

Cromwell Junior and Infant and Nursery Class

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103191
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	336030
Inspection dates	24–25 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Alan Dobbins

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	226
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Tim Power
Headteacher	Mrs Rubina Darr
Date of previous school inspection	4 July 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors spent 65% of their time looking at learning, saw 10 lessons in whole or in part, observed all the school's teachers, held meetings with the Chairperson of the governors, staff, groups of pupils and spoke with the local authority's advisor to the school. They looked at data the school has on pupils' progress. They scrutinised 127 questionnaires and spoke with 30 parents.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- whether the results of pupils in Year 6, who will leave at the end of this year, will continue the trend of improving standards seen over the last three years
- how well teaching is helping pupils improve their writing skills
- how effective is the Early Years Foundation Stage in giving children a good start
- how effective is the work of senior leaders, subject leaders and governors in continuing to improve the school.

Information about the school

Cromwell Junior and Infant and Nursery Class is an average size school that serves an area of Birmingham with a social deprivation index that is among the highest in the city. Almost all of the pupils are from a Black African heritage with a small minority being White British. The proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language is very much higher than is typically found in other schools, as is the proportions of those who claim free school meals and those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Many pupils join the school throughout the school year. Since the appointment of the headteacher in January 2007, there has been a substantial turnover of staff, but over the last year staffing has been stable. The school holds the Healthy School award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Cromwell is a good school that is better than at the time of the last inspection. Senior leaders have worked very hard and successfully in creating a safe, happy and harmonious place in which pupils thrive as learners and as developing young people. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school because they are 'learning so well' and because it is a place where 'you can make friends easily'. Parents and carers are fulsome in their praise for the school, one saying that, 'I am really glad my son is at this school. I am so proud of him because he is doing so well and everyday enjoys going to school.'

Typically, children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with standards well below those expected for their age, especially in their use of language and in their personal and social development. They settle quickly, even though many have very little command of English and no history of pre-school education. They make satisfactory progress. Assessment information does not provide a detailed enough picture of the progress children make, but it is clear that when they enter Year 1 their language use and their personal and social skills remain well below the levels expected for their age. Over Years 1 to 6, in mathematics and science, pupils make outstanding progress against their target levels for learning, including pupils learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. In English pupils make satisfactory progress. They read well enough but progress in writing is too slow. The school's national test figures represent an impressive improvement in attainment over the past three years. The upward trend seems likely to continue. The school's data on current Year 6 pupils shows that when they leave they are expected to do even better again.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and say they are safe there. They behave well and by their actions in lessons show that they have fully accepted their role as learners.

They have a secure understanding of right and wrong and show maturity when they have difficult choices to make, including those to do with staying safe and keeping healthy. Most attend regularly enough to gain full benefit from what the school offers. A minority do not and spend too much time away from school and not always because they are not well enough to be at school.

Leaders know the school's strengths and weaknesses well enough through their effective procedures for self-evaluation and their astute use of the good system for tracking pupils' progress. Driving up the quality of teaching and learning has underpinned the striking improvement in standards and shows that the capacity for sustained improvement is good. Staff talk enthusiastically about other good developments they have seen in the school over the last three years, for example to do

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with the curriculum and the way the building is presented, and are very positive about the future.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in English by planning lessons with precise learning objectives and clear success criteria that ensure learning is always relevant to all pupils.
- Increase progress in Early Years Foundation Stage by making better use of assessment information, especially in promoting the use of language and in the development of personal and social skills.
- Improve attendance by reducing the number of pupils who are persistently absent and the number of absences of those with irregular attendance.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

In most lessons, all pupils make good progress against their targets for learning, including those whose grasp of English was limited when they first joined the school and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This is because of the good specialist support available to provide specific help to pupils and because pupils routinely work hard, show positive attitudes to their work and behave well. The good relationships they have with their teachers and teaching assistants help make lessons friendly and fun events, enjoyed by pupils and staff alike.

In mathematics and science pupils make the most progress because lessons are made up of tasks that are most often right for each pupil. Careful planning takes heed of what each pupil knows and can do and this helps ensure that lessons are neither too easy nor too hard. Progress is slower in English because pupils do not always know well enough what they have to do in their learning or, at the end of lessons, whether they have met the learning objectives.

There are a number of contributors to the good gains all pupils make in getting ready for the next stage of their education and their life thereafter. The school has a 'supportive family' feel. Pupils get on well with each other and say they are proud to be recognised as pupils of the school. The prefect system provides regular opportunities for older pupils to take responsibility and being selected as head boy and head girl is seen as an honour. The school council is a vibrant body and works well in giving pupils a feeling for democracy at work. Members are pleased with their contribution to running of the school, for example in helping plan the overnight camp held annually in the school's field for each year group. Gaining the healthy school award has helped make visible the importance of maintaining a healthy life style, as is shown by the healthy foods pupils enjoy at lunch time, and at other times throughout the day, and by the high take up in the after school sports clubs.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have high expectations for learning and behaviour and these are, routinely, communicated to pupils. In the lessons in mathematics and science learning rushes along. Pupils know what they have to do because the objectives for lessons give them a clear frame of reference. In the lessons in English, learning objectives are not sufficiently precise and too often pupils do not know if they have met the learning objectives because the criteria for success are not clear enough. This is especially so for lessons in writing and is the primary reason for the slower progress. Teaching assistants are managed well and provide good support particularly when they lead the learning of pupils in small groups. Resources, especially interactive whiteboards, are used well and the strong focus on practical activities, especially in lessons in science, is exciting for pupils as well as giving them opportunities to gain the skills of independent learning. The system for tracking the progress of pupils in Years 1 to 6 is used well in checking whether pupils are on track to match with their target levels for learning. Assessment information is not used as well in the Early Years Foundation Stage and too little attention is given to what children know and can do in planning sessions that provide relevant learning opportunities for each child.

Pupils are learning what is right for them because the curriculum is adjusted well to balance the school's priority for developing the skills of literacy and numeracy while helping pupils grow into rounded young people, prepared well for their move to

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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secondary education. The impressive progress pupils make in mathematics and science reflects the strong way in which these subjects are presented. In dance, art and design, and information and communication technology, specialist teachers add depth to learning. The many trips and visits to places in the locality bring classroom learning alive and the good programme of extra-curricular activities has a high take-up and is much enjoyed by many pupils.

Safeguarding practices are robust, and pupils are quick to say they feel safe and valued within a welcoming and caring environment. Pupils learning English as an additional language make rapid progress because of the good procedures and the expertise and experience of staff. The links with a wide range of external agencies, such as behaviour support, speech and language therapy and the education welfare service provide valuable specialist help for many pupils and their families. Attendance is rightly considered a priority, and absence from school is relentlessly followed up with parents and carers to ensure that pupils' progress is not limited. Good arrangements operate for the care and support of pupils during their passage through the school and during transition to secondary education.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders are unified as a team and are committed to making their school a haven for learning and concord where all pupils, irrespective of their ethnic background or religious tradition, have an equal opportunity to prosper, both as learners and as developing young people. There is no discrimination of any sort and all pupils have equal access to all the school offers. This is the strength of the school, confirmed by most parents and carers who see the school as a cohesive place in which staff and pupils respect each other and work very well for each other. The significant improvement in progress is testament to the capacity of the senior leaders to drive development. Governors have supported leaders very well and have the skills and knowledge to spend more time in challenging leaders to continue to improve the quality of the school, especially in raising attainment in English. Staff morale is high. Staff are enthusiastic about contributing to further improvement through, for example, working to raise attainment in their subjects. Safeguarding procedures are thorough as the school ensures it adopts good practice. Due regard has been paid to community cohesion. Links with the local community are already well established through the programme of

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litter picking and bulb planting. Pupils benefit from visiting another school in the city populated by pupils with a different ethnic make up. International links are developing, mainly through links with international charities, including the Well Project in Somalia.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle well and quickly develop trusting relationships with staff. They make satisfactory progress in each of the learning areas. Relationships with families are strong and many parents and carers make a positive contribution to their children's progress by carrying on the work of the school in the home. Leadership is satisfactory and day-to-day management is good. The curriculum matches with national recommendations, with an appropriate emphasis on developing children's language and personal and social skills. The learning journeys form a very good record of children's experiences of their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage but, overall, assessment information is not being used well enough in raising the achievement of individual children.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire or spoke with inspectors say they like the school very much. They are very pleased that their children enjoy school, that teaching is good and that their children are being prepared well for their futures. They say their children are safe at school and they especially like the way all children are equally valued and treated with respect, irrespective of their religious belief or ethnic tradition. They like the way in which the school is led and managed, the school's high expectations for good behaviour and the positive way the school promotes healthy living. A small minority are of the opinion that the school could do more in helping them support their children's learning at home. Inspectors judged that the school offers many good opportunities for parents and carers to find out ways of helping with their children's learning.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cromwell Junior and Infant and Nursery Class to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 127 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 226 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	77	61	47	37	1	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	66	52	60	47	0	0	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	52	41	65	51	6	5	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	45	35	71	56	8	6	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	57	45	62	49	2	2	2	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	48	38	63	50	10	8	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	47	37	70	55	4	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	45	35	67	53	2	2	3	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	40	31	67	53	5	4	3	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	46	36	65	51	6	5	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	41	32	67	53	6	5	7	6
The school is led and managed effectively	50	39	56	44	7	6	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	61	48	56	44	4	3	3	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



26 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cromwell Junior and Infant and Nursery Class, Birmingham, B7 5BA

It was lovely for me and my colleagues to meet and talk with you when we visited your school. We found the school to be providing you with a good education. We especially liked:

- the outstanding progress you make in mathematics and science
- the way in which each one of you can take an equal part in all the school's activities
- the way you feel safe and comfortable at school, behave well in lessons and work hard at your learning
- the way you know the importance of a healthy lifestyle
- the good way in which your senior leaders, with the help of all staff, are improving your school.

There are a few things I have asked to be made better. Firstly, I am certain you can do as well in English as you are doing in mathematics and science. To help in this I would like your teachers to plan lessons more carefully so that you do not find them too hard or too easy. Secondly, I want the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to have a better start. I have asked that more attention be given to helping them use language and in growing up as young children. Finally, I want those of you who often miss school to attend more regularly, otherwise you will not learn as much as you can. You can all help do your bit by continuing to behave well in your lessons and by always trying to do your best.

Yours sincerely

Alan Dobbins

Lead inspector

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