

Crow Orchard Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119334
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	339410
Inspection dates	2–3 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Brian Holmes

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	159
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs A Bridson
Headteacher	Miss Ann Hedges
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2007
School address	School Lane Skelmersdale Lancashire WN8 8QG
Telephone number	01695 724046
Fax number	01695 723805
Email address	head@croworchard.lancs.sch.uk

Age group	5–11
Inspection dates	2–3 December 2009
Inspection number	339410

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2009

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited ten lessons, looked at pupils' work in classrooms and held discussions with governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents. They observed the school's work and looked at its assessment data, evidence of activities and events, information about the curriculum, and monitoring and evaluation documents. Inspectors analysed 40 parents' questionnaires, 90 pupils' questionnaires and 13 questionnaires from staff.

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

- the effectiveness of the school's strategies to raise standards of attainment in Key Stage 1
- the effectiveness of strategies to improve pupils' rates of progress across the school, particularly in Years 3, 4 and 5
- how effectively the school is improving the achievement of the more able pupils
- how effectively the 'Creative Curriculum' is improving pupils' achievement in all subjects
- the effectiveness of leaders at all levels, including governors, to drive and sustain improvement.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than average. It has an Early Years Foundation Stage with Reception-aged children. During the inspection significant building work was taking place to improve outdoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is higher than average. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than average. Almost all of the pupils are of White British heritage with a very small number of pupils from other backgrounds who speak English as an additional language. The school has gained a number of awards including the Healthy School's Award and the Active Mark.

The school has childcare provision that is not managed by the governing body and was inspected separately. The report for this provision can be found on the Ofsted website.

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

Crow Orchard is a good school. It has strengths in its quality of teaching, which is consistently good and sometime outstanding, and in its curricular provision, which has excellent enrichment of pupils' learning. These strengths have a positive impact on pupils' achievement and on their personal development. The school's mission is simply put: 'Everyone matters at Crow Orchard' and the staff and governors work hard to ensure that this mission works in practice.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage progress well from entering school with skills that are well below nationally expected levels in important aspects of their learning. Their progress is good owing to the beneficial impact of successful teaching and effective leadership and management that ensure that children learn well in a welcoming and safe learning environment. In Key Stages 1 and 2, good teaching and curricular provision ensure that pupils' rate of learning and progress is good. They achieve well with no notable variation in the achievement of different groups. Progress is built on firm foundations lower down the school and accelerates in Key Stage 2. As a result the standards attained by pupils in Year 6 are broadly average and currently rising, particularly in reading and mathematics. Attainment in writing is not quite as good as in reading and mathematics, partly because the opportunities pupils have to apply their writing skills in all their subjects, although satisfactory, are not planned systematically enough across subjects and throughout the school.

Pupils' behaviour, both in class and around school is good, and this contributes well to their learning. Behaviour is managed well. Pupils are clear that they feel safe and that any instances of misbehaviour are quickly dealt with by staff. They are keen to come to school and like the range of activities on offer. They think their learning is fun and like the idea that, 'If you do well you get harder work.' Pupils appreciate the creative curriculum owing to the practical work and the range of visits and clubs, including links with schools in Spain and Uganda. In this way, pupils develop a good understanding of those from other backgrounds and communities further afield. However, their understanding of other cultures, more locally and at a national level, is not as well developed.

The effectiveness of leadership and management is good with strengths, which impact positively on pupils' achievement. The headteacher's clear vision for enabling all pupils to achieve is shared by all staff and is supported by increasingly effective systems for checking the school's work. This involves governors, senior and middle leaders. Leaders at different levels have an accurate picture of the school's performance and take positive and effective action to address weaknesses identified. This concerted approach has had a clear effect on improving pupils' rates of progress and standards of attainment. The

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

school has improved its performance since its previous inspection and has a good capacity to improve further by building on these successes.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' attainment in writing to be in line with that in reading and mathematics by providing more consistently planned opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in all subjects.
- Improve pupils' cultural understanding by providing more opportunities for them to learn about other cultures and communities within the United Kingdom.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils respond well to the challenges they are set in lessons, demonstrating good levels of engagement and sustained concentration and enjoyment. This was evident in a Year 5 literacy lesson when pupils worked enthusiastically to select a range of 'wow' words to describe different characters. For the most part, learning throughout the school is successful. It dips very occasionally when the pace of learning drops, for example, when a group of pupils do not collaborate effectively.

Standards are improving in Key Stage 1 and pupils in Key Stage 2 make accelerated progress to reach standards that are at least in line with the national average at the end of Year 6. This represents good achievement for the vast majority of pupils from their point of entry to the school. There is clear evidence that standards have improved in mathematics and that standards are higher in reading than they are in writing. All groups of pupils make good progress, including the more able pupils who are challenged successfully. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities respond well to targeted intervention programmes and make good progress. The few pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language also make good progress, as seen in their good attention and sustained motivation in lessons.

Pupils achieve well and develop well as confident learners with good self-esteem. They have a good understanding of how to live healthily. They are knowledgeable about the benefits of regular exercise and a healthy diet. They participate in a good range of sports including those that are provided as extra-curricular activities. Pupils say that they feel safe and that any instances of bullying are rare and are quickly dealt with. They undertake a number of roles to contribute to the school's work, including as playground buddies and activity box monitors. The school council was involved in devising the Golden Rules, which govern pupils' behaviour in and around school. It is also involved in the local community through links with local schools and recycling activities. Pupils show good spiritual, moral and social awareness and satisfactory cultural awareness.

Assemblies contribute effectively to pupils' spiritual development. Pupils engage well with other pupils from schools in Spain and Uganda but their understanding of the different cultures at home is limited. Attendance is satisfactory and the school has made good progress in improving persistent absence.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers meet the needs of all pupils well through good use of assessment, good subject knowledge, good use of technology and thorough lesson planning. Lessons move along briskly using a wide range of approaches, engaging pupils in practical activities, with good opportunities to work independently. In a Year 4 numeracy lesson pupils were inspired to set each other number problems, assessing each other's work to check how well they had done. Teaching assistants are deployed extremely well to support pupils' learning, including with the more able pupils. Occasionally, learning slows when pupils are off task because instructions are not clear. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language and those who occasionally need extra help with their learning are well supported. Marking is thorough and comments ensure that pupils know how to improve their work. Pupils are clear, owing in part to good discussions with their teacher, that they know their targets and what they must do to achieve them.

The curriculum underpins pupils' learning well and makes a good contribution to their personal social and emotional development. Standards in mathematics have risen owing

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

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

to an emphasis on calculation and problem-solving. In writing, there is good provision to raise standards but opportunities to apply writing skills in all subjects are not systematically embedded across all classes. Good practice was seen in Year 3 where pupils wrote diary extracts about Francis Fry. The creative curriculum has had a positive effect on pupils' learning with more time spent undertaking projects in depth and the use of visits to stimulate learning to motivate interest. The curriculum provides excellent enrichment for pupils to extend their learning with all classes learning Spanish and having opportunities to work with artists and engage in themed activities, such as a Victorian Schools Day and a Mexico Day.

Pupils are well cared for in a secure learning environment. Relationships are good and help develop pupils' confidence and self-esteem as well as to feel valued. Adults give support to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those at an early stage of learning English as an additional language and other vulnerable pupils. There are good links with outside agencies to provide specialist support as required, such as speech therapists. There are rigorous procedures in place to monitor absence and reward pupils for good attendance.

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?

The headteacher, other staff and governors show a strong commitment to enabling all pupils to do their best through a good quality of education. There are strong systems of school self-evaluation which form the basis for identifying weaknesses and taking effective action to drive improvement. Focused priorities are identified through the school improvement plan and all staff have responsibility, through their own performance, to raise standards. Systems for checking pupils' performance are very effective in tracking attainment and identifying what they need to do to improve. As a result pupils have good equal opportunities to succeed. Governors have a clear view of their responsibilities in relation to ensuring that safeguarding requirements are met and they are fully involved in evaluating the work of the school. Safeguarding procedures meet current requirements and are supported by thorough documentation. There are good links with other schools and a range of partners to promote pupils' learning and well-being. The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily. It is a cohesive community itself, as seen in the way pupils have welcomed others from different backgrounds. The school's audit of community cohesion prioritised working more closely

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

with other groups but these plans are at a very early stage and pupils demonstrated a limited understanding of communities beyond the local area. The school uses its budget and other resources efficiently to enhance its provision and ensure good outcomes for its pupils. As a result the school provides good value for money.

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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The area is well led and managed with an effective team of staff who place a high priority on children's safety. Links with parents are strong. Parents appreciate the daily contact with staff which helps them to support their children's learning. Children start school with skills that are well below those typical for their age, especially in their early reading, writing and mathematical skills. They make good progress, although by the end of Reception their attainment is below that expected nationally.

Children settle quickly and happily into school routines in a secure and inclusive environment. They are warmly welcomed by staff at the start of the day and willingly record themselves what they had for breakfast on the interactive whiteboard. These activities develop children's confidence and independence effectively as do opportunities provided for them to select their own resources. Detailed planning meets individual needs well and thorough assessments are used well to plan next steps in children's learning. The varied range of activities engage children's interest and develops their investigative skills. There is a good balance between adult-led activities and those that children choose for themselves although, at times, opportunities are missed to enable

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

children to practise and develop their skills in writing.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Inspectors' findings agree with the very large majority of parents who are positive about the school, particularly the friendliness and approachability of the staff. The overwhelming majority of parents feel that their children enjoy school, make good progress and are happy with their children's experiences at the school. Parents typically comment, 'It is like being part of a family – this is a happy friendly school.'

There were a very small minority of parents who expressed the view that their children are not safe and that unacceptable behaviour is not effectively dealt with. There was no evidence in the inspection to support either of these views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Crow Orchard Primary School 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 inspector received 40 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 159 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	55	18	45	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	24	60	13	33	3	8	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	20	50	20	50	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	45	21	53	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	19	48	18	45	2	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	48	18	45	2	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	45	21	53	0	0	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)	17	43	18	45	2	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	40	22	55	2	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	30	22	55	4	10	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	38	19	48	2	5	3	8
The school is led and managed effectively	18	45	19	48	1	3	2	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	20	50	18	45	1	3	0	0

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.



4 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Crow Orchard Primary School, Skelmersdale WN8 8QG

Thank you for being warm, friendly and polite when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our time at Crow Orchard, particularly the discussions we had with you. We know that you are proud of your school and you are right to be so.

You will be pleased to know that I think that Crow Orchard is a good school. It has several strengths. I was impressed by your good behaviour and to see how well you enjoy your lessons and work well together. You are taught well by your teachers who, you told me, do their best for you, make learning fun and give up a lot of their time through the clubs that they run. You like the practical work you do in the creative curriculum and enjoy all the learning opportunities that the school has to offer, particularly the extra activities and visits. As a result of everything that the school does you achieve well in your work and in your personal development. You become thoughtful, caring and responsible people. All of the good things the school has to offer are made possible because your headteacher, other staff and governors, work hard to give you the best education possible. They do a good job and are always looking for ways to make things better.

I am asking your school to do two things to improve even further. First of all, to help raise your standards in writing further, I have asked the school to give you more planned opportunities to use your writing skills in all your subjects. Second, you have a good understanding of communities in your local area and in other countries through your links with schools in Spain and Uganda, but your understanding of communities in the rest of this country is not as good, so I have asked the school to improve this.

You can help by continuing to work hard, behaving well and doing your best to help the school improve even further.

With very best wishes for the future

Yours faithfully

Mr Brian Holmes

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.