

Crich CofE Infant School

Bowns Hill, Crich, Matlock, DE4 5DG

Inspection dates 12–13 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Important improvements since the last inspection, including greater consistency in approaches to teaching, have led to pupils making good progress.
- The governing body has become increasingly active in fact-finding about the school's work.
- Governors work cooperatively alongside staff, to help improve pupils' quality of education.
- Staff and pupils alike show high levels of care and respect for each other.
- Pupils' general behaviour and approach to keeping each other safe are excellent.
- Pupils' outstanding attitudes to school make a vital contribution to their learning.
- The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is particularly good.
- Teaching is good in both classes, and some in the Reception class is outstanding.
- All teachers and their assistants have high expectations for what their pupils can achieve, and give personal and academic progress equal importance.
- The strong leadership and example shown by the headteacher has fostered good teamwork.
- Parents and carers appreciate the 'family' atmosphere within a harmonious community.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- When working with classes as whole groups, teachers do not always ask pupils sufficiently probing questions to check fully their understanding.
- Teachers do not make the most of opportunities for pupils to develop their writing and calculation skills in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Subject leaders are still developing the skills they need to help the headteacher check on the school's work and effectiveness.
- The governing body accepts that it has relied too much on the headteacher to monitor the school's work. It has taken positive steps to resolve this, and is becoming involved more actively, but the full impact of this has yet to be evaluated fully.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons, including four which were observed jointly with the headteacher. All three part-time class teachers and their teaching assistants were seen working with the children and pupils.
- In addition, the inspector heard a sample of pupils from Year 2 read, attended assemblies and scrutinised pupils' work.
- A meeting was held with a randomly selected group of pupils. In addition, many informal opportunities were taken to talk with pupils.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of school documents including development plans, policies, self-evaluation reports, various monitoring files, safeguarding and curriculum materials, governing body documents, and information for families.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, the office manager, class teachers, a visiting special educational needs specialist, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took into consideration the 24 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and spoke individually with several parents and carers. The 10 responses to the questionnaire for school staff were also taken into account.

Inspection team

Michael Miller, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized infant school, mainly serving families from its local village and surrounding communities.
- There are two classes, one for children of Reception age and another for Year 1 and 2 pupils.
- The headteacher is the only full-time teacher at the school; in addition to her management role she shares the teaching in Reception. All other class teachers are on part-time contracts with Key Stage 1 teachers operating a job-share arrangement.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage; currently none speak English as an additional language. The proportion of girls is above average.
- Almost all children who join in the Reception class continue their education at the school until they leave at the end of Year 2.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for particular groups, including those known to be eligible for free school meals) is average. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals varies as their parents move in and out of employment.
- The proportion who have a statement of special educational needs, or are supported at school action plus, is average. No pupils are supported at school action, and none are taught in alternative provision elsewhere.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on the good practice established in the Reception class in Key Stage 1, by:
 - providing regular opportunities for pupils to use and develop their literacy and writing skills, and mathematical and calculation skills, across the full range of subjects
 - extending the good questioning skills teachers already use with small groups and individual pupils to whole-class situations.
- Sharpen the impact of leadership and management by:
 - enabling subject leaders to develop the essential skills they need to support fully the headteacher in checking the school's work
 - ensuring that the new governing body's programme for monitoring the school's work is implemented, and evaluated fully, by the end of the academic year.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- In the school office there is a letter to the teachers from one of the pupils which reads, 'I want to say you have made my favourite place in the world Crich Infant School.' This goes a long way to explaining why the pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent, and why they achieve well.
- There is no typical pattern of attainment on entry to the Reception class, which changes from year to year. This is because children arrive with very mixed pre-school experiences. Good links have been developed with the main local pre-school provider. Children have the opportunity to visit the school regularly during the year before they start in the Reception class. This helps them to become familiar with the school and its pupils and confident when they join, so they make a flying start.
- With such small numbers in each year group, staff get to know pupils' individual strengths and weaknesses very well. Teachers record and track pupils' progress carefully, so they can quickly give help and guidance as and when necessary. Pupils respond readily to such help, whether from teachers, teaching assistants or the regular volunteers who support the school daily.
- The individual approach to the checking of pupils' progress ensures that the school focuses its spending to ensure that pupils who need extra help with their learning, those who are disabled or have special educational needs, and boys and girls, usually achieve equally well. Assessment information shows that pupils known to be eligible for free school meals make similarly good progress to other groups of pupils at the school, given their starting points and circumstances.
- Throughout the school, and especially in the Reception class, a clear emphasis on the pupils' readiness for learning helps them to achieve well. Where required, support from visiting specialists helps, and this sometimes extends to support for the families concerned.
- Achievement is also enhanced by the school's partnership with parents and carers. Family members are encouraged to stay with their children during the first half-hour of the school day to support activities such as reading. Regular guidance for parents and carers enables them to support effectively their children's learning at home.
- In the Reception class, children made rapid progress across all their areas of development as part of their 'Busy Bee' topic 'Dino-Roars!' It was impressive that they not only knew the proper names of a whole range of dinosaurs, but could also identify whether they were carnivores or herbivores, and differentiate between those who could fly and those who walked. The concepts of 'old' and 'new' were being established well, and the ways they were able to discuss their ideas spoke volumes about the quality of their speaking and listening skills.
- The teaching of letters and the sounds they make is equally successful in both classes. This gives the pupils good confidence to tackle new words and specialist vocabulary. However, additional opportunities to make use of their writing skills across a broader range of subjects every day are too infrequent. This is now a key focus of the school's improvement planning. Similarly, extending opportunities for pupils to practise their calculation skills in 'real life' situations across subjects other than mathematics are underdeveloped.
- Nevertheless, the teaching is good at making links between subjects and this helps pupils to make sense of their learning. In a Year 1 and 2 lesson, work in personal and social education on feelings, and the ways we express ourselves, was reflected well in subsequent topic work on pets and how we are responsible for them. The way the concepts of trust, accountability and

self-awareness were woven through the lessons helps explain why the pupils achieve so well in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and understanding.

The quality of teaching is good

- Typical of staff comments on their questionnaire were: 'I feel proud to be a member of our school team,' and, 'We are always open to trying new ways to help us improve the children's learning.' This responsive approach to cooperative working and striving for improvement helps explain why teaching is good. Staff, governors and volunteers alike support learning effectively.
- Since the last inspection, sustained improvements to both what is taught and how it is taught have underpinned the gains in pupils' progress. Teaching is now consistently good or better across the school. The excellent practice established in the Reception class, particularly regarding planning, organisation and the use of resources, is starting to extend more successfully into Key Stage 1, but not sufficiently consistently.
- Teachers are skilled at getting the best out of their pupils and little or no time is wasted in lessons. There is constant encouragement and involvement with the pupils, by both teachers and their assistants. This keeps the pupils on their toes, on task, and interested. Pupils are stimulated to listen, think and try their best.
- However, teachers do not always ask sufficiently probing questions in whole-class sessions to check pupils' understanding of what they are learning. The demands made on them are therefore sometimes limited. It is not that teachers do not have these skills; searching questions are often asked of individuals or small groups of pupils by both the teachers and their assistants. Pupils benefit from this approach, which has been a focus for the teachers' own training.
- Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' learning through the effectiveness of their support for pupils' social and emotional as well as academic needs. The observations they make about the pupils in their care contribute to teachers' assessments and the information they need to adjust their planning so that work is set at the right level of difficulty.
- Marking and oral feedback give pupils helpful support and focused guidance. This helps sustain pupils' good progress and goes a long way to explain why teaching is increasingly successful.
- Teachers promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. Pupils' creativity is encouraged. This comes out in their imaginative work, including the ability to solve problems and find alternative solutions to ways of calculating in mathematics. The teaching encourages balance in the pupils' thinking. In a Reception class outdoor role play session as paramedics, children's spiritual understanding was enhanced by their consideration not only of the 'death' of a dinosaur model but also how it was succeeded by the birth of one newly born.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Life at school is full of interest. Pupils are simply too fascinated and involved in their work to lose interest. They want to come to school, and this is reflected in their above-average attendance. Behaviour and safety are outstanding because pupils develop self-confidence, socialise exceptionally well, and sustain high levels of concentration throughout the school day.
- As a community, the school enables its pupils to appreciate the potential impact of their behaviour on both themselves and others. Discussions with pupils show they own up to occasional silliness and thoughtlessness, but they never want to let the school down.

Consequently, pupils make rapid gains in their social development and moral understanding. This helps both staff and pupils to keep the school free from bullying in all its forms.

- Trust and the promotion of responsibility from the very start in Reception are vital ingredients in the school's approach. Discussions with pupils show that they know how to keep each other safe, and put into practice their care and consideration for others. They respect each other.
- A consistent and sensitive approach to behaviour management reflects the way staff have the highest expectations of the pupils' behaviour. Pupils respond to this quickly and naturally. This helps reinforce very effectively pupils' understanding of right and wrong.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is providing excellent leadership and direction for the school. During the 2011/12 academic year she also had full-time responsibility for teaching the Reception class, and this inevitably slowed the pace of change and development. Nevertheless, this situation has been resolved and more settled staffing has enabled momentum to be regained.
- All the teachers show good willingness to support the headteacher by taking on multiple posts of responsibility for sharing the leadership of the various subjects. However, they are still in the process of building all the important skills necessary for their leadership roles. With a more settled staff, focused leadership from the headteacher is ensuring that their monitoring and evaluation skills have a suitably high priority in their professional development.
- Joint observations of lessons with the headteacher confirmed the accuracy of her understanding of the quality of teaching and learning. Discussions with other teachers show good levels of self-evaluation and self-criticism. The ways in which staff hold themselves accountable for pupils' progress are good. These are underpinned well through the setting of targets for the teachers to improve further their professional skills, both individually and collectively.
- The school shows a strong commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity for all its pupils. This is reflected well not only in its policies but also in practice, as this approach is integral to the school's spirit. Staff support pupils who attract additional government funding by ensuring, for example, high levels of individual one-to-one support tailored specifically to both the academic and personal needs of each individual pupil. The headteacher and governing body ensure that the impact of this spending is checked for each pupil concerned to ensure it is enhancing their progress.
- The school has an effective working relationship with the local authority. The support and advice provided to the staff and governors are constructive and beneficial. Regular reviews of the school's performance help support the accuracy of its own self-evaluation and reflect its good capacity for further improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body openly recognises that, in the past, it has not always been sufficiently helpful to the headteacher in her checking on the work of the school. It has made a very positive start in resolving this with a complete review of its role and responsibilities. This has led to a programme of reforms which have started to make its activities increasingly effective. This is still a work in progress, and the impact of these initiatives has still to be evaluated fully. However, as a result of governor visits and additional training, it is now contributing more actively in the processes of school improvement and development. More regular contact with the school supplements the excellent information provided to it by the headteacher. A number

of governors act as regular volunteers to support pupils' learning, and this adds an extra dimension to the governing body's appreciation of the quality of teaching. Governors do have an accurate view of the teaching at the school, and how its pupils achieve in relation to others nationally. The governing body checks regularly on the impact of the targets set for teachers, and these are linked directly to salary structure and overall school improvement planning. The relevant committee keeps a close check on the school's finances; the school has moved successfully from debit into credit. The governing body makes sure that the systems and processes for safeguarding pupils and ensuring equal opportunities meet current national requirements. The school benefits from the commitment and expertise of its governors.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	112867
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	401315

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	50
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bronwen Macarthur-Williams
Headteacher	Julie Kirk
Date of previous school inspection	25 February 2010
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