

Crich Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112534
Local Authority	DERBYSHIRE LA
Inspection number	310918
Inspection date	14 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Godfrey Bancroft

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	51
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pastor Chris Hand
Headteacher	Mrs Cheryl Julian
Date of previous school inspection	8 September 2003
School address	School Lane Crich Matlock Derbyshire DE4 5DF
Telephone number	01773 852 384
Fax number	01773 852 384

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school, its achievement, standards and quality of teaching and learning, and investigated in particular the following issues:

- The achievement and the standards attained by pupils currently in Year 6;
- The actions taken to improve achievement and raise standards in science.
- The impact on standards in English of the school's programmes for teaching pupils about letter and word sounds and to improve their spelling.

The inspector gathered evidence from an analysis of information and data about pupils' achievement provided by the school, observations of parts of lessons, parents' questionnaires and discussions with the headteacher, staff, governors, pupils and Local Authority adviser.

The inspector did not investigate other aspects of the school's work in detail, but found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These judgements have been included in the report.

Description of the school

This is a very small junior school, serving a village community. The percentage of pupils eligible for a free school meal is broadly average. However, pupils come from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds. All current pupils are of White British background. The percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average, as is the percentage having a statement of special educational need. The school is a member of the local Sports Partnership.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school is an exciting place to learn and rightly evaluates the quality of education it provides as good. This is mainly because it is led and managed effectively. Pupils benefit greatly from the ways in which staff work together to support each other and from good teaching. Parents and carers are very pleased with the school. A comment made by one parent reflected that of many when she said, 'We think the teaching and learning our child receives is excellent.'

Attainment on entry varies from year to year and is sometimes below average, especially in reading and writing. However, pupils achieve well and make good progress, especially those who experience various learning difficulties. By the time pupils leave standards in English, mathematics and science are broadly average, a pattern that has been maintained over recent years, even when year groups have contained significant numbers of pupils who have learning difficulties. There has been a tendency for standards in science to fall behind those in English and mathematics. However, the school has taken prompt action to remedy this situation through the introduction of specialist teaching and a stronger focus on investigative work. The underlying trend is one of steadily improving standards. Measures of the value added by the school show it to be close to the top 25% of schools for the progress its pupils make. This progress, combined with a good understanding of information and communication technology (ICT), well-developed social skills and their willingness to take responsibility, is laying the foundations for pupils to be successful in their future education and later life.

Personal development and well-being, including pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Behaviour is excellent and attendance is above average, reflecting pupils' enjoyment of school and their commitment to trying to do their best. As one pupil commented, 'I've been to lots of schools and this is the best.' Pupils also have a good understanding of how to stay safe and of the importance of eating healthily and taking regular exercise. The success of this is exemplified by the observation of the school's Healthy Snacks policy. Pupils also make a valued contribution to their community, for example by caring for their environment and helping at the village luncheon club.

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers consistently celebrate pupils' successes and efforts and this helps to motivate pupils exceptionally well. Lessons are planned well to meet the needs of all pupils and to make learning interesting and stimulating. Very effective use is made of teachers' specialist knowledge and skills in areas such as ICT, music and science. This is leading to significant improvements in provision and achievement in each of these subjects. The school's approach to teaching letter and word sounds and spelling is helping to improve pupils' progress in English. However, teachers sometimes miss opportunities for pupils to take part in discussions and do not always give them enough time to plan their answers to questions.

The curriculum is outstanding and focuses very effectively on developing pupils' artistic and creative abilities. The planning for pupils' progress and the coverage of subjects across the mixed age classes is excellent and builds very effectively on pupils' previous learning. There are also very effective systems to capitalise on each pupil's preferred learning style, which helps pupils of all abilities to maximise the progress they make. Music is at the heart of a school that is at the centre of its community. This was vividly illustrated by the excellent concert, held in the nearby, packed, chapel, in which every pupil played an instrument, including brass and strings. For such a small school there is an exceptional range of additional activities with a significant number of pupils taking the opportunity to participate. Theme days, in which different

age groups work together are greatly enjoyed by all pupils. Such days include a European language day and a sports day, which includes activities such as fencing and golf. In addition, all pupils are taught French.

Care, guidance and support are good. Exceptional care is provided for potentially vulnerable pupils, who take great comfort from being able to use the well equipped Positive Play Room and from time spent with Peggy, the school dog. The school meets all the legal requirements to ensure that pupils are safe and cared for very well. Arrangements to track pupils' progress and to intervene in the event of any shortfalls are good. Overall, there are effective arrangements to involve pupils in understanding what they need to do to improve their work. Even so, the school's marking policy is not applied consistently and sometimes opportunities to document how work might be improved precisely enough are missed. Parents, carers and pupils all have good opportunities to express their views about the school's work and to make suggestions about how it might be improved. There are also strong links with partner providers, especially to ensure that pupils who have learning difficulties do well.

Leadership and management, including governance, are good. Governors are supportive and well informed about the work of the school, fulfilling an effective role in guiding its work. In partnership with the headteacher and staff, governors ensure that targets for pupils' attainment and progress are suitably challenging. However, the systems for governors to evaluate the quality of provision are not always focussed closely enough on current developments and the outcomes of evaluations are not recorded. Improvement since the last inspection is good and the school has successfully addressed all the issues for improvement identified at that time. The school's capacity for further improvement is also good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure that opportunities for pupils to be involved in discussion and to plan their answers to questions are used to best effect.
- Ensure teachers apply the school's marking policy consistently.
- Establish a more structured approach for governors to evaluate the quality of provision and record their observations.

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

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 disabilities make progress	2

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	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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?	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 tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

14 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Crich Junior School, Matlock DE4 5DF

Thank you for making my visit to your school such a pleasure. I really enjoyed talking with you and watching you work so hard during lessons. I know that you and your parents and carers think your school is good and you are correct to do so. Your musical concert, in the chapel, is something I will remember for a long time. It was brilliant. You and your school do many things well. For example

- Enjoyable and interesting lessons help you to learn well.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you work and play together really well.
- For such a small school you have an excellent range of additional activities, such as music, various sports and 'theme' days.
- All the adults are good at taking care of you and at helping you to do your best.
- Mrs Julian, the other adults and your school governors are good at making sure everything at your school works well and that you have all you need to help you to learn successfully.

To help to make your school even better I have asked Mrs Julian, the staff and the governing body to

- Provide more opportunities for you to be involved in discussions and to give you more time to plan your answers to questions.
- Make sure that when your work is marked, teachers' comments are clear enough to guide you about how to make it even better.
- Improve the systems for your school governors to measure how well the school is doing and to keep records of the things they see when they visit.

I wish you well in your future education. If you work with the enthusiasm you showed during the inspection, I am sure you will be successful.

Yours sincerely,

Godfrey Bancroft

Lead Inspector