

Crosshall Junior School

Great North Road, Eaton Ford, St Neots, PE19 7GG

Inspection dates 25–26 February 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school is well led and managed by the Principal. All staff share her commitment to develop every child's full potential both academically and personally.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve well throughout the school. Leaders have developed effective ways of checking pupils' progress in their learning.
- Teachers plan lessons that are engaging, so pupils' interest is captured well. They make sure that the school is a stimulating place for pupils to develop a love of learning.
- Pupils feel safe and they behave well in lessons and at play. They respond quickly to their teachers and are considerate to each other. Pupils are proud of their school. Their attendance is above average because they are keen to come to school.
- High-quality care, support and guidance contributes effectively to the happy, nurturing atmosphere.
- Teaching assistants provide good support to individuals and groups of pupils, which ensures they achieve well. All groups of pupils make good progress from their various starting points.
- The very well resourced and attractive library encourages pupils to read widely. They read fluently and with understanding.
- The school's motto of 'achieve your dreams' underpins the exemplary curriculum. A varied and exciting range of activities and themes engages pupils. Strong provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development fully supports pupils' good achievement.
- Governors are well informed about the school's performance and provide good support and challenge to school leaders.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of marking varies. Teachers are not consistent in checking that their advice has been followed.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to use their skills in writing and mathematics in other subjects.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning across the school. The Principal and Vice Principal joined the inspectors in observing three lessons.
- The inspectors talked with two groups of pupils, as well as individual pupils during lessons and at playtimes, to find out their views about the school. The team undertook a scrutiny of pupils’ English and mathematics books to establish the quality of their work. They heard groups of pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the Principal, Vice Principal, senior, subject and other leaders, staff and several governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school’s plans for improvement, records of lesson observations and information on pupils’ progress. They also scrutinised records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding. Minutes of the governing body meetings were examined. Inspectors looked at pupils’ work on display throughout the school.
- The inspectors took account of the 47 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire and informal meetings with parents and carers at the school during the inspection. They checked information on the school’s website, and took into consideration the 58 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Susan Thomas-Pounce, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
David West	Additional Inspector
Adrian Reed	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the majority of primary schools.
- Crosshall Junior School converted to become an academy in October 2010.
- The school building is open-plan in design, with four teaching areas for each year group. Each of the four teaching areas have shared learning spaces.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is lower than average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for disadvantaged pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those in care.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school is the regional primary centre for the school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) affiliated to Nottingham University and is responsible for training up to 30 student teachers annually.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Help pupils to make more rapid progress by:
 - ensuring that teachers check the advice they give to pupils to help them improve their work has been followed
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to use their skills in mathematics and writing in other subjects.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The school is well led by the Principal. She has established a strong staff team who share her commitment to school improvement, positive behaviour and good learning across a wide and rich range of subjects. The Vice Principal, team leaders and subject leaders drive developments and coordinate actions in their areas well, including changes to the National Curriculum and to assessment arrangements.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate. It informs school improvement planning, and the objectives set for the Principal and staff as part of the management of their performance. Leaders and managers at all levels use the school's tracking system to check on pupils' progress. When additional help is needed, tailored support is swiftly put in place and monitored.
- Checks are regularly made on the quality of teaching in order to identify where further training is needed and to monitor improvements. Areas identified for improvement are closely followed up. Well-targeted support and guidance, both internal and external, is provided to help staff improve. Staff welcome this, and are good at sharing expertise and implementing advice.
- The teamwork between teaching and support staff has a marked effect on pupils' learning and personal development, especially for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. The provision for these pupils is managed well. The school uses the information gained from its rigorous tracking of pupils' progress to set ambitious targets for all pupils and to implement any intervention programmes.
- The outstanding curriculum is both rich and vibrant. It engages pupils exceptionally well through a wide range of interesting experiences in music, art and sculpture, as well as story telling through comic strips and animations. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) is impressive and topic work brings subjects together well. Clubs, trips and visitors to school considerably enrich pupils' experiences. Many pupils learn to play musical instruments to a high standard. There is a firm emphasis on literacy and numeracy, although pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise these skills across all subjects.
- The academy prepares pupils very effectively for life in modern democratic Britain. Pupils learn a great deal about other faiths as well as their own. Activities such as school council elections give them plenty of chances to put their own views across and to hear the views of others. This helps them to develop values of fairness, tolerance, understanding and respect for others. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- The academy promotes equality of opportunity well making sure that the needs of individual pupils are identified and met and there is no discrimination. Relationships at the school are warm.
- The additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is being used effectively to provide small-group teaching and short-term programmes of support for individual eligible pupils. As a result, gaps in attainment between the pupils supported by this funding and others, both nationally and within the academy, are narrowing.
- The additional funding to encourage pupils' participation in sports is used extremely effectively. Targeted spending has increased numbers attending school sports clubs, extended participation in competitive sports events and provided training for teachers. More pupils are now taking part in competitive sports.
- Since converting to become an academy, Crosshall has retained its link with the local authority. The academy has good links with other schools through local clusters.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All necessary checks on those employed by the academy are completed.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors visit the school regularly, support developments and check all areas of its performance very carefully. This means that they are very well informed about its effectiveness.
- Governors ask challenging questions on the basis of their detailed knowledge of the school's performance data and are well aware of how good teaching is rewarded and how weaknesses are tackled. They have made good use of training to sharpen their ability to challenge and support the school.
- Governors ensure that finances are well managed and that the spending of extra funds, such as the pupil premium, raises pupils' achievement.
- Governors make sure that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements so that pupils and staff are very safe.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are proud of their school. They enjoy coming to school, and this is reflected in their above-average attendance. Pupils appreciate the wide variety of activities and interesting learning the school offers. They behave politely around the school, in assembly and in the dining room, and get on very well together in the playground. Their level of concentration in the open-plan learning areas is impressive.
- Pupils are supportive of each other during lessons, work together well in pairs and small groups, and often choose sensibly who they would like to work with. They enjoy learning and want to do well. Pupils understand the targets they have for literacy and numeracy, and can explain how they use them to improve their learning.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy the responsibilities they have and the way they are trusted to organise the equipment used in assemblies. Through groups such as the school council and the eco committee, they enjoy opportunities to learn about democracy and how they can contribute towards the life of the school. These activities make a substantial contribution to their personal and social development.
- Pupils know what bullying is and the different forms it can take. Homophobic language is taken very seriously and is not tolerated. A review of the school's records confirms that incidents of poor behaviour, including disruptive behaviour, are rare and any challenging behaviour is dealt with effectively. School records show that fixed-term exclusions are extremely rare.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils state they feel safe and say the school teaches them how to keep themselves safe. Their parents agree.
- Pupils see rewards, sanctions and rules as necessary and fair. They understand the importance of reporting any concerns that they may have to an adult and are confident that they will be listened to.
- Pupils recognise potential dangers when using the internet and social media. School leaders broaden pupils' understanding of safety in general by giving them more responsibility. Year 6 pupils consider themselves role models for the younger pupils and say that all minor behaviour incidents are extremely well managed by adults.
- Safeguarding is given a high priority in the school, and procedures are regularly reviewed. Consequently, the pastoral care of pupils is very strong. Leaders ensure that staff receive regular training in relation to keeping pupils safe and that the suitability of visitors to the schools is carefully checked.

The quality of teaching is good

- The mostly good, and occasionally outstanding, teaching is enabling pupils to learn and progress increasingly well in literacy, reading and mathematics. Typical of the good teaching is the effective

planning that arises from the in-depth knowledge staff have of every pupil. Staff work exceptionally well as a team to provide a breadth of opportunities beyond the classroom so that pupils can learn from their experiences.

- Learning is often very successful when teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and do. This happened in Year 5, where pupils made rapid progress in learning the importance of citing references when quoting information from websites. Work was set at the right level for the different abilities of the pupils. Pupils responded enthusiastically and made excellent progress towards achieving their learning targets. Such excellent practice does not happen often enough to secure outstanding progress for all pupils throughout the school.
- Teachers make it very clear to pupils what they are to do, the purpose behind their work and how they can be successful. Consequently, pupils have a clear understanding of what they are learning or expected to do. Additionally, they often have a choice in how they might tackle the challenge, who they might find it helpful to work with, and where in the open plan learning spaces would suit them best to concentrate.
- Pupils enjoy learning because teachers use a range of interesting resources and activities to stimulate their interest. New technologies, such as tablet computers, are skilfully used by pupils across many subjects. Teachers ensure resources are easily accessible and clearly organised. Displays around the school illustrate the pride that pupils take in their work. Trips to places outside of school and visitors to the school capture pupils' imaginations.
- Learning is effectively designed to meet the specific learning needs of individual pupils. Effective teamwork by teachers and teaching assistants ensures a high level of support for all groups of pupils. This enables disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs to access the curriculum and produce the same or similar work to their peers.
- The school develops pupils' literacy skills effectively. Most pupils read fluently and enjoy reading for pleasure. They have access to a wide range of challenging texts which have been carefully chosen to appeal to both boys and girls. Clear explanations, and well-planned and structured lessons make work in mathematics relevant and extend pupils' skills and understanding. Topic work is planned well and provides exciting opportunities for pupils to experience the full range of subjects of the new curriculum. Good use is made of assessment information to plan future learning. However, in some classes, pupils are not encouraged enough to practise their writing or numeracy skills in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- The work in pupils' books is marked conscientiously. However, in some classes, teachers are not always checking that the advice they have given in marked work has been followed up.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' results in the Year 6 national tests rose in 2014. Their attainment in reading, writing and grammar, punctuation and spelling rose both at Level 4 and Level 5. The decline seen in mathematics in 2014 has been reversed. Achievement in mathematics is now improving at a good pace.
- The school measures pupils' skills on entry to the school, and, based on a wide range of evidence, inspectors found pupils' progress to be good in relation to these starting points. This reflects the willingness of the pupils to learn, the good quality of teaching, the exciting curriculum and the watchfulness of leaders in ensuring that pupils receive appropriate help as they need it.
- The progress of the most-able pupils is good. A small number reached Level 6 in mathematics in 2014, and considerably more in the current Year 6 are on track to reach this level in English and mathematics.
- Pupils achieve well in reading. They show an interest in books and can hold confident discussions about those that they have enjoyed and why. By Year 6, pupils learn to refine their writing skills to suit different audiences and purposes. As a result of changes in the methods for the teaching of mathematics, the work produced by pupils currently in the school indicates they are making faster progress than previously,

particularly in their ability to solve problems. Although pupils use and apply their writing and mathematics skills effectively, they do not have enough opportunities for using these skills in different subjects to help them make rapid progress.

- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make the same good progress as other pupils. Some make outstanding progress. Skilled teaching and support staff attend to the pupils' specific learning needs with individualised programmes that are constantly checked to ensure their effectiveness.

- Pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding make at least the same good progress as other pupils. In 2014, there were some gaps between their attainment and that of other pupils in the year group. In reading, disadvantaged pupils were behind others by over one term, and just under two terms in writing and in mathematics. The gap with other pupils nationally was almost a year behind in mathematics, just over a term in behind writing and around half a term in reading. The gaps are continuing to close throughout the school because the additional funding for these pupils is used effectively to support individual and small-group teaching. All support programmes are rigorously monitored to ensure they are effective with identified pupils.

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	136339
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	456062

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	470
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rob Murray
Principal	Julia Elliott
Date of previous school inspection	24 May 2012
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