

Crawford's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	124733
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	380968
Inspection dates	2–3 February 2012
Lead inspector	Nick Butt

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	61
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Caroline Robinson
Headteacher	Clare Farrant
Date of previous school inspection	20 October 2010
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Age group	4–9
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Introduction

Inspection team

Nick Butt

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed 12 lessons taught by four teachers. Meetings were held with parents, carers and pupils, three members of the governing body, including the Chair, and a wide range of staff. The inspector took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation including self-evaluation documents, strategic plans and other development plans. The inspector scrutinised 40 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, together with those returned by staff and pupils.

Information about the school

Crawford's is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. Pupils are taught in mixed-aged classes up to Year 4. Almost all pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above average.

At its last inspection the school was given a notice to improve. There have been several changes of staff over recent years and changes to the leadership of the governing body.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school no longer requires significant improvement.

- This is a satisfactory school. Under the clear direction of the headteacher it has successfully tackled the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. There are now strengths in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and the governing body is effective in supporting the school and holding it to account.
- Achievement is satisfactory. Children make satisfactory progress in Reception and good progress in Key Stage 1. Progress in Key Stage 2 has been more variable because of periods of uncertainty around staff changes. However, there is now a cohesive staff team who are working together well to bring about further improvement.
- Pupils' attainment is in line with expectations by the end of Year 4 in reading and mathematics but below in writing. This is because there has not always been sufficient emphasis on developing pupils' spelling, punctuation and handwriting. A focus on making writing interesting and enjoyable for pupils is having a positive impact, especially in engaging boys, and is helping to close the gap in performance compared with that expected of pupils of this age.
- Teaching is satisfactory, with good elements in all key stages. Reading is taught well and pupils develop a love of books. Marking regularly shows pupils how to improve but they are not always given the time to respond to comments or act upon them.
- Pupils' behaviour is generally good in lessons and satisfactory overall. There is occasional exuberance at lunchtimes. The existing behaviour policy is adequate but does not place sufficient emphasis on rewarding good behaviour and is not always applied consistently by all staff.
- Parents and carers commented upon the improvements in the school and appreciate the work to engage with them and keep them better informed.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment and progress in writing across the school by:
 - focusing on developing pupils' spelling, punctuation and handwriting
 - giving pupils more opportunities to practise their literacy skills in a range of subjects.

- Improve pupils' behaviour further by:
 - revising the school's behaviour policy to have a greater emphasis on rewarding good behaviour
 - ensuring all staff consistently implement the new policy.

- Ensure all teaching is good or better by:
 - maintaining a brisk pace throughout every lesson
 - making effective use of marking by giving pupils time to respond to teachers' comments in their books and to act upon them.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, especially when lessons actively involve them and interest them. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 enjoyed working together in teams to make model animals out of recycled materials. They all contributed to the final designs and shared resources sensibly. Pupils sustain their concentration when writing at length. They are beginning to apply their increased knowledge of sentence structure and vocabulary to make their writing lively for the reader. There remain some weaknesses in their spelling and punctuation, although the school is tackling these. The quality of handwriting varies. While attainment in writing is below expectations by the end of Year 4, standards are rising this year.

Children join Reception with skills and knowledge generally in line with expectations and make satisfactory progress in all areas of learning. They settle quickly into routines and take part in a wide range of interesting and purposeful activities both inside and outdoors. They enjoy plenty of opportunities to develop their emerging writing, such as making invitations to a teddy bear's picnic. Good teaching ensures that pupils now make rapid progress in Key Stage 1 and become proficient in reading and sounding out new words. They achieve well in reading and mathematics. Pupils reach broadly average attainment in reading by the end of Year 2. In Key Stage 2 progress has been more uneven in recent years, but careful tracking has identified the individuals at risk of falling behind. Good support is ensuring that they catch up with their peers quickly so that attainment is generally in line with expectations in reading and mathematics. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress because they receive appropriately targeted support and their needs are kept under regular review. Apart from attainment in writing, where the gap is rapidly closing, there are no significant gaps in the performance of any groups of pupils compared with similar groups nationally. Most parents and carers who returned questionnaires were rightly satisfied with the progress their children were making, and several commented upon the improvement they could see.

Quality of teaching

In Years 1 and 2, lessons are planned well and the teacher has high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils take an active role in assessing their own and others' learning. For example, they can comment on good openers to sentences and explain why an adjective works well. In Years 3 and 4, changes to the way writing is taught are giving pupils the confidence to write at length. They enjoy discussing their ideas and talking through a story with the help of props before writing it down. The planned curriculum takes into account pupils' needs and interests, and is increasingly ensuring that they find learning relevant and sufficiently challenging. This is not always the case, however, and a few lessons do not run at a brisk enough pace to engage all pupils.

Teaching makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Reception and Year 1 children were awestruck by bear footprints that appeared outside at lunchtime, which led them to find out more about bears and think of ways of befriending their visitor. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 considered moral dilemmas in class discussion when thinking about whether all misdemeanours should be punished. They soon found out there were no simple solutions.

There is good teaching of targeted groups of more-able pupils, who are challenged to reach the higher levels of attainment. Skilful questioning extends pupils' learning and they enjoy sharing ideas together. Pupils are given helpful written comments in their books about how to improve their work, but do not have the time to respond fully to them, or show that they have acted upon them. Most pupils find the teaching helpful and feel their work is improving. Almost all parents and carers agreed that their children were well taught. Inspection findings were that while there are good elements to the teaching, over time it is satisfactory.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Most pupils behave well, especially during lesson times, when disruption is very rare. Just occasionally movement from one activity to another is not brisk enough, and pupils can be slow to settle if they are not entirely sure what is expected of them from a task. Around the school and in the playground some pupils can be boisterous. The opening up of the garden at the front of the school for pupils who want a quiet area is proving a great success. While the behaviour policy is ensuring that behaviour is satisfactory and that bullying rarely occurs, a system of sanctions for misbehaviour is not proving entirely effective. The school has identified that not enough emphasis is being placed on promoting good behaviour and that the existing policy is not always implemented consistently, especially at lunchtimes. Behaviour records confirm this. Pupils say that behaviour has improved and are confident that adults will help them if they have a concern. They are familiar with different types of bullying and how to stop it happening, such as prejudice-based and cyber bullying. They particularly like the school's 'worry box' for confidential problems, which they feel are dealt with sensitively. The large majority of parents and carers do not consider behaviour a particular issue, but a small minority disagree. Inspection findings were that behaviour is typically satisfactory, and the school is actively considering new ways to make it consistently good.

Pupils say they feel safe at school. Almost all parents and carers agree with them. They understand about reducing risks and how to be safe on the roads. They also know about internet safety. Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance is above average. They get on well together, with the older pupils helping the younger ones.

Leadership and management

The drive and determination of the headteacher has enabled the school to overcome past difficulties and to show improvement, even during periods of staffing uncertainty. The Early Years Foundation Stage, which was judged to be inadequate at the time of the last inspection, has improved considerably. Children experience all areas of learning both inside and outside, and have good opportunities to pursue their own interests, for example in finding out about different kinds of bears. The governing body, another area of inadequacy last time, gives the school clear strategic direction and its new leadership brings expertise and rigour. Members of the governing body know the school's strengths and areas to develop well. They regularly monitor its work, giving helpful and perceptive evaluations of progress against key priorities. Teaching has improved as a result of careful monitoring and effective professional development. More teaching is now good and none is inadequate, although teaching is not yet consistently good or better. The local authority has made a valuable contribution in supporting the school in raising standards.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and makes a positive contribution towards pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are close links with the parish church and visitors to the school enrich pupils' experiences. For example, a Hindu shared his customs and traditions and pupils entertained members of the Royal British Legion to lunch following the Remembrance Day service, including past and present members of the armed services. While there are some opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy skills across different subjects, for example in describing science experiments, these are not sufficiently widespread.

Careful tracking of pupils' progress and prompt intervention to overcome any underachievement ensures that there are no significant gaps in learning and that attainment in writing is improving to match that in reading and mathematics. In this way, the school ensures equality of opportunity for all pupils and tackles discrimination robustly. Safeguarding requirements meet current government requirements and all training is up-to-date. The school works hard to engage parents and carers and is responding well to their suggestions about how to improve communication. As one parent commented, 'Since the last inspection, the school has been keen to get parents' views and to work with us.' Self-evaluation is accurate and the school's termly improvement plans are focused and purposeful, ensuring that the school maintains its momentum of progress and has the capacity to improve further.

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.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
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.



6 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Crawford's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Stowmarket, IP14 3QZ

Thank you for making me welcome when I visited your school recently and sharing your views with me. I am pleased to inform you that your school no longer requires significant improvement and provides you with a satisfactory education. Here are some of its strengths.

- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress.
- The school teaches you reading well.
- Provision for the youngest children has improved since the last inspection.
- You get on well together and support one another when you need help.
- Teachers make learning interesting for you.
- The headteacher leads the school well.

In order for the school to become even better, I have asked your headteacher and teachers to:

- help you do better in writing by focusing on your spelling, punctuation and handwriting
- give you more opportunities to practise your writing skills in other subjects
- reward your good behaviour and make sure everybody manages behaviour in the same way
- make sure all lessons run at a brisk pace so that you learn quickly
- give you time to respond to written comments in your books to help you improve your work.

You all can help by working hard at your writing and acting upon the advice your teachers give you.

With best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Nick Butt
Lead inspector

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