

Crofton Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108141
Local Authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	288030
Inspection dates	12–13 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Joyce Taylor

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	188
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Chris Powell
Headteacher	Mrs L Fowler
Date of previous school inspection	19 November 2002
School address	Slack Lane Crofton Wakefield West Yorkshire WF4 1HJ
Telephone number	01924 303905
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Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school takes the majority of its pupils from the local area, with mixed social and economic circumstances. A third of the children come from further afield where parents have specifically selected the school. Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage and all speak English at home. The proportion of pupils eligible for a free school meal is below average and the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, or statements of special educational needs is below average. The school has gained awards for Basic Skills and Investors in People. It is currently awaiting assessment for the Healthy Schools Award and is part of an international creativity study which includes staff visiting India to develop cultural and creative links.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Crofton Junior School provides an outstanding education for its pupils and parents are rightly delighted with the opportunities their children receive. Parents say, 'my child loves school', and, 'I had such fun when I came in for the morning workshop'. Pupils say they are happy in school and that they thoroughly enjoy the wide range of activities the school provides. Care, guidance and support of the pupils are outstanding. The school is extremely calm and orderly and pupils' behaviour is exemplary. As a result, they concentrate fully on their work and try hard in all their lessons.

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. Data from several years show they invariably arrive with average skill levels and within four years they reach very high standards in reading, mathematics and science. Standards in writing are broadly average and lifting these standards is already a successful focus for improvement. Teaching is outstanding. Teachers' clarity of planning, a carefully structured curriculum and excellent assessment procedures ensure teachers know exactly how well pupils are doing. They intervene immediately progress falters and their excellent relationships with pupils ensure the rapid pace of learning does not make pupils anxious. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make outstanding progress. They benefit from a range of well designed programmes to help them catch up with others and to accelerate their learning. Teaching assistants make a very strong contribution by expertly supporting individuals and groups and ensuring their progress is rapid.

Personal development is good. Pupils' understanding of how to get along together and that differences between people do not mean some people are better than others, is excellent. Work towards recognising the needs for a healthy lifestyle is progressing well and pupils are developing good citizenship skills. The school is working towards extending pupils' skills in this area by the establishment of strategies to encourage them to make even more decisions about their learning.

The curriculum is outstanding. Extremely well designed tasks ensure learning is most effective. Literacy and numeracy are given priority in a bid to maintain high standards but there are many other opportunities for pupils' to explore new and exciting experiences. For example, all pupils learn French, they all play the recorder and the quality of performance by the school choir and orchestra is stunning. Lively opportunities to examine and improve their own performance, for example, by videoing themselves in gymnastics, provide exciting and fun learning experiences. On a few rare occasions pupils are expected to be passive learners and these lessons do not engage them as well as during sessions where learning is more active. The school has recognised the need for more independent learning opportunities and has established a forum for pupils to air their views.

The headteacher and senior staff provide outstanding leadership. They have implemented extremely effective plans for school improvement which have kept standards high for several years. Their thoughtful and successful influence is evident in a wide range of original developments designed to help pupils learn even more effectively. Checks on pupils' achievement are rigorous. The need to raise standards in writing is being managed successfully through an extremely effective whole-school focus for improvement. Strong teamwork is a significant factor in the school's outstanding capacity for further improvement. The school gives excellent value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide further opportunities for pupils to make decisions and take more responsibility for their own learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

From broadly average standards on entry, pupils make outstanding progress across the school and reach high levels in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave. Standards in writing are now beginning to rise as a result of very effective strategies introduced by the school to improve them. In the past, the more able pupils made slower than expected progress in writing, an issue which is firmly resolved as these pupils now progress at an outstanding pace. Detailed monitoring of pupils' work, linked to extremely helpful marking, keeps pupils on target and helps them identify how well they are doing. Standards are also high in music and art, and pupils' ability to use information and communication technology to access and respond to the school's excellent interactive virtual learning environment (VLE) is highly developed.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school lives out the characteristics of its covenant: pupils are valued and are at the heart of everything it tries to do. In response, pupils show considerable maturity. They are tolerant, kind and thoughtful. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and is strengthened by excellent opportunities for pupils to discuss their concerns through the personal and social education programme and very effective collective worship. They also enjoy making contributions about how they feel on the school's VLE. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities such as answering the telephone, acting as playground buddies and wearing yellow caps for instant identification. Through the school council, pupils contribute well to the life of the school. They have a good understanding of how to live a healthy life and say they eat healthily and seize opportunities for physical activity including the before school 'Wake up Shake up' routines. In lessons the pupils are not always as independent and involved in making decisions about their own learning as they could be.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Exceedingly high quality teaching has a huge impact on pupils' achievement and strongly motivates them as learners. 'My teacher is the perfect package', one child wrote. Teachers are enormously skilled in promoting high standards in, for example, science, reading, numeracy, and information and communication technology. Excellent marking, especially in English, provides clear guidance for pupils to follow and is making a major contribution to improvements in writing. Planning is outstanding. Tasks are specifically designed for different groups of pupils depending on their needs. In lessons, the pace of learning is fast and targets are clear and challenging. However, there are occasional missed opportunities to involve pupils more closely in decision making and planning aspects of their own learning. Tasks ensure the most able pupils build rapidly on earlier learning and excellent support is provided for the less able through

a combined and very effective approach by the teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils are confident and immediately let teachers know if they are unsure. 'I haven't got it', one boy told his teacher. She immediately focused on him until he had!

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum provides many exemplary learning opportunities for pupils to excel in different subjects and extend their understanding through a wide range of challenging and enjoyable tasks. They thoroughly enjoy literacy, art and geography weeks where they work at a high standard. They enjoy performing and excel at music. Opportunities for pupils to discuss their tasks with a partner, and take account of the views of others, widen their insights. Pupils' enjoyment and success in these activities show how ready they are to take on further responsibility for their learning. The curriculum is extended through a good range of visits, visitors and clubs that effectively build up pupils' skills and confidence and supports their personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Outstanding assessment systems track pupils' progress and ensure that teachers set challenging targets. Pupils' personal development is effectively promoted and monitored as a means of supporting vulnerable pupils. As a result, they develop mature and positive attitudes. The school has outstanding strategies, closely involving parents, which ensure high standards of behaviour and attendance. Racial understanding and tolerance are promoted exceedingly well through personal development projects. Safeguarding procedures are in place. Staff and governors are well trained in aspects of health and safety including child protection procedures.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher knows exactly how well the school is doing and sets clear directions for improvement which are openly and regularly discussed by all staff and governors. Pupils' achievement is outstanding as a result. Senior staff recognise they are accountable for the quality and standards in their areas of responsibility and work closely with colleagues to support new initiatives. Together with the headteacher and governors, they identify what needs to be done next. Their work is extremely effective and has a powerful impact on all aspects of school life. Challenging targets for pupils are in place for literacy and numeracy, planning is detailed and shows how well the learning is structured. Outcomes of a push to improve standards in writing are already visible.

Very good use is made of partnerships with the local authority, nearby schools and support agencies to promote pupils' learning and well-being. Parents strongly support the school and encourage their children as learners. Almost all families have attended morning sessions where parents work alongside their children, and parents rate these occasions highly. Governance is excellent. Governors are challenging, visit the school frequently and have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They work extremely hard on the school's behalf. The overall impact of this outstanding provision is that the school has an enviable reputation in the local community and pupils make excellent progress during their four years in the school.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for your help when I visited your school recently. I very much enjoyed watching you work and talking with you in your classes and around school. Yours is a brilliant school and it gives you wonderful opportunities for learning. It provides you with a huge range of interesting and lively activities.

Your headteacher knows exactly how well the school is doing and knows what to do to make it even better. Your teachers and classroom assistants are dedicated and extremely hardworking and they constantly try out new ideas to make learning better for you. Your parents say they are delighted you come to this school because it takes such good care of you and helps you do so well. You work really hard and as a result, your standards in mathematics and science are high and new ways of working are now helping you reach high standards in English. You enjoy your lessons but need to have more opportunities to organise some of your tasks for yourselves. You behave extremely well; you are very polite and show genuine concerns for each other.

You are enthusiastic about your school and I hope you carry on making Crofton Junior School a happy place to learn.