

# Crays Hill Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114810
<b>Local Authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	338451
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 October 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Eileen Chadwick

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	64
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Gordon Clubb
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sulan Goodwin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 July 2007
<b>School address</b>	London Road Crays Hill Billericay
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited six lessons and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents and carers. They observed the school's work and looked at its improvement plans, assessment records, pupils' work, curriculum plans, safeguarding and welfare procedures. The 21 questionnaires completed by parents and carers and returned to the inspection team were also examined.

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

pupils' attainment on entry to Reception and that of later entrants

- pupils' progress in all year groups
- the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning, including systems for helping pupils to catch up in literacy and numeracy
- pupils' attendance and measures taken to ensure pupils attend regularly when they are living in the area
- the impact of leadership and management at all levels on raising achievement.

## Information about the school

This small school serves a mixed population that includes the local village and the surrounding area. Almost all pupils are from travelling families of Irish heritage who occupy the country's largest Traveller site. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including statements, is very high. Most of these pupils have speech, language, literacy, physical or emotional and behavioural learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Nearly all pupils spend long periods of time away from school travelling with their families. Consequently, pupil turnover is very high and newcomers join at different stages, some having had no previous schooling. The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a single age Reception class whilst the other three classes contain two age groups.

The school has gained a number of awards recently including Healthy Schools, Activemark, Inclusion Quality Mark and Artsmark.

**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?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This is a good school. It has some outstanding aspects to its work. The atmosphere is extremely warm and welcoming and relationships are excellent. Outstanding care, support and guidance and an interesting curriculum stimulate pupils' interest in school and help to promote their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including their behaviour. Pupils integrate very successfully and learn well and the considerable numbers who join in different year groups are given excellent support. The headteacher's determination to reach out to all parents and build trust in the school is bringing success. Parents and carers from all backgrounds are involved in the life of the school and often attend events and meetings. They are pleased with the progress their children are making in the basics and the fact they enjoy school. Both parents and pupils are very proud of the school and one parent summed up the views of many by saying, 'I am really, really happy with the school because I was never educated as a child and I would like my children to stay in this school.'

Pupils' academic achievement is satisfactory and their personal achievement is good. Pupils enter with low standards and, although they remain low in English, mathematics and science by Year 6, pupils have made good progress from their starting points on entry to the school. Pupils who leave at the end of Year 6 are seldom the same pupils who began at the beginning of that year and, as a result, overall attainment remains low. Pupils often travel to other countries and rarely attend other schools whilst travelling so this constantly creates large gaps in their knowledge and basic skills. Children get off to a good start in Reception and this continues throughout Key Stage 1 although standards remain static overall. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress. Excellent arrangements for teaching phonics and catch up programmes, such as 'reading recovery', have a very strong impact on raising achievement in literacy. Older pupils can often write for a range of purposes but spelling and punctuation are weaker aspects and their writing is not always well formed or joined.

Significantly below average attendance levels are also due to extended periods of travelling and the movement in and out of school in each year group. This impacts negatively on standards reached. While the school is sensitive to the cultural traditions of its pupils it has rigorous procedures for promoting good attendance. However, the school is currently without an education welfare officer and this limits any unauthorised absence being tackled quickly and pupils do not always attend as regularly as they should when they are not travelling.

Overall leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is very well supported by her deputy in ensuring all staff are focused on

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accelerating pupils' achievement. Because of this, its ambition, good record of improvement and accurate self-evaluation, the school has a good capacity for sustained improvement. Thorough self-evaluation has led to teaching and learning that are good and outstanding in Years 3 and 4. Teachers' skills in planning and delivering lessons are carefully evaluated by the senior team and teachers are given strong support for keeping up-to-date and improving their teaching. However, occasionally, assessment is not used well enough to ensure the most-able pupils are consistently challenged. Governance is good overall, although recent changes mean that several governors are new and still receiving training for their roles. The school promotes community cohesion exceedingly well.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise standards in writing by improving pupils' spelling, punctuation and handwriting.
- Raise achievement for more capable pupils by using assessment more effectively to make sure teaching provides consistent challenge.
- Improve pupils' attendance and reduce any unauthorised absence with strong support from an education welfare officer.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Many pupils are overcoming significant barriers to learning but develop a keenness to do well and become enthusiastic learners with confidence in their own abilities. Overall attainment is low. Individual attainment varies according to the starting point of each pupil and, for the greater majority, levels of attainment are below average. Nonetheless, a few pupils reach standards that are equal to those expected nationally. The school takes effective steps to ensure these pupils are not disadvantaged by their relatively small number.

Teachers cultivate pupils' enjoyment of school through excellent relationships with them and by providing lessons which they enjoy. For example, in an outstanding literacy lesson, all pupils made rapid progress and demonstrated pleasure when mastering new basic skills. The teacher engaged pupils from the beginning by using high quality resources, providing an excellent match to pupils' previous skills and engaging every pupil through focused questioning. This enabled every pupil to take an active part at their own level. From the earliest stage in Reception, or at the point of entry, methodical assessment of pupils' needs, individual care and support and early intervention for raising attainment are key to pupils' good progress in English and mathematics. Pupils make good progress in enhancing their speaking and thinking skills because of the rich opportunities that are provided. Pupils of all ages talk about their learning confidently, although pupils' vocabulary is often limited, despite the progress being made. Weaker spelling, punctuation and handwriting often restrict pupils' writing standards. The school is already working to improve writing and acknowledges these areas need a stronger focus in order to overcome the gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills.

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Pupils quickly develop a pride in their school and are very polite and well mannered. Older pupils know they have an important role in helping younger pupils, and later entrants, to feel safe, secure and happy. Pupils say they feel very safe and are very sure any concerns will be dealt with by staff. This fosters a strong sense of family within the school. Along with developing their responsibility within school, of special note is pupils' respect for other cultures, religions and lifestyles. They develop a mature understanding of the reasons for some of the extreme resentment they have sometimes encountered outside the school community. Pupils learn to think about how their actions impact on others, make an excellent contribution to the smooth running of the school and look after their attractive school environment. They contribute well to decision-making through the school council and form a very good understanding of the different needs of people in their community and abroad through their charity work and curriculum projects. Reflecting the school's Healthy School and Activemark, pupils show they understand how to lead healthy lifestyles. Many of them enjoy the school's nourishing lunches and make full use of many sporting activities, including using the outdoor play equipment and swimming lessons. Pupils' good progress in developing basic literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills and many worthwhile social opportunities prepare them well for the future, although intermittent attendance limits the standards of basic skills achieved.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	4

<sup>1</sup> 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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<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>
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### How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good and occasionally outstanding. Teachers manage pupils very well and plan lessons so they learn effectively through discussion and solving problems as well as listening and watching. Basic skills are carefully taught and practical experiences bring academic learning alive. For example, a visit to the Planetarium provided real experiences for cultivating pupils' interest in space before they were given more abstract academic tasks. In a literacy lesson, reading tasks on this theme were very well-matched to pupils' prior attainment so pupils of all abilities read eagerly and made rapid progress. The rigorous teaching of phonics in ability groups helps teachers to match pupils' learning to the wide range of attainment and promotes excellent learning. Occasionally, there are instances when assessment is not used as effectively and work is easy for the more capable pupils. Pupils usually know their learning targets and what they need to do to improve.

The broad curriculum is enriched by a wide range of visits and visitors that extend pupils' experiences. Projects are planned to cross subject boundaries while ensuring a structured approach to teaching literacy and numeracy. Pupils' ability to apply mathematics to science is developing well so that their learning in both subjects is enhanced. The excellent partnerships with other schools enrich their learning and enable pupils to visit and undertake projects with other schools, including secondary; although, at present, few attend secondary schools when they leave this school. The extremely caring ethos results in very happy pupils who want to learn. The school works extremely well with parents and carers and external support agencies to ensure those with learning difficulties and/ or disabilities, including those with challenging behaviour, receive maximum support. It works tirelessly with parents and carers to help them support their children's learning and to promote regular attendance. Parents now often do let the school know when they are going travelling or report their children's absence on the first day.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

### How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has established herself at the heart of the school and provides

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outstanding energy and vision for improvement. She is very well supported by her deputy and they have worked closely together to create an ethos where all staff have high expectations for all pupils. Morale among staff is very high and they all work as a cohesive team dedicated to improving pupils' achievement. The school carefully checks the impact of its work through evaluating a good range of information including assessment data, lesson observations and discussions with pupils and parents. Demanding but realistic targets are set and senior staff systematically evaluate pupils' progress towards these to measure the impact of provision on raising achievement. The process of school self-evaluation involves other staff but, given the small size of the team and personnel changes, monitoring and evaluation have fallen mostly on senior leaders. Subject leaders are now being empowered to play a fuller part in raising achievement. Governors are well led by the knowledgeable chair and between them have a very good range of expertise. However, due to mobility, there are regular changes of governors from the Traveller community. A system of 'shadow governors' is currently being explored to ensure smoother transition. Arrangements for safeguarding are excellent and reflect high standards of pastoral care and a safe environment. The school works very effectively to ensure it connects with all parents and carers and the appointment of a community cohesion worker has strengthened this. Innovative features of its work include home visits for pupils of all ages; parents' full access to school and classrooms at all times; workshops for parents in school and on the Travellers' site; help for parents with reading and writing and accessing services. The school promotes community cohesion extremely well. The school is a very united place where all staff and pupils value each other's cultures; for everyone is valued. Although most of the pupils are Catholic, the range of different cultures and faiths in the school are celebrated. Outreach events, including those with other schools, colleges and wider communities, share expertise and help others to learn from the schools' extensive experience. Well-developed international links enhance pupils' understanding of children's lives in other countries. The school works tirelessly to involve all local communities and ensures the school can be regularly used for community events.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>



<b>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</b> Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly into Reception because of the excellent induction processes. Very few children entering Reception have received pre-school education. Children's overall skills, knowledge and understanding on entry are low because of weaknesses in their speaking and listening skills, personal development and knowledge and understanding. Children make good progress with excellent gains in their personal development, although by the end of Reception standards are still well below the expected levels for their age. This includes skills in communication, reading and writing. Their good progress stems from strong teaching and the way learning is tailored to every child's needs, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The promotion of children's welfare and safety is outstanding and parents and carers are very pleased that school is so safe and children like it so much.

There is a strong focus on improving personal, language, literacy and numeracy skills through the provision of a broad, practical and interesting curriculum. Adults plan a wide range of worthwhile and stimulating learning opportunities indoors and outside, striking a good balance between adult-led activities and those which children select for themselves. The exciting outdoor area is impressive for physical development and well used for promoting creative development through role play. However, there are fewer resources for encouraging children's mathematical development outdoors. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. The assessment of individual attainment and progress is very thorough and regularly evaluated by school leaders as well as staff.

### *These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers are pleased with the school. Parents and carers commented how pleased they were that their children were getting a good

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education and how they were all made to feel welcome in the school. The majority of questionnaires were scribed by the local authority minority ethnic pupils' service for the parents who were not able to read or write. These parents' comments included delight that their children were being educated although they had not always been to school themselves. However, some parents and carers would like their children to receive more regular homework and the inspection team and the school agree.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Crays Hill Primary 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. The inspection team received 21 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 64 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	14	67	7	33	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	14	67	7	33	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	12	57	8	38	1	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	10	48	9	43	1	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	12	57	9	43	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	12	57	5	24	4	19	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	11	52	10	48	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)	12	43	12	57	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	9	43	11	52	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	11	52	10	58	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	52	10	48	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	13	62	8	38	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	13	62	8	38	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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



9 October 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Crays Hill Primary School, Billericay, CM11 2UZ

Thank you very much for the friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We really enjoyed talking to you and finding out about the interesting things you do.

Firstly, you need to know your school is a good one where you make good progress. Here are some of the many things your school does well.

You do well in reading, writing and mathematics.

Those of you in Reception get off to a good start.

You help to make your school such a special place because you are helpful, work hard, and behave extremely well.

You welcome new children and really help them to feel at home.

You understand how very important it is to keep fit and healthy and enjoy lots of sport. You know you should not eat too many sweets and cakes.

You have some great opportunities for sport and outside visits.

Staff take very good care of you. You get extra help if you need it so you can learn new things as quickly as possible.

Your headteacher leads you all extremely well and all the staff and governors think very carefully about what is best for you.

This is what we are asking the school to improve.

Help you to improve your spelling, punctuation and handwriting.

Make sure your work is never too easy.

Make sure you all know the importance of attending school and all of you attend regularly when you are not travelling.

We hope you will continue to enjoy school and continue to work hard in all you do.

Yours sincerely

Eileen Chadwick

Lead inspector

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