

Croftlands Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112197
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	378442
Inspection dates	15–16 May 2012
Lead inspector	Tim Vaughan HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	142
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Clive Wilson
Headteacher	Sian Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	12 October 2006
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Introduction

Inspection team

Tim Vaughan

Her Majesty's Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed teaching and learning in 12 lessons, assembly and observed the work of eight teachers and teaching assistants and nursery nurses. He talked with a wide range of pupils throughout the inspection and heard a range of individuals read. Meetings were held with members of the governing body and staff. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school improvement plan, the safeguarding policy and the school's own self-evaluation. The inspector analysed 67 parental and carers' questionnaires and others completed by staff.

Information about the school

Croftlands Infant School is smaller than the average-sized infant school. A small number of children are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. A small minority of children speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled children and those with special educational needs is below average. There is very little pupil mobility. The proportion of children known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The school has achieved the Activemark, the Bronze and Silver Eco Schools Awards and Healthy School status.

The school has a Nursery class and shares an outside play space with the Croftland Pre-School setting. The pre-school includes a breakfast club and an out-of-school club. It is inspected separately and was not part of this inspection.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. There is a strong ethos of enjoying learning and supporting one another as a school community. Pupils are happy to come to school and they enjoy the wide range of activities that it provides. A typical parent/carer comment was, ‘The school has helped my child to come out of their shell and believe in themselves’. The school is not outstanding because there is not yet outstanding learning and teaching across the school.
- Pupils achieve well and they make good progress from their starting points although some aspects of their personal, social and emotional development in the Early Years Foundation Stage are less strong. By the time that they reach the end of Year 2, they attain above national expectations. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also make good progress.
- Teaching is good and some is outstanding. There is a strong focus upon the teaching of literacy and as a result, children love books, reading and writing. Staff understanding of how children learn to draw and paint is inconsistent. Consequently, the outcomes of these aspects of children’s artwork are satisfactory. However, other aspects of creativity in the school are strong, including well-developed opportunities for creative thinking and singing.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils say that on the rare occasions that bullying occurs all staff take their concerns seriously and address any problems. As a result, pupils say that they feel safe.
- The school is well led and managed. The headteacher has a clear vision of improving learning and teaching and the well-being of pupils, families and staff. She has a clear understanding of the management of change and as a result, staff are ambitious and keen to improve the school further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding learning and teaching by:
 - further developing the role of subject leaders in monitoring the quality of learning and teaching
 - increasing links with other schools in order to further challenge school self-evaluation
 - sharpening the focus and feedback within termly monitoring of teaching and learning
 - sharing an understanding of outstanding learning and teaching across all staff.
- Improve achievement in personal, social and emotional development by children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - providing a greater range of active play and learning opportunities that allow children to sustain their involvement and perseverance
 - increase teaching through problem solving and opportunities for sustained shared thinking with other children and adults
 - increase opportunities for children to confidently express their feelings and needs.
- Improve the standard of pupils' drawing and painting by deepening staff knowledge of how to provide high quality learning and teaching in these aspects of creativity.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Data and evidence seen during the inspection indicate that children start in Nursery with skills and knowledge broadly typical for three-year-olds. Their skills are strongest in physical development and the curriculum effectively builds upon this through outdoor play. By the end of their time in the Reception class, children make good progress in most areas of learning and their overall attainment is higher than the national figures. They make large strides in understanding the sounds that letters make and in learning to write. However, children's dispositions and attitudes and their confidence to express their feelings and needs are weaker. During the inspection, this was observed to be partly because of a need to support children's play and exploration more effectively during some parts of the day.

Teachers in Year 1 and 2 make good use of tracking and assessment information to plan pupils' next steps. As a result, pupils grow in confidence and emotional well-being. They make good progress from their starting points and achieve well. Parents and carers have an accurate view of pupils' learning. Most comment that their children's individual needs are recognised and that their children enjoy school and are making good progress.

For the last three years, attainment by the time that pupils move to junior school has been above average in reading and writing and improving each year. In mathematics, attainment has remained unchanged, although still above the national average. The school has undertaken a wide range of effective steps during the past year to begin to increase higher levels of attainment in mathematics. For example, Year 2 children have one of their weekly mathematics lessons in the neighbouring junior school. During the inspection, good progress

was observed in a range of lessons, including in numeracy lessons. Consistently good progress was also observed in lessons for the small numbers of minority ethnic pupils, disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs. This is particularly because of the very effective support from classroom assistants and classroom helpers and the clear leadership by the special educational needs coordinator.

There are well-planned opportunities to read in lessons and to read aloud in assembly. Very effective use is made of individual and guided reading in school and a broad range of books are regularly taken home as enrichment activities. Pupils spoken to during the inspection consistently said how much that they enjoy books, even those for whom reading is more difficult. Pupils in Reception, Year 1 and 2 benefit from a very well-stocked library of books that includes good evidence of diversity and promotion of global and environmental issues.

Quality of teaching

All parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire said that their child is taught well. The inspector found that the quality of teaching overall is good, and although some is outstanding, in some lessons teaching is satisfactory. In the best examples, there was clear planning and activities were well matched to pupils' needs. In addition, teachers had high expectations regarding cooperation and teamwork and supported pupils to persevere and do their best. This was evident in an outstanding physical education (PE) lesson in Year 1, where individual expression was valued and celebrated as children worked to travel across large apparatus. Good use of language and questioning to stimulate children's thinking is another strength, such as in a group baking activity in Nursery led by a nursery nurse. Occasional, less effective teaching was characterised by children sitting for too long or by low expectations of children's abilities. For example, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, weaker teaching was related to limited opportunities for sustained shared thinking through play with other children and adults.

Teachers have improved their understanding of the teaching of literacy and as a result, reading and writing have become strengths of the school. Teaching across classes places a close focus upon talk, stories and rhymes. Staff very effectively use meaningful contexts across lessons to help pupils understand the sounds that letters make and to promote communication and writing. However, in the Nursery, meaningful opportunities for children to play at being writers, for example, in the role-play area are too limited.

Across the school, wall displays of pupils' artwork rely too heavily upon stencilled shapes provided to the children. As a result, pupils are not becoming sufficiently confident in their two-dimensional representation of what they see, feel and imagine. By contrast, activities to stimulate children's wider creativity are good and sometimes better. For example, in an outstanding Year 2 literacy lesson, children were completely enthralled about the imaginary creature living in the woodland across the school field. They created in their minds and in words what the creature might be like and made a chant to encourage this unwelcome guest to depart. Furthermore, across year groups regular singing is a strong part of the curriculum.

Classroom assistants and class helpers are deployed well in lessons. In the best examples, additional adults supported groups very effectively as well as in whole-class sessions. For example, in a Year 1 numeracy lesson, the clear explanation from the teacher meant that an unqualified helper could work very effectively to support a less-able group of pupils.

The school has recently invested in Forest School training for a member of staff. This is already enhancing the geography and science curriculum and children who participated in a Forest School session showed high levels of emotional well-being as a result. Extra-curricular activities enrich the well-developed school curriculum and pupils talked with great enthusiasm to the inspector about their learning in the Orienteering Club after school. The Go Green Club at lunchtime was observed to be deeply engaged in planting shrubs to form a new hedgerow. A wide range of other opportunities means that many pupils are involved in clubs and groups. Parents, carers and pupils recognise that the regular celebrations, trips and visitors also enhance the school curriculum.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Relationships across the school are very positive. Those who are disabled or have special educational needs have high emotional well-being as a result of the school's inclusive approach.

Pupils behave well and school records and comments by pupils and almost all parents and carers indicate that behaviour is good and the school manages behaviour very effectively. A wide range of pupils say that they feel valued, safe and respected. They are clear about how to treat one another, show high regard for the school and are keen to take on extra responsibilities such as becoming a member of the school council. They enjoy attending school and show a positive attitude to learning. This is because of the ethos of the school, typically described by one parent who said that there is a 'warm loving atmosphere within the fabric of the school, each child is an important member of the school family.'

Pupils spoken to during the inspection said that instances of bullying are rare. Through class discussions and regular assemblies, pupils know about different types of bullying. They consistently stated that such behaviour is not tolerated. Although a few pupils do not attend school as often as they need to, overall levels of attendance are improving because the school is working effectively with parents and carers to improve the situation. Levels of punctuality are good.

Leadership and management

The headteacher leads with clear vision and sense of direction. Her ambition and sensitive management of change have ensured that the school has continued to improve. Consequently, there is a shared understanding of priorities and a strong commitment to learning together among the staff team. Staff describe the school as happy and strong on teamwork. Good professional development, including for those in leadership roles, has ensured that there are ongoing improvements to teaching and achievement. Leaders acknowledge that not all staff have yet developed an understanding of outstanding learning and teaching.

The curriculum has been enriched and now provides a broad range of experiences including Forest School sessions and several extra-curricular opportunities. This means that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The headteacher is not complacent and recognises that in order to raise standards further all leaders need to take a sharper focus in their monitoring and feedback roles. She has also identified that there are further opportunities for linking to other schools, in order to challenge self-evaluation.

Since her appointment three years ago, the headteacher (ably supported by the governing body) has striven to establish the school finances on a secure footing. This key priority has now been achieved, although this has led to some staffing constraints in the Nursery. The headteacher and governors are aware of this issue and they are developing plans to re-establish full-time teacher involvement in the Nursery.

Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds get on well together in the school and have equal access to learning opportunities and extra-curricular activities. Through the well-developed library, assemblies, the celebration of different festivals and visitors to the school, pupils have a good understanding of equality and diversity.

The governing body plays a very effective role in supporting the headteacher and in helping the school to improve further. Two governors are nominated to oversee safeguarding and they are trained in safe recruitment. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and child protection procedures are very clear.

The school has fully addressed recommendations made at the previous inspection, continued to improve the quality of teaching and achievement, and shows good capacity for further improvement.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
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.



17 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Croftlands Infant School, Ulverston, LA12 9JU

Thank you for your help when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed chatting to you in lessons and around the school. You expressed your views very clearly and they were very helpful to me. I also liked listening to some of you read.

I am pleased to tell you that Croftlands is a good infant school. I was very impressed by the places to play and learn in each of the classrooms. In most of your lessons you are taught well, make good progress in your work and are very well looked after.

I was impressed by the extra groups and activities that you can join such as Orienteering Club and the Go Green Club. I was also very pleased to find that you are having Forest School sessions because this is a wonderful way in which to use your school woodland.

Your behaviour around school is good. You told me that you like school and feel listened to. I was pleased to see the progress that the school helps you to achieve in reading, writing and mathematics. Some of your lessons are excellent, such as the literacy lesson in Year 2 about the creature in the woods and the PE lesson on large apparatus in Year 1. I was pleased that children in the Nursery and Reception are helped to learn to play together and to investigate both indoors and outdoors.

Your teachers work hard to make the school as good as it can be. To help them I have asked them to make sure that more of your lessons are like the very best ones that I saw. I have asked teachers to find ways to help Nursery and Reception Year children become more confident and enjoy their learning even more.

I have asked teachers to provide you with more interesting opportunities to draw and paint as I am confident that you can show what good artists you all are!

Keep working hard.

Yours sincerely

Tim Vaughan
Her Majesty's Inspector

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