact on their learning. For example, pupils' excellent behaviour and relationships make classrooms happy, engaging and secure places in which to learn. Pupils throughout the school regularly participate in exercise, which is fun. One former pupil is planning to participate in the Para Olympics which exemplifies his personal view of 'believe and achieve'. Pupils have a very good understanding of caring for themselves and others. They keenly participate in helping younger pupils and actively voice their ideas for the community. Pupils' confidence and self-esteem prepare them very well for the next stage of education.

The rapid progress made in academic and personal development is the result of outstanding teaching, an innovative and creative curriculum and excellent care, guidance and support. Teaching and learning are outstanding because work matches individual needs and interests. Teachers and teaching assistants are highly knowledgeable and there are effective interventions and support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Regular assessment of learning ensures that staff provide a high level of challenge for every pupil whatever their ability.

The commitment to a creative curriculum provides excellent opportunities for pupils to explore and experience life in their own and other communities. One parent believes that 'the community cohesion and creative curriculum are fantastic'. The high quality of work produced in art, drama, music and information and communication technology (ICT) demonstrates the interest, enterprise and enjoyment the curriculum has generated.

The school was judged to be outstanding at the last inspection and it has maintained its quality and provision. Given this track record, the school has an excellent capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children enter the Reception class with a range of skills and abilities that are below and, in some areas, well below others of their age. Communication, language and literacy are particularly weak as are aspects of personal and social development. They make good progress in all areas of learning and particularly in personal development and language for communication. While there are some variations between areas of learning, by the end of the Reception Year their attainment is broadly in line with local and national averages. Children enjoy the good range of activities provided and their social skills develop well as they learn to play and work together. Teachers achieve a good balance between activities led by themselves, and others in which children have a greater independence. Teaching is good and pupils' personal development is promoted well and this results in very good behaviour. Because of the high levels of interaction and observations of the children, adults know what each child needs as their next steps. The innovative use of digital imagery provides an accurate record of their work, play and development. Parents' contributions are valued by staff who seek to develop their involvement further. The management of the Early Years Foundation Stage is shared by all the team. They are new to leadership and management and have not yet had sufficient professional development to provide them with a full range of effective management skills. They have, however, devised and are implementing an appropriate development plan which is beginning to improve standards and provision.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Strengthen leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage to support further improvements.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 1

Achievement is outstanding. Given their starting points in Reception, most pupils make outstanding progress during their time in school and by the time they reach Year 6 standards are above average.

Pupils currently start Year 1 with broadly average standards. This has not been the case in previous years when pupils started Year 1 with lower standards. As a result of actions taken by the school progress is accelerating rapidly in Key Stage 1 because of effective teaching. Inspection evidence shows that pupils in the current Year 2 are reaching average standards in reading, writing and mathematics which is a significant improvement on previous results in national assessments and reflects good progress from their starting points.

Progress in Key Stage 2 is especially strong in reading, English and mathematics. A focus on mathematics has led to good improvement in standards of calculation and mental mathematics through well planned teaching for all pupils. Inspection evidence shows that pupils currently in Year 6 are on course to meet challenging targets in national tests and reach above average levels in English, mathematics and science. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to others and often reach the expected standard for their age by the end of Year 6.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being is outstanding. Pupils have an excellent understanding of keeping safe. They feel secure because of extremely friendly relationships, mutual respect and a very clear and consistent behaviour policy. As a member of the children's management team said, 'Teachers make school fun and everyone gets involved'. As a result, behaviour is excellent. Pupils show respect for each other and are attentive in lessons. Attendance is average and has risen slightly in the current academic year through good monitoring. Pupils speak of their enjoyment in keeping fit and this was evident in their energetic 'wake and shake' sessions and playground activities. Pupils have a very good understanding of caring for themselves. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Older pupils are very keen to contribute to the day-to-day running of the school, help the younger ones settle in and add their voice to decisions about the school's activities in the local community. Pupils confidently use new technology and Year 6 annually make a DVD about their views on school. Their pride in their school shines through. Pupils develop citizenship skills through their work as playground buddies and 'mini buddies'. School traditions have successfully encouraged and challenged pupils. For example, the house system fosters friendly competition and a sense of belonging. The school expands pupils' understanding of their role in society to a global dimension through the strong international links with other countries and pupils say they feel that they are prepared to be citizens of the world. They say that they have come to understand that 'one person can make a difference'.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 1

Teaching is outstanding and makes the most significant contribution to the excellent overall progress pupils make. Pupils often make rapid progress because their learning builds well on previous tasks. They know exactly what they are expected to do because lesson objectives are communicated clearly to them. Pupils are becoming increasingly knowledgeable about their own progress because teachers focus on assessment of daily learning. Teachers' excellent subject knowledge ensures many opportunities for pupils to improve their conversational, analytical and creative skills through encouraging them to talk to a partner, collaborate on a science activity or visualise times in the past. These very good methods help pupils acquire key skills that prepare them very well to cope with life ahead. Pupils love lessons, they enjoy the stimulating resources that excite and motivate them to learn, for example, the use of ICT provides insights into challenging issues such as child slavery. 'Big Bang' weeks support exploration of times present and past alongside members of the community. Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to the learning process because they encourage pupils to 'have a go' so they enjoy the success of doing work by themselves.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 1

The curriculum provides outstanding opportunities for pupils' personal development through its richness, breadth, balance and relevance. This contributes significantly to high quality behaviour and very positive attitudes to learning and reflects the school's status as a Creative Change school. Wonderful artwork adorns the walls. One area of the school appears as a medieval

castle and Years 3 and 4 are transforming their areas into exotic India. Examples of the school's many international links are everywhere. Enrichment activities are outstanding and appreciated by pupils and their parents. Regular themed weeks enhance learning and enjoyment, for example a recent community cohesion week involved pupils in a wide range of community activities. Across all subjects, pupils make very effective use of their speaking, reading, and ICT skills. Enterprise skills are fostered through special events and an enterprise week. The Year 6 team called the 'Jambo Jewels' recently won an enterprise competition against other schools. Music, dance and drama significantly support pupils' growing confidence and self-esteem.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Pastoral care is excellent and pupils say they feel safe and know how to look after themselves. Parents praise the nurture and care their children receive, summed up by one who wrote 'I have been extremely impressed at the extra support my son has received'. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is a strength of the school. Pupils' progress is tracked rigorously and well targeted intervention and support help pupils learn. The school invests in developing the professional expertise of learning support assistants so that pupils are able to make excellent progress. Arrangements for safeguarding and protecting children are robust. Training is up to date and staff know what to do in an emergency. Pupils confidently turn to an adult for help in any situation. Pupils' confidence is boosted because the very rare instances of inappropriate behaviour are strongly and efficiently dealt with. The school works hard to support the small proportion of pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern. Challenging targets are established through the effective tracking of academic progress. Learners at risk of underachieving are identified early and supported well through rigorous procedures and monitoring.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Leadership, management and governance are outstanding. The headteacher and the leadership team provide exemplary leadership, which embraces community cohesion, creativity and effective partnerships. Their ethos gives parents a view that 'all the staff are always happy and cheerful and provide a safe and caring environment for the children'. Important outcomes of the excellent leadership are pupils' excellent progress as they move through the school, improvements to resources, especially those for the Foundation Stage, and placing personal development and well-being at the heart of the school. Governors have an excellent understanding of the school, through their commitment to monitoring. They use finances well to improve resources including additional support for individual needs. Leaders use self-evaluation to identify school priorities then take individual responsibility to develop teams to achieve them. The excellent provision for community cohesion is exemplified through extensive international links with Tanzania, China and Japan. It is woven into the curriculum to promote pupils' very good understanding of diversity and human rights and new developments will include involvement with the United Kingdom India Education Research programme. This strong focus on community cohesion, the emphasis on creativity and the rising standards are ensuring that the school has excellent capacity to improve in the future.

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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?	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?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup>Grade 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

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	3
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	1
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**

6 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Crook Primary School, Durham, DL15 8QG

Thank you all for making our recent visit to your school interesting and enjoyable.

You gave us valuable insights into how your school is run and we would like to share with you the things you helped us to find out. First, we are very pleased to tell you that your school is outstanding. You told us, 'we are the best in the county, if not the country'. There are many reasons why you are so proud of your school and a lot have to do with you all. You are confident, courteous and work well together which helps everyone to learn really well. You help each other and are excited when you are learning which shows in your excellent behaviour. Your teachers give you the chance to use some wonderful resources like the computers and digital cameras, so we were able to see a very professional looking DVD on your thoughts about school.

We were impressed with the amount of jobs you do to help the school run. Your Children's Management team has been so organised in getting the talent show underway and helping the teachers decide how the money for Tanzania should be spent. We were so pleased to see how much energy you put into 'Wake and Shake' every day and how well you understand staying safe. Some of you told us that everyone loves school and you would grade it 10 out of 10. You enjoy most French, music, singing and the 'Big Bang Days' because of lots of dressing up.

The only thing we have asked your headteacher and the governors to do is to help leaders make changes in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that is outstanding like the rest of the school.

Thank you all once again. You made our visit very special. Our very best wishes to you and all the adults with whom you work. We hope you have a happy and successful end to the school year.

Yours sincerely

Ann Muxworthy, Judith Straw and Geoff Watson

Lead inspector