

Cranfield Church of England Academy

Court Road, Cranfield, Bedford, MK43 0DR

Inspection dates

15–16 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy
	This inspection:	Good 2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Early years provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school is well led by the headteacher. Along with the governing body, she makes sure that the school provides a safe and stimulating learning environment where all pupils achieve well. Governors monitor the work of the school rigorously.
- Pupils' progress in all subjects is good, and attainment in writing and mathematics is above average at the end of Key Stage 1.
- Pupils' attainment in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 is well above average. The proportion of pupils achieving higher levels is consistently greater than seen nationally.
- Pupils make good progress during Key Stage 2. Those who achieved well at the end of Key Stage 1 continue to attain higher levels, especially in reading and mathematics. They are well prepared for middle school when they leave at the end of Year 4.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They are polite and respectful towards one another and adults. They are proud of their school and show a love of learning. Attendance is above average and pupils are safe.
- Teaching is good overall with some that is outstanding. Relationships with pupils are good and teachers make learning interesting.
- Most children in the Early Years make good progress and acquire good learning habits.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school's rich curriculum prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The most-able children do not make as much progress as they could in the Early Years because staff give them activities to do that are too easy.
- Although achievement is good or better across the school, there is still some variation across subjects. This is because not all teachers' consistently make sure that all pupils have a good understanding of a subject or skill before they move them onto the next piece of work. Examples of this were seen in some science and literacy books.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 14 lessons and inspectors saw teaching in all classes. The headteacher or deputy headteacher joined the inspectors for five of these observations. Inspectors also gained evidence on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement by conducting short visits to lessons, looking at the work in pupils' books and talking to pupils about their work. Inspectors also looked at an extensive range of work from the previous year. They also heard a range of pupils read.
- Inspectors attended two assemblies.
- Meetings were held with a number of pupils from both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, a key stage coordinator, the Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator, special educational needs coordinator, and three members of the governing body. An inspector also held a telephone conversation with the School Improvement Partner.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including: the school's development plan and view of its own performance; information on safeguarding and child protection; information on pupils' attainment; the 35 responses from the staff questionnaire and the minutes of governing body meetings. They also considered the findings from the Ofsted interim assessment conducted in January 2013.
- Inspectors took into account the 53 responses by parents to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the school's own parent survey. They also spoke to parents and took account of written comments from parents.

Inspection team

Caroline Pardy, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Mark Vickers

Additional Inspector

Philip Scull

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Cranfield Church of England Academy converted to become an academy on 1 February 2012. When its predecessor school, Cranfield Voluntary Controlled Lower School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. However, the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special education needs supported at school action is 12%. This is above the national average. At 6%, the proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average. There were no pupils who have an education, health and care plan at the time of this inspection.
- One in eight pupils are disadvantaged so the proportion supported by the pupil premium funding is below average. The pupil premium funding is additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- A much higher than average number of pupils join or leave the school other than at normal times.
- The school is part of the Redborne School Sports Partnership.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of achievement across the school by ensuring that all teachers:
 - make sure that pupils always thoroughly understand and complete their work before moving on to the next piece of work
 - give pupils clear guidance, in all subjects, on how to improve their work.
- Accelerate the progress of the most-able children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by providing them with more challenging activities.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Cranfield Church of England Academy is a school with a changing pupil population, as the proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language has increased. The headteacher is effectively managing this change. In order to raise attainment, pupils are set more challenging end-of-year targets and a new marking policy has been introduced which helps the pupils clearly understand what they need to do to succeed. The 'reward and consequences staircase' has been successful in supporting pupils to manage their behaviour and in creating a harmonious learning environment.
- The progress of pupils is tracked and extra support is provided for pupils who are identified as falling behind. As a result, pupils quickly catch up.
- The headteacher and senior leaders regularly monitor the quality of teaching. This has resulted in improvements because staff are supported in improving their practice. Senior leaders accurately identify the strengths and weaknesses of teaching within the school and are taking effective action to address them through a well-planned programme of training. All staff who completed a questionnaire felt the school supported them to improve their teaching.
- Performance management strategies are used well and linked to evidence of pupils' progress and improvements in teaching. Only teachers who meet their rigorous targets are considered for a pay rise.
- Self-evaluation of the school's performance is accurate and improvement plans concentrate on the right priorities. The school receives light-touch support from the local authority, and leaders use a School Improvement Partner to check on the accuracy of their school self-evaluation.
- The school makes effective use of the pupil premium funding it receives. The gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils is closing as a result of the support provided.
- The employment of a part-time sports coach to teach and support staff in the delivery of physical education lessons has improved the quality of provision. The school's partnership with Redborne School allows pupils in Year 4 to be trained as play leaders, provides free tennis and football training for pupils and allows the school to take part successfully in a number of sporting tournaments; for example, tag rugby and sports hall athletics.
- The school provides a rich, broad and balanced curriculum. Alongside literacy, numeracy and science, pupils have the opportunity to learn French, computing, music, art, religious education, history and geography through exciting topics such as 'Fabulous and Famous' which examines the lives of famous people in history and their enduring impact. Events such as International Week, and visits and trips, help to make learning more enjoyable for pupils. Pupils appreciate the wide range of clubs and activities held at lunchtime.
- Topics are planned to incorporate the school's values of courage, respect, tolerance, forgiveness and thoughtfulness. Pupils learn about different cultures and religions, and develop an appreciation of the arts. Many take on leadership responsibilities, such as being a member of the school parliament. The daily collective act of worship is broadly Christian but allows pupils of different faiths to participate. The spiritual, moral, cultural and social development of pupils is outstanding and pupils are thoroughly prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school promotes equal opportunities for all. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, pupils who speak English as an additional language and those who join the school mid-year are all well catered for. Pupils have programmes of support in place which allow them to participate fully in all activities within the school, and they make good progress as a result.
- The school is meticulous in ensuring that policies and procedures make the school safe for pupils.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors are highly ambitious for the school and are effective in challenging the senior leaders. They understand what the school data tells them about pupils' achievement, and the reasons for any variation in the performance of particular groups. A specific governor tracks the use of the pupil premium funding and the impact it is having on the attainment of disadvantaged pupils.
- Governors visit lessons and talk to staff and pupils. This allows them to make informed decisions when deciding whether or not to award pay increases to staff, and in working with senior staff on both evaluating the work of the school and writing development plans.
- The governors are rigorous in ensuring that the school is a safe environment for both pupils and staff. Regular checks ensure that policies are put into practice and that the needs of vulnerable pupils are met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. It contributes greatly to their good progress and attainment. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning and are quick to settle to learning at the start of lessons. They are eager to answer questions and thrive on the praise they receive from their teachers. They concentrate on their work well and behave safely in lessons.
- Pupils are exceptionally keen to talk to visitors about their work and their school. Pupils who have joined the school mid-year told inspectors how their classmates have made them feel welcome and have helped them to settle into school. On more than one occasion, inspectors observed pupils helping those who speak little or no English with their learning.
- All adults are respectful towards the pupils and help them to understand how to work together as part of the 'Cranfield community'. As a result, pupils demonstrate this behaviour towards one another during lessons, and socialise well during break periods. One group of pupils told an inspector that 'sometimes we have to do things we don't want to do because other pupils want to. It's okay because we have to respect others.'
- All staff set very high expectations with regard to behaviour, and the level of support provided for those pupils who find it difficult to behave well is outstanding. Pupils identified as requiring support join the 'Stepping Stones Group' where they learn how to behave and socialise with others. This has been very successful in ensuring these pupils succeed.
- Pupils enjoy the leadership opportunities available to them and play leaders support younger pupils and provide good behaviour role models. Members of the school parliament have worked to raise money for new play equipment, and for the Mirafior School in Nicaragua.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. The vast majority of parents agree that their children feel safe in the school and are well looked-after.
- Pupils feel safe and well cared for. They report that bullying is very rare, and dealt with effectively when it does occur. Pupils talked about how they can use the 'helping hand' guidance about who they can turn to for help if they felt worried.
- Pupils know about the dangers of using the internet how to keep themselves safe online. They know how to minimise risk outside of the school; for example, by not talking to strangers and crossing the road safely.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching over time is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. Inspection evidence,

joint observations, scrutiny of pupils' work for both this year and the previous year, along with analysis of the school's records, all confirm this.

- Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning. They find their lessons interesting as teachers choose activities that are engaging. Typical comments heard by inspectors include: 'I really love our topic work', 'I'm learning so much' and 'I like being able to choose difficult words.'
- Teachers listen carefully to pupils and check their understanding. This enables them to either move learning forward or provide extra support so that the minimum of learning time is lost and pupils make good progress.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils and usually set suitably challenging work. However, sometimes teachers do not move the most-able pupils on to harder work quickly enough, especially in the Early Years.
- Reading is taught well, and pupils learn to use a range of strategies, such as breaking words into their letter sounds. Mathematical skills are also well taught and teachers use a range of methods that help pupils to develop their number skills. Pupils have the opportunity to develop their writing through topic work; for example, writing a non-fiction article about the Romans as part of their 'Ruthless Romans' topic.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly and teachers often provide detailed feedback on how work can be improved, or pose 'challenge questions' to extend learning. Sometimes, teachers do not make sure that pupils complete work before they are moved on to the next task. Teachers do not always provide pupils with clear improvement targets in all subjects; as a result they do not always know how to take the next steps in their learning. Examples of this were seen in some literacy and science books and as a result the rate of progress made by the pupils was slower than in other subjects.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language receive effective support. Pupils receive support from additional adults within the either within the classroom or as a member of a withdrawal group. Pupils receiving additional support make good progress.

The achievement of pupils is good

- A large majority of children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of development that are below those typical for their age, especially in the areas of speech and language, literacy and numeracy. In 2013, most children made good progress and met the expected level of development by the end of the Reception Year.
- As a result of good teaching and pupils' very positive attitudes to learning, attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is above average. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 in reading, writing and mathematics was above that seen nationally in 2012, 2013 and 2014.
- In 2013, the gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and their peers was approximately eight months in reading, writing and mathematics. However, as a result of effective support, disadvantaged pupils are now making progress equal to their peers and in 2014 the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers has reduced further.
- More-able pupils achieve well and make good progress as they are provided with activities that enable them to apply their literacy and numeracy skills across other subjects. The proportion of Year 4 pupils achieving above the levels expected for their age is high, especially in reading and mathematics. These pupils are very well prepared for middle school.
- Pupils' well above-average attainment in reading is due to the many varied opportunities they have to read various texts in lessons. The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) has led to pupils' attainment being consistently above average in the national phonics screening check.

- Pupils learning English as an additional language make above-average progress in writing and mathematics and well above average progress in reading. Their attainment in all three subjects meets that nationally. Pupils who join the school mid-year quickly settle and make good progress.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special education needs receive support which is tailored to meet their individual needs. 'My child is treated as an individual and the school provides them with the help they needs', was a typical comment from parents. Data shows that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making good progress.

The early years provision is good

- The school makes good arrangements to support the children's move into Reception Year. Visits to their nursery school and meetings with parents ensure that staff have an awareness of the children before they join the Reception Year. Parent workshops are provided on topics such as the curriculum and supporting your child.
- Parents say that they are well informed and value the workshops run by the school. They are pleased that the school helps their child to settle quickly into school. A parent typified the views of many in commenting, 'My child asks to go to school every morning. The speed of learning amazes me.'
- Children who start school speaking little or no English are made to feel welcome and are given help that ensures they quickly settle in.
- Children learn in a calm and caring environment where relationships between staff and children are good. Adults model standards of behaviour and learning expectations and, as a result, the children quickly settle to learning and establish good learning behaviour. High levels of concentration were observed by the inspectors.
- In this well-run provision, teachers keep accurate records of what the children can do and use the information to plan activities that promote good progress. The school helps parents understand the best ways to support their children's learning.
- Almost all teachers plan activities that are interesting and stimulating and, as a result, children are keen to learn. For example, teachers used a castanet when teaching the 'ck' sound. Teachers are quick to notice when children need help but not always when children are ready to move on to a new activity. As a result, learning is not always as rapid as it could be, especially for the most-able.

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	137853
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	448629

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	280
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Brown
Headteacher	Joanna Farbon
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
Telephone number	01234 750261
Fax number	01234 752597
Email address	cranfield@cbc.beds.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

