

Crook Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114056
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	378788
Inspection dates	26–27 March 2012
Lead inspector	Christine Cottam

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	325
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dennis Halladay
Headteacher	Antonella Lupton
Date of previous school inspection	29 April 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

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Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited 20 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 14 different teachers and looked at pupils' work. They listened to pupils read and talked to them about their reading. Discussions took place with governors, staff, and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documents, including those related to safeguarding, the school's improvement plans and evaluation records, as well as its own assessment data. The inspectors analysed questionnaires from pupils and staff as well as those from 43 parents and carers. There were no responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).

Information about the school

Crook Primary is larger than the average-sized primary school. It shares a site with a separate nursery school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds with few pupils on roll from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is much higher than average. The school holds several awards including International School status, Healthy School status, Investing in Children and Impetus. The school exceeds the current government floor standards (the minimum level of attainment and progress expected by the government).

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. Pupils make good progress in an environment where innovation and creativity are encouraged. Behaviour is excellent because pupils readily take responsibility for themselves and each other. The school is not outstanding because there is some satisfactory teaching and pupils do not always make quite as much progress in writing as in other subjects. The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire would recommend the school to others.
- Achievement is good. Children join the school with knowledge and skills that are well below those typically expected for their age. They make good progress overall to reach average levels in reading and mathematics by the time they leave for secondary school. Attainment in writing is below average but it is rising.
- Good teaching helps pupils to make progress. In good and better lessons pupils are enthusiastic because the work is interesting and challenging. Where teaching is satisfactory it is because pupils do not have enough time to practise and extend their skills at a level suited to their ability, and occasionally pupils' rate of progress slows a little because work is not always matched well enough to the needs of pupils.
- Pupils have excellent social skills and have a well-developed understanding of moral issues. Their exemplary behaviour in lessons makes a very strong contribution to learning. The school environment is exciting and there is a warm, family atmosphere.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher leads an enthusiastic team who inspire and motivate others so that the school is an effective learning community. The systems for tracking the progress of pupils have been strengthened and this is ensuring standards are rising and also contributes to the good management of performance.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of pupils' writing in all key stages so that achievement in writing is at least as good as that in reading and mathematics by:
 - increasing the opportunities for pupils to write independently in English lessons
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write in other subjects.
- Ensure teaching is consistently good or better by:
 - more precisely matching work to the ability of pupils, particularly the more-able pupils
 - giving pupils more time in lessons to practise and extend their skills and develop their understanding.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Progress in lessons is good and sometimes better, particularly when teachers plan work that is well matched to the different abilities within the class and give sufficient time for pupils to work independently. For example, in a very effective English lesson pupils were able to produce a leaflet to persuade others to attend their imaginary weekend school. Pupils used drama to rehearse their writing and then used prompts from displays to support them. As a result they produced individual work of a high standard.

Pupils' achievement is good. When children enter the school in the Reception Year their abilities are often well below those typically found, in particular their communication and literacy skills. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that their skills in reading and their physical and creative development are often close to those typically found. By the end of Year 6 their attainment is average in English, reading and mathematics. Pupils make at least the expected levels of progress in their writing relative to their starting points. Attainment in writing is rising but is below average. This is because pupils are not given enough opportunities to develop their writing skills. The proportion of pupils reaching higher levels at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is increasing, but remains below average. Parents and carers say that children are making good progress and inspectors agree.

Pupils make good progress in their reading skills over time. They are enthusiastic and read regularly to adults in school. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 use their knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) to decode unknown words and their attainment is broadly average. By the time pupils reach Year 6 they are able to read with increasing fluency and use a range of strategies to interpret the meaning of what they have read. Information and communication technology skills are good because pupils use these skills to help them learn in other subjects.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress in English and even better progress in mathematics, where three out of four pupils reach the average level for their age. This is because progress is tracked systematically and effective programmes are put in place to help pupils catch up. Pupils who are eligible for free school meals have achieved less well in the past, but good support is making sure more are making good progress and the gap is narrowing.

Quality of teaching

The impact of teaching on pupils' achievement is good. A proportion of teaching is outstanding, although the quality overall is a little inconsistent. All lessons are well planned so that learning intentions are clear and pupils know what they are going to learn. Teachers plan a curriculum that stimulates and interests pupils and makes an excellent contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In the best lessons teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic. They plan a variety of activities and use effective assessment strategies during the lesson to make sure that all pupils are fully engaged and learning quickly. Teachers model high expectations so that pupils know what is expected and work hard to do their best. Effective questioning engages all pupils so that they develop their understanding well.

In a science lesson pupils were investigating the best surface on which to build a train track. All pupils made excellent progress because they were interested and the tasks they were given were well matched to their different abilities. The more able were challenged to record their experiment independently and the less able were well supported by an adult and the design of the task. Where teaching is satisfactory the tasks are either too difficult or too easy for some pupils thus limiting the progress they can make. Progress is slower because time is not used as well for learning and pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise their skills or become as fully involved when the teacher is talking. Marking in pupils' books is consistent because there is a clear policy and all teachers follow it. This means that pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. There is a clear and innovative policy on homework which gives pupils choices from an interesting array of activities so that they are enthusiastic about completing work at home. The vast majority of parents and carers agree that teaching is good.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour is outstanding. The school works hard to develop the moral, social and cultural understanding of pupils so that they have a very strong sense of what is right and wrong in different situations and respond very well to the school's high expectations. They are able to empathise with the feelings of others so that, on the rare occasions when bullying occurs, it is quickly and effectively resolved. In a strong lesson based on *'The Merchant of Venice'*, pupils were able to make the link between the persecution of Shylock and bullying at school. They were able to discuss the power that a bully may feel whilst understanding that it is morally wrong.

There are many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for themselves and each other. For example, Year 6 pupils run their own management team and have introduced an anti-bullying room which they organise themselves. Other pupils are playground buddies and play leaders. The outdoor play area is extremely well organised with a wide variety of activities so that pupils play well in a stimulating environment. There is an excellent family atmosphere and pupils say that this is always the case.

Behaviour in lessons is outstanding with pupils showing high levels of confidence, independence and self-control. Learning is very rarely interrupted by poor behaviour. This is because lessons are interesting and teachers manage behaviour well. Pupils have a thorough understanding of how to stay safe and say that they feel safe in school. Attendance has improved over time and is now in line with the national average. Pupils and parents say that where there are small instances of bullying, usually name-calling, it is dealt

with effectively so that it does not recur. Whilst the great majority of parents strongly agree that behaviour is good a very small number raised concerns about behaviour. This included a serious incident drawn to the attention of inspectors which occurred this term and which was a rare occurrence. This was fully investigated by the inspectors who found it had been very effectively dealt with by leaders and managers using robust procedures and ensuring the safety of children.

Leadership and management

The headteacher is ambitious and forward thinking, always looking to develop the leadership potential of her staff. This has led to a strong and dynamic team, well supported by the governing body. Roles are clearly defined so that responsibility is shared, aspirations are high and the challenge to do better is endemic. Innovation and creativity is encouraged so that there are many projects which are having a positive impact on teaching, the curriculum and behaviour. Excellent opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding, with a growing awareness of other countries and cultures through the school's international links. The school has links with external parties which enrich the curriculum and help to develop staff, for example there are international links with India, Venezuela and Tanzania, including delivering professional development to teachers in these countries. There is strong provision for information and communication technology, which has a positive impact on the quality of teaching and the skills that pupils learn. The curriculum is interesting and changes frequently because pupils have a say in what they want to learn, including the homework that they do.

Systems to track the progress of pupils and identify underachievement have recently been strengthened so that they are now more rigorous. This is beginning to have an impact on standards with more pupils reaching and exceeding the levels appropriate for their age. The school is aware that pupils do not perform as well in their writing and is currently focused on raising attainment further. The school has accurately identified its strengths and weaknesses and has effective action plans in place. It has successfully tackled the area for improvement from the last inspection and demonstrates a good capacity to improve. The school has a more positive view about the quality of teaching than inspectors have found to be the case. This is because lesson observations conducted by the school have not focused sufficiently on the impact of teaching on the achievement of pupils. That said, there is a high proportion of good and outstanding teaching which is being driven by effective professional development.

The school has good arrangements in place to ensure safeguarding meets statutory requirements and is effective in promoting equality and tackling discrimination. The vast majority of parents and carers agree that the school keeps them well informed about the progress of their child.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



28 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Crook Primary School, Crook, DL15 8QG

My colleagues and I would like to thank you for your friendly welcome when we came to inspect your school recently, with special thanks to those of you who met with us, talked to us and read to us. Those of you we spoke to and who returned questionnaires told us that your school is a good school and we agree with you.

We think your behaviour is outstanding. You show respect for each other, work hard in lessons and look after each other at playtimes. You learn well because most of the teaching is good and some is excellent. We found many of your lessons to be very interesting and like the way you are able to work together to help each other learn.

We want your school to be even better, and have asked the headteacher, governors and teachers to work on two areas in particular. We would like all of the teaching to be as good as the best so that you all make even better progress. In addition, we would like you to have more opportunities to practise your writing because it is not quite as good as your reading and your mathematics.

You can help your school by continuing to work hard and behave well. I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Christine Cottam
Lead inspector

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