

Croscombe Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123829
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	292806
Inspection date	19 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Anna Sketchley

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 on roll	
School	63
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Green
Headteacher	S Budden
Date of previous school inspection	20 May 2002
School address	Long Street Croscombe Wells BA5 3QL
Telephone number	01749 343114
Fax number	01749 344826

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small primary school situated in the heart of the village of Croscombe midway between Shepton Mallet and Wells. Many pupils come to the school from the surrounding area and join with skills normally expected for their age. They are taught in mixed age classes. The number of pupils with learning difficulties is broadly average but the number entitled to free school meals is below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Croscombe is a good school which is regarded highly by parents, some of whom made very positive comments such as, 'the school is small and friendly with fantastic support and everyone is welcoming... we feel strongly that our son's progress is due to this'. The Christian ethos of the school is clearly evident in the excellent relationships that abound and in the warm, calm atmosphere. Teachers know the pupils very well, and those with individual needs are well catered for. Care, guidance and support and attendance are all good and pupils really enjoy coming to school. They demonstrate positive attitudes to all aspects of school life and are lively but well behaved. The way in which this small school uses its links with outside agencies and other schools is outstanding. Through these links, it provides pupils with a wide range of personal and academic learning opportunities. Pupils are very enthusiastic about the many opportunities and responsibilities they are given and carry them out well. As a result, their personal development and well-being are good.

Children enter school with skills that are appropriate for their age and they make a good start in the Reception Year. All groups of pupils achieve well throughout the school. Standards in the current Year 2 are likely to be above the national average. Standards in this year's Year 6 are likely to be broadly average. This represents good progress for these pupils because a higher proportion than usual have learning difficulties. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are particularly high.

Teaching is consistently good throughout the school with some very good features, although occasionally the pace and challenge are slow. When this happens, pupils remain on task but do not work as hard as they could so they do not make the progress of which they are capable. The curriculum is now good. It is well planned, taking into account the learning needs of all pupils. The wide range of activities, visits and visitors that enrich the curriculum are outstanding for such a small school. There has been very good improvement in both teaching and the curriculum since the last inspection.

Improvements have been achieved through good leadership and management. The headteacher is experienced and dedicated to improvement. She has steered the school tirelessly and competently through a period of upheaval caused by staff absence. Staffing is now very settled and, as a result, pupils are making good progress. The school is very well aware of what it needs to do to improve further and has a good capacity to do so. This is evident through the emphasis it has already placed upon writing, which has been very successful. Each pupil's progress is rigorously tracked and levels of support matched to their needs. Pupils are set group targets but they do not have a sufficiently clear idea, individually, about what they need to do to improve the standard of their work.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of target setting to ensure that individual pupils have a clear understanding of how to improve their work.
- Improve the pace of lessons so that pupils are challenged to work hard at their tasks.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Children join the school with skills expected for their age and make good progress. All Reception pupils are on course to meet or exceed the standards expected by the end of the Reception Year. Because of good teaching, good achievement is now maintained throughout Years 1 and 2. Some year groups are very small and it is not reliable to compare the school's standards with national standards using sets of test results as this does not always give the correct picture. However, this year, pupils in Year 2 are working at standards that are likely to be above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Some are achieving the higher Level 3 in all areas. Writing standards, especially for boys, have improved considerably because of new initiatives that have been introduced. An emphasis upon phonics and spelling and frameworks to support the writing process has been very successful. Pupils continue to make good progress throughout Years 3 to 6. Year 6 is a small group this year, with a high number of pupils with learning difficulties. As a result, standards are likely to be average, although a few pupils are working at the higher Level 5 in both English and mathematics. Despite their difficulties and because of the good teaching and support they receive, Year 6 pupils are making good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They like the smallness of the school because they know each other well. They say they feel happy, safe and secure and that it is easy to sort out problems if they arise. They are confident that they can do this for themselves but know how to seek help from an adult if necessary. Pupils speak enthusiastically about all the clubs they can join and about the new outdoor play equipment and sports activities that are helping them to keep healthy. Although they understand the need for a healthy diet and enjoy the good quality school meals, those who bring packed lunches do not seem to be quite as aware of the importance of eating healthy foods.

Pupils' contribution to the community is outstanding and includes strong links with the church and being involved in such activities as the Village Fun Day, entertaining senior citizens and raising money for various charities. Through the School Council and other responsibilities such as running the school's healthy tuckshop, pupils develop very good leadership skills and use their competency in literacy, numeracy and ICT. This is preparing them well for the future. Their good personal development makes a significant contribution to the good progress they are making.

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. Cultural development is satisfactory but recent initiatives such as 'Africa Week' are just beginning to impact successfully upon pupils' cultural awareness.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The consistently good quality of teaching is the reason why pupils are making good progress in their learning. Planning for the mixed age classes is an outstanding feature in all lessons. Work is matched very well to the needs of all pupils. Pupils know what they are expected to

learn because teachers share with them very clearly the learning objective for the lesson. Teaching assistants are very well used to support pupils with learning difficulties as well as the different age groups in the class. Reception children are particularly well taught within the infant class because the activities planned for them are appropriate and they receive dedicated support. Lessons are brought to a close really well because in all classes teachers use interactive whiteboards to return to the learning objective. Through a series of questions, they help pupils to assess their learning for themselves. Sometimes introductions are a little long and pupils are not always reminded about the amount of time they have to finish a task. When either of these situations occurs, the pace of the lesson slows and pupils are not challenged to work as hard as they could in order to make the best possible progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is well organised and very carefully planned to take account of the age range within classes and the interest level of boys. Despite there being only four Reception-aged children this year, they are very well catered for and experience a curriculum appropriate for their age. All of them are boys and the practical theme of a 'building site' was specially introduced as a stimulus for their early learning needs. A whole-school initiative to improve writing has been very successful in raising standards. ICT is making a significant contribution to other subjects through the way in which teachers use it and because of pupils' competency in the subject. Enrichment through the use of the local area, residential visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities is outstanding and is one of the reasons why pupils' personal development and well-being is good.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Teachers and classroom assistants know every pupil and care for them well, including those who are vulnerable. This is a strong feature of the school. This is confirmed by parents who say, 'I believe that Croscombe School is a nurturing school' and, 'if my son has any problems, he will always ask his teacher and know it will be resolved'. Pupils with learning difficulties benefit from well organised support both within school and from outside agencies.

Marking gives helpful guidance towards the next step in learning and all pupils have group targets for both literacy and numeracy and know them well. However, these targets are not specific or sharp enough to allow individual pupils to identify clearly how to raise the standard of their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher is dedicated and focused and leads the school well. She and the governors have taken effective action with regard to past staffing difficulties and, as a result, there is a settled and committed teaching team. The school's self-evaluation is largely correct although staff are modest in their judgements about the amount of progress pupils are now making and about standards of teaching. Consistent monitoring has raised standards in teaching and a review of the curriculum has ensured that it is relevant and balanced. Priorities for improvement are correct and set a clear direction for the future. Pupils' progress is rigorously tracked and

the information gained is used to ensure that work is well matched to their needs. The governing body is very well led and has undertaken considerable training. Governors discharge their responsibilities well and now provide good support and guidance to 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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
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	3
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	1
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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Croscombe Church of England Primary School, Wells BA5 3QL

Thank you very much for the friendly welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed spending time with you and talking with you. Your parents told us what a good school they think Croscombe is and we agree with them. These are some of the best things we found:

- You all learn well and are making good progress.
- You really enjoy being part of a small school and your attendance is good.
- You know how to keep healthy and safe, are kind and helpful to each other and enjoy all the extra activities that are planned for you.
- You are taught well and your teachers plan your lessons very carefully.
- You are very well cared for and told us how happy and safe you feel in school.
- Your headteacher and all other teachers and adults lead your school very well.

Your school knows what it needs to do to improve and we have asked them to do some things to make your learning even better:

- We have asked your teachers to set you individual targets so that you will each know more clearly what you have to do to improve your work.
- We have also asked your teachers to make sure that your lessons move along quickly so that you are challenged to make the best use of your time.

With best wishes

Anna Sketchley Lead Inspector