

Croft Primary School

Station Road, Sutton-in-Ashfield, NG17 5FJ

Inspection dates 2–3 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils enjoy their lessons, make good progress and do well in the national tests at the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Children in the Reception classes make good progress because of effective teaching, an inspiring and well-balanced curriculum, and incisive use of assessment.
- Most of the teaching is good, and an increasing proportion is outstanding. Teaching assistants provide exceptional support, particularly for pupils who have special educational needs and those known to be eligible for the pupil premium.
- Pupils are happy, polite and welcoming. They behave well in lessons and around the school. They are rightly proud of their school, which makes sure that they feel safe and secure.
- Leadership and management are good. The governing body and other leaders and managers have a clear understanding of what the school does well and what it needs to do to improve. They have successfully addressed the previous weaknesses and are driving rapid improvement in teaching and learning and achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding.
- Marking in subjects other than English and mathematics is not always helpful in identifying clearly the next steps in pupils' learning.
- Attainment in reading by the end of Key Stage 2 is not as high as it is in writing. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to read widely, or in subjects other than English.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in all year groups. Two of the observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher. In addition, the inspectors watched an assembly and made a series of short visits to classrooms to observe the range of activities taking place.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, looked at samples of pupils' work in mathematics, literacy and topic work, and reviewed children's records from the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Meetings or discussions were held with: the headteacher; senior and middle leaders; five members of the governing body, including the Chair; teachers and teaching assistants; a group of pupils; and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 20 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and spoke to a number of parents and carers at the end of the school day.
- Inspectors looked at the school's development plan and documents relating to its own evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses, as well assessment data that teachers use to monitor pupils' progress.
- Inspectors looked carefully at the arrangements and records kept to safeguard pupils.

Inspection team

Dorothy Bathgate, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Marian Driver

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average. This is additional funding for specific groups of pupils such as those known to be eligible for free school meals and children in local authority care.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is higher than the national average. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average. Their needs range from speech, language and communication needs to behaviour, emotional and social difficulties.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has achieved the Healthy Schools Gold Award, the Eco-Bronze Award and the International School Award Foundation Level.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve teaching so that more is outstanding by ensuring that:
 - time spent in lessons always supports pupils to achieve exceptionally well
 - marking in all subjects provides pupils with clear points about how their work can be improved.
- Raise achievement in reading in all year groups by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to read in subjects other than English
 - providing regular opportunities for pupils to make use of the school library in order to enrich and broaden their reading experiences.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' starting points are below age-related expectations. They make good progress during their time at the school and by the end of Year 6, reach standards in reading and mathematics that are in line with the national average, and well above in writing. Attainment in English and mathematics has improved year on year since the last inspection.
- Pupils' learning in lessons is good. Their positive attitudes to learning help most pupils to gain knowledge and skills quickly. All pupils make at least the progress expected nationally, with many doing better than this. At the end of the summer term in 2013, almost half of the pupils in Year 6, including the most and least able, exceeded nationally expected progress in reading and writing.
- Pupils supported through the pupil premium make good progress because of the extra support they receive such as small group work and one-to-one teaching. Consequently, they often make better progress than their classmates and any gaps in their performance when compared with other pupils in the school are closing rapidly.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Well-organised, balanced and sensitive support is enables these pupils to grow in confidence and as a result, they frequently tackle more demanding work.
- Throughout the school there is a strong emphasis on the development of skills in phonics (the sounds that letters make). This is reaping rewards as the gaps in early reading skills which hinder some pupils' progress are being successfully plugged. Increasingly, pupils are using their phonic knowledge to tackle unfamiliar words with more confidence and as a result, they are reading with increased excitement and enthusiasm. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to read in different subjects or to enjoy regular visits to the school library.
- Pupils participate enthusiastically in high-quality physical education and sporting activities provided by external sports coaches. These benefit their health and well-being and help them to reach good levels of performance.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is usually good and some is outstanding. This has a direct impact on the consistently good or better progress now seen and the rising attainment of pupils.
- Teachers show that they have high expectations for what pupils can achieve. Work is generally pitched at a suitably challenging level because teachers plan lessons based on accurate information about what the pupils already know and can do.
- The Reception classroom is a highly stimulating environment which promotes curiosity and creativity. Teaching is often outstanding and as a result, children thoroughly enjoy their learning and thrive on the rich curriculum and care they receive.
- Teaching assistants make an outstanding contribution to pupils' learning. This is because their role is extremely well developed through regular training and weekly team meetings, as well as being valued as equal partners with teachers in pupils' learning. As a result, they support pupils with confidence and use their initiative well to judge when, and how, to support individual

pupils, including those with additional needs.

- Teachers check pupils' work regularly in lessons. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are regularly involved in checking their own and each other's work, and assessing how well they have completed a task.
- Most teachers are good at using questions and observations to check pupils' understanding. They use this information where necessary to adapt their subsequent teaching. In an outstandingly well-taught Year 6 lesson, the teacher used a range of questions at different levels to both probe and promote pupils' understanding of the properties of quadrilaterals.
- A range of homework activities enhances and enriches learning. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are eager to take home their class homework bear and diary. Year 2 pupils listened with excitement as they heard about their bear's visit to a karate class the previous evening.
- Marking in English and mathematics is of a good quality. Pupils receive advice and guidance with clear points for improvement. Pupils enjoy the regular opportunities that are provided for them to respond to, and act upon, the marking and advice that they receive. However, this high level of marking is not always provided in other subjects.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school is a happy, safe and caring place where pupils from all backgrounds are welcomed. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and behave well in lessons and at break and lunchtimes. There is a consistent approach to behaviour management by all adults in the school.
- Pupils understand that bullying can take different forms, including cyber bullying, but say that it is rare. On the few occasions when pupils fall out, they say that teachers quickly resolve any disagreements.
- The school promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, equipping pupils with strong values and a wide range of social skills that help them to develop into mature individuals. It has created an effective culture of mutual respect and cooperation and effectively promotes pupils' confidence and self-esteem.
- Pupils listen attentively in assemblies and adopt a quiet and contemplative approach during times of reflection and prayer.
- The school has taken effective steps to tackle pupils' absence. These include raising expectations, regular reminders to parents and carers, working with other agencies, and holding meetings with parents and carers where there are ongoing concerns. Although attendance remains below the national average, it is clearly showing steady improvement as a result of these actions.

The leadership and management are good

- The commitment, vision and drive of the headteacher have ensured that previous weaknesses have been successfully addressed. Simultaneously, she has strengthened the senior and middle leadership teams to avoid overdependence on her own leadership.
- Leadership and management are good in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

- Key leaders, including the governing body, set high expectations and challenging targets for improvement. They use effective systems to keep a check on pupils' learning and progress. Senior leaders hold regular meetings with all teachers to discuss pupils' progress and identify suitable support.
- Subject leaders carry out a range of monitoring activities and successfully encourage staff to reflect on their work and seek ways to improve the learning experience for pupils.
- The school has good partnerships with parents and carers, who are very happy with their children's education. The overwhelming majority would recommend the school to others. Notably, induction arrangements for children starting school are excellent, and include both home and pre-school visits by teachers.
- The headteacher has established a highly effective partnership with a local leader of education. This has extended to involving staff from both schools in sharing ideas, resources and expertise, and has been of significant benefit in supporting the school on its journey of improvement.
- The school has received good support from the local authority to bring about improvements since the last inspection. The school improvement officer knows the school well through his regular visits where a range of activities, such as joint teaching observations and data analysis, are conducted with the headteacher. The governing body appreciates the local authority's guidance and support and has received a range of well-tailored training sessions and briefings.
- The curriculum meets pupils' needs well through a growing range of learning experiences including art, music, drama and school trips, as well as a range of after-school activities.
- The school is using additional funding for physical education and sport to continue the good work of the sports coaches. In addition, some of this funding is being used to provide training for midday supervisors in initiating and leading a range of positive play activities at lunchtimes.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is good. The governing body is well led and has a clear understanding of its responsibilities. Its members are knowledgeable and consistently compare the school's progress to national and local standards. Governors question senior leaders effectively to ensure that all pupils receive a good education. All members of the governing body are regular visitors to the school and understand where teaching is most effective. Governors provide good support and are ambitious and passionate about the school's future. Good decisions are made about staffing, salary progression and the budget. Governors make sure that additional funding received from the government is spent wisely and monitor the impact of this to ensure that it is being used effectively to help pupils make rapid progress. This can be seen in the decisions made on how to spend the pupil premium which has improved pupils' achievement, and on the use of additional sport funding. Arrangements for safeguarding meet government requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	122463
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	423978

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	352
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Carroll
Headteacher	Lizzie Blount
Date of previous school inspection	9 November 2011
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