

Crowhurst CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114497
Local Authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	311626
Inspection date	10 December 2008
Reporting inspector	David Collard

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	107
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jill Ferguson
Headteacher	Andrew Jervis
Date of previous school inspection	21 February 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Foreward lane Battle TN33 9AJ
Telephone number	01424 830324
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average rural primary school serving the local village but nearly two thirds of pupils come from outside this area. Nearly all pupils are of White British background and all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below that nationally. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly higher than that nationally although there are fewer pupils with statements of special educational need. Most of these difficulties relate to language and communication problems. The headteacher joined the school in April 2007. The school has been awarded Healthy Schools status, the Basic Skills Quality Mark and Active Mark.

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. Since the last inspection it has continued to make the right improvements to the curriculum. Teaching and learning are consistently good and this has impacted well upon pupils' development. Consequently, achievement is good and pupils reach above average standards by the time they leave the school.

The present headteacher's good quality of leadership has successfully built upon the start made by his predecessor. A shared commitment and good communication between all stakeholders including staff, governors, pupils and parents has helped everybody understand what the school does well. A clear direction for school development is provided through the accurate self-evaluation which identifies where the school still needs to improve. This has provided a realistic balance between driving up academic standards and developing pupils' interpersonal skills, thereby making sure pupils develop good life skills and are well prepared for their future schooling. For example, the school rightly recognises that now pupils are making consistently good academic progress it is time to enhance the already good curricular opportunities by providing more opportunities for pupils to collaborate on projects. This is planned to be developed in areas such as pupils' better understanding of this country's diverse cultures, beliefs and traditions.

Pupils are articulate and confident. They show increasing levels of maturity and behave well, both in lessons and around the school. Attendance continues to be above the national average because pupils enjoy their education and are always keen to suggest ideas that will make things better. For example, they have helped promote the 'School Travel Plan' so that an increasing number of families are now walking to school and this is improving the already good understanding of healthy lifestyles.

Children generally start school with skills in line with their expected age. By the end of Reception, the good achievement they have made means that standards are at least in line with the national average. Pupils make continuously good progress through the rest of the school.

Underachievement from the past has been eradicated as can be seen in the significantly improved standards in the 2008 national tests. In Year 2, these were the highest for five years. Similarly, the school's challenging targets for those in Year 6 were almost all achieved, with pupils gaining standards in English, mathematics and science above the national average, particularly in the number gaining the higher levels. Those with learning difficulties made particularly good progress with almost all achieving the age-expected levels but from much lower starting points.

Pupils are looked after very well. Safeguarding procedures are robust and pupils understand how to stay fit and healthy. Academic care and guidance are good. Thorough analysis of pupils' progress takes place through regular assessments. This has helped teachers provide a wide range of support and intervention for those who need help. However, senior managers have yet to analyse the success of each of these initiatives to help refine the provision that is offered and so make the most efficient use of resources. Nevertheless, good improvement since the last inspection and the strong foundations put in place have resulted in raised standards, demonstrating the school's good capacity to continue improving.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is led well, resulting in good provision. Children make good progress as they successfully develop the personal, social and academic skills necessary for their later schooling. Throughout all areas of the curriculum, children achieve at least the expected levels, particularly in communication, language, personal and social skills. Teaching is good. All staff plan well to ensure that children have a balance of play and more structured work. Occasionally, more reluctant or shy pupils are not given a full opportunity to become involved in discussions. This limits their progress. The outside area is used well to enhance all areas of learning such as children seeing how useful writing can be through their letters to Santa. Parents are fully involved and a number say how sympathetically the individual difficulties of their children have been dealt with. Welfare procedures are highly developed so that children settle quickly and soon feel part of the school, playing well with older pupils and not being afraid to ask for help. There is a good understanding about each individual child and how they might be developed. Examples of this are when children show they have particularly good ability and are able to join in with older pupils in Year 1 or when those who need more support get the opportunity to experience the EYFS provision after leaving the Reception class.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide pupils with a broader perspective of their own community so that they better understand the cultural diversity of our country.
- Monitor the impact of new initiatives to ensure the best use of space, equipment and personnel.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils throughout the school are making at least the progress expected of them and in a significant proportion of cases this is better than expected. Results in the 2008 Year 2 reading tests were particularly good where all reached the expected Level 2 and over half exceeded this. While not quite as strong in writing, a third still reached these above average levels, a significant improvement on previous years. The school is rightly working on making sure that these writing skills are now at a similar standard to those in reading and mathematics. In the 2008 Year 6 tests, the previous four-year decline was reversed in English, although again standards were slightly lower in writing. Nearly all pupils achieved the expected level in mathematics and science. In all three subjects, half of the pupils achieved above average levels. Those presently in Year 6 are showing the same, if not better, potential, particularly in writing. If the targets are achieved, and work in books suggests they will, this will demonstrate how successful the recent intervention for specific groups and individuals has been.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils have well-developed personal skills and a good work ethic. They interact well with each other and value each other's contributions in lessons. Just occasionally, they do not always listen to their peers and want to continue to talk when others are voicing their opinion. Nevertheless, relationships across the school are strong. In discussion, older pupils said that they understood what was expected of them and valued the chance to be involved in school

developments. The school council, for example, is presently considering how to use a significant amount of donated funds to enhance the school environment. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural developments are good. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their regular visits to the church and about some of the exciting activities they are involved in locally. They have good involvement in local, national and international community projects and raise money for children abroad. However, their understanding and appreciation of the wide range of cultures within our own country are not as well developed. Pupils' involvement in a range of sporting activities helps them understand about keeping fit and they are really proud of their new all-weather pitch which is helping develop these skills further.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Since the last inspection, teaching through the school has continued to improve. In all classes it is good. Planning for the core subjects of English and mathematics has been developed to ensure that any areas where pupils appear to make less progress are provided with good levels of support. Teachers, along with the skilled teaching assistants, use clever questioning to try and draw out pupils' understanding and to provide extra challenge. Work in books shows that on many occasions different types of work are given to the class, many of these activities making the pupils think hard. In mixed-age classes, teachers plan work that is suitable for the full age and ability range. All this is providing good levels of challenge and so learning progresses well. Pupils know their targets although these are better used in some classes than in others. An example of best practice was seen when pupils were involved in deciding what step to take next, although this is not so in all classes.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has worked hard to develop basic skills in discrete subjects and across the curriculum. Good expertise and resources for information and communication technology mean that learning here is good. Themes and topics are used well although some subjects, such as history and art, are better represented than others. The school is correctly starting to use the success in driving up standards in English, mathematics and science to start developing better and more creative links between all subjects. Given the restricted accommodation, the school does well to use a wide range of partnerships, particularly within its own cluster of schools. Master classes, visits and joint ventures provide good enhancement to the curriculum that can be more difficult to achieve in a small school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care is outstanding. Child protection takes a high priority and all is being done to ensure pupils feel safe and secure. Parents note the strong care, one explaining that her child was helped to settle into school even though he was very apprehensive and how this has raised his self-esteem. Good individual analysis and evaluation are at the heart of lesson planning. This is largely used well to ensure that challenging activities are provided for the different groups in classes. However, some individual targets are a little too general and older pupils rightly say that they could be more involved in the evaluation process.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The present headteacher has continued to improve the school by giving clear messages that better teaching would lead to better learning. He quickly assessed the current position and has used internal and external expertise well. In conjunction with all other staff and, particularly, the good support of the governing body, this has resulted in clear action plans. The next stage, not yet in place but identified by the school, is to make sure that the many new initiatives are having a measurable effect so ensuring that resources are used as efficiently as possible. This sharing of ideas means that the priorities chosen are those that will make the most difference. It is not easy to move around between classrooms without disturbing others. To help alleviate this, innovative solutions, while not ideal, have been developed, such as the use of the village hall and one classroom for dinners. Nevertheless, pupils themselves remark that it would be good to have more indoor space. Good links are helping to develop the satisfactory community cohesion and the school is seen as a central part of its local area. However, the school needs to do more to develop the pupils' understanding about global diversity, to avoid any stereotyping of different cultures.

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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
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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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

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

11 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Crowhurst Church of England Primary School, Battle TN33 9AJ

Thank you for looking after us so well during our recent visit. We enjoyed meeting you all and being able to talk about the many things that are happening. It will probably be no surprise to you that we have said yours is a good school. As I promised some of you, I have included some of the main points of our report below.

- You told us that it was fun to be at your school. We can see why. We have said that you behave well and get on really well with each other during lessons and in the playground. We can see that you enjoy being at school. You know how to stay safe, fit and healthy. We have mentioned that you help with lots of things in the village and further afield.
- You are taught well so you are making good progress in each year. By the time you leave Year 6, you are reaching above average standards. Keep up the good work!
- We have also said that you are looked after well. This is ensuring that you feel safe and secure. This is something that a number of you pointed out to us.
- You have lots of exciting things to do in lessons. Since the last inspection these have improved and there are plans for even more exciting things in the future.
- Your headteacher and the rest of the staff know what to do to make your school even better. They have a number of plans for the future. We have asked them to make sure that they check how well new ideas are working so that they can plan the best use of equipment and space. By doing this they will know what is working best.
- We have also asked them to give you more opportunities to see how people from different cultures in the United Kingdom live, work and play.

Finally, we wish you all the best for the future. You can keep helping your school become one of the best by suggesting improvements and helping one another.

Yours faithfully

David Collard Lead inspector