



Crossacres Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105410
LEA Manchester
Inspection number 277352
Inspection dates 20 March 2006 to 21 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Sarah Drake CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Crossacres Road
School category	Community		Wythenshawe
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Manchester, Lancashire M22 5AD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 437 1272
Number on roll	392	Fax number	0161 436 2532
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Ms Katherine Leach
Date of previous inspection	28 February 2000	Headteacher	Mr Barry Chalmers

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Crossacres is a large school serving an area of significant deprivation to the south of Manchester. Broadly average numbers of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and a high proportion is eligible for a free school meal. The great majority of pupils are of white British heritage and very few speak English as an additional language. The school opened in 2001 and was removed from special measures in March 2004. The acting headteacher took up post in September 2005 and will stay until the arrival of the new permanent headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Crossacres is a good and improving school. It has an accurate view of its own effectiveness. Staff members' good teamwork and strong commitment to the pupils have helped the school come through a difficult period with a clear sense of purpose. The school provides satisfactory value for money. Other than in English at the end of Year 6, standards are broadly in line with the national average and pupils of all abilities achieve well. This is because teachers organise interesting, relevant activities for them to do and explain them well. Good quality relationships pervade the school, helping to create a harmonious and supportive community. Pupils' behaviour is good overall because staff are skilled at managing those who find self-discipline difficult. The good links made between subjects increase pupils' enjoyment of learning and promote their communication skills well. Good quality care helps pupils to feel at ease in school and to benefit from the opportunities it provides. Parents are very positive about the school but do not always support it sufficiently well over their children's attendance.

The leadership team provides clear direction and ensures that all staff contribute to improvement. Recent improvements in the analysis of pupils' progress are beginning to have an impact but staff's use of the information and their guidance to pupils are at an early stage of development. The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage are good but the under-development of the outdoor area restricts its use as a learning environment. Initial good improvement since the last inspection faltered during a period of leadership upheaval. It is now continuing apace and the strength of the current leadership team means there is good potential to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

Raise standards, particularly in English, by:

- improving teachers' use of assessment to identify the progress made by pupils and pinpoint the steps they need to take next to improve their work
- continuing to work with parents to increase attendance levels.

When funding allows, improving the quality of the outdoor area for children in the Foundation Stage.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Standards are broadly average. Children enter the Foundation Stage with skills which range year to year from well below to below average. Attainment on entry to nursery this year is below average. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage and standards at the end of Reception in 2005 were broadly in line with expectations. Progress in Years 1 and 2 is also good. Standards in the most recent Year 2 tests were average in reading, writing and mathematics - a significant improvement on previous years.

In the Year 6 tests in 2005, pupils attained broadly average standards in mathematics and science. However, standards were below average in English, particularly so in writing, rather than average as in the previous year. The school failed to reach its targets except for the higher level in mathematics. A good proportion of pupils achieved well to reach average standards from their starting points at the end of Year 2. All pupils who gained the higher level in Year 2 also achieved this in Year 6. Girls performed better than boys.

Currently, good teaching ensures that boys and girls are achieving equally well. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress in response to good quality support from teachers and other staff. Standards are on course to be similar to those of 2005.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good, which prepares them well for later life. They have many opportunities to consider their own and others' feelings, to delight in what life has to offer and to contribute to the community. Their positive response creates a happy, orderly environment. Nursery children were entranced by caterpillars cocooning, while Year 2 pupils giggled with glee at a Spike Milligan nonsense poem. The School Council has a strong voice and pupils' views are taken into good account. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities and carry them out well. They understand about healthy living and they act safely when, for instance, setting out gymnastics apparatus. Through religious education and recent involvement in Fair Trade activities pupils have a good knowledge of different beliefs and ways of life. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong and generally put this into practice.

Pupils' behaviour is good. Staff work extremely hard to help pupils achieve this; patiently and sensitively reminding them of what is and is not acceptable. Relationships are strong and pupils give as a reason for their liking of school that 'everyone is friendly.' They collaborate well in lessons and thoroughly enjoy their learning. However, despite the school's persistent efforts, attendance is too low. Since the removal, for financial reasons, of the full-time attendance officer, levels have dropped back to well below average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. In the best lessons, teaching is well organised and geared well to pupils' preferred ways of learning and levels of attainment. Teachers and teaching assistants challenge and manage pupils well, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, so they are interested, behave well and make good progress. Teachers take every opportunity to extend pupils' understanding of subject specific language. Relationships between pupils and teachers are good. The

practice of pairing pupils as 'talking partners' supports their personal development, as well as helping them to consolidate and extend their learning. In the few lessons that were satisfactory rather than good, the pace slowed and pupils spent too long listening to teachers which resulted in restlessness. Questioning was not directed to specific pupils so that individuals' learning was not checked. Occasionally, challenging pupils demanded too much adult attention.

Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly and use their observations when planning lessons. They celebrate good effort and suggest how writing in particular can be improved. However, the marking is not linked sufficiently closely either to specific targets for individuals or to their levels of attainment and the tracking of pupils' progress is at an early stage. Opportunities are missed to record levels of attainment, such as for different types of writing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. High quality displays throughout the whole school reveal its richness. Recent changes to curricular planning, linking subjects together, add interest and purpose to learning. Visits and visitors provide an extra dimension and added enjoyment for pupils. Strong emphasis is placed on developing literacy skills across subjects. The grouping of pupils with similar attainment levels for lessons in English and mathematics is well planned so all pupils experience similar work suitably adapted to their needs. The Foundation Stage curriculum is good, although lack of resources and the bleak nature of the outdoor area inhibit further improvement. Increasingly, pupils are gaining a better understanding of healthy living, keeping safe and contributing to the community through personal, social, health and citizenship education. They appreciate the extra activities such as choir, sports, art and cookery clubs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Good quality care, guidance and support ensure that pupils feel comfortable in school and make good progress. Pupils appreciate this and say that, 'teachers are kind and caring, they make you work hard and learn from your mistakes in lessons'. Child protection procedures are robust and reviewed regularly; vulnerable pupils are supported well. Health and safety procedures are good overall but playground supervision is satisfactory. Personal guidance is good. Staff have very good knowledge of individuals' circumstances and are tireless with their support in times of need. The 'house points' system creates a healthy spirit of competition which helps to maintain good behaviour and celebrates achievement. Links with specialist agencies are good, including speech and language therapy and specialist teaching on a weekly basis to support those at an early stage of learning English. Academic guidance is satisfactory but pupils are not yet sufficiently clear about the precise next steps to take to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good quality leadership and management have helped the school to maintain its positive ethos and academic standards throughout a period of uncertainty. The deputy and assistant headteachers have kept staff united after the unexpected departure of the previous headteacher and provided a clear thrust for moving forward. The acting headteacher has added further dynamism and good experience of managing schools in difficult circumstances. Leadership takes into good account the views of all those with an interest in the school and works in good partnership with parents, other schools and the local authority to enhance the provision for pupils. Through the improvement and raising attainment plans, all staff are clear about areas for improvement, their responsibilities and how much progress is being made. The focus areas are soundly based on evaluation of the school's weaknesses and the impact of actions is closely monitored.

In the past, the targets set for standards at the end of Year 6 were not sufficiently closely based on pupils' actual rate of progress because of inadequate assessment systems,. Satisfactory assessment procedures are now in place and the recent systematic analysis of pupils' progress confirms that they are achieving well. However, whole school use of information relating to individuals' performance is at an early stage of development.

The school runs smoothly on a day to day basis and sound financial management means that its resources are directed to the benefit of pupils. Over recent months governance has improved with a suitable committee structure, governors paired with year groups and good quality information from school management which enables governors to fulfil their role of critical friend properly. Staff morale is high and with its effective leadership and management the school is well set to move forward.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for making us so welcome on our recent visit to your school. We enjoyed our time with you.

You told us that Crossacres is a good school and we agree with you. Here is a list of the things that we particularly liked about it:

- your teachers organise interesting things for you to do and explain them clearly so that you enjoy learning and make good progress
- you get on well with each other and adults so you have a happy school
- your teachers are very good at helping you to behave well
- the good links made between subjects means that your learning makes sense to you and you develop skills across a range of areas
- staff know you well as individuals and offer you good support
- your senior teachers have led the school well through a difficult period and are well set to bring about improvement.

These are the things that we have asked your teachers to do next to make your school even better:

- record your progress carefully and help you understand exactly what you need to do next to improve your work
- work with your parents to make sure that you attend school more regularly
- find the money to make the outdoor area for Foundation Stage children as interesting as the indoor classrooms.

Your part will be to attend regularly and continue to enjoy learning new things.