

Croft Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120125
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	379959
Inspection dates	16–17 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Carol Worthington

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	104
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andy Greasley
Headteacher	Adrian Gyles
Date of previous school inspection	4 March 2009
School address	Brookes Avenue Croft LE9 3GJ
Telephone number	01455 282643
Fax number	01455 282643
Email address	office@croft.leics.sch.uk

Registered childcare provision	Croft Pre-School
Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision	24
Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	7 June 2010

Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	16–17 November 2011
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed nine lessons led by five teachers and two teaching assistants. Meetings were held with the headteacher, subject leaders, and the Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors held discussions with a group of pupils and spoke with many more informally. They observed the school's work, and looked at records of assessments of pupils' attainment, data tracking their progress and samples of their work in books. All safeguarding documents were scrutinised. Inspectors analysed responses to questionnaires returned by 40 parents and carers, 14 staff and 51 Key Stage 2 pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Inspectors judged the impact of strategies introduced by the school to improve pupils' attainment and progress in Key Stage 1.
- They looked at how well different groups of children, especially boys and the more able, gain early literacy and numeracy skills through the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- They looked at how effectively the school promotes pupils' knowledge and understanding of the multicultural nature of the modern United Kingdom.

Information about the school

This small primary school is in a rural location close to Leicester. Virtually all pupils are White British, and very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is about average, but none has a statement of special educational needs. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average.

The school has suffered severe staffing problems in the last few years and has a relatively high proportion of part-time staff sharing teaching posts. Pupils are grouped in four mixed-age classes, but for literacy and numeracy sessions these are divided into small groups reflecting pupils' ages and abilities. The morning pre-school provision is managed by the governing body and was inspected as part of the school. The school has achieved Healthy Schools status and the Basic Skills Quality award.

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: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Croft Church of England Primary School provides a good education for its pupils. They achieve consistently high standards in English and mathematics by the time they leave school because of the outstanding progress they make in Key Stage 2, where teaching is excellent. This is not the case in Key Stage 1 and therefore pupils' achievement across the school is good. Pupils enter the school with skills and knowledge below those expected for their age. Girls and boys make good progress in gaining early literacy skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This has not continued in Years 1 and 2, however, where progress has slowed due to staffing difficulties and inconsistencies in teaching. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics fell in 2010 to below average. Measures put in by the school resulted in this improving to average in 2011, but current assessments show some underachievement remaining. School leaders are tackling this robustly by organising Key Stage 1 pupils in small teaching groups for English and mathematics that reflect both their age and ability. This is similar to established successful practice in Key Stage 2 and improved progress can already be seen in reading, writing and mathematics, though there has not been time for the full impact on attainment to be seen in the current year. These arrangements allow the wide expertise of part-time teachers and highly qualified teaching assistants to be effectively used. Observations indicate that some boys find it difficult to maintain concentration during writing sessions in Years 1 and 2.

A key feature of teaching is the good use of assessment to plan work that matches the ability range of pupils to provide a good level of challenge. This also enables higher-ability pupils, for example, in Reception, to be taught in an older group. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities within the groups results in effectively targeted support and higher attainment. Literacy is developed through motivating curriculum themes which are particularly effective in developing enjoyable reading and writing tasks, for example, following visits to the National Space Centre and a Victorian museum.

Pupils' personal qualities develop well, because of the good care they receive. They have good social skills, behave well and gain an excellent understanding of how to keep safe and live healthy lifestyles. Pupils gain a satisfactory knowledge of the wide cultural mix in the modern United Kingdom but do not get enough opportunities to extend this through first-hand experiences. Their parents and carers are highly satisfied with the care provided by the school. However, despite the many methods of communication employed by the school, including a Parents' Consultation Group

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that involves parents and carers of children in all years in school, a significant minority still feels school leaders could do more to involve them in decision-making on key matters.

The headteacher and senior staff provide good leadership with strong support from the governing body. Despite recent staffing problems which have resulted in school leaders taking on temporary extra teaching loads, they maintain a strong vision for improvement. Rigorous self-evaluation, the maintenance of high academic standards and good improvements since the previous inspection indicate the school has good capacity for further sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all pupils make consistently good progress in Years 1 and 2 by:
 - systematically checking the consistency of teaching and learning
 - providing staff training where necessary for specific strategies being introduced by the school
 - making sure that boys remain focused during writing sessions.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to gain first-hand experiences of the wide variety of cultures present in the United Kingdom.
- Give all parents and carers the opportunity to be involved in decision-making on key matters, not just those on the Parents' Consultation Group.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Current attainment is well above average in English and mathematics in Years 5 and 6, maintaining similar high standards to those of the last five years. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Both produced some excellent examples of diary entries for a Victorian boy who had just run away from the workhouse. All pupils knew exactly what they had to do to gain higher attainment levels, and put this into practice in their writing. Their excellent behaviour and attitudes made a significant contribution to learning. This was a feature also seen in lower Key stage 2, but not in Key Stage 1, where boys in particular found it hard to concentrate when writing about Samuel Pepys. Boys and girls, however, made good progress in ability groups in mathematics in Year 1, identifying important times of day and in Year 2, in the early stages of multiplication. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities were given effective support in the early stages of learning about fractions by well-trained teaching assistants.

Older pupils are able to express their views articulately and participate keenly in discussions about their learning and well-being, but some younger pupils find this more difficult, particularly in carpet sessions, where some are easily distracted and lose concentration. All have a responsible attitude to doing jobs such as class monitors. The school council is strongly involved in promoting a healthy lifestyle and

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checks pupils’ lunchboxes for healthy food. Pupils take part enthusiastically in the wide variety of sporting and cultural activities and enjoy writing letters to children in a school in India. Pupils are prepared well for senior school by their high academic standards and good personal qualities.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils’ behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning are good overall, because pupils make good progress, but there is variation throughout the school. It is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage, satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and outstanding in Key Stage 2. Good lessons are well-structured, with clear objectives and often involve practical activities, such as chalking clock-faces on the playground to reinforce understanding of time. In outstanding lessons, individual pupils are all well challenged by the learning material, know exactly what they have to do to succeed and concentrate well on completing the task. Low-level disruption sometimes interrupts learning in satisfactory lessons when learning objectives are not sufficiently clear or challenging enough to motivate all pupils to work hard throughout the lesson.

The curriculum is based on motivating themes, for example Space, World War 2 and the Great Fire of London, which encourage pupils of all abilities to learn because of the emphasis on drama and practical activities. Opportunities to develop pupils’ literacy, numeracy and computer skills are well set out in all the themes, but writing tasks are better carried out in Key Stage 2. The wide range of sporting, drama and performing arts clubs are popular and well-attended. They include partnership with

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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the local secondary school and residential visits, starting in the locality for Year 2, and moving further afield for Key Stage 2 pupils.

All pupils are well cared for in a very supportive environment. This makes a good contribution to their personal development and well-being, and provides effective support for their learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified early, and support is effectively targeted, so most make good progress from their starting points. Arrangements for the transfer of these pupils in particular are an excellent feature of the good transition to secondary education. The school has improved attendance and has effective measures in place to maintain it as satisfactory, despite a relatively high incidence of illness over the last year.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The good leadership of the senior team successfully motivates the whole school community to share a common vision and ambition for success. There have been good improvements in the use of assessment and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage since the previous inspection. Regular assessments and pupil-progress meetings maintain high attainment in Key Stage 2, where targets set for pupils are challenging, regularly met and exceeded. All staff share high expectations, a strong sense of purpose and a belief in the school's success. The school keeps parents and carers well informed about all aspects of their children's achievements, well-being and development, through a wide range of communications.

The good governing body makes a significant contribution to the work and direction of the school. Its members are systematically involved in evaluating curriculum subjects such as science. They evaluate the effectiveness of the school's regular training in safeguarding and child protection, which is given a high priority. Consequently, safeguarding is good. The school integrates issues about safety into the curriculum, so pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, a point endorsed by their parents and carers in questionnaire responses.

The school makes sure everyone has equal opportunities to succeed. There have been no recent instances of discrimination or racial intolerance. Underachievement of individual pupils and groups is quickly identified and addressed. The current difference in progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 has been identified as a priority for the school's further development. It is too early for the full impact of the small-group

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teaching in Key Stage 1 to be seen, but higher-attaining pupils work with others at a similar level despite age differences. All pupils have opportunities to take part in the wide variety of enrichment programmes, including three residential visits.

The school actively promotes community cohesion within the immediate neighbourhood, where pupils give singing concerts, support local charities and help resolve parking problems. It reaches out to other school communities through a good and beneficial partnership with its 'feeder' secondary school. Pupils' understanding of the traditions and beliefs of people from different cultures in the United Kingdom is less well developed. The school has a satisfactory partnership with parents and carers, but not all of them feel sufficiently involved in decision-making processes.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress so that they enter Year 1 meeting expectations in most aspects of their learning. Children have daily opportunities in Reception to practise their reading, writing and mathematics in short, focused sessions, and these are further developed through the exciting independent activities provided indoors and outside. Role play in a fire station, for example, provided opportunities for children to plan and record ways to rescue their toy cat, stuck up a tree in the outside area. Boys were noticeably more focused on practical activities, and less on writing reports, than girls. Younger children in the Pre-school group enjoy activities such as exploring darkness in boxes and tunnels. They play amicably alongside, and sometimes with, each other, delighting in role play. Adults develop children's vocabulary well by talking about their activities, sharing books and posing questions about adding and taking away numbers.

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Children are confident and happy in the secure and welcoming environments of Pre-school and Reception. Their personal, social and emotional development is good, shown by their good behaviour and relationships with each other and with adults. They fully understand class routines, taking their snack together and older children know that ‘good sitting’ is required on the carpet.

Teachers plan a wide range of motivating activities to develop learning. In Reception, this includes free access to the outside area. Assessment is good across all the areas of learning. Higher-ability pupils are challenged by working with Year 1 pupils in literacy and numeracy groups. The safety and welfare of all children has a high profile. The good partnership with parents and carers extends to daily progress reports in the home school journal. These contain comprehensive information about precise ways in which parents and carers can support their children’s learning. Leadership is good and directed towards further improvement, for example, to engage boys more consistently in early reading and writing activities.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The majority of parents and carers expressed positive views about the school. Virtually all parents and carers expressed complete satisfaction with their children’s experience at the school. Positive comments were received on the caring nature of the staff and children’s general happiness and progress. There were, however, negative comments about the leadership of the school. Some parents and carers felt that their suggestions and concerns are not sufficiently taken into account. Inspection evidence found the school leadership to be good because of the outstanding academic and good personal outcomes for pupils, and the good provision. The school provides many channels, including a website, text messaging, regular newsletters and exit questionnaires at consultation evenings, for parents’ and carers’ views to be heard. School leaders are coping with long-term staff absence well, but information regarding this is entirely confidential and may not be disclosed. An area for further development of the school’s partnership with its parents and carers is given in the report.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Croft Church of England Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 40 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 104 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	29	73	9	23	2	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	31	78	8	20	1	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	17	43	17	43	3	8	2	5
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	43	18	45	3	8	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	19	48	18	45	2	5	1	3
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	8	20	17	43	3	8	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	58	16	40	1	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	18	45	19	48	3	8	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	19	48	11	28	8	20	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	30	21	53	4	10	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	8	20	15	38	11	28	4	10
The school is led and managed effectively	9	23	15	38	9	23	5	13
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	22	55	16	40	1	3	1	3

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



18 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Croft Church of England Primary School, Croft, LE9 3GJ

Thank you very much for being so friendly and helpful when we visited your school recently. It was good to see you enjoying your work and play. We think your school gives you a good education.

Your headteacher and governing body run the school well. Teaching is good, so you enjoy your lessons and work hard, too. In Key Stage 2, you make excellent progress and your high standards in English and mathematics prepare you well for secondary school. Children in Reception also make good progress, but in Years 1 and 2, pupils' progress is slower, and I have asked your teachers to make sure this improves. Your behaviour is good and you all get on well together, so the school is a happy place. We were very impressed by your excellent knowledge about how to keep yourselves healthy and safe.

All the adults take good care of you and you told us you can always talk to someone if you have problems. You enjoy learning about people with different faiths and customs in religious education and curriculum topics, but you do not get enough opportunities to meet people from other communities who live in this country. I have asked for this to be improved.

Most of your parents or carers are pleased with the information they get from the school about your progress, but some feel that they would like more opportunities for their points of view to be heard. I have asked the school to work with the Parents' Consultation Group to make sure this happens.

All the adults in your school want it to be even better. I am sure you do too, so make sure you always do your best in every lesson.

I wish you all well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Carol Worthington
Lead inspector

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