

Crags Community School

Strauss Crescent, Maltby, Rotherham, South Yorkshire, S66 7QJ

Inspection dates 18–19 March 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
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- This is a very happy and rapidly improving school.
- The headteacher, very ably assisted by the deputy headteachers, provides highly skilled leadership. He has rapidly changed the culture of the school and significantly raised expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Morale is high because staff feel valued and appreciated. They are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Staff are united in the vision for continuous improvement.
- The curriculum provides an exciting range of subjects and learning experiences. These promote British values and pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development very well.
- Extremely strong relationships exist with parents and the local community.
- Governors are well led and provide rigorous challenge and support. They help the school to improve the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and sometimes outstanding. Pupils enjoy learning, feel safe and their punctuality and attendance is improving.
- Pupils have extremely strong and trusting relationships with staff. Staff boost pupils' self-esteem and willingness to try that bit harder.
- Teaching is generally good and sometimes outstanding. Pupils in the majority of classes make good progress. Standards across the school are rising.
- Children in the early years achieve well, and sometimes outstandingly so, from their different starting points.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In a few classes, progress occasionally slows particularly in writing.
- Pupils, particularly the most able, are not always given work that is demanding enough.
- Not all marking reflects the school's policy to help pupils improve their work.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their writing and mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Improvement plans are not always precise enough in how their impact will be measured.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed the learning of pupils in all classes across school, including a joint observation with the headteacher. Inspectors listened to some pupils read.
- The inspectors looked closely at pupils' work in lessons, in books and on display around school. They also spoke to pupils about their views of school. Inspectors checked the records kept by the school on the progress of pupils and their behaviour.
- Inspectors looked carefully at a range of school documentation, including the school's own view of its performance and plans for improvement.
- Discussions were held with a range of school leaders, including the headteacher, deputy headteachers and other senior and middle leaders. Inspectors met governors, including the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors also checked on the work of governors and particularly on documents relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents through checking the 71 results from the school's own surveys of parental opinion and the 23 responses to Parent View, the online survey. Inspectors also took account of the views of those parents they spoke to during the inspection.
- The inspectors took account of the views of staff expressed in the 37 responses to the voluntary questionnaire.

Inspection team

Chris Maloney, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Howard Bousfield	Additional Inspector
Pamela Hemphill	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- There have been significant changes in staff and governors since the last inspection. The current headteacher took up post in September 2013 and the two deputy headteachers in January 2014. There has also been a change in the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body.
- The headteacher is a local leader in education (LLE).
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A very small proportion of pupils are from other ethnic backgrounds and cultural traditions or speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is much higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through pupil premium funding is high compared with the national average. This additional government funding is provided for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school has two full-time Reception classes and two part-time Nursery classes.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectation for pupils' achievement in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school works in partnership with the Maltby Mining Memorial Committee to promote pupils' understanding of their local heritage.
- The school provides a breakfast club.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the progress of pupils and so raise their attainment and standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, particularly in writing, by ensuring that:
 - teachers always plan activities that challenge the abilities of all pupils, particularly the most able
 - teachers' marking reflects the school's marking policy and makes it clear to pupils how to improve their work, and pupils are given time to respond
 - pupils have more opportunities to apply their writing and mathematical skills across subjects.
- Ensure that actions planned by leaders at all levels to improve teaching and the achievement of pupils are always clear in how their success will be measured.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteachers, provides incisive and inspirational leadership. His unrelenting and highly motivational drive to make the school the best it can be has empowered the whole school and local community to be part of this mission. As a result, the sharp decline in achievement following the previous inspection has been halted. Expectations of what pupils can achieve have been raised significantly. The quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils are rapidly improving. Pupils' attitudes to learning and enjoyment of school are greatly improved. This is being reflected in their improving punctuality and attendance.
- The morale of staff is very high and they enjoy pulling in the same direction. They feel supported, valued and appreciated. A typical staff comment was, 'The headteacher has given us a whole-team approach with consistently high expectations and a focus on the whole child.'
- Senior leaders demonstrate an accurate understanding of how well the school is doing. They have taken decisive and successful actions to improve teaching and the achievement of pupils. However, plans for further improvements by leaders at all levels do not always show how their effectiveness will be assessed.
- Senior leaders regularly check on the quality of teaching and provide clear guidance to staff on how to improve further. This has helped to eradicate inadequate teaching; the vast majority of teaching is now good and some is outstanding. Staff have opportunities to observe their own practice and that of others. The excellent 'buddy system' involves watching video clips of their teaching with a partner to identify areas for further improvements. Senior leaders also ensure that staff take advantage of sharing and observing practice in other schools and accessing local and national training.
- Regular and rigorous checks are made by senior leaders on the progress of all groups of pupils across the school. Pupils in danger of underachieving are identified quickly and well-targeted support is provided. Leaders make sure that additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively in helping them progress as well as, and sometimes better than, others in school. The promotion of equal opportunities is good because the school offers all pupils equal access to an exciting curriculum and good quality support.
- Middle leaders are highly enthusiastic and share the headteacher's passion and drive for continuous improvement. They use their skills well to help make improvements to teaching and learning. They work very closely with senior leaders to check that school policies and ways of working are effectively delivered.
- School leaders have successfully reviewed how different subjects are taught and linked together in creative and stimulating ways. Topics are very carefully chosen to provide exciting and interesting learning. Pupils enjoy a wide range of visits, visitors and residential visits.
- Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. Highly positive relationships are fostered through the strong promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Pupils appreciate and celebrate different cultures and traditions. Staff promote British values well. They plan ways to show pupils how important it is to be tolerant and have respect for the rule of law. This prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- The school has made excellent use of the additional funding for physical education and sport. The appointment of a full-time specialist physical education teacher to the school staff has greatly improved staff confidence and competence. Pupils have increased opportunities to develop skills and participation in additional clubs and competitive sports, such as through the Maltby Family Sports Cluster of schools. Pupils' improving well-being is reflected in the increasing numbers attending the 'change for life' club which provides exercise and information on healthy eating and lifestyles.
- Very strong and highly positive links exist with parents. A typical parent comment was: 'I love the school, the teachers and the headteacher. Tell him something and it gets done'.
- Excellent relationships exist with the local Maltby Mining Memorial Committee. This has inspired pupils to have a real sense of community spirit and a love of learning about the heritage of their locality.
- The school receives very effective support from the local authority in helping check the accuracy of school judgements and for staff and governor training.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is well led. The governors provide increasingly rigorous challenge and support to the headteacher and other senior leaders. As a result, they have helped to successfully address the decline in teaching and achievement following the previous inspection. Governors visit school often and make sure they have the information they need to check on the quality of teaching and the progress of all groups of pupils. They are very effectively linked to areas of the school's work so that all governors play an active role in ensuring improvements are made.
 - Governors regularly access training so that they have the skills to ask the right questions and make the

right checks. They ensure that teachers' pay progression and pay rewards are rigorously linked to improving pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. Governors keep a close watch on school finances. They ensure that extra funding has the impact on pupils it should. Governors make close checks on safeguarding policy and practice. These arrangements are effective and meet statutory requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are friendly, polite and get on well together. They have positive attitudes to learning. Pupils talk about their pride in their school and how much they like and trust the staff. Their enjoyment in learning is reflected in their improving punctuality and attendance which is getting much closer to the national average.
- Pupils have highly positive relationships with staff. Pupils say they place a great deal of trust in the staff and can turn to them when they have any worries or concerns. They also know they can use the 'worry box', which is monitored daily, if they prefer. Relationships are built on mutual respect. This helps to build pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem well. As a result, pupils want to succeed and try their best.
- Pupils respect other cultures, faiths and the right to hold different beliefs. Pupils eagerly told an inspector that, 'It doesn't matter where you come from, we are all equal.'
- Pupils enjoy the many opportunities they have to take on responsibility, including the school council. Some pupils act as junior wardens and produced excellent work on promoting pride in Rotherham, called 'Love my street'. They eagerly take part in the exciting range of clubs such as engineering, sport, music, cookery and team sports, including hockey and cross-country running.
- When work really captures the imagination of pupils and makes them think hard, their behaviour and attitudes to learning are at least good and sometimes outstanding. However, when tasks are too easy or too hard, a few pupils sometimes lose concentration and drift off task, hindering their progress.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils have a good understanding about how to stay safe and keep others safe. Assemblies really help this understanding of stranger danger and road safety. Visits from South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue and from Community Support Officers help them learn how to deal with unsafe situations. Pupils understand how to avoid dangers on the internet and when using social media. A typical pupil comment was, 'Never reveal any personal information.'
- Pupils understand different types of bullying, such as cyber-bullying and bullying as result of prejudice. They say that bullying is rare, but have confidence in the way staff deal with any that happens.
- Parents are confident that their children are safe in school and feel safe. This is reflected in their very positive response to the online Parent View, the school's own surveys and their comments to inspectors.
- The school has rigorous systems in place to ensure that pupils are safe. Senior leaders ensure that the site is safe and secure and that the adults who work with them are closely vetted.

The quality of teaching is good

- Staff pride themselves in their knowledge of pupils as individuals. They use this information very effectively to build trusting and respectful relationships. These help pupils to want to learn, try hard and persevere when work is more demanding.
- Teachers and teaching assistants use their good subject knowledge to check how well pupils are learning. They then adapt tasks to promote further learning and greater engagement of pupils, if necessary. Pupils are encouraged to assess their own and their partners' learning to make further improvements. However, some teachers do not consistently plan tasks that are pitched precisely at the right level to suit the learning needs of all pupils. As a result, some pupils, particularly the most able, do not make the progress they should because work is either too easy or too hard.
- Staff are getting to grips with implementing the school's behaviour policy well. As a result, they are increasingly successful in managing the behaviour and attitudes of pupils. They make sure that pupils know exactly what is expected of them in terms of attitudes to learning. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of the school's five golden rules for behaviour and this is aiding their improved learning.
- The quality of teachers' marking is improving throughout the school. Most reflects the school's marking policy. Pupils often receive clear guidance on what to do to make their work better and are given time to

show they have understood. However, this is not consistent in all classes, hindering the progress of some pupils.

- Reading is taught well. Teachers and teaching assistants use their good training to ensure that reading skills are taught systematically with lots of praise and reward. Interesting class novels and visits from authors help to inspire a love of reading. As a result, pupils build up their skills, understanding and confidence as they move through school. Highly trained teaching assistants provide skilled and sensitive additional support, on a daily basis, to any pupils in danger of falling behind.
- The quality of writing is improving because teachers give pupils lots of opportunities to talk about their ideas and stimulating reasons to write. Teachers help pupils to review their own writing and work with partners to share ideas. The improved use of classroom displays and guidance sheets are aiding the quality of writing produced by pupils.
- Teachers give pupils regular opportunities to build and consolidate their mathematical skills and mastery of concepts. This is done through practical problem-solving activities, daily number games and revision of efficient calculation strategies. Teachers and teaching assistants use their good subject knowledge to probe pupils' understanding and check on progress.
- When work suits the learning needs of pupils, makes them think hard and captures their interests, pupils make at least good progress. This was evident in a Year 6 English lesson, where pupils were fully engrossed in identifying the features of good descriptive sentences linked to characters in the class novel. The teacher inspired pupils of all abilities, particularly the most able, to improve their writing further. This resulted in good quality writing such as, 'Being tossed into the unknown, strange voices echoed around the plain white room as Joe finally woke up from his never ending dream.'

The achievement of pupils

is good

- The swift and decisive actions taken by the headteacher since his appointment to raise expectations and improve teaching has quickly arrested the decline in achievement following the previous inspection. This has led to rapid improvements in pupils' progress and an increasing number attaining the higher levels.
- Standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have not been high enough, particularly in writing. The most recent published results in 2014 show that standards were significantly below those seen nationally in Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. In Year 6, they were significantly below average in reading and writing, but slightly higher at just below average in mathematics.
- The pupils who took the national tests at the end of 2014 did not have the benefit of the good teaching now seen throughout their time in school. Consequently, they could not catch up fast enough in the academic year 2013 to 2014 and so did not attain standards matching the national average. The pupils currently in Year 6 are better prepared and are working at a higher level because of the good teaching they receive.
- The school's own data, verified by the local authority with regard to Year 6, and inspection evidence show that the progress of pupils in most classes for the previous academic year was good. Although there is still a little variability, the progress of current pupils in all classes is rapidly improving. As a result, attainment is rising strongly. This is particularly so for current Year 2 pupils in reading, writing and mathematics, with much higher proportions of pupils working at the higher levels, especially in writing. Standards are also rising for the current Year 6 pupils, particularly in writing. Pupils are now making at least good progress from their different starting points and the number of pupils exceeding the progress expected of them across classes is increasing.
- Progress in writing is good. Pupils eagerly engage in many stimulating and creative opportunities to improve their writing. Their writing often shows skilled use of language and thoughtful development of ideas. This is because of the clear focus on pupils talking through their ideas and better teaching of grammar, punctuation and spelling to aid the quality of their writing. Pupils regularly draft and redraft work to seek out improvements in choice of words and description. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to use and extend their writing skills across subjects, hindering their progress.
- Pupils are making good progress and developing a strong love of reading as they move through school. This is due to the systematic teaching of skills throughout school, skilled extra support to those who need it, and the creative use of books and stories. The results in the Year 1 national screening check on reading increased greatly in 2014 and were broadly average. This reflected pupils' increasingly good understanding of the sounds that letters make.
- In mathematics, pupils show a secure understanding of the concepts and basic skills due to skilled teaching, regular revision and a great deal of practical work. They apply these with increasing confidence when solving problems. Pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) resources confidently

and accurately to support their work. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to strengthen their mathematical skills when working in other subjects.

- The progress of the most-able pupils is good. Most teachers provide pupils with more challenging work as soon as they are ready. This deepens their understanding and stretches their abilities. However, this approach is not yet consistent across school, especially in writing.
- The few pupils from minority ethnic groups, including the few who speak English as an additional language, make good progress from their starting points. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good and sometimes outstanding progress. This is because their needs are identified early and they receive highly skilled and sensitive additional support.
- In 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 was a term behind other pupils in the school in reading and mathematics, and half a term behind in writing. Compared with other pupils nationally, pupils were three terms behind in reading, four terms behind in writing and one and a half terms behind in mathematics. However, the gaps in attainment between current disadvantaged pupils and others in school are narrowing rapidly. The work of these pupils and progress records across school show that most are achieving as well and sometimes better than others in class.

The early years provision

is good

- Many children join Nursery with skills and experiences that are below those typical for their age, particularly in their language and communication and personal development. All children, including the most-able and those who have special educational needs, make good and sometimes outstanding progress from their different starting points. This is due to well established routines, strong links with parents, high expectations and good and sometimes better teaching. Most children are well prepared for Year 1.
- Children thrive in the highly caring and nurturing environment. They enjoy the many creative and stimulating opportunities they have to follow their interests and extend their learning both inside and outside. All staff prompt and motivate learning well. By their own words, they show children how to use language and encourage children to talk about what they are doing. For example, when children were pretending to be aliens, the staff asked them to describe what they were doing.
- There are many opportunities for the development of children's reading and writing skills. Staff encourage children to write for many different reasons, including their names, lists and about their ideas. They benefit from the skilled teaching of the sounds individual and combinations of letters make. Children quickly identified the sounds made by 'oa' and 'oi' and eagerly applied these to words they could now read.
- Children's mathematical skills are developed well. Staff take every opportunity they can to prompt children to recognise shapes or count numbers in different ways. Children loved singing a favourite song about five speckled frogs and working out how many were left as some were taken away.
- Staff demonstrate a very clear understanding of how children learn and use this extremely well to capture children's interests and extend their learning. They provide a skilled range of learning activities that children choose for themselves or are led by adults. Staff regularly check how well children are learning. This is often done electronically and the results shared with parents, along with other detailed written observations they make. As a result, parents receive good quality information on how well their children are learning and how they can support this at home.
- The behaviour of children is good and sometimes outstanding. They listen attentively and play co-operatively. Children share equipment safely and demonstrate good awareness of personal safety.
- The leadership of the early years is strong. The leader has a very clear understanding of strengths and what needs to improve further. She ensures that staff work well as a team and share a commitment to continuous improvement. Children are kept safe through rigorous risk assessments and the deployment of well-trained staff. The leader ensures a strong commitment to the development of every child.

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	106870
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	456096

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	419
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dean Fenton
Headteacher	David McNaught
Date of previous school inspection	19 June 2012
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