

The Crescent Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 115886 |
| Local Authority | Hampshire |
| Inspection number | 326284 |
| Inspection date | 27 February 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Christopher Schenk |

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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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 372 |
| 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 Anne Westcott |
| Headteacher | Mrs Jane Laurie |
| Date of previous school inspection | 30 November 2005 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Toynbee Road Eastleigh SO50 9DH |
| Telephone number | 02380 612536 |
| Fax number | 02380 612612 |

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|--------------------------|------------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors who attended assemblies; observed teaching and learning in all year groups; met groups of pupils; held discussions with the headteacher, governors and staff; and looked at a range of documents, and at the questionnaires returned by parents.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school, and investigated the following issues: the progress made by vulnerable pupils; the pupils' personal development; the quality of the teaching and learning; and the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage. 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

The Crescent is larger than most primary schools and includes 60 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in two Reception classes. The school draws its pupils from all parts of Eastleigh, with around half coming from areas of the town beyond the school's immediate neighbourhood. Overall, the intake is fairly typical of the country as a whole. The proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is in the middle of the usual range: higher than around half the schools in England and lower than the other half. This is also true of the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and the proportion whose first language is not English. The proportion of pupils who have been identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is a little below the national figure, although the proportion who have statements of special educational needs is a little higher than in the majority of schools, and these pupils include those with sensory impairment, mobility difficulties, severe learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorder. In addition, a class of 10 pupils with severe learning difficulties, and who are on the roll of Shepherd's Down Special School, is based in the Crescent School building. There is also a privately run pre-school on site that provides day care for nursery-aged children. It was inspected separately, shortly before this inspection. The school is federated with Norwood Primary School nearby. The two schools share the same executive headteacher and the same governing body.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstandingly effective school in which pupils make excellent progress in their learning and in their personal development. When they first come to the school at around the age of four, many children do not have the communication and language skills normally expected for their age. They make excellent progress in Reception and Key Stage 1, reaching standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are a little above average. Their progress is sustained and extended in Key Stage 2, so that by the time that they leave, their standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. This is all the more impressive because around a third of the pupils in Year 6 have not been at the school throughout their primary education, and some of them have had unhappy educational experiences elsewhere. The school is very successful in helping these vulnerable pupils to get back on track in their learning and in their behaviour. The high standards are solidly established and have been consistently attained over the last five years, representing outstanding achievement on the part of the pupils.

The pupils have excellent attitudes to learning: they show a high level of interest, enthusiasm and enjoyment. They are also growing in their self-confidence and self-esteem because of the encouragement they are given. As one of the pupils remarked, 'The teachers make you feel good about yourself and that gives you confidence.' Behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good indeed. The small number of pupils who have difficulty in behaving appropriately benefit from the help they receive from the emotional literacy support assistant, who has been specifically trained to support pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. There is an active school council and its members take their responsibilities very seriously. They recently visited the Houses of Parliament and are proud to be a part of this country's long tradition of representative democracy.

The headteacher's very effective style of leadership has created a strong sense of common purpose among the staff, who are clearly focused on bringing about improvement in the pupils' progress and personal development. Because flexibility and initiative are encouraged, members of staff contribute ideas of their own and work together extremely effectively. Since the federation began nearly two years ago, the day-to-day management of the school has largely been left in the capable hands of the long-serving deputy, who is very well regarded by staff, parents and pupils, and is ably supported by the school's administrators. The governors carry out their responsibilities exceptionally thoroughly, giving support and challenge to the school's leaders. They are in the process of appointing a new headteacher, since the present postholder is leaving at the end of the academic year. Leaders and managers at all levels are particularly focused on promoting equality of opportunity and ensuring that all pupils, whatever their backgrounds, are fully included in all aspects of the life of the school. Because of this commitment, the school is able to make an outstanding contribution to the coherence of the community that it serves.

The teaching is very effective indeed in meeting the wide range of needs in every class and teaching group. Teachers have common approaches to classroom management and to planning work that is at the right level of difficulty for different groups of pupils within the class. However, the consistency is not at the expense of their individuality: they feel able to use their own imagination, professional expertise and initiative to adapt materials and programmes to suit their pupils. As a result, the teaching is lively and engages the interests of the pupils, who are highly motivated to work hard on the tasks that they are given. Pupils appreciate the skilful ways in which teachers help them to learn. As one of them commented, 'The teachers give you

a lot of help when you're stuck, but they don't tell you things; they help you to find them out for yourself.'

Just over two years ago, the school undertook a review of its curriculum. Teachers worked together, pooling their extensive subject knowledge, to plan a curriculum that makes stronger links between subjects through integrated topics, while ensuring that subject-specific skills are progressively developed as the pupils get older. The result is that pupils are given a particularly good range of interesting things to learn about within a well-planned framework that gives appropriate emphasis to all subjects and to key skills. The school makes good use of the expertise provided by three nearby secondary schools with specialisms in sports, engineering and business studies. German is taught throughout Key Stage 2 in a lively way that engages the interest of the pupils. There are many clubs that are well attended.

The pupils are very well cared for. Safeguarding policies are robust and consistently implemented. The school is particularly vigilant about safety on the internet, and supports parents in making home systems more secure. All pupils are given full access to the curriculum, with adjustments made when necessary: one pupil said, 'If you've got a disability, they give you security and everything you need.' Pupils have a clear idea of how well they are doing and know what they need to do to improve. The support for pupils with learning difficulties is well organised and carefully targeted; as a result, these pupils make excellent progress in their learning. The inclusion of a class of pupils from a nearby special school is an arrangement that is of mutual benefit to the two schools involved and to their pupils.

Since the last inspection, the school has consolidated, embedded and extended its strengths. It has now reached a stage where it has a solid framework of achievement in place, enabling it to reach out and give support, for example through the federation, without jeopardising the standards attained at the Crescent. The response of parents to a questionnaire sent out at the time of the inspection was overwhelmingly positive. The following comments are typical of many: 'The Crescent is a warm, friendly, welcoming school. All the staff bring a and;quot;family atmosphereand;quot; to the school. Our two children don't just enjoy school - they love it. We cannot praise them enough.'

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children enjoy greatly their time in Reception and make outstanding progress. The carefully planned yet flexible curriculum meets all their needs most effectively. Staff form excellent relationships with children and their welfare is given the highest priority. The Early Years Foundation Stage is exceptionally well led and managed.

Children join the Reception class with skills and knowledge below those expected of their age and do extremely well, joining Year 1 with above average standards overall. The greatest strength is their personal development. Very positive attitudes, willingness to listen, and sustained effort when working independently, are key attributes that enable them to succeed. Behaviour is excellent. The children have a very clear understanding of personal safety and of being healthy. They appreciate the importance of eating fruit at break time and drinking water throughout the day, as well as the benefits of energetic activity.

The teachers and their assistants in both Reception classes work together as a close-knit and highly successful team. Children are divided into up to four groups for phonics sessions according to their prior learning, which helps to ensure rapid progress. For many this is from a low base of language skills on entry to the school; broadly average standards in communication, language

and literacy are attained by the end of the year. The indoor and outdoor areas are attractively set out, enabling children to select from a wide and extremely interesting range of activities. Examples such as dressing in the clothing of children from several different countries, building a house with large construction apparatus, and role play as police officers - including arresting a member of staff! - complement several more focused literacy and numeracy tasks. Members of staff are skilled in guiding individuals towards selecting a balance of play activities. They challenge the children by asking questions that require extended answers and reflective responses.

Induction into the Reception class is exceptionally well organised. Home visits allay fears and help to inform parents and their children, so that they can settle quickly and happily into school life. Regular formal assessment and observation of children involved in activities enable staff to track the progress of each child. Parents are kept fully up to date through formal and informal contacts.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the strengths of the school are preserved at the forthcoming time of change in leadership.

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

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| 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

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| 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

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|---|---|
| How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS? | 1 |
| How well do children in the EYFS achieve? | 1 |
| 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? | 1 |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted? | 1 |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed? | 1 |

Achievement and standards

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|--|---|
| 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

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|---|---|
| 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

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|--|---|
| 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

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| 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 | 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

13 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Crescent Primary School, Eastleigh, SO50 9DH

Thank you for your welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. I am particularly grateful to the three pupils who took me to lunch, to the six pupils who came to talk to me during the afternoon, and to the members of the school council who told me about the work that they do and about their trip to the Houses of Parliament.

One of you said to me, 'Crescent is one of the best schools, and we're quite lucky.' We agree that you go to an outstanding school which helps you to make excellent progress in your learning and to grow in self-esteem and self-confidence. You show interest, enthusiasm and enjoyment in your lessons, and you get along well with each other and help to make the school a happy place with your considerate and sensible behaviour.

The teachers and the other adults in the school look after you very well indeed. You are given a very good range of interesting things to learn about and exciting things to do, which are carefully planned by your teachers so that you can make progress in the skills needed for all the subjects that you study. Teachers encourage you and help you, but they don't do it all for you; they expect you to work hard as well. As one of you told me, 'The teachers give you a lot of help when you're stuck, but they don't tell you things; they help you find them out for yourself.'

Your headteacher and deputy headteacher lead and manage the school very well indeed, in a way that encourages all the staff to work together and share their ideas. Before we left, we met them and some of the other teachers and governors, and asked them to make sure that the school stays just as good next year when there will be a new headteacher. You can help them by continuing to be enthusiastic, well behaved and hard working.

Yours faithfully

Christopher Schenk

Lead Inspector