

Crawford Primary School Biggar South Lanarkshire Council

13 May 2008

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1. Background

Crawford Primary School was inspected in February 2008 as part of a national sample of primary education. The inspection covered key aspects of the work of the school at all stages. It evaluated pupils' achievements, the effectiveness of the school, the environment for learning, the school's processes for self-evaluation and innovation, and its capacity for improvement. There was a particular focus on attainment in English language and mathematics.

HM Inspectors examined pupils' work and interviewed groups of pupils, including the pupil council, and staff. Members of the inspection team also met the chairperson and representatives of the Parent Council, a group of parents¹ and representatives of the local community.

The school serves the village of Crawford and the surrounding area. It forms part of the Biggar Learning Community. At the time of the inspection the roll was 35. The headteacher was also responsible for Abington Primary School. The proportion of pupils who were entitled to free school meals was in line with the national average. Pupils' attendance was in line with the national average.

2. Key strengths

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- Confident, motivated and enthusiastic pupils and their achievements.
- The inclusive ethos and the commitment of staff to providing high quality pastoral care.
- Productive partnerships with parents and the wider community.
- Successful engagement of the school community in promoting healthy lifestyles.

3. What are the views of parents, pupils and staff?

HM Inspectors analysed responses to questionnaires issued to all parents, P4 to P7 pupils, and to all staff. Information about the responses to the questionnaires normally appears in an [Appendix 2](#). However, as there were fewer than five responses from staff, in order to maintain confidentiality, only analysis for parents and pupils is provided. HM Inspectors also interviewed staff, parents and pupils during the inspection. The following is an analysis of the views expressed by staff, parents and pupils.

Overall, parents were positive about most aspects of the school. They felt that the school had a good reputation in the local community and that the school buildings were kept in good order. They reported that staff made them feel welcome and that any concerns they raised were dealt with appropriately. A minority wanted more information about the standards of work expected of their children and how they could support their children's progress at home. Pupils were very positive about the school. They felt that they got on well with each other and that behaviour was very good. They believed that teachers expected them to work hard and praised them when they had done something well. They felt that they had a say in improving the school and that the school helped them to keep safe and healthy. Staff were very positive about all aspects of the school. They liked working in the school and felt that there were very good links with parents and the community. They thought that pupils were enthusiastic about their learning and that the school celebrated pupils' achievements well.

4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?

Pupils' learning experiences and achievements

The overall structure of the curriculum was good. The school provided pupils with broad and relevant learning experiences which helped them to develop successfully a wide range of skills. These included an effective focus on health education and the development of pupils' awareness of healthy lifestyles. The school needed to ensure that all pupils experienced two hours of quality physical activity in line with national expectations. Staff provided successfully a range of activities to promote enterprise and citizenship skills at all stages. The school was developing further opportunities to use information and communications technology (ICT) to support pupils' learning across the curriculum. Visiting teachers and visitors contributed very positively to pupils' learning experiences. The overall quality of teaching was good with a few examples of very effective interactive teaching, for example in mathematics at P5 to P7. Teachers gave clear explanations and instructions and used praise well to encourage and motivate pupils. In most lessons, they made effective use of questioning to develop pupils' knowledge and deeper understanding. Teachers shared the purpose of lessons with pupils in most lessons. On occasion, pupils reviewed what they had learned but this good practice was not consistent. Overall, teachers' use of ICT to enhance pupils' learning experiences was limited.

The overall quality of learners' experiences was good. Pupils were motivated, attentive and worked conscientiously on tasks set by their teacher. They responded confidently to opportunities to work together in pairs and small groups and learned effectively from each other. Trips to places of interest, visiting groups and speakers, contributed positively to their learning experiences. As part of their study of democracy, pupils at P5 to P7 benefited from interviewing their MSP. Pupils at the early stages had limited opportunities to be active in their learning, for example through play. Working with members of the Clydesdale Community Initiative to improve the school grounds provided the pupils with useful real-life contexts for learning. Not all staff provided pupils with feedback on their learning so that they could take responsibility for improving their work.

The school had very effective approaches to promoting pupils' personal and social development and to helping pupils develop their wider achievements. Links with the local community, writing a weekly report for the local newspaper and raising funds for charities helped pupils to develop their awareness of citizenship. By taking on a range of responsibilities as prefects, junior road safety officers and pupil councillors, pupils developed their confidence and self-esteem. Serving on a health committee which included parents and staff had helped to develop further their teamworking skills. As a result of their efforts, the school had gained a silver award for health promotion. Enterprise activities enabled pupils to demonstrate self-confidence in real life situations, for example running the school tuck shop. Pupils at all stages worked collaboratively with members of the Clydesdale Community Initiative to plan and build a garden in the school grounds. Residential trips for pupils at P6 and P7 helped to foster their independence.

English language

The overall quality of pupils' attainment in English language was good. Overall, most pupils achieved appropriate national levels of attainment in reading and writing. A few pupils, notably at the early stages, were capable of learning at a faster pace and achieving higher standards. Those pupils not achieving expected national levels were making appropriate progress in their learning. Pupils, particularly at the upper stages, listened attentively and expressed their thoughts and feelings confidently. Pupils at P5 to P7 demonstrated effective skills in class, paired and group discussions. At all stages, pupils enjoyed reading and most read with fluency. They talked positively about their favourite books and their use of the school library and visiting library van. At P5 to P7, pupils made purposeful use of ICT resources to develop their reading skills. They had a sound understanding of different writing styles and wrote for a variety of purposes across the curriculum. Pupils at P3 had written and illustrated a story book. A visit by the local MSP provided pupils at P5 to P7 with the opportunity to produce a report of their interview. Each week, pupils at P7 wrote an article on school events for the local newspaper. The standard of presentation of written work was variable.

Mathematics

The overall quality of attainment in mathematics was good. Most pupils achieved appropriate national levels of attainment. A few pupils were capable of achieving higher standards by being set more purposeful and challenging tasks. Pupils who had not yet achieved the appropriate level for their stage were making good progress in their learning. Across the school, pupils were engaged in practical activities. At all stages, they could collect, present and interpret information using an appropriate variety of graphs and charts. Use of ICT to display survey data, for example, was limited. Pupils at P7 had begun to use spreadsheets and databases to handle information efficiently. Most pupils performed well in written calculations and were developing a sound understanding of money and time. However, they were less secure in mental calculations. They had sound knowledge of angles and could discuss the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes. At all stages, pupils used an appropriate range of approaches to solve problems. They did not have sufficient planned opportunities to apply and develop their mathematical skills in other curricular activities.

5. How well are pupils' learning needs met?

Across the school, the effectiveness of the school's approaches to meeting pupils' learning needs was too variable. In the most successful lessons, the pace of learning was appropriately brisk and tasks were well matched to the learning needs of all pupils. This was not consistent across the school. Teachers did not always make enough use of assessment information to build effectively on pupils' earlier learning. In the majority of

lessons, teachers set well-judged and interesting tasks and activities but some lessons did not develop pupils' learning sufficiently well. As a result, a few pupils particularly at the early and middle stages were not achieving appropriate levels of attainment. Pupils who had individualised educational programmes (IEPs) benefited from having clear learning targets. The school shared the plans with parents and reviewed them regularly. A few pupils with additional support needs did not have IEPs and their individual needs had not been fully addressed. The visiting teacher of learning support provided very effective advice to staff and support to individuals and small groups. Support assistants provided valued help for teachers and pupils. The school had developed effective links with a range of outside agencies to support pupils and meet their learning needs.

6. How good is the environment for learning?

Aspect	Comment
Care, welfare and development	The school's arrangements for ensuring pupils' care and welfare had major strengths. Staff promoted a strong culture of care across the school to help ensure pupils' emotional, social and physical well-being. All were caring and committed and knew pupils and their families well. They followed established procedures relating to pupil safety, including anti-bullying, internet safety and child protection. Effective links with a range of agencies enabled staff to deal sensitively with the needs of vulnerable pupils. Pupils said that they felt safe in the school and knew what to do if they were upset. They were very knowledgeable about the importance of healthy lifestyles. Transition arrangements between nursery and the school were well established. Induction arrangements for P7 pupils transferring into S1 at Biggar High School were well planned and effective.
Management and use of resources and space for learning	The quality of the accommodation was good. The janitor and cleaning staff maintained the building to a very high standard and this contributed to the very positive ethos of the school. There was suitable access to the building for users and visitors with restricted mobility. The reception area was welcoming, with interesting and informative notice boards and displays of pupils' achievements. Throughout the school, staff had worked hard to create a well-organised and stimulating environment for learning. However, the temperature in classes varied considerably across the school with some classes hot and stuffy while others were inappropriately cold. Teachers used the hall and additional teaching areas to enhance pupils' learning experiences. The playground was very uneven. The school had appropriate security arrangements.
Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality and fairness	The school had a very inclusive ethos. Staff, parents and pupils, identified very strongly with their school. Morale amongst staff and pupils was positive. Staff were motivated and generally worked well as a team. Overall, staff and pupils shared high expectations of pupils' behaviour and effort. Teachers' expectations of pupils' attainment were not consistently high enough across the school. At all stages, pupils' achievements were shared and celebrated through colourful displays, newsletters and at assemblies. Pupils felt valued and believed that they were treated fairly. They were helpful and friendly and showed respect for each other. The school used successfully a range of approaches to promote diversity and attitudes of tolerance. The local minister visited the school providing useful additional support at assemblies.

The school's success in involving parents, carers and families	Parents were committed to, and actively involved in, the life and work of the school and in their children's learning. They served on the Parent Council and, with pupils and staff, on the health promoting committee. They attended a range of events including parent meetings and curriculum workshops and raised funds for the school. Staff consulted appropriately with parents about a range of issues, including after-school clubs and activities, and the teaching of sensitive health issues. Parents were kept well informed about pupils' achievements and their children's progress. They knew how to raise concerns with the school and were confident that the school would act on these. Pupils benefited from links with cluster schools, local businesses and community groups including the bowling group and Clydesdale Community Initiative.
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7. Leading and improving the school

[Appendix 1](#) provides HM Inspectors' overall evaluation of the work of the school.

Crawford Primary School provided pupils with a very caring, supportive and inclusive environment for learning. It benefited from strong support from parents and its wider community. The school actively promoted pupils' wider achievements and involved them in decision making. Pupils were happy, motivated and well behaved. Most attained appropriate national levels in reading, writing and mathematics. There was scope to meet the learning needs of all pupils more effectively.

The headteacher was in her second year in post and had developed further the strong partnerships with parents and the community to improve the life and work of the school. As a result pupils' learning experiences and opportunities for wider achievement had been enhanced. The headteacher had built on the school's strengths and had introduced a number of carefully-planned initiatives which had begun to improve pupils' attainment. She recognised the need to share explicitly her vision for the school and develop further a more consistent team approach to ensure continued improvement. The headteacher was supported very effectively by a recently appointed principal teacher. The principal teacher had successfully engaged parents and the local community in a range of activities to improve pupils' experiences. For example, she had involved parents and the local community in leading an activities day for pupils. She provided effective support for colleagues, for example in ICT, and her teaching was a model of very good practice. The headteacher had introduced more rigorous approaches to improving the school through self-evaluation. She evaluated the work of the school by monitoring teachers' plans, observing lessons and sampling pupils' work. Although there were early signs of improvement, for example in raising attainment, there was scope for further development. The tracking of pupils' progress had not led to the provision of appropriate support for a few pupils experiencing difficulties in their learning. The headteacher had successfully sought the views of pupils, parents and staff. This had led to their engagement in the school's promotion of healthy lifestyles. With continued support from the education authority, the school had a good capacity for further improvement.

Main points for action

The school and education authority should take action to improve pupils' learning needs and experiences, self-evaluation and teamworking. In doing so they should take account of the need to:

- meet the needs of all learners more effectively by improving the school's approaches

- to providing support and challenge;
- improve the pace of learning and the consistency of pupils' learning experiences; and
- continue to develop teamworking and ensure that all staff are fully involved in using self-evaluation to improve the school.

What happens next?

The school and the education authority have been asked to prepare an action plan indicating how they will address the main findings of the report, and to share that plan with parents. Within two years of the publication of this report parents will be informed about the progress made by the school.

Eleanor Harkness
HM Inspector

13 May 2008

Appendix 1 Indicators of quality

The sections in the table below follow the order in this report. You can find the main comments made about each of the quality indicators in those sections. However, aspects of some quality indicators are relevant to other sections of the report and may also be mentioned in those other sections.

How good are learning, teaching and achievement?	
The curriculum	good
Teaching for effective learning	good
Learners' experiences	good
Improvement in performance: English language	good
Improvement in performance: mathematics	good
How well are pupils' learning needs met?	
Meeting learning needs	adequate
How good is the environment for learning?	
Care, welfare and development	very good
Management and use of resources and space for learning	good
The engagement of staff in the life and work of the school	good
Expectations and promoting achievement	good
Equality and fairness	very good
The school's success in involving parents, carers and families	very good
Leading and improving the school	
Developing people and partnerships	good
Leadership of improvement and change	good
Improvement through self-evaluation	adequate

This report uses the following word scale to make clear judgements made by inspectors:

excellent	outstanding, sector leading
very good	major strengths
good	important strengths, some areas for improvement
adequate	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	major weaknesses

Appendix 2 Summary of questionnaire responses

Important features of responses from the various groups which received questionnaires are listed below. Where any one group had five or less respondees then, in order to maintain confidentiality, the analysis is not provided.

What parents thought the school did well	What parents think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school provided helpful information about pupils' progress.• Relationships between staff and pupils were positive.• Their children liked being at school and were treated fairly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Set higher standards for attainment.
What pupils thought the school did well	What pupils think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They made decisions which improved the life and work of the school.• Teachers checked their homework and told them how to improve their learning.• Teachers explained things clearly to them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve homework tasks.

Appendix 3 Good practice

In the course of the inspection, the following aspects of innovative and effective practice were evaluated as being worthy of wider dissemination.

Effective transitions

The school has been actively involved in a joint programme for pupils at P7 in Abington, Crawfordjohn and Leadhills in addition to those in Crawford Primary School. To supplement the existing transition programme, the pupils from these four small schools met up weekly in the final term to have lunch, socialise and take part in planned transition activities. These activities helped pupils to develop wider friendships and enabled them to prepare effectively for their move to the large secondary school. Parents and pupils had been very positive about the programme and as a result, the school reviewed its own internal transition stage from P4 to P5. Benefits included the further improvement of continuity and progression within learning as pupils from both classes undertook a language programme that involved them learning collaboratively and independently.

Working with the wider community

As part of an audit for health promotion staff identified that the development of the school grounds would broaden the pupils' learning experiences and allow pupils to engage more actively with the wider community. External funding from *Awards for All* provided the pupils with money to buy the necessary building materials and plants. Pupils and staff worked together with members of the Clydesdale Community Initiative (CCI) to draw up plans to develop a wildlife garden. The programme was scheduled to run for approximately ten weeks. All pupils worked directly with members of the CCI team to build raised beds and

plant a variety of plants to enhance the grounds and welcome a greater range of wildlife into the garden. They have begun to forge links with keen gardeners in the village to work with them and help them to maintain the garden when it has been established.

How can you contact us?

If you would like an additional copy of this report

Copies of this report have been sent to the headteacher and school staff, the Executive Director (Education Services), local councillors and appropriate Members of the Scottish Parliament. Subject to availability, further copies may be obtained free of charge from HM Inspectorate of Education, Europa Building, 450 Argyle Street, Glasgow G2 8LG or by telephoning 0141 242 0100. Copies are also available on our website <http://www.hmie.gov.uk/>.

HMIE Feedback and Complaints Procedure

Should you wish to comment on any aspect of primary inspections, you should write in the first instance to Chris McIlroy, HMCI, at HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

If you have a concern about this report, you should write in the first instance to our Complaints Manager, HMIE Business Management and Communications Team, Second Floor, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA. You can also e-mail HMIEComplaints@hmie.gsi.gov.uk. A copy of our complaints procedure is available from this office, by telephoning 01506 600200 or from our website at <http://www.hmie.gov.uk/>.

If you are not satisfied with the action we have taken at the end of our complaints procedure, you can raise your complaint with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). The SPSO is fully independent and has powers to investigate complaints about Government departments and agencies. You should write to the SPSO, Freepost EH641, Edinburgh EH3 0BR. You can also telephone 0800 377 7330 fax 0800 377 7331 or e-mail: ask@spsso.org.uk. More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website: <http://www.spsso.org.uk/>.

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Footnotes

1. Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.