

# Crosshall Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	136339
<b>Local authority</b>	N/A
<b>Inspection number</b>	395496
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 May 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Nick Butt

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Academy
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	457
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rob Murray
<b>Headteacher</b>	Julia Elliott
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	N/A
<b>School address</b>	Great North Road Eaton Ford St Neots PE19 7GG
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<b>Age group</b>	7–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	24–25 May 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	395496



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Nick Butt Additional Inspector

Carolyn Wood Additional Inspector

Meg Hackney Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 22 lessons taught by 14 teachers, some jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. They also heard pupils read in each year group. Meetings were held with parents, carers and pupils, three members of the governing body and a wide range of staff. A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority. Inspectors 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. Inspectors scrutinised 175 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and those returned by staff and pupils.

## Information about the school

Crosshall is larger than the average-sized junior school. Most pupils are White British. A few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those supported by school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is average. The school supports a small group of blind pupils or those with sight loss in mainstream classes. The school meets current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

Awards include NACE Challenge Award, Artsmark Gold and the Quality Mark. The school is a regional centre for the National SCITT in primary schools and trains approximately 25 students per year.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- Crosshall Junior is a good school. Pupils make consistently good progress, and reach above average attainment by Year 6. The school is not yet outstanding because achievement is not quite so strong in mathematics as it is in reading and writing, and not enough teaching is outstanding.
- Achievement is good. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and make good gains in attainment as they move through the year groups. The school has identified that pupils in Years 3 and 4 sometimes find it difficult to apply their numeracy skills in solving real-life problems and this slows their progress. Measures to remedy this are bearing fruit as pupils are given increasingly more opportunities to practise their skills. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well because their needs are identified promptly and effective interventions support them in reaching their individual learning goals.
- Teaching is good. There are some outstanding features, especially when pupils are fully engaged in learning and make their own choices about how to tackle an activity. Occasionally, especially at the beginnings of lessons, pupils spend too much time listening to the teacher rather than becoming actively involved.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Most pupils behave well in class and around the school and have confidence in adults to help them with any concerns. Almost all pupils told inspectors that bullying was rare and dealt with well.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher form a highly effective partnership fully committed to driving forward improvement. The leadership of teaching and the management of performance are supported well by strong year-group teams. The outstanding curriculum brings learning to life in exciting and memorable ways.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Raise achievement in mathematics further by:
  - providing even more opportunities for pupils to use and apply their skills in solving real-life problems, especially in Years 3 and 4.
  
- Move teaching to outstanding by:
  - consolidating work to engage pupils more actively in learning, especially at the beginnings of lessons.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Most parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire rightly felt that their children were making good progress, and that the school met their children's particular needs. The school assesses pupils' attainment on entry accurately, and its records and the inspectors' observations show that all groups typically make good progress in all year groups. By Year 6, levels of attainment are above average. Progress in reading is particularly good.

Pupils readily work with a partner or in groups, cooperating well in lessons. For example, Year 6 pupils worked in teams of three to measure how many exercises they could do in a given time, with one person counting, one timing and one exerting. Pupils are very clear about what they are learning, and routinely assess their own or their classmates' progress against a personal 'learning journey' in lessons. This helps them to judge how well they are doing in comparison with the objectives for the module of work. Pupils take a pride in the presentation of their work and share resources very sensibly. The school has successfully taken steps to narrow the gap in reading between boys and girls by introducing an electronic system that particularly appeals to boys. Creative use of online software is having a similarly positive impact on girls' achievement in mathematics, especially as they can access it at home as well. Some pupils in Years 3 and 4 struggle to apply their mathematical skills in solving real-life problems. The school is seeking ways to give them more opportunities to practise their skills in a range of contexts so that they can apply their skills independently, and this is beginning to have a positive impact.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well because they are well supported by a targeted programme of interventions. Their effectiveness is monitored closely and adapted as necessary so that these pupils make the same good progress as their peers, and in some cases do even better. Other groups of pupils, including those at the early stages of learning English, blind pupils and those known to be eligible for free school meals, also make good progress because staff are very aware of their needs and ensure they receive effective support.

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Attainment in reading is high because pupils are well equipped to use a range of strategies to read and interpret text, and to develop more complex skills. Pupils spoke with enthusiasm about books they were reading both at school and at home, and discussed authors they enjoyed authoritatively.

### **Quality of teaching**

Teaching is imaginative and holds pupils' interest, so that they work hard and enjoy learning. Teachers make particularly good use of technology to engage pupils and encourage them to develop their communication skills across a range of subjects. For example, pupils produce a feature-length film of a Shakespeare play each year, acting the parts, choosing the locations, and leading the directing, filming, sound-track and editing. Pupils also use new technology, such as hand-held electronic devices, to assist them in researching new learning.

Pupils behave well in lessons and are keen to participate. Teachers make good use of questioning to extend their learning and to promote discussion. For example, Year 3 pupils were considering traditional tales from the point of view of particular characters and reflected maturely on the moral dilemma presented by the 'Pied Piper', who took revenge after being cheated by the town mayor. Teaching makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, for example through focusing on Olympic values such as 'respect' and planning programmes of study around these themes.

In the best lessons, pupils are fully engaged in learning and practise their skills in real-life situations. For example, Year 5 pupils put together a share portfolio based on live Stock Exchange prices, and then measured how much they had gained or lost as the prices changed over time. Pupils were very excited to find out what had happened to their shares, and the impact of their choices on their overall investments. Just occasionally, pupils listen for too long at the beginnings of lessons and are not encouraged sufficiently to become active participants in learning.

Staff cater well for the needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including blind pupils, ensuring they are fully included in all activities and can access tasks at the correct level with the help they require. Marking shows pupils how to improve their work on a regular basis, and all pupils know what their challenging targets are to help them reach the next level of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils meet the staff's high expectations of their behaviour, so that the school is a calm and orderly environment. Pupils say that behaviour is typically good and that any issues that may arise are dealt with well. They say they feel safe in school. They are polite and courteous towards one another and show respect to adults. Most parents and carers agree that pupils are safe and behaviour is good, and the large majority are happy that lessons are not disrupted and feel that any bullying is dealt

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with well. A few parents and carers expressed concern about how the school tackles bullying and inspectors followed up their views. They found that the school works very hard to resolve any issues but a very few parents and carers are not satisfied with the outcomes. Almost all pupils (including the 104 who returned questionnaires and those spoken to by inspectors) said that bullying was rare and that the school deals with all types of bullying very well. Pupils have a good understanding of the forms bullying can take, including name-calling, racial harassment and cyber-bullying.

In lessons pupils behave well and apply themselves purposefully. On rare occasions, when teaching does not fully engage them, they can become rather passive. Pupils take a full part in the life of the school as school councillors and eco-warriors, and also take on leadership roles, for example helping pupils in the nearby infant school. Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their above average attendance.

### **Leadership and management**

Year-group teams are led well by confident leaders who display high levels of professionalism and share good practice. They are extremely ambitious for the school and make a valuable contribution to its success, ensuring a consistency of approach. Staff respond well to the many opportunities to take on leadership roles, both within the school and further afield, and make the most of professional development to improve their practice. The headteacher and deputy headteacher communicate their vision and values particularly well to the whole school community. Rigorous and systematic monitoring systems give leaders a clear picture of the school's strengths and areas to develop, although their evaluation of its performance is occasionally somewhat generous. Good use is made of performance management to help staff develop their skills and to hold them to account for pupils' outcomes. The impact of initiatives to close gaps in performance and raise standards has been positive, and teaching is continuing to improve. The well-organised governing body runs a programme of regular visits to monitor the work of the school and provides a good level of support and challenge. The school has a strong capacity for further improvement.

The curriculum is outstanding because it is innovative and has been developed specifically to harness pupils' interests and talents, giving them a wide range of stimulating experiences. For example, all year groups go on residential visits, including to France. The school's unique 'iDiscover' programme gives pupils the opportunity to research a topic of interest in depth and to present it in a way of their choosing. Pupils spoke with great enthusiasm about some work they had completed on the 'D-Day' landings of the Second World War. The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well through giving them opportunities to reflect on their learning and progress, and to understand about other faiths and cultures. Year 5 pupils wrote an anthology of Chinese-inspired stories, and all year groups study art and music from a variety of cultures. The curriculum is extremely well enriched, enabling pupils to excel in sport and take part in a wide variety of clubs.

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The governing body ensures that all safeguarding requirements are met so that pupils are kept safe. The school promotes equality well and tackles discrimination robustly, so that all pupils feel included and all achieve well. As a parent commented, speaking for many, 'Crosshall Junior School works tirelessly to meet the needs of all pupils whilst creating an enthusiasm for learning.'



## 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](http://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.**



28 May 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Crosshall Junior School, St Neots, PE19 7GG**

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school, for sharing your views with us and returning questionnaires. We enjoyed meeting you and agree with you that Crosshall Junior is a good school. Here are some of its strengths.

- You make good progress so that your attainment is above average.
- Teaching is good and you find lessons enjoyable.
- You behave well and show consideration to one another.
- You have a good understanding of what you need to do to improve your work.
- The curriculum is outstanding and gives you many memorable experiences.
- The school is led and managed well by the headteacher and senior staff.

Even good schools can become better, so for this to happen we have asked your teachers to:

- make sure pupils in Years 3 and 4 have plenty of chances to practise their mathematical skills solving real-life problems
- get lessons off to a lively start so that you are fully involved in your learning from the word go.

You can all help by doing your best in lessons and telling your teachers what you enjoy about your learning. Our best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Nick Butt  
Lead Inspector

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