

Croscombe Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123829
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	340438
Inspection dates	5–6 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Michael Barron

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	67
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Green
Headteacher	S Budden
Date of previous school inspection	19 June 2007
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited seven lessons and observed three teachers. They also held meetings with the headteacher, members of the governing body, staff, parents, carers and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at school development planning, minutes of governors' meetings, school policies, including those associated with safeguarding procedures, assessment and tracking documentation, pupil records and samples of pupils' work. Inspectors analysed the views of parents and carers in the 28 Ofsted questionnaires returned.

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

- the impact of measures to raise attainment in writing and improve the progress of more able pupils
- how well teachers use information from the school's assessment and tracking systems when planning further work for pupils
- the impact of the school's initiatives to improve the quality of teaching and learning
- pupils' knowledge and understanding of cultures and communities other than their own.

Information about the school

This is a small rural primary school. Pupils are taught in three mixed-age group classes. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds and all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. The needs of this group of pupils include emotional, social and behavioural needs, although the majority have learning difficulties. The number of pupils entering or leaving the school at times other than at the start of the school year is well above average. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision in the school's mixed Year 2, Year 1 and Reception Year class. The school holds several awards including the National Healthy Schools Standard. Two of the three permanent class teachers are presently on maternity leave and have been replaced by temporary teaching staff.

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

This is a good school which prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education. The headteacher and her staff have created a caring environment where pupils feel secure and say they enjoy school. This is reflected in pupils' outstanding behaviour and excellent attitudes to learning. Parents and carers value the effective way the school safeguards and protects pupils, and fully appreciate the lengths the school goes to in order to ensure the quality of care it provides is of a consistently high order. One parent commented that the school was like 'one big happy family' while another praised the hard work of the 'devoted staff'. Inspectors agree with these views in the returned parents' and carers' questionnaires.

The school is well led by a dedicated headteacher who provides a clear vision for improvement. She has worked well with staff and governors to ensure the school has increased its effectiveness by regularly evaluating its performance thoroughly in order to improve its practice. The school has, for example, improved the rigour and use of its assessment and tracking systems since the last inspection and this has helped to raise attainment, especially that of the more able pupils. It has also raised the level of care, guidance and support for pupils from good to outstanding. The headteacher and governing body have worked hard to ensure that the standard of teaching has not been affected by enforced temporary changes to the teaching staff. Teachers have been encouraged to share good practice and the school has worked well with outside agencies to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Progress since the last inspection has been good and the school displays a good capacity to improve in the future.

Children enter their Reception Year at the age of four with skills and understanding expected for their age, although their writing skills are often less well developed. They make good progress during their first year at school and all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the more-able, continue to make good, if slightly variable, progress. However, even though the school has implemented several initiatives aimed at improving the quality of pupils' written work, attainment in writing lags behind attainment in mathematics and reading throughout the school and pupils often find it difficult to complete longer pieces of writing successfully. While overall attainment is above average in Year 6, it is noticeably better in mathematics and reading than in writing.

A regular range of visits to places of interest and visitors to the school are helping to widen pupils' horizons. Despite this, pupils display only a limited knowledge and awareness of the wide range of cultures and beliefs of people living in the United Kingdom.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing by the end of the summer term 2011, especially the ability of pupils to complete longer pieces of writing successfully, by improving pupils' basic writing skills and their confidence to use a wider vocabulary in their written work.
- Increase pupils' awareness of the multicultural nature of the United Kingdom during the autumn term 2010 by improving opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultural diversity found in modern society.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils get on with each other well and believe they are important members of the school community. They take their responsibilities seriously, for example serving on the school council. Their spiritual, moral and social development is strong and this is reflected in pupils' excellent behaviour and attitudes. Attendance is above average and pupils enjoy talking about what they like the most about school and confidently describe how they take part in local community events. They have a good grasp of the importance of exercising regularly and eating healthily. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the sporting activities they take part in and also about their opportunities for gardening in the school's allotment. They are less confident when involved in discussions about the multicultural nature of modern society in the United Kingdom and this reflects a gap in their knowledge and understanding.

Pupils respond well to the friendly and caring approach taken by staff and this adds to their enjoyment of learning and to their good achievement. Their attitudes are outstanding and they work hard in lessons, especially when teachers make learning enjoyable. Their behaviour in lessons is outstanding and this allows teachers and teaching assistants the time to support pupils who are experiencing difficulties in learning, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This was evident in several lessons observed during the inspection. All pupils in the school's Year 5 and Year 6 class, for example, made good progress developing their understanding of place value in a mathematics lesson because the tasks they had to complete were matched well to their different abilities. Similarly the teacher and her effective teaching assistant were left with the time to support those pupils needing extra help with their learning.

Despite their difficulties in completing longer pieces of writing successfully, older pupils say they enjoy literacy lessons. Information and communication technology is another popular subject and here standards are above average.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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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	1
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The curriculum mixes subjects together well while concentrating on improving pupils' achievement in literacy and numeracy. It provides a wide range of experiences for pupils, who say they look forward to visits to places of interest and listening to interesting visitors to school. They appreciate the diverse programme of enrichment activities provided for pupils, including ukulele lessons and a range of after-school activities, such as sports coaching and science clubs.

Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to make a positive contribution to pupils' achievement. Classrooms are colourful and well resourced and teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards to enhance learning. The quality of academic guidance and support for pupils is very good and this is reflected in the high quality of teachers' marking, which consistently shows pupils how to improve their work. Most lessons observed met the needs of different groups of pupils effectively and pupils understood what they were doing and why they were doing it. However, on a few occasions, lesson introductions were overlong and this affected the pace of learning.

The school provides pupils with an outstanding level of care, guidance and support, and this is very much appreciated by parents and carers, who value the way in which the school looks after their children. It is also the basis for pupils' good personal development. Pupils are very aware of the needs of others and get on very well together. Older pupils enjoy looking after the younger ones. They say they are confident any rare instances of unkind behaviour will be dealt with quickly and fairly by adults. Effective induction and transfer arrangements help pupils settle into new routines and vulnerable pupils receive very good levels of care. Provision for personal, social and

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health education is good. However, the curriculum does not presently offer regular opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of the wider nature of modern society in the United Kingdom.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The good quality of leadership and management is reflected in the thoroughness of the school's self-evaluation and the quality of its development planning. All teaching staff have leadership and management roles and share a common belief in continually striving for school improvement. Governors play an important role in school life and are involved in all major decision-making. They provide an appropriate level of support and challenge to the school when required to do so. The school has developed good links with parents and carers, who appreciate the effective way in which the school tackles discrimination and makes sure their children are given equal opportunities to succeed. This is a key factor in ensuring all pupils, regardless of their background or ability, make good progress, not only in their academic work but also in their personal development. Links with external agencies and partnerships with other bodies are used effectively to support pupils' learning and well-being, including the well-being of vulnerable pupils. Safeguarding procedures are good and the school has adopted recommended good practice across all areas of its work. This is reflected in the thoroughness of school documentation and the very secure nature of the school site. Staff and governors receive regular safeguarding and child protection training and are well aware of the importance of their roles in keeping pupils safe and free from harm.

The school's work in promoting community cohesion is satisfactory. Links with the nearby church and the local community are used effectively to develop pupils' understanding of the local world in which they live and also of shared beliefs. However, despite pupils' good links with the local community, their appreciation of important aspects of the diversity of cultures and beliefs in the wider national community is limited.

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

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	
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

Children make good progress in all areas of learning during their Reception Year because the Early Years Foundation Stage teacher and teaching assistant work hard to cater for the needs of all children, regardless of their abilities. Parents and carers value the quality of education the school provides for their children. As one parent commented: 'My child loves school and is making good progress in her first year at Croscombe.'

The quality of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and ensures the rather small classroom, which children share with Year 1 and Year 2 pupils, is well equipped to support independent learning and used to best effect to make lessons interesting and enjoyable. Records of children's progress are detailed and used well when planning further work. There is a good balance of teacher-led activities and those children choose for themselves. Safety and welfare are given a high priority and children appear happy, say they feel safe, and interact well with classmates, older pupils and adults. Their behaviour is excellent and children have good attitudes to learning. Lessons provide well-structured opportunities for children to build up their understanding of the world in which they live while at the same time ensuring they improve their skills in all areas of learning, especially literacy and numeracy. A well-equipped outdoor area is used to good effect to help children build up the skills associated with outdoor learning and play. However, the access to this area is rather narrow and this restricts the free flow of children to and from the classroom during lessons.

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

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

A very large majority of parents and carers who returned the questionnaires or who spoke to inspectors held positive views about the school. Nearly all were happy with their children's experiences. The vast majority believed their children enjoyed school and several commented favourably about how safe they felt their children were. Most believed the school was led and managed effectively and the standard of teaching was good. Few parents and carers expressed any concerns, although some felt the school was not led and managed effectively. A small number of parents and carers thought the school did not promote healthy lifestyles for their children or meet their child's particular needs. A small minority felt the school did not take account of their suggestions or concerns.

□

Inspectors considered these comments and judged that the school was led and managed well and met children's particular needs well. Inspectors also judged that the school promoted healthy lifestyles for pupils and took account of parents' and carers' suggestions and concerns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Croscombe Church of England 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 inspection team received 28 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 67 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	21	75	6	21	1	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	21	75	7	25	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	11	39	17	61	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	61	10	36	1	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	16	57	12	43	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	10	36	17	61	1	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	46	13	46	2	7	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)	16	57	8	29	1	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	61	11	39	2	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	5	18	21	75	1	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	32	16	57	2	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	10	36	15	54	3	11	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	15	54	12	43	1	4	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



7 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Croscombe Church of England Aided Primary School, Wells BA4 3QL

Thank you for welcoming myself and the other inspector to your school. Everyone was really friendly and helpful, and we soon realised why you all enjoy school. We found it very interesting talking to you about what you like the most about school and seeing you all working hard in lessons. Your parents and carers believe that you attend a good school and we agree with them.

Here are some of the main things we found out about your school.

- You get off to a good start in your Reception Year.
- Your behaviour is outstanding and you are a credit to your school.
- You make good progress in learning because teachers make lessons interesting.
- Your school takes very good care of you and makes sure that you are all very safe and secure.
- Your headteacher, governors and staff have worked hard to improve the school.

We believe your headteacher and teachers can make your school even better. We have asked them to:

- help you to improve your writing, especially your ability to complete longer pieces of work successfully
- help you to find out more about the customs and traditions of people living in this country who are from cultural backgrounds that are different to yours.

Once again, thank you for making us feel so welcome in your school and remember, you can help your school to improve by continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Michael Barron

Lead Inspector

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