



Crich C of E Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112867
Local Authority DERBYSHIRE
Inspection number 289444
Inspection date 17 October 2006
Reporting inspector Sue Hall

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Bowns Hill
School category	Voluntary controlled		Crich, Crich
Age range of pupils	4-7		Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 5DG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01773 852165
Number on roll (school)	40	Fax number	
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Sarah Wallis
		Headteacher	Mrs Jean Stinson
Date of previous school inspection	26 February 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a very small infant school in an attractive rural village in mid-Derbyshire. Almost all the children are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language. The proportion that has learning difficulties or disabilities is below the national picture, as is the number entitled to free school meals. The headteacher teaches a class for nearly three quarters of the school week.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This school provides a satisfactory quality of education and has several good features. The whole staff team works extremely closely in supporting each other, the children and their carers so the school feels like an extended family where children are safe and secure. Parents are happy with the school, noting 'the staff are very caring, they take the time to get to know the children and offer suitable encouragement'.

The personal development of the children is good. This is because of the school's good individual support and results in children enjoying lessons and school life in general. High quality displays celebrate children's achievements and do much to raise their self-esteem. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The work they do in creative arts supports their cultural development well. Close links with the community and church positively benefit children's understanding of working with others. The school's strong promotion of keeping healthy and safe results in children's good awareness. Behaviour is good overall. It is good in lessons, although not always to the same standard at lunchtime.

Children's achievements are satisfactory and they reach standards which are average. They are adequately prepared for the next stage of education and for future life. In the Foundation Stage, children make satisfactory progress and enter Year 1 having met the targets for their age. In Years 1 and 2, children also make satisfactory progress and attain standards which, whilst varying from year to year, are currently average overall. Inspection findings confirm the national assessments made. These show that children do better in writing than in reading and few reach higher levels of attainment.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with some good features. Staff have very warm and supportive relationships with children and offer them lots of encouragement. Most work is suitably planned to meet the needs of the children and is matched adequately to their abilities. However, the teaching of reading is not fully effective because teachers do not spend enough time with groups or individuals identifying what exact skills they need to practise.

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory, though the school judges these to be good. Teamwork is very effective and the dedicated and hardworking headteacher is widely supported by the staff team. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The strengths identified previously remain. However, so do elements of less effective areas. The school has developed some procedures to monitor the work of the school and has extensive information about children's achievement. However, the information is not always easily accessible to be used to track progress and identify targets. Occasional monitoring has taken place by senior staff and this has rightly informed some future priorities. However, the staff sometimes find it difficult to step back from day-to-day involvement and at times, the monitoring is not always rigorous enough. Governance of the school is satisfactory. The school provides satisfactory value for money and has a satisfactory capacity to make further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Bring the children's achievement in reading in line with that in other subjects.
- Extend the opportunities for staff to monitor rigorously the progress children make and the work of the school in order to identify the further steps for improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Although there is a wide range of attainment on entry to the school, standards when children are admitted are average overall. However, initial school assessments soon after children are admitted are a little cautious, as are the predictions and the targets staff set for what the children will subsequently achieve. In the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 children of all abilities achieve satisfactorily, though the school judges achievement to be better than this. In national assessments at the age of seven, standards are currently average, although this varies year on year, partly because the year groups are so small. Children have often done particularly well in writing. However, over several years they have not done as well in reading with fewer achieving the higher levels than in other areas. The school's self-evaluation procedures have correctly identified reading as a key priority for improvement. Staff have carefully considered what needs to be done and have introduced different approaches. Reading results improved in 2006 and the challenge for the school is to build upon these improvements to ensure that future results in reading match those in writing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development is good and children enjoy their time in school. As one parent notes, 'children have a very positive attitude towards school thanks to the ethos of Crich Infants'. There are good links with both village churches and with local organisations, including children contributing to the community magazine. The school gives good messages to all about the importance of a healthy lifestyle and has a walk-to-school-award. The Class 1 'Elephant checks' ensure that all are reminded of safety and security at least twice daily. Attendance is good as is the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children. Overall behaviour has improved since the previous inspection, although this is not as good at lunchtime where staff miss opportunities to support children's social development.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and has some good features. Staff have very good relationships with the children and provide them with lots of encouragement.

Children of all abilities learn at least satisfactorily. There is suitable planning with different work for groups of children of different abilities, including those with learning difficulties. While the level of challenge offered is reasonable overall, a scrutiny of a sample of recent work, and lesson observations indicate that at times more could be expected of children. Writing skills are usually well taught and there are good opportunities to write in subjects other than English. While the teaching of reading is satisfactory, there are not enough activities led by teachers where, in groups or individually, children practise and develop the skills to tackle unfamiliar words or develop an understanding of a wide vocabulary. At times there are insufficient opportunities for children to be involved in all parts of the lesson and they have to sit and listen to others for too long, rather than discuss their ideas and be actively involved.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. The school is justifiably proud of the good range of activities to support the creative arts. An appropriate emphasis is placed on the development of literacy and numeracy which helps develop skills that will contribute satisfactorily to children's future economic well-being. The school has extended the use of information and communication technology to help improve writing across the subjects. Staff provide suitable opportunities for children to develop investigative and problem solving skills in mathematics and science. The Foundation Stage curriculum is satisfactory and staff plan carefully to provide a range of practical learning activities for the youngest children. However, this is difficult to arrange in a mixed age class and with limited outdoor facilities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care and guidance of children are good overall with many widely acknowledged strengths in the pastoral care of children. Parents note that over a number of years this has been 'a happy, caring and loving school'. Because staff know the children so well they readily identify when they feel unhappy and there is genuine warmth in the care and support provided including for those with learning difficulties. The information the staff have to check on children's achievements and track how well they are doing is extensive. The information is used at least satisfactorily to aid the planning of future work. At times, however, teachers are unable to make use of the full range of data. This is because it is not always organised in way that makes the information easily retrievable.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The inspection readily identifies, as the previous inspection did, that the headteacher works extremely hard as both a class teacher and a school manager. The whole staff team work very closely and are

widely consulted and involved in all matters including school-improvement planning and decision-making. However, senior staff find it difficult to step back at times from day-to-day practices to identify specific strengths and weaknesses. School self-evaluation is satisfactory overall but a little more generous than inspection findings would support. Some monitoring has taken place and this has enabled the school to identify priorities such as improvement in reading. However, it has not been very wide ranging. Subject leaders and governors have had relatively few formal opportunities to evaluate the work of the school but are very supportive of the school community.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

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	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

18 October 2006

Crich C of E Infant School, Bowns Hill, Crich, Matlock, Derbyshire, DE4 5DG

Dear Children

Firstly thank you very much for looking after me when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed speaking to several of you in lessons, at lunchtime, in the playground and when I talked to the Eco council. I was interested to hear that you particularly enjoy playtimes and that your favourite subject is art.

These are the things that I found are good about your school:

- the staff like working with you and care for you really well;
- the classrooms are bright and interesting with lots of your work on display;

and

- you have very good relationships with all the adults in school and they give you plenty of praise which makes you feel good about yourself.

These are the things that I think could be improved:

- teachers could organise more times when they hear you read to find out what you need to improve; and
- when grown ups look at lessons and your work they could find more ways to help you make better progress, especially with your reading.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when I came to see you. Remember that you can do a lot to help your school improve by trying really hard all the time.

Yours sincerely

Sue Hall

Lead inspector