

Cramlington Eastlea Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122191
Local Authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	327654
Inspection dates	26–27 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Derek Sleightholme

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)	204
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	45
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Diane Oliver
Headteacher	Mrs Christine McGuire
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Bowmont Drive Cramlington Northumberland NE23 2SN
Telephone number	01670 732261

Age group	3–11
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Fax number

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized school. The pupil roll has risen as provision has just completed full transition from first school to primary school status. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and a few are at an early stage of acquiring English. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision includes a part-time Nursery and a Reception class.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school that provides sound value for money. Pupils' personal development and well-being and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. The school provides them with good care, support and guidance. 'The school puts children first. It is a pleasure to send my child to Eastlea Primary', is a comment that typifies most parents' positive views of the school.

Pupils make good progress in their social development and converse both confidently and courteously with adults. They are eager to take part in school activities especially those that involve practical learning. Attendance and behaviour are good. Pupils are very settled at school and they feel safe because they are reassured by the good care, support and guidance they receive. Pupils recognise the positive contribution exercise and diet make to staying healthy. Pupils accept responsibilities enthusiastically; they are keen to 'have a say' in the development of their school. Pupils' sound progress in key literacy and numeracy skills ensures they are satisfactorily prepared for life ahead.

Achievement is satisfactory. Standards are below average when pupils enter Year 1. Progress is good in Key Stage 1. Current standards in Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly average. Progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 2 but much more variable between classes because work provided for pupils is not always well matched to their range of needs. Progress accelerates with better teaching in Year 6. Current standards are broadly average in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. Although writing is broadly average standards are not as high as in other subjects. Pupils do not have enough opportunity to extend their writing and teachers' expectations of pupils' writing are not always high enough. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to other pupils.

Teaching is satisfactory. When there is good teaching, it entices the pupils to want to learn, the activities are stimulating and capture pupils' interests. These features are not yet consistently found at Key Stage 2 where, sometimes, teachers talk for too long. This reduces the time for pupils to be actively involved. This slows progress, most noticeably in writing, where completed work reveals gaps in learning and inconsistencies in the quality of pupils' presentation of work.

The curriculum is satisfactory. The enhanced learning opportunities that come with the good enrichment, partnerships and family learning programmes contribute positively to pupils' personal development. Pupils use their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. Although investigations are a strength in science, they are underrepresented in mathematics. This limits pupils' opportunities to apply their numeracy skills to enquiry and problem-solving activities.

Leadership and management are good. There is clear direction and a steadfast focus on raising achievement. Self-evaluation is accurate and effective. The school has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Priorities are translated into actions in the successfully implemented raising achievement plan which has sensible targets for a newly established primary school. Initial focus on improving attainment in upper Key Stage 2 is having a positive impact and standards are rising. This is especially evident in pupils' good achievement in Year 6. Because the school has recently changed from a first school to a primary school there is as yet no national or historical data to measure success at the end of Year 6. Governors support and challenge the school well. Community cohesion is planned and promoted well in school, through good local partnerships and activities that bring pupils into contact with distant places.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision is good. Children enter the Nursery with skills and abilities that are well below what is typical for this age range. Many have low starting points in social, language, communication and mathematical skills. Children's personal development is good. They quickly acquire social skills and confidently approach adults who they trust to help them. Children enjoy using equipment such as art resources. They behave well, responding to signals such as the sound of chime bars when their teacher needs their attention. Children, including those at an early stage of acquiring English, make good progress because teaching is good. Despite the good progress children enter Year 1 with below average standards.

Learning and development are good because the planned programme strikes a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities. Indoors, for example, while planned teaching helped Reception children to say the sounds of letters and join these to make simple words, others chose to 'make porridge' for the three bears. Outdoors, an adult encouraged Nursery children to feel the surfaces of leaves and twigs while others, independently, put on helmets to handle construction materials. Welfare is good. Children are well managed and supervised because staff implement established routines consistently. They respond promptly when a child requires rapid personal attention. Thorough assessment practices contribute to detailed records.

Leadership is good. Leaders successfully reviewed the curriculum provision to match revised guidance. They are, through effective teamwork, planning ahead for provision on the new site.

What the school should do to improve further

- Tackle the unevenness in the quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 to accelerate progress and enable pupils to reach higher standards.
- Raise standards in writing at Key Stage 2 by improving the quality and quantity of work produced in each class.
- Improve the provision for mathematics in all classes by ensuring pupils have more opportunities to apply their numeracy skills to problem solving and investigations.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the few at an early stage of learning to speak English achieve as well as other pupils. On entry to Year 1, standards are below average. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1. Current standards in Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics are average. Assessments in 2008 were average overall, and similar to recent years.

Progress is uneven from Year 3 to Year 6 because teaching varies in its effectiveness. Overall, it is satisfactory. School leaders are addressing the raising standards agenda well. Their initial attention has been to ensure older pupils make good progress before leaving school. As a result, standards are rising with signs of improvement and especially good achievement in Year 6. Current standards in English, mathematics and science in Year 6 are average. There is no comparative historical data because the school does not yet have any Year 6 results from

national tests. Progress in writing is slower than in other subjects. Standards although satisfactory are not as high as other subjects and the presentation in the exercise books of most Key Stage 2 pupils are inconsistent and their work is often untidy.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. In their time at school, pupils become polite and friendly. Pupils love school activities. They enjoy lessons and appreciate the extra-curricular activities provided. This is reflected in their good attendance. Pupils feel safe, know how to keep safe personally and recognise the value of staying healthy and keeping fit. They recognise healthy foods and readily take part in many sporting activities. Their behaviour is good.

Pupils have 'a good voice' in school and the local community. They are proud to accept duties such as buddies, sports leaders and monitors. They assume these responsibilities conscientiously. At playtime they naturally care and support younger pupils. Pupils are thrilled to represent their school in local festivals with other schools; their success in skipping was celebrated in assembly. School councillors, known as 'Brainwaves', are involved in taking decisions relating to school improvements. They freely express their opinions about their work and school life. They are very proud of their role in interviewing candidates for positions within school. This enables them to successfully gain an insight into the responsibilities of adult life. Given their key skills of literacy and numeracy by Year 6, pupils' overall preparation for life ahead is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There is some good and occasionally excellent teaching, but pupils do not benefit from this consistently as they move through the school. Pupils' work shows the way this variability leads to uneven rates of progress. Leadership has successfully organised a training programme to promote good practice. This is raising the quality of teaching. School monitoring confirms improvements in planning and methodology. Good features of the better teaching include effective planning that matches tasks well to the range of pupils' abilities, confident delivery, brisk pace, and clear ongoing feedback to pupils. This teaching successfully 'keeps pupils on their toes'. Progress is more rapid because pupils are actively involved in their learning and enjoy the stimulating activities.

Not all of the teaching is of this good quality. Too often, in Key Stage 2, the expectations are not high enough. Sometimes in lessons, too much time is spent where pupils listen to the teacher talking and their active involvement in learning is delayed. This carries through to their slower work rate and some exercise books reveal some unfinished work, a limited quantity of writing and lack of care in presentation.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. A strength is the emphasis on a creative topic-based approach. This complements the leadership's focus on improving literacy and numeracy and creates greater

enjoyment. The curriculum, in terms of raising standards, is currently impacting more successfully on progress at Key Stage 1 than in Year 6. A weakness in planning mathematics is that insufficient emphasis is given to problem solving and investigations.

The curriculum makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils have good opportunities to learn about other faiths and cultures through visits and visitors. Recently, pupils in Years 4 and 6 were thrilled to visit a local Indian restaurant where they enjoyed lunch and sampled different foods. Extra-curricular opportunities are varied and well attended. The family-learning, parent and child initiative 'Big Cook, Little Cook' is very popular. Residential visits provide good opportunities for pupils to develop self-confidence and independence. The introduction of French is increasing pupils' understanding of communication in the wider world.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Safeguarding, child protection and risk assessments meet requirements. Parents are justifiably confident that their children are well looked after. One parent wrote, 'They do everything to help children and make it a nice place to be.'

Support for pupils and their parents is good. Initiatives to improve attendance are effective. The small number of pupils who occasionally display challenging behaviour are managed well in a calm and sensitive manner. Good partnerships with external agencies help staff to access expert advice. This further enhances provision. Support and intervention for pupils with learning difficulties and/or difficulties is planned well. They make similar progress to others of their age because they benefit from the input of skilled assistants and effective intervention programmes.

Academic guidance is mostly good. Leaders' success in establishing a rigorous progress tracking system and taking subsequent action is leading to a more accurate picture of pupils who are making slower progress. Pupils understand their targets and are involved in reviewing them. Although regular marking provides pupils with guidance on how to improve, they do not always have sufficient time in lessons to make the suggested improvements.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership, management and governance are good. The headteacher provides clear and dedicated leadership and has worked well with staff to steer the school successfully during the transition to full primary age provision. Leaders have used the opportunity of the change in status to define new approaches within a primary ethos. The result is that leadership, having had considerable success in developing pupils personally, is now instigating changes that are also impacting well on raising standards. Outcomes of the good leadership include a rigorous progress tracking system and a robust raising achievement plan. The impact of the initial focus on upper Key Stage 2 is evident in the good achievement during Year 6. There has also been good improvement in developing whole-school assessment and monitoring practices. Good monitoring contributes to accurate, if slightly modest self-evaluation. Although leaders set challenging targets that will lead to faster than expected progress there is still some unevenness in teachers' expectations throughout Key Stage 2. Governance is good. Governors support the school well and confidently probe its accountability.

Leaders promote community cohesion well. They have assessed the school context realistically and taken positive steps to strengthen pupils' contribution to the school, the local and wider communities. Leaders' good impact on social cohesion is best illustrated by pupils' enthusiasm for meeting the staff of a local Indian restaurant and the international learning that developed when a school governor visited India. The school has good capacity for further improvement.

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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?	3
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?	2
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?	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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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**

30 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cramlington Eastlea Primary School, Northumberland,

NE23 2SN

We enjoyed our recent visit to your school. Thank you for helping us. We enjoyed meeting you, visiting your classrooms, looking at your work and talking to you about your school. You were friendly and courteous and we were impressed by your good behaviour and attendance. Well done!

These are the things we found out about your school during our visit. You attend a satisfactory school. Your personal development, including your behaviour and attendance, is good. You are provided with good care, support and guidance. We know you value being healthy and keeping fit. You told us that you feel safe and know how to get help. You receive good guidance on how to improve your work and clear targets to work towards. You play your part by being enthusiastic in lessons. We know you have much to say about how you think your school can improve and the adults welcome your views.

Your school leaders have devised a plan for you that makes most of your learning interesting and challenging. You make good progress up to Year 2. Your progress is then satisfactory up to the end of Year 6. By then, most of you have reached the expected standards. Teaching is satisfactory because you have interesting things to do.

There are three things the school could do better.

- Make sure that teaching helps you all to make good progress throughout the school.
- Improve writing by improving the quality and quantity of work produced in each class.
- Make sure you have more opportunities to use your numeracy skills to solve mathematical problems and carry out investigations.

You can help by working hard and doing the best you can for your teachers.

Yours faithfully

Derek Sleightholme and Gill Gleghorn

Inspectors