

# Creswick Primary and Nursery School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117229
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	326552
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Keith Sadler

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	240
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 David Hegarty
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Ann Keen
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 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>	Sir John Newsom Way Welwyn Garden City Hertfordshire AL7 4TP

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 March 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	326552

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

Creswick is an average sized primary school that is heavily oversubscribed. Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage and with few from other backgrounds. There are no pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of a mornings-only 30-place Nursery and a full time Reception class. There is a pre-school group and an after-school club. Both are separately managed by private providers and are inspected separately. In addition, there is a Sure Start Children's Centre on the school site which is managed by the school.

The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning or speech, language and communication difficulties. The school has gained a number of awards, amongst which are Healthy Schools and the sports Activemark.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The school provides a good education. It has some significant strengths. There is a positive atmosphere which promotes the care and support of individual pupils exceptionally well, ensuring that they make excellent progress in their personal development, which is outstanding. Parents are almost unanimous in their support. Their many positive comments are typified by the parent who wrote, 'Ours is a well-run school with a friendly ethos and all the staff are friendly and approachable.' All the parents said that their children are well cared for and enjoy school.

Children start the Nursery with abilities below those typically found, particularly in their social and communication skills. However, because the provision is good, children achieve well in both the Nursery and Reception classes and, by the time they leave the Early Years Foundation Stage, they almost all attain the expected learning goals. Progress in the past has slowed in Year 1 and this has led to standards that are average in reading and writing, though below average in mathematics at the end of Year 2. However, progress is now much stronger and current Year 2 pupils are on course to attain standards that are at least in line with expected levels. Progress is good in Years 3 to 6, and standards at the end of Year 6 are now above average, with an increasing proportion of pupils gaining the higher level in English, mathematics and science. However, the school is keenly aware of the need to ensure that even more pupils gain the higher level, particularly in mathematics.

Leadership and management are good and there are some outstanding features. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent and she is supported well by the senior leadership team, staff with responsibilities and governors. The staff work closely as a team and morale is high because all are encouraged to make suggestions about how the school can be improved further. There is an outstanding sense of community cohesion with excellent partnerships between the school and parents and the local community. In addition, pupils' horizons are broadened and enriched by the school's twinning with a school in Sri Lanka, with pupils exchanging topic work and information about how they live and their religions. Because of this, they have an outstandingly well developed sense of national and global issues. Many parents commented on the school's, and the governing body's, responsiveness to community development, which has led to a range of extended school services, in particular the exceptionally well organised Children's Centre. This is highly responsive to local needs such as in the establishment of sessions for Polish parents. There has been good improvement in provision and standards since the previous inspection and this demonstrates a good capacity for further improvement.

The quality of teaching is good and there are some excellent aspects. Teachers know the pupils well and invariably manage them with skill and ensure that relationships are good. This leads to classrooms having a calm and purposeful atmosphere. When lessons are outstanding, teachers have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve, ensure that work is planned well to meet the different learning needs of the pupils and that lessons provide exciting and interesting activities. However, this is not always the case and, on occasion, learning is satisfactory rather than good because teachers spend too long in explaining activities to pupils, slowing the pace of learning. Care, guidance and support are outstanding and have improved considerably since the previous inspection because academic guidance is now excellent. There are robust and secure systems in place to track pupils' progress. These ensure that staff are able to spot any pupils in danger of slipping behind, so that additional provision can be made. In addition, it means that overall progress for different year groups can be closely monitored and evaluated and this data is used to inform the good quality school improvement plan.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children thoroughly enjoy their time in both the Nursery and Reception classes and they achieve well. Because there is a close partnership with the pre-school, which makes use of the Nursery accommodation in the afternoons, children and their parents have many opportunities to visit and meet staff before they start school. This helps them to settle very quickly, form friendships and feel secure. This is further aided because one member of staff works in both the pre-school and the Nursery. Good use of the key person system in the Nursery provides children and parents with a central point of contact. This close partnership contributes to the excellent level of welfare promoted in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Children achieve well and particularly good progress is made in their personal, social and emotional skills, and also their spoken language and linking sounds and letters. This was evident as children explained excitedly how to play 'hangman' using vowels and consonants. Story telling and conversation with adults during activities helps children to quickly gain new vocabulary and become confident, as when Nursery children talked about making cookies as they played in the water tray. The settings provide a good balance between teacher-led and child-initiated activities in which children work and play happily together. The high quality outdoor areas are used well to help to encourage children's greater independence and the choices they can make for themselves and this is aided by children having to plan their own activities.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Staff work well together as a team. There are good procedures for checking and recording children's progress. This ensures that the next steps in children's learning and development are readily identified and well planned. They have also helped staff to identify accurately where provision needs to be developed further.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve satisfactory lessons by speeding the pace of learning.
- Increase the proportion of pupils gaining the higher level at the end of Year 6, particularly in mathematics.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Standards are above average at the end of Year 6 and pupils achieve well throughout the school. In 2007, standards were above average in English and science and, although standards slipped to average in 2008, current Year 6 pupils are on course to attain above average standards, with a higher proportion of pupils gaining the higher level in English and science, though not in mathematics. Standards have been lifted since the previous inspection because the quality of provision, particularly teaching, is more consistently good. Improvements in academic guidance mean that the pupils are clear about how to improve and this has boosted progress in all subjects. Pupils who find learning hard make good progress because their needs are identified quickly and good quality support is provided for them. The pupils with statements of special educational needs make particularly good progress towards their personal targets.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They develop a very good awareness of the needs of others and of the diversity of cultures represented in society. They make an excellent contribution to the school community, for instance through participation in the school and Eco councils. Older pupils are very ready to help younger ones, for instance in the dining hall or the playground. They have established close links with the local community, for example singing at a local hospital. Pupils know how to keep healthy through eating and exercise and are proud of the school's gaining Healthy School status. They enjoy lessons and the wide range of other activities the school provides. They feel safe in school and have a particularly good understanding of the need to keep safe when using the internet. Attendance is above average and the school does all it can to discourage absence by letters to parents and rewards to pupils for good attendance. Behaviour around the school and in lessons is exemplary. Pupils take pride in their achievements and are developing well the skills they need for later life. In consequence, pupils are prepared well for their move to secondary education.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good and there have been improvements since the previous inspection. The school has placed a strong emphasis on developing pupils' learning and this is helping to boost progress. Pupils are clear about what is being taught and what the success criteria are for lessons and units of work. In addition, teachers take care to ensure that activities are set to meet the pupils' preferred learning styles. Teachers manage pupils well, which helps pupils to feel relaxed, ready to learn and keen to do their best. Teachers often set activities that encourage co-operative work, such as in an excellent mathematics lesson where pupils were investigating and calculating using measures, and in which speaking and listening skills were effectively promoted. Teachers question pupils well and frequently ensure that there is high challenge in the exciting activities set. In consequence learning is usually outstanding. However, this is not always the case, because the pace of learning drops when teachers spend too long providing explanations. Support staff make a valuable contribution particularly for pupils who find learning hard.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The school provides a broad curriculum which is matched well to the needs of all its pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. All pupils in Key Stage 2 learn French and good links are being made between subjects, for instance between mathematics and science, art and music, although the school acknowledges that there is still more to be done with this. Themed weeks, for example in science or life skills, enable some areas to be explored in greater depth. There is also specialist teaching in physical education. The curriculum is extended very well by visits to places of interest such as Hatfield House and a residential visit for pupils in Years 5 and 6 to the Isle of Wight. Visitors to the school, including representatives of a range of faiths and cultures, also widen pupils' experience. There are termly performances which use skills developed in all the creative arts and there is a good range of well-supported extra-curricular clubs which pupils enjoy.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 1

The school provides an excellent level of care for its pupils. All requirements for the safeguarding of pupils are met. The school carries out rigorous risk assessments on its activities, and child protection procedures are firmly in place. There is very good support for vulnerable pupils and the Children's Centre makes a valuable contribution in supporting families. There is also very good support for pupils with learning or behavioural difficulties, for instance through a speech and language therapist and an art therapist, as well as small group work. There is a rich range of activities to support pupils' physical development and healthy lifestyles and this is recognised by the school's gaining the sports Active Mark. The progress of pupils is tracked very effectively and this enables teachers to provide pupils with very good guidance on how to improve their work. Pupils know their targets for literacy and numeracy and the objectives for individual lessons are made clear to pupils in language they can understand. Their achievement is rewarded well, for instance through house points or recognition in assembly, and there are also effective systems for promoting good attendance.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The school has a good understanding of its strengths and areas for development because there are robust and well-organised checking procedures that are used well to pinpoint future priorities. This is led, in the main, by the senior leadership team. Although many leaders in core areas are new to their post they make a good contribution to improvement by checking progress and the school's provision in their area. There is a shared commitment to, and focus on, lifting standards and all members of the senior leadership team are determined to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to achieve their best. The headteacher has built successfully on the many strengths identified in the previous inspection. The governors bring useful expertise, support the school well, and are effective in ensuring that the school continues to develop its effectiveness.



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

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<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	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
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	2

## The quality of provision

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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
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	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?	1
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**

19 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Creswick Primary and Nursery School, Welwyn Garden City, AL7 4TP

I am writing to let you know what we found when we visited your school. Thank you for helping us so well and making us welcome. We really enjoyed talking to you and finding out about your school. I particularly enjoyed watching Year 3 and 4's rehearsal of 'A big Green Adventure' and I am sure your parents would have enjoyed your performance. We were pleased that you understand how important re-cycling is. We can see why you enjoy school so much because yours is a good school and some things are outstanding.

These are the things that are best about your school.

- You enjoy school and you all get on very well together. Your behaviour is outstanding.
- You make good progress in your learning and want to do your best. Well done for this!
- The staff take excellent care of you and make sure that you are safe and very well looked after, so remember to say 'thank you' to them for this.
- Your teachers do a good job. Teaching is good and you thoroughly enjoy learning.
- You are lucky to have well-planned activities to do. We were pleased to hear how many of you enjoy the after-school activities and learning French.
- Your headteacher is doing an excellent job. She is supported well by all the other adults in the school.

We have asked the school to continue to focus on two things:

- making sure that more of you gain Level 5 by the time that you leave school, particularly in mathematics.
- for your teachers to help you to learn quickly and well in all lessons.

You can help by making sure you work as hard as possible to meet your targets.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely

Keith Sadler

Lead Inspector