

Crophorne-with-Charlton CofE First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116800
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	290637
Inspection date	21 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Frances Gillam

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

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	81
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vacant Position
Headteacher	Carol Gregory
Date of previous school inspection	12 November 2001
School address	Main Street Crophorne Persore WR10 3NB
Telephone number	01386 860246
Fax number	01386 860246

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Cropthorne-with-Charlton is smaller than the average-sized first school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is lower than in most schools. Almost all pupils come from a White British background and the proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal is much lower than average. A higher-than-average number of pupils join the school part-way through their education. Children's attainment on entry to reception is lower than at the previous inspection and is now broadly as expected. Pupils in the Reception Year and Year 1 are taught together in class 1, Years 2 and 3 are taught together in class 2, and pupils in Years 4 and 5 in class 3. At the time of the inspection, the school had an acting headteacher in post for two terms. The new headteacher takes up her appointment in April 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school, where pupils achieve well and attain well-above-average expectations by Year 5. Care, guidance and support are effective and these contribute well to pupils' good personal development and well-being. Pupils flourish in the warm and friendly school environment. They develop healthy lifestyles because of the good choices they make about what to eat and the regular exercise they take. Pupils make an exceptional contribution to the wider community. They help to keep their local community clean and tidy and take regular part in village events. Pupils enjoy school and their behaviour is especially good in lessons. At times, behaviour in the playground is boisterous and some children find this daunting. Not enough is done to channel pupils' energy and to encourage, particularly some older boys, to play more considerately. This is in spite of pupils knowing how to look out for others and how to take good care of themselves. A strength of the good curriculum is the extensive range of activities outside normal lessons, including sporting clubs, visits and visitors, which support pupils' personal skills successfully. In most instances, learning activities build well on what pupils have done before but at times, writing tasks, in subjects other than English, do not meet the needs of pupils well enough, especially those with learning difficulties and disabilities, who sometimes struggle to complete their work.

Good provision in the Reception Year enables children to make a positive start to school. The children achieve well and most attain or exceed the goals expected for their age on entry to Year 1. Predominantly good teaching helps pupils, including those with learning difficulties and those from minority ethnic groups, to make good progress and learn well. Teachers make good use of learning support assistants; this ensures that pupils who need extra help receive well-focused support. Pupils and staff get on well together and pupils say they are confident to ask for help if they encounter difficulties in their work. Pupils, though, could be doing better in mathematics. Sometimes questioning and activities are not challenging enough, especially in whole-class sessions, to give pupils the opportunity to use mental strategies and explanations to develop their ideas further.

Good leadership and management ensure that staff and governors have a good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Evaluation processes are robust and tease out the most important areas for improvement. However, the school acknowledges that pupils' writing skills in other subjects do not always match the good standards seen in their literacy books. The staff work successfully together to ensure the right action is taken to bring about change for the better. This has led to good improvement since the last inspection and shows that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure that pupils are challenged to do their best in mathematics, and are given better opportunities to use mental strategies and to explain their findings, especially in whole-class situations.
- Make sure that activities to promote pupils' creative and factual writing, in subjects other than English, take better account of their needs, especially for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.
- Devise more structured activities at playtimes to encourage pupils to play more constructively and considerately together.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are well above average by the time pupils leave the school. Children in the Reception Year do well. Staff are responding well to the increasing number of children who are being admitted with learning difficulties and disabilities. Activities are well conceived and build effectively on children's experiences, which enables them to make good progress. Basic skills are taught well and most children achieve or exceed the goals for their age by the time they enter Year 1.

Pupils make good progress by Year 5. Tracking pupils' progress enables the school to quickly identify pupils who may need extra support and helps it to set challenging targets, which most pupils achieve. Pupils produce some good quality written work, especially in English, but this good standard is not always evident in other subjects. Games and fun activities in mathematics appeal to pupils and raise their enthusiasm and eagerness to learn. These activities are especially successful in group and independent work. During whole-class mental starters and discussions, questioning and activities are not always challenging and pupils do not always make the progress they might.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils say they enjoy school and their attendance is good. They make good choices about their diet and general well-being because of the strong emphasis the school places on healthy lifestyles. Pupils make an extremely good contribution to the wider community. They take part in many church and village events and their involvement in local recycling schemes enables them to have a good understanding of how to care for their environment. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' relationships with adults and each other are trusting and most pupils care well for themselves and others. Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong and most behave well, but a small number are not always fully aware of the consequence of their actions and this leads to some over-excitable play at break times, which other pupils sometimes find worrying.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching in the Reception class gets children off to a positive start. Activities grab children's interest and encourage them to explore and try things out for themselves. As children move into Year 1, this good start is built on effectively and throughout the school, staff assess pupils' achievements accurately and in most instances plan the next steps in learning carefully. This enables pupils to do well in their learning and make good progress. Learning support assistants play an important part supporting small groups and pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Staff help to build pupils' self-esteem and confidence because they value pupils' efforts and praise their achievements. Pupils settle quickly and work effectively on their own or with others because teachers set out their expectations clearly and explain to pupils what they are going to learn and why. Sometimes in whole-class mathematics sessions, teachers' questioning does not always challenge pupils' mental dexterity or encourage pupils to explain

the strategies they use, which would help to deepen their understanding and ability to learn from each other.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

An extensive and exciting range of activities outside normal lessons, including circus skills, sports clubs and visits to places of interest, supports pupils' personal development and well-being successfully, and contributes well to their enjoyment of school. Pupils, including children in the Reception Year, experience an interesting range of learning activities which promote literacy and numeracy skills well and help to prepare pupils successfully for the future. Activities for the most part build well on what pupils have learned before, but this is not always the case in pupils' creative and factual writing across the curriculum. Sometimes activities are not adapted sufficiently well to take account of pupils' writing skills, especially for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Children commented on the kindness of staff and how they always have someone they can talk to. Pupils new to the school settle quickly and soon feel part of the warm and friendly school environment. Good child protection procedures and the school's work, for example, with the school nurse and other support services, help pupils to understand the necessity of a healthy lifestyle and the need to care for themselves and others. These features contribute well to pupils' personal development and well-being but not enough is done at playtimes to help pupils play safely and with due care and consideration for others. All pupils have learning targets that challenge and encourage them to try their best and these help pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills effectively.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good systems to monitor and evaluate the school's effectiveness provide the acting headteacher, staff and governors with a clear idea of the strengths and weaker areas in the school's work. These systems ensure the right priorities for improvement are identified and the action to bring about change for the better is often successful. However, as yet they have not addressed the weaknesses in writing in other subjects and aspects of the teaching of mathematics. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully and this enables key personnel to check carefully how well pupils are doing and to focus support effectively. This is further enhanced by the good links with outside agencies and local schools which help to share good practice and support pupils' learning further. Parents are very supportive but the school acknowledges it could do more to listen to and consider the views of parents.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

Thank you for making the team of inspectors so welcome when we visited your school recently. It was a pleasure to meet you and see all the exciting things you were doing. You have a good school. The people in charge and your teachers do a good job of helping you to do well in your work.

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

- You work hard and this is helping you to make good progress and reach standards in your work which are well above those expected by Year 5.
- You like school; you especially enjoy all the interesting activities you have outside your normal lessons.
- You are friendly and polite and you make children new to your school feel welcome.
- You make sensible choices about what you eat and take plenty of exercise, and this is helping you to grow up strong and healthy.
- You take part in lots of local events and know how important it is to look after the environment.
- Your teachers care for you and most of you feel well looked after.

To improve the school still further we have asked the people in charge and your teachers to work together on three things.

- To make sure that you are always challenged to do your best in mathematics, and that you have better opportunities to calculate and solve problems in your head and to explain how you come to your answers.
- To make sure that your writing in all subjects is as good as it is in your literacy books, and to ensure that the writing activities that some of you are asked to do are not too hard.
- To help some of you play more constructively and considerately at break times.

You can all help by keeping up the hard work.

With best wishes for the future,