

# 'We have a school we can be proud of'



## Creswell school battles back after critical report

Creswell Junior School is winning its battle to provide a better education for its 230 pupils.

Following a highly critical Ofsted inspection in April 1997, the school has been turned around thanks to a virtually whole new teaching team led by head teacher Lynne Pawlowski.

And the school has even received praise from the chief school inspector Chris Woodhead who congratulated Creswell on its progress in his annual report.

"The whole ethos of the school has changed," said Mrs Pawlowski. "We have an enthusiastic team and this rubs off onto the children. It is a pleasure to work here and the children now find it a pleasure to learn here."

"It's been hard work but something worthwhile never comes easy."

The 1997 Ofsted report highlighted many problems with the school, from attendance to behaviour and teaching weaknesses, especially in literacy. The school buildings were also earmarked as needing improvements.

"We managed to get new deal money for the repairs and renovations to the building," explained Mrs Pawlowski. "We now have a school that the children are proud of and offers a stimulating learning environment for all."

Part of the school's development has been put down to a new scheme called Success for All (SFA). This is a literacy project widely used in America and currently being piloted in only five schools in the whole country.

In conjunction with Nottingham University, the scheme has helped greatly improve the reading skills of the children at the Creswell school since it was set up in September 1999.

The curriculum controlled literacy hour has been replaced by 90 minutes of strict structured learning and combines reading silently with a co-operative approach.

"By working in small groups for some of the time the children can learn from each other," explained deputy head and SFA co-ordinator Pauline Kelly.

"When we first started the scheme there were over 70 pupils in the less able reading groups, this has reduced to less than 35," she added.

Following the school's success at implementing the SFA scheme, they have welcomed visitors from Leicester, Liverpool and Hull to see how it works.

And the head and deputy from both infant and junior schools have been invited to attend the SFA April conference in Miami, USA. The trip will be paid for by the scheme sponsors.

"We have all worked long and hard on teaching strategies. The SFA scheme arrived at the right time but there is no room for complacency."

February 2000