

Crossacres Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105410
Local Authority	Manchester
Inspection number	324220
Inspection dates	11–12 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Steve Rigby

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	397
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	83
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Katherine Leach
Headteacher	Mrs Suzanne Blay
Date of previous school inspection	20 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Crossacres Road Wythenshawe Manchester Lancashire M22 5AD
Telephone number	0161 437 1272
Fax number	0161 436 2532

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger than average primary school serves an area of social and economic disadvantage. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above the national average. Most pupils are of White British heritage and there are a small but increasing number of pupils from minority ethnic heritages or who speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. Since the last inspection the school has a new headteacher and a significant number of new appointments. The Early Years Foundation Stage building recently experienced a serious fire that has required staff to completely reorganise and relocate the unit. It is comprised of a Nursery and two Reception classes. Crossacres holds several awards including the Healthy Schools, the Eco Schools Silver and Artsmark Bronze awards.

There is a privately managed after-school and holiday club on the school site. This was inspected separately and will receive a separate written report which will be available on the Ofsted website.

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 school with some outstanding features such as the Early Years Foundation Stage and the care, guidance and support it provides for its pupils. The overwhelming majority of parents express their support of the school and state that their children are happy. They appreciate the school's efforts and a typical comment is that, 'All the staff try very hard and the school is improving.' Positive links with families contribute considerably towards the school's good work and help foster community cohesion.

Achievement in Key Stage 1 is good following the excellent start pupils make in the Early Years Foundation Stage. There has been an improvement in standards attained by the end of Year 2 over the last few years and these are now broadly average. Current standards at the end of Year 6, as shown by pupils' work and school data, are average. The school's results in national tests at the end of Year 6 were well below average in 2008 from pupils who had entered Year 3 with standards well below average. Only recently is there strong evidence to show that standards are now reaching the levels expected for pupils' ages in all Key Stage 2 classes and that achievement is good. This can be attributed to an improvement in teaching and learning and the effective monitoring of pupils' progress. This good achievement includes pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and pupils from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds whose needs are well met, allowing them to be fully included in all that is offered.

Teaching and learning are good with some that is outstanding. Pupils learn well and make good progress in response to teachers' good use of assessment information to match work to pupils' needs, their good subject knowledge and enthusiasm. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) by staff in lessons enhances presentation and stimulates pupils' interests. However, pupils have limited access to computers throughout the day and opportunities to use ICT in their learning and independent work are missed. Assessment information is used well to set challenging targets. A skilled and highly effective team of teaching assistants support the most vulnerable pupils well.

A rich and broad curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to participate in sports, ecology work, music and the arts. However there are insufficient opportunities for pupils at Key Stage 1, particularly younger pupils, to extend their language skills through a continuing programme of imaginative play and outdoor learning opportunities, as experienced in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Pupils' personal development and well-being is good. Pupils enjoy lessons and participate fully in them. Behaviour is exemplary and bullying is rare. Pupils are very well aware of the need to adopt healthy lifestyles and to act safely around the school and towards one another. The school provides an outstanding level of care and ensures that all health and safety and safeguarding requirements are fully met. Levels of attendance are broadly average but there are a small number of persistent absentees.

The school has a good capacity to improve. Issues from the previous inspection have been dealt with successfully, particularly in relation to the academic guidance to direct pupils on how to improve their work. Leadership and management are good and clearly focused on raising standards. The headteacher is well supported by her staff and the parental body who appreciate her openness and willingness to discuss matters with them. The quality of teaching and learning is regularly monitored and resources directed effectively towards the greatest need. Governors

provide good support and adopt a supportive but critical focus to ensure the school is doing its best.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are outstanding. From starting in Nursery with skills that are well below expectations for their age some children reach the nationally expected learning goals by the end of Reception. However, despite making excellent progress, most children are still working towards the learning goals set for them nationally by the time they begin Year 1. Children's personal, social and emotional development is excellent. Children listen well, are keen to learn and show independence in accessing the wide range of activities available. Staff plan together and provide an excellent range of exciting activities that allows children scope to choose for themselves how they want to learn. Lessons in numeracy or literacy are extremely well-focused and provide very good opportunities to extend children's vocabulary. Boys' active participation in 'Write Dance' has had a very positive impact on their writing. The excellent provision ensures children are fully involved in new learning and make outstanding progress. Teachers make the best possible use of the outdoor area, with a range of activities that echo the indoor provision. Provision for children's welfare is outstanding and meets requirements. There are efficient systems in place to support children's transition both on entering the Early Years Foundation Stage and moving to Year 1. Children's progress is carefully monitored by designated staff members, who also share in the process of assessment and planning for the next steps in learning. Parents are welcomed into the classrooms and encouraged to be involved in their children's learning and development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the opportunities for pupils to use ICT to support their learning in all areas of the curriculum.
- Increase opportunities for imaginative play and language development at Key Stage 1.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' attainment at the start of Year 1 is below average. They build on the excellent start they receive in the Early Years Foundation Stage to make good progress in Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2 standards are broadly average in reading and writing with a growing number of pupils reaching above average standards in mathematics. The current pupils in Year 2 are working securely at national levels in most areas and are on course to meet their targets. Over time Year 6 results have dipped significantly due to staffing and other issues. Although standards remained well below average in 2008 at Year 6, the pace of improvement was good in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The work of pupils currently in Year 6, the school's data and predicted targets indicate significant improvements in all core subjects bringing attainment in line with national levels. Current evidence indicates good achievement and rising standards for all Key Stage 2 year groups taking into consideration their well below average starting points on entry to the school. Vulnerable groups of pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to other groups owing to well-targeted intervention work and adult support in the classroom.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school places a high importance on pupils' personal development. Pupils feel valued and enjoy excellent relationships with adults in the school. Pupils are attentive and clearly enjoy their lessons. Although pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good overall, pupils' cultural development is less well developed, because their awareness of the wider, diverse global community is more limited. Pupils' social development as exhibited in their cooperation and collaboration is good. They contribute well to the school community. This stems from positive relationships and a desire to improve their school. Older pupils are willing to get involved and take their responsibilities seriously either as members of the school council, the green team or 'play pals'. They have an excellent awareness of healthy foods and that is reinforced through the provision of a healthy tuck-shop and good quality school meals. Pupils use all opportunities to play actively, encouraged by initiatives, with many walking to school. Pupils not only learn and talk about safe practices but demonstrate them very well when they are playing, using the Internet or when they carry apparatus in physical education lessons, showing awareness and respect for others.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. In the best lessons, learning objectives are quickly established and shared so pupils know what they are learning and why. Teachers are skilful in promoting pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence so that pupils are motivated and eager to do their best. Lessons are well-planned, and accurate assessment allows teachers to build on pupils' prior learning. Many lessons benefit from a good pace of delivery, which is enhanced by a good use of the interactive whiteboard to develop learning and provide challenge. This keeps pupils' interest and intensifies their learning. However, opportunities for the use of ICT to support independent study are missed. Skilful questioning ensures whole-class participation and encourages pupils to discover things for themselves through discussion. Teachers make effective links between different subjects to make learning meaningful and interesting. The work of teaching assistants is of a high quality. They work well in partnership with teachers to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities so ensuring they are able to access all lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum that is well-matched to the specific needs of the pupils. Well-planned thematic units of work effectively draw together many subjects allowing learning to become more interesting and meaningful, such as the scientific testing of pupils' parachutes in a topic on the Second World War. Visitors and visits to relevant places in the local area further enrich the curriculum and are enjoyed by pupils. The school works well in raising the aspirations of the pupils by using the links they have established with, for example, Manchester airport by heightening pupils' awareness of future employment and increasing their confidence in achieving future economic well-being. However, younger pupils in Key Stage 1 have insufficient opportunities to extend their language skills through a continuing programme of imaginative

play and outdoor learning. A very good range of lunchtime and after-school activities are available and well supported by pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding and appreciated by parents. The staff are committed to promoting enjoyment and achievement and supporting pupils' needs. They take every opportunity to engage parents in the work of the school and their children's learning. There is a high awareness of the importance of pupils' health and safety and current requirements for child protection. Safeguarding procedures meet current government requirements and risk assessments are fully in place. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and well cared for. Excellent assessment procedures track pupils' progress. All pupils are fully included and special provision is made for the school's most vulnerable pupils who are identified as needing specific additional support especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school works hard to encourage good attendance, even amongst a small group of persistent absentees. Teachers provide clear guidance in their marking of recorded work. It not only boosts pupils' self-esteem through praise but also advises them how they can next improve their learning. This is resulting in pupils reaching and even exceeding challenging targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Recent improvements in standards and achievement can be attributed to the strong leadership and clarity of vision of the headteacher and the senior management team. The process of devolving management is good and the school encourages staff to share responsibilities. This was exemplified by the outstanding success of the recently reorganised Early Years Foundation Stage unit following a serious fire. Rigorous systems of self-evaluation ensure an accurate view of the school's performance. Teachers benefit from helpful feedback about their work and this has created a positive work ethic. Staff morale is high and teamwork strong: this matched with the improvements made to date and staffing stability gives the school a good capacity to continue to improve. The headteacher and key staff closely monitor planning, assessment and pupils' achievement, allowing them to deploy resources and use intervention strategies effectively to meet individual and group needs; this demonstrates the school's successful commitment to equality of opportunity. The school actively supports community cohesion through links with the local community although the school recognises that national and international links need to be developed further to ensure pupils recognise and celebrate the diversity of cultures within a multicultural society. The governing body is well informed, supportive and able to hold the school to account. They work in close harmony with the headteacher and with the school management team.

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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?	2
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
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 learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I would like to thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we came to inspect your school. Thank you for talking about your school and explaining to us how you enjoyed your time in school. You showed excellent manners and behaviour towards one another and the adults in your school. You also told us just how much you enjoyed the opportunities you have to try different things in your after-school clubs. Your school is a good one that is improving, as is your attendance and punctuality. The staff and those who lead your school look after you exceptionally well and ensure you are safe and well cared for. You told us you feel safe and that there is always someone that you can share problems with. The adults in your school want you to do well and so I have asked them to make sure that:

- you are provided with a greater number of opportunities to use computers in your classrooms
- pupils in Years 1 and 2 have more opportunities to develop their language skills and learn through creative and imaginative play.

We know the staff will help you all they can but you can help by working hard and building on your improvements. Best wishes and good luck for the future.