

Cricket Green School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102699
Local Authority	Merton
Inspection number	335950
Inspection dates	16–17 March 2010
Reporting inspector	James Bowden

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	133
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Kevin Vickers
Headteacher	Mrs Celia Dawson
Date of previous school inspection	17 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried by two additional inspectors. They visited 15 lessons, seeing all 15 teachers who were present over the two days. Meetings were held with the senior leadership team, middle managers, the chair of the governing body, and with two groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at teachers' planning and assessment. They analysed 77 parent questionnaires, 32 questionnaires completed by pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 and 43 responses from staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the progress and achievement of all groups of pupils over the last three years
- how well teaching challenges all pupils
- the effectiveness of leadership and management of literacy, communication, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) and the impact of this on pupils' progress.

Information about the school

The school provides for pupils with a diverse range of learning needs with increasing numbers of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders and severe learning needs. Pupils are taught in mixed year groups with the exception of Years 7, 10 and 11. The school also provides for a small number of pupils on the roll of mainstream schools, supports reintegration for a small number into mainstream schools and makes joint 14-16 provision with Merton College, YMCA Wimbledon and Alternative Education. In addition, the school provides training and support for staff in mainstream schools and a variety of community settings through its outreach and inreach services. Responding to need, the school provides for a small number of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage who are also taught in small mixed-age groups.

Most pupils come from Merton but a little over 20% travel from other boroughs. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Approximately 50% are for moderate learning difficulties, 25% for autistic spectrum disorders and 15% for severe learning difficulties. Currently, approximately half of the pupils are of White British origin, with the remainder reflecting the ethnic mix of the local authority. Almost two thirds of the school's population are boys.

The school is subject to reorganisation proposals, which will include sixth form provision, as a result of an inclusion review by the local authority.

Amongst the school's many awards are Enhanced Healthy Schools status, Activemark, Sportsmark and Artsmark Gold.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Cricket Green is a happy and outstandingly successful school. It meets fully its core aim of providing an environment within which all pupils feel safe and develop their self-esteem so that they learn to respect themselves and others within the school and local community. Underpinning this is the ambition, drive and inspirational leadership of the headteacher. There is an excellent focus for continuing improvement and ensuring that every child really does matter. The enthusiastic and dedicated staff team contribute highly to this ethos. As a result, the school is exceptionally well placed to sustain further improvement. 'The school does a great job,' commented one pupil, summing up the feelings of one of the pupil discussion groups. A strong culture of communication and collaboration between home and school keeps parents and carers informed of their child's progress. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers are highly appreciative of the school's work. One, expressing the views of many, noted: 'Cricket Green is a first class school that supports children's learning needs very effectively. The head and staff are excellent and so enthusiastic and caring.'

Pupils are achieving exceptionally well across the school because of the total education and support package offered. On entry, some pupils are not yet ready to learn. However, the progress pupils make in relation to their starting points is outstanding, particularly in communication, literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. This is the result of high quality leadership and management of these areas. Significant progress is made across both the primary and secondary phases in terms of national expectations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. By the time they leave at the end of Year 11, many are enabled to achieve accreditation in specific subjects as well as in courses to develop their personal and life skills.

Pupils enjoy learning. This was clearly evident in an imaginatively resourced secondary phase drama lesson where there was excellent use of intriguing facial expressions and movement during performance by groups to the rest of class. In a primary phase literacy lesson, pupils contributed enthusiastically to the activity based on their recent shopping visit to a local supermarket. As a result of the calm and sensitive support from all adults working in the school, pupils are safe, persevere very well, develop their independence and make excellent progress towards their individual targets set for lessons.

Teaching throughout the school is outstanding. Teachers' careful planning ensures the individual needs of all pupils are met fully and all are suitably challenged. Consequently, learning is excellent, as is the progress all pupils make in lessons. The highly effective curriculum underpins the school's focus on improving pupils' key skills of communication, literacy, numeracy and ICT. Older pupils have specific programmes, which prepare them

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successfully for the next stage of their education. A particular innovation, reflecting the school's Artsmark Gold status, is the 'Shed 13' arts project. This is staffed by an artist in residence and links Cricket Green to an international network of schools and overseas institutions. The exemplary quality of care, guidance and support supports each pupil, including the most vulnerable, in very specific ways and ensures they are all looked after in a safe, healthy and caring environment.

Rigorous self-evaluation has resulted in highly focused planning, ensuring the school has continued to go from strength to strength, as well as identifying areas for further improvement. Although ICT is used very effectively to support teaching and enliven learning, the school recognises that the use of ICT could be broadened in order to support further its specialist training work, communications with parents and carers, and links with educational partnerships. In light of improvements since the last inspection, the ambition and drive for improvement, and continuing success in enabling pupils to make outstanding progress, the school has excellent capacity to improve even further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Broaden the use of new technologies to add new dimensions to:
 - the school's specialist training work
 - the school's communication with parents and carers
 - the school's partnership arrangements.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

The quality of learning and progress in lessons is outstanding. There is no noticeable variation between different groups of pupils. Learning is individualised, with all pupils having very specific targets for their academic and personal development. Rigorous assessment and carefully drafted targets support and enable outstanding progress. In a primary phase mathematics lesson, pupils improved greatly their measuring skills while dressed as construction workers in an activity focused on house building. The Year 11 'working towards independence' group is making excellent progress in handling money and calculating profit and loss in a range of enterprise activities. This includes provision of healthy school lunch for themselves and staff on a regular basis throughout the year in order to fund their leaving event.

As well as being enabled to eat healthily and understand the importance of this, pupils participate in a wide range of physical activities during the school day and as part of enrichment activities after the end of the school day. The school's work in this respect has been recognised by Enhanced Healthy Schools status, as well as Activemark and Sportsmark awards. Pupils respond really well to sensitive intervention from adults. As a result, a calm and purposeful atmosphere is the norm in lessons. Pupils' views are listened to because of their active involvement in the school's pupil forum. In addition, some are members of the Year 11 life skills group overseeing the 'Shed 13' (Room 13) arts project. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education by the time

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they leave school, almost all moving on to further education or training. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, as is their understanding of the community beyond the school. They work well together in lessons and are sensitive to the needs of one another. One pupil nominated another for the school's weekly 'good news' book because he had appreciated his friend asking about his religious beliefs.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers and teaching assistants work together highly effectively, which enables pupils to make the best possible progress. In a secondary phase design and technology lesson, the careful deployment of staff provided a well-pitched level of challenge and enabled pupils to make choices and decisions about the model shelters they were constructing. Staff model positive relationships for pupils. Consequently, pupils trust the adults around them and are prepared to try new and varied activities. In a secondary phase physical education lesson, for example, this included indoor curling and balloon volleyball. Assessment of pupils' progress is ongoing and in-depth, pupils reporting that they know how well they are doing. Praise is used wisely and is never over-effusive. Success is

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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rewarded judiciously.

A real strength of the curriculum is how well it supports pupils' personal development and prepares them for transition from one stage of their education to another as they move through the school. In addition, the curriculum for younger pupils develops their creativity through 'themes' as well as specialist lessons. For older pupils, a personalised approach develops work-related learning and enables them to experience learning with other providers. Numerous enrichment activities enhance greatly pupils' learning experience.

Pupils' health, safety and well-being are at the forefront of the school's outstanding ethos of care. The dedication, enthusiasm and commitment of all staff in working with pupils underpin this aspect of the school's provision. Not only do pupils arrive with smiling faces and positive attitudes, they also leave in a contented manner. A carefully managed and individualised programme of annual reviews is highly effective in supporting pupils as they move through the school and when they leave for the next stage of their education. Parents too are helped effectively, when appropriate, by the school's family support worker.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's vision and ethos of 'can do' is shared and promoted throughout the school. The culture of high expectations for teaching and learning is underpinned by highly effective monitoring and evaluation and sharing of good practice across the school. This helps the school plan future strategies precisely. Staff feel valued and their professional development has a high priority. The school is highly effective in ensuring all pupils have equality of opportunity and tackles racial discrimination diligently, which results in a strong ethos of inclusion. The governing body is highly effective in challenging and supporting the school's drive for sustained improvement. It also works closely with the headteacher to ensure safeguarding and child protection procedures are of the highest quality, updated regularly and permeate all aspects of the school's life. The school's contribution to promoting community cohesion is excellent within its own community, the local community and beyond. This is as a result of curriculum planning, the impact of this on pupils' personal development, and the extensive range of community initiatives and partnerships.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

A large majority of parents and carers completed the Ofsted questionnaire. Almost all are very pleased with the quality of education provided for their children and feel their children are safe. They are particularly supportive of the effectiveness of leadership and management of the school. This inspection confirms their views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cricket Green School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	60	78	16	21	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	59	77	18	23	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	58	75	19	25	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	55	71	22	29	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	58	75	18	23	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	55	71	22	29	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	51	66	25	32	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	53	69	21	27	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	57	74	20	26	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	50	65	26	34	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	46	60	29	38	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	62	81	13	17	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	63	82	14	18	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



19 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cricket Green School, Mitcham, CR4 3AF

Not so long ago, two of us came to the school to see how well you are getting on and whether we could suggest anything to make things better. We really enjoyed meeting you in lessons and around the school, and being able to have a formal chat with two small groups. We also enjoyed eating a very tasty lunch provided by a group of Year 11 pupils. Lots of smiling faces throughout the day and the things you told us about showed us that you really enjoy the things you do in school. We have decided that your school is excellent because:

- the headteacher and her senior team lead the school very well and have plans to keep making things even better for you
- you make excellent progress in your learning and personal development
- the staff care for you really well and make sure you are safe
- in lessons, teachers and other adults give you all the help and support they can
- the school makes sure there are lots of exciting things for you to do.

We think the school could improve if:

- ICT were used even more to support its work.

Thanks to all of you, we had a wonderful time at the school as well.

Yours sincerely

James Bowden

Lead inspector

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