

Crofton Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101611
Local Authority	Bromley
Inspection number	355038
Inspection dates	20–21 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Alison Storey HMI

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	454
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sue Hannay
Headteacher	Mr John Brown
Date of previous school inspection	21 September 2007
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Age group	4–7
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. They visited a total of 30 lessons and small group sessions, some of which were led by one or more teaching assistants; 19 teachers were observed. The inspectors observed the school's work, and held meetings with groups of pupils, staff and governors. They looked at a range of documentation, including the school's analysis of pupils' attainment and the progress they make, data on attendance and behaviour, evidence of leaders' monitoring and evaluation and plans for improvement, and reports by the local authority following their visits. The inspectors also evaluated questionnaire responses from 153 parents and carers and 47 staff.

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

- how successful the range of strategies to improve writing, particularly for boys, has been.
- how effectively the school identifies and meets the needs of all groups of pupils, especially those that are potentially most in need and the higher attainers.
- how well pupils are supported to know how well they are doing and how they can improve.
- how the of sharing leadership roles and the responsibility for improvement more widely among staff has impact.

Information about the school

Crofton is a much larger-than-average infant school. Just over 80% of the pupils come from a White British background. The remainder come from a range of other ethnic backgrounds. Very few are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below that found nationally. A higher proportion than average has a statement of special educational needs because the school has a special unit that caters for up to ten pupils with severe learning difficulties. A second special unit was opened in September 2009 for up to four pupils with complex learning needs and/or extremely challenging behaviour. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The school has received a number of awards, including the Activemark, Artsmark, Healthy Schools and an Eco Bronze Award. A breakfast and an after-school club are run on the school premises but are not managed by the governing body and so were not looked at as part of this inspection.

The deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2009, following the promotion of the previous post holder. One of the three assistant headteachers left the school in July 2010 to take up an advisory role for the local authority. The responsibility of the special educational needs coordinator was being covered by a one-year temporary promotion from within the school at the time of the inspection. A building programme, to refurbish one of the special units, was taking place at the time of the inspection.

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

It is evident from the pupils' attitudes and the questionnaires completed by parents and carers that they agree with the inspectors that Crofton is a good school. One parent/carer hoped that inspectors would 'see Crofton as a brilliant school'. It is certainly determined to be outstanding and, in a number of aspects, it has already achieved this ambition.

Most pupils make good progress and standards are high by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. The pupils have an extremely well-developed awareness of their own safety and that of others, consistently behave well and are developing a good sense of their place in the world. They are well prepared for their next school and future life. This is the result of a successful combination of factors.

- A highly inclusive and caring environment that nurtures pupils' learning and personal and social development. As one parent/carer observed, 'It is a big school from the outside but in reality each child matters.' Pupils from the two units are well supported through a good balance of time in their own base and joining in class or whole-school activities.
- Excellent systems for keeping pupils safe.
- The good start pupils make in the Early Years Foundation Stage. By the end of the Reception year standards are already above those expected for their age.
- The school has introduced a new curriculum since the last inspection. A themed approach, based on topics that are relevant to the pupils, creates meaningful links between subjects and gives writing a purpose. The international dimension helps the pupils to appreciate the local, national and global communities beyond their school.
- A whole-school focus on lessons being about what the pupils are learning, rather than what they are doing, helps the pupils to understand how well they are doing. Individual targets help them to know what they are aiming for.
- Good systems for tracking the progress of all pupils during the course of the year. Particularly close attention is paid to the progress of those pupils who are more at risk of underachievement and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The quality of the additional support they receive, often from teaching assistants, is good. It is carefully targeted and regularly reviewed to make sure it is working. As a result, all groups of pupils make good progress.
- The creation of teams to lead aspects of the school's work and the delegation of responsibilities beyond the senior leaders ensures that members of staff at all levels know what they have to do to bring about improvement. Momentum is not

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lost if staff leave because others are well prepared to take on the roles.

The school demonstrates that it is in a strong position to continue to improve through its recent proven success in tackling issues such as raising the achievement of the more needy pupils and steadily improving the standards boys reach in writing. Accurate monitoring and evaluation give senior leaders a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have identified that more teaching needs to be outstanding, that there is more to do in developing the curriculum to meet the needs of the gifted and talented and that even more pupils could achieve the higher levels, especially in writing. Focused plans are in place.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels, particularly in writing, by:
 - ensuring that those pupils with the potential to reach the higher levels are identified as early as possible and that their progress is carefully tracked
 - providing suitable challenge in lessons and through additional activities.
- Implement plans to lift the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by ensuring that:
 - lessons consistently take account of the pupils' previous learning and what they need to learn next and give them opportunities to be independent learners
 - feedback consistently helps the pupils to understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve and supports them to assess their own learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

The pupils enjoy school because the staff plan interesting activities to bring learning to life and make lessons fun. They respond well to the adults' own enthusiasm in lessons and the good relationships they develop with their classes or groups. On the whole, the pupils are usually interested in what they are doing. They behave well, listen attentively and respond confidently to questioning during whole-class sessions and apply themselves well to the tasks set for them. They know what they are learning and make good progress in lessons and over time.

The pupils move around school very sensibly, despite the size of the building. Playtimes are enjoyable, sociable occasions. The pupils are polite and mature for their age, respect the need for rules, such as not crossing the 'magic line' out of the main playground, and have a well-developed sense of the difference between right and wrong. They say that, occasionally, some pupils do not behave well, but are confident that the staff will sort out any problems.

The pupils are encouraged to have a strong voice in school decision-making. The

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school council is influential. Through their representatives, all pupils have a chance to make an important contribution to discussions about issues such as whether pupils should be allowed to bring their own toys to school. The oldest school councillors take it in turns to report the outcomes of these meetings to the leadership team. Pupils of all ages take on responsibilities and the older pupils act as buddies to the youngest.

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	1
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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Crofton is right to describe itself as a caring community with learning at its heart. The school is very effective in supporting pupils to overcome any barriers to learning and achieve their potential, whether in the two special units or the main school. The staff are very successful in identifying pupils who need additional support and meeting their needs through a wide range of intervention strategies, from additional teaching in small groups to lunchtime sessions to develop social skills. Links with outside agencies are very effective. The appointment of a family worker since the last inspection has been invaluable in supporting families with particular needs or problems and in improving attendance, so that it is now good.

The best lessons take account of what the pupils have learnt already and are carefully planned to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding. The teachers give the pupils opportunities to be independent learners and just the right mix of encouragement and support to persevere when they feel something is too hard. Good questioning gets them to explain their thinking and helps them assess for

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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themselves what they have learnt. However, sometimes, the teachers do not use strategies to engage all pupils in learning and feedback focuses more on what they did than what they learnt.

The curriculum meets its aim to ‘enjoy what we do’ successfully. Linking topics to current events, such as the football World Cup, and introducing each one with first-hand experiences or role play, such as a jobs fair, engages and interests the pupils. The staff make each topic relevant to the pupils by starting with a discussion with the pupils, about what they know and can do already. Integrating activities related to healthy living and opportunities for pupils to learn about things like money management, or to look after the school’s chickens, make a good contribution to the pupils’ personal development and well-being. A wide range of out-of-school activities gives the pupils the chance to pursue interests and develop skills in a variety of areas.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The senior staff and the governing body work together effectively to move the school forward. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are well-respected by the staff, parents and carers and governors and have created a sense of team spirit. They have used a combination of strategies, from reviewing provision and improving assessment to staff training and performance management, to bring about improvement in areas such as boys’ writing. They know what further improvements are needed. The governing body is effective and kept well informed. They make regular visits to school to understand its work and use data and external reports to hold the senior leaders to account.

The school’s commitment to equality can be seen in all aspects of its work. Pupils from the two special units are treated very much as part of the school community. Senior leaders know which groups of pupils or individuals are at risk of underachieving, keep a careful check on their progress and analyse outcomes. Marking occasions such as Chinese New Year and Diwali celebrates the diversity within the school. A high priority is given to developing the pupils’ ‘international mindedness’, for example through the links being established with a school in east London and another abroad which use the same curriculum. This explains why the school community is so cohesive and the pupils are accepting of differences and developing an appreciation of diversity.

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Safeguarding procedures are outstanding. There are very clear procedures for ensuring the safety of the pupils, backed up by regular training for the staff and consultation with parents and carers to check that they are confident that their children are safe in school. The pupils are familiar with procedures, for example they know all the staff and visitors should be wearing a badge and are confident to put forward their own views on matters such as making sure pupils do not run in the corridors.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Reception classrooms are welcoming, interesting places to be and routines are well established. Discussions with parents and carers and early assessments ensure that the staff have a good idea of what each child can do from the start. Ongoing observations and assessments keep this picture up to date. Most children join the Reception classes with skills levels that are in line with those expected for their age. Some are below, but equally others are above. They thrive in a safe and stimulating environment and make good progress in all areas of learning. By the time they move to Year 1, standards are above average, particularly in personal, social and emotional development. There is usually a good balance of adult-led activities and opportunities for children to choose what they want to do. Occasionally, when the children are directed to independent activities that they are not really interested in, they find it difficult to concentrate for long.

The team is well led. Opportunities to meet together as a team are used well to support and draw on each other’s expertise. Careful analysis of data is used to review provision and improve outcomes. For example, taking the children’s interests

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into account when planning activities and ensuring more mark-making opportunities indoors and outside have led to improvements in boys’ early writing skills over recent years. Recently, the staff have begun to identify more formally those children who enter with skills levels above those expected for their age, for example in reading, to ensure they are challenged sufficiently. The well-equipped outdoor area is used on a daily basis, but the logistics of sharing it between six classes make it difficult for all children to have free access to outdoor activities throughout the day.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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 work of the school. Everyone agreed that their child enjoys school, that the school keeps their child safe and that overall they are happy with their child’s experience at Crofton. Around 20% of those replying chose to add additional positive comments. A handful of parents and carers disagreed with one or more statements. Usually, the statements that they disagreed with were that unacceptable behaviour was dealt with appropriately, that their child was making enough progress or that individual needs were met. The inspectors found no evidence to support the comments about behaviour or progress during the inspection. They found that behaviour is managed effectively and that the pupils make good progress. Individual needs are met well, although there is more to be done in stretching the more able pupils.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Crofton Infant 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 153 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 454 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	120	78	33	22	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	115	75	38	25	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	81	53	70	46	2	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	87	57	61	40	3	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	100	65	51	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	93	61	54	35	2	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	105	69	47	31	1	1	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)	73	48	60	39	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	87	57	56	37	4	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	69	45	67	44	2	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	60	39	78	51	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	104	68	44	29	1	1	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	111	73	42	27	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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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 pupils' 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.



25 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Crofton Infant School, Orpington BR5 1EL

It was lovely to meet you when we came to your school. Thank you very much to all of you who spoke to us in lessons, around the school and in the special meetings we had. We know that your school takes your views seriously and so do we. We agree with you and your parents and carers that Crofton is a good school and in fact we judged that some things are outstanding. These are some of the things that we found:

- the staff are very caring. They look after you very well and make sure you are really safe at all times.
- lessons are usually interesting and fun and teachers help you to understand how well you are doing and how you can improve.
- the teachers check carefully how well you are doing and give you extra help if you need it.
- you make good progress because you learn new things and get better at others all the time.

To make the school even better we have asked your headteacher and the staff to:

- make sure always that they help all of you to learn as much as possible
- make sure that teaching gets even better.

Yours sincerely

Alison Storey
Her Majesty's Inspector (On behalf of the inspection team)

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