

Canterbury Cross Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103177
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	308239
Inspection dates	26–27 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Martin James

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	500
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Malik
Headteacher	Paula Williams
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2004
School address	Canterbury Road Birchfield Birmingham B20 3AA
Telephone number	01214 645321
Fax number	01214 643823

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is much larger than most primary schools. Pupils come from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and nearly all speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school has received the Arts Mark Gold, Active Mark and Investor in People Awards.

The school has been through a period of significant instability since the time of the previous inspection, with a succession of four acting headteachers following the serious illness of the previous substantive headteacher in April 2005. There has also been a high level of change amongst the teaching staff. The current headteacher took up the post in January 2007, and the school now has a stable teaching staff.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good, and their social skills are well developed. Pupils' behaviour is generally good, and they enjoy coming to school. The school's care, guidance and support for its pupils are satisfactory overall, but pastoral care is good, and pupils' safety is given priority. Parents voice positive views about the school, and give it good support. Good use is made of outside bodies, such as specialist sports coaches and special needs advisers.

After a period of instability, leadership and management are now satisfactory overall. The headteacher is providing good leadership. She has put in place a new management structure with a clear commitment to improvement. School leaders have identified, for example, that some boys have not achieved as well as they should because they are not always sufficiently interested or engaged in lessons. They have also recognised that assessment information has not been used well enough either to provide adequately challenging work for more able pupils, or to identify any possible underachievement in pupils' performance. Initiatives to tackle these issues are being introduced, but it is too soon to assess their impact.

Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage, although by the end of Reception very few attain the levels expected of them, largely because of their very limited English language skills. Pupils then make satisfactory progress through Years 1 to 6 though standards by Year 6 remain below average. More able pupils do not achieve as well as other pupils because not enough is always expected of them. Furthermore, girls consistently perform better than boys in all subjects.

Teaching, learning and the curriculum are satisfactory. Teachers relate well to pupils, and teaching assistants are deployed well, supporting all groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Much well directed advice is given to pupils in class, but neither comments made in their books, nor the targets provided for them, help them to understand clearly how to improve their work. Pupils benefit from the good range of visits and clubs that enrich the curriculum, and pupils show a clear understanding of the importance of healthy eating and keeping safe.

All staff and governors show a commitment to improving the school, and self-evaluation is accurate in identifying strengths and weaknesses. Despite the difficulties that it has experienced, the school has adequately addressed the issues raised in the previous inspection. Current planning shows a clear awareness of the ways to take the school forward, new initiatives are beginning to take effect and the school demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children settle happily into all the classes, and the adults provide them with an appropriate balance between teacher-led activities and opportunities to choose for themselves. A good range of resources is provided, although the school is currently working to extend the use of the outdoor area. The staff work hard to create a friendly and caring learning environment, and children enjoy school and develop good social skills. As a result of good teaching, the children make good progress, although, because of their weak language skills, very few are able to attain the standards that are expected by the end of Reception.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more relevant and interesting learning experiences for lower achieving boys, to capture their attention and help them raise the standard of their work.
- Ensure that teachers consistently provide challenging activities for pupils, especially those who are more able.
- Ensure that marking and target setting help pupils understand clearly how to improve their work.
- Provide a rigorous approach to monitoring and evaluating pupils' achievement, to ensure that they are all achieving as well as they can.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory, but which have areas of underperformance, will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are below average, but pupils, nearly all of whom are learning English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress. Children's attainment on entering Nursery is well below the level expected, especially in language and literacy. By the end of Reception, whilst very few children achieve the targets set for them, their progress is good, especially in their personal development. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2, with current standards being below average in Year 2.

Standards in Year 6 are usually below average, as they are at present, although progress remains satisfactory. The weakest area of pupils' work has been in English, where in 2006 there was some underachievement. The school made considerable efforts to improve this picture and, as a result, there was clear improvement in 2007. The school recognises, however, that more might still be expected of more able pupils. Furthermore, girls performed significantly better than boys in all subjects and, for example, in English the standard of girls' work was broadly in line with national expectations. The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and this is enabling them to make steady progress towards their targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils generally enjoy lessons and most have sensible attitudes to their work. Most pupils behave well, although a few are restless and inattentive at times in class. Pupils are courteous and welcoming, and they are proud of their school. They feel safe in school, and they say that bullying is not a problem. Attendance is satisfactory and has improved, especially in relation to long-term absences. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and the wider community. They readily carry out a variety of responsibilities, for example as school councillors, prefects and peer mediators, and they take their roles seriously.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to live healthy lives and they benefit from the good opportunities provided for exercise and sport. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and their cultural understanding is particularly well developed. The school successfully develops in its pupils a range of personal skills such as confidence and independence,

and pupils make satisfactory progress in literacy and numeracy. This is preparing them adequately for their next stage of education, as well as later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers have sound subject knowledge, and in most lessons they have good relationships with their pupils. This leads to a happy atmosphere in classrooms, where pupils enjoy their work and are keen to learn. Good use is made of interactive whiteboards to enhance teaching, explanations and instructions are clear and this captures most pupils' interest. However, some boys are not always interested or attentive in lessons. Teaching assistants are fully involved in lessons and provide good support to all pupils where needed.

The school has an increasing range of assessment information. However, there are often times when insufficient account is taken of this information, and there is little variation in the demands of the work given to pupils. As a result, some pupils, particularly those who are more able, are not challenged enough. In lessons that lack this challenge, the pace of learning for these pupils is often slow.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Pupils study a broad range of subjects and topics, and this contributes towards their satisfactory progress. Music has improved since the previous inspection, and physical education is enhanced through links with a specialist sports college. Insufficient use has been made of literacy and numeracy in other subjects of the curriculum in the past, although the school is currently in the process of developing these links to contribute towards raising standards. The curriculum has not always captured the interest of some boys, and this has contributed towards the lower standards they have achieved. A start has been made in addressing this issue, through, for example, the introduction of suitable topics and group activities. However, the school recognises that there is still more to do in this direction.

In the Foundation Stage, a wide range of activities and experiences is provided for the children. However, limited use has been made of the outdoor area. Good attention is paid throughout the school to developing pupils' personal skills, as well as their awareness of healthy lifestyles. There is a wide range of outings, residential visits and clubs, together with visitors to the school, which pupils enjoy and support with enthusiasm.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The welfare of the pupils is at the heart of the school's work, and adults ensure that there is good pastoral care. In this respect, there is a strong focus on ensuring the well-being of every pupil, with staff taking particular care of vulnerable pupils and those who are new to the school. Pupils in turn are very confident that they have an adult to turn to if they are worried. Child protection procedures are good, and staff are alert to signs that any pupil might be distressed or anxious. Staff ensure that pupils work in a safe, secure and clean environment. Pupils are taught about the importance of healthy living, and they are regularly reminded of the need to take care, for instance when doing physical education.

Teachers mark pupils' work regularly but, whilst they often add words of praise, they do not usually provide pupils with advice on how to improve their work. Pupils also have targets for literacy and numeracy, but these are too broad to ensure that they have a clear understanding about what they need to do to make their work better.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Since the last inspection, the school has been through a period of considerable instability in its staffing, a position that has caused concern to a few parents. This has had an effect on the overall provision being made for the pupils; also a concern to some parents. However, the school now has a more stable leadership and teaching team. The headteacher has helped create a positive and caring atmosphere, and she has a clear vision for the future of the school. She is providing good leadership, and is receiving good support from the leadership team.

Self-evaluation is carried out conscientiously and is accurate in its assessment of the school. Areas for improvement have been correctly identified and plans are well advanced for tackling them. A new management structure is in place, with the emphasis clearly being on improving standards and achievement. A number of initiatives have been put in place, such as making better use of data to assist the monitoring of pupils' progress, to identify and address possible underachievement. However, it is too early to gauge the impact of most of these initiatives.

The role of the subject leaders is satisfactory, and they have a clear understanding of what they need to do to take the school forward. They have studied planning, as well as samples of work. However, they have had few opportunities to develop their leadership skills further through classroom observations. Governors are involved in planning and monitoring various aspects of the school's provision, such as the budget and the school development plan, and they are regular visitors to the school. However, they have not always monitored closely enough the progress that pupils make as they move through the school.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

28 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Canterbury Cross Primary School, Birmingham, B20 3AA

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school and showing us your work. We enjoyed our visit, and talking to you all, I am writing to tell you what we found out about the school, what we think is good and what we think needs to be made better. Overall, you are in a satisfactory school, where you are making steady progress with your work. The headteacher and other staff know what they need to do to make the school better.

What the school does well.

- Children in Nursery and Reception get off to a good start.
- Nearly all of you behave well and are friendly and polite.
- You enjoy the range of activities that the school provides, such as the visits and different clubs.
- The staff know you well, and you receive good care and support from them.
- You know all about how important it is to eat healthy food and take exercise.

What the school has been asked to improve.

- Help some of you, especially some of the boys, to do better, by making sure you are all interested and involved in your lessons.
- Make sure that you all get work that suits you and is hard enough for you.
- Provide you with clear targets and comments in marking, to help you understand how to improve your work.
- Keep a close check on the progress you are making, to ensure that you are all doing as well as you can.

You can help too, by telling your teachers when you think work is too easy, and by asking them how you can make your work even better.

We wish you all good luck for the future.

Best wishes

Martin James Lead inspector

Annex B



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