

Crofton Infant School

Towncourt Lane, Orpington, Kent BR5 1EL

Inspection dates

1–2 March 2016

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The executive headteacher has successfully empowered leaders at all levels. They share her vision and determination for pupils at Crofton Infant School to receive a high-quality education.
- Leaders are relentless in their drive to maintain high standards and continually enhance the school's provision. Close monitoring of pupils' performance ensures that action is taken promptly to address their changing needs.
- Pupils' attainment has been significantly above average in recent years. They leave the school exceptionally well prepared to continue their learning in the junior school.
- Pupils in the Busy Bees classes (provision for pupils with severe and complex needs) make outstanding progress from their starting points. Adults achieve an effective balance between establishing a nurturing and supportive environment, and challenging pupils to achieve all that they are capable of.
- Teaching is highly responsive to pupils' needs. Strong subject knowledge and questioning skills enable teachers to adapt their teaching to pupils' understanding. Activities are well planned to ensure that pupils' knowledge is secure, while providing sufficient challenge to support rapid progress.
- The level of care exhibited both by adults and pupils creates a community in which pupils feel safe. Staff have a clear understanding of the arrangements in place to safeguard pupils and are well trained to notice, and respond to, any concerns.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well. Their attitudes to learning play a significant part in them attaining highly and in their readiness for the next stages of their education.
- Children make outstanding progress in the early years. No time is wasted in engaging them in carefully selected activities which inspire and motivate them to learn.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school's work. They value the support pupils receive to address their individual needs and appreciate the challenge which leads to them making rapid progress.
- The governing body and board of directors have a clear understanding of their roles. They provide well-judged support and challenge for leaders and have a clear strategy for the school's future.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the recent successful work to increase the rate of boys' progress leads to a narrowing of the gap between the proportions of boys and girls exceeding the expected level.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- As one parent commented, 'Children are at the heart of this school.' The visionary approach of the executive headteacher, head of school and senior leaders has retained a close focus on pupils' academic achievement and personal development. Their determination for pupils to achieve all of which they are capable is shared by the governing body, directors of the multi-academy trust and staff throughout the school.
- The culture of continual review and improvement permeates the school and has a significant impact on the practice of staff at all levels. Leaders, teachers and support staff are well trained. A comprehensive programme of training provided both within and beyond the school ensures that staff have the skills they need to carry out their roles effectively.
- Staff morale is extremely high. Whatever their role, staff have a professional approach, reflecting on the impact of their work and actively seeking ways to improve their practice. The 'Crofton tree of success' highlights teachers' areas of strength and promotes the sharing of good practice within the school. It is the norm for teachers to observe the work of their colleagues as part of their training.
- The thoughtful and considered approach to the deployment of human and material resources has a significant impact on the rate of pupils' progress. Leaders have a high regard for the principles of inclusion and understand the value of high-quality interaction between adults and pupils. The high ratio of adults to pupils enables in-depth discussion at a level closely matched to pupils' understanding.
- Leaders' frequent checks on pupils' progress enable swift action to be taken when the first signs of any discrepancy between a pupil's achievement and his or her potential are noted. Pupils catch up quickly as a result of the intensive support they receive. This prevents achievement gaps widening to a point at which they are hard to address.
- The pupil premium (additional government funding) is spent very effectively. Its use is precisely focused. Leaders and others have a clear understanding of its purpose to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. It is used predominantly to increase the number of adults available to support eligible pupils. Some funding provides successful therapy to improve pupils' emotional well-being, confidence and communication skills.
- Primary physical education and sport funding is put to good use. Leaders ensure that the funding provides for sustainable provision through the improvement of facilities and an investment in staff training. The recently installed multi-use games area has provided a high-quality facility, which is used during lessons and lunchtimes. The majority of pupils are active during lunchtimes, involved in organised games led by adults and using the equipment available or initiating their own games and activities.
- Leaders routinely review the impact of the curriculum. They consider whether the topics taught are sufficiently effective in engaging pupils and promoting their learning. As a result, changes are made to the content of the themes which form the basis of each half term's work. 'Entry point' days enthuse pupils and whet their appetite for the forthcoming work. Pupils recall the enormous dinosaur fossil they saw in the Natural History Museum during the visit which launched the Year 2 'dinosaur island' topic. A broad range of extra-curricular clubs allow pupils to develop interests beyond the National Curriculum subjects.
- Materials and topics to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are well chosen. Pupils are reflective, considerate and accepting of the views of others. During the 'treasure hunters' topic, pupils debated whether it was right to make someone walk the plank, following their reading of *Black Beard*. Each classroom represented a different country during the 'around the world' topic. Pupils learned about the cultures and customs of each, particularly enjoying the visit of a Chinese theatre company and their involvement in dance and storytelling workshops. Pupils understand that the democratic process used to select members of the school council is similar to that employed to vote for the country's Prime Minister.
- Parents spoken to during the inspection, and those who completed Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents), commented on their exceedingly high levels of satisfaction with the school's work. They appreciate the level of care and attention given to ensuring that children make a smooth start when they join the school. Parents value the individual approach taken to assessing children's additional needs, including the speed at which they are identified and addressed.

■ The governance of the school

- There is a clear understanding of the different roles of the academy trust and the governing body. Governors achieve a good balance between challenging and supporting school leaders. They ask searching questions about pupils' performance and about the impact of the funding received.
- Directors of the academy trust are very well informed about the school's performance and have a strategic approach to their work. They are clear about their statutory duties, including those relating to safeguarding.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff throughout the school have a good understanding of the procedures for reporting any concerns they may have about pupils' well-being. A comprehensive programme of training ensures that staff have an up-to-date appreciation of their duties in relation to safeguarding. Staff are far from being complacent about safeguarding issues; they are vigilant and respond promptly when concerns are raised.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

- Teachers have a thorough understanding of the subjects they teach. This enables them to explain concepts clearly and to address pupils' responses skilfully and knowledgeably.
- Teaching assistants are highly effective. They work closely with teachers to make sure that pupils' needs are met promptly. They are extremely attentive, noticing when pupils become stuck or when they appear not to have fully understood a concept. Their confidence, knowledge and skills enable them to act immediately, removing confusion and the potential for misconceptions to become embedded. This provides highly effective support for pupils with special educational needs or disability, and those who may have fallen behind.
- Pupils live up to the high expectations adults have of them. Staff do not dumb down their vocabulary, instead expecting pupils to understand the technical vocabulary they use, for example when discussing digraphs during phonics (letters and the sounds they make) lessons.
- Careful thought is given to the order in which concepts are taught so that pupils build on what has been learned previously. The highly effective and prompt support for those who have difficulty understanding at first means that they quickly catch up. This proactive and precise approach to addressing individuals' needs results in pupils making rapid and sustained progress.
- Teachers' questions are well chosen to encourage pupils to explore subjects more deeply. Teachers do not always accept pupils' initial responses if they know they are capable of more detailed explanation or of reflection at a more advanced level. Pupils are asked to explain why things are as they are, and to justify their opinions. This results in pupils gaining a thorough understanding of concepts.
- The teaching of phonics is extremely effective. Frequent small-group teaching provides discrete teaching of sounds. Teachers and teaching assistants also take every opportunity to reinforce what has been learned during other lessons. As a result, pupils apply their learning successfully in reading unknown words and phrases. This contributes to the pleasure they take from reading and the rapid progress they make. Phonics is taught equally effectively in the Busy Bees classes, with a strong focus on the correct pronunciation of sounds.
- Improving the quality of pupils' writing, and particularly that of boys, has been a recent focus throughout the school. A thoughtful approach to encouraging and inspiring pupils to write has led to an increased rate of progress. Good use is made of outdoor activities to inspire pupils to write. For example, boys' writing about dinosaur traps benefited from them having constructed them previously.
- Pupils develop secure understanding of mathematical concepts through the use of practical resources and high-quality teaching. Pupils are given frequent opportunities to practise their mathematical reasoning, explaining how they have completed a calculation or solved a problem. The organisation of the mathematics curriculum creates an effective balance between pupils developing fluency in their recall of mathematical facts, and their ability to apply their knowledge to solve mathematical problems.
- Teachers have a detailed picture of pupils' understanding. They assess pupils' abilities accurately and pinpoint precisely individuals' needs. Regular reviews of teaching groups ensure that pupils receive the right support.

- Activities to support learning in the Busy Bees classes are well chosen to engage and challenge pupils. Signing is used effectively to reinforce key learning points and to increase participation during singing. Adults judge skilfully when to provide support and when to allow pupils time to grapple with situations they initially find challenging. This ensures that pupils are appropriately challenged to apply what they are familiar with and already know.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The very positive relationships between adults and pupils play a significant role in securing outstanding outcomes. The high level of mutual trust creates an environment in which pupils are confident, and not afraid to make mistakes. This plays a large part in pupils developing the resilience to support sustained learning.
- Pupils explain that they feel safe in school and that adults look after them well. The strength of pupils' friendships and the level of kindness they display contribute significantly to the culture of safety and sense of belonging that leaders have successfully embedded. Pupils are increasingly aware of the measures they can take to use the internet safely and of the need to seek help from adults when they encounter any concerns.
- Pupils greatly value their learning, some already having made the link between their education and the jobs they hope to have in the future.
- Pupils feel that their voices are heard and that school leaders act on their suggestions for improving the school, taking their views into account. The recently installed junk music area in the playground is the result of the school council's leadership. Uprturned plastic containers, saucepans hung on the wall and a large tuned instrument resembling a xylophone provide the opportunity for pupils to engage in purposeful music making at lunchtimes.
- Parents of pupils in the Busy Bees classes speak highly of the nurturing approach adopted by staff, one commenting that, 'it is a very happy place', another expressing regret that the provision was only for early years and Key Stage 1 pupils. Staff are highly skilled in managing pupils' additional needs so that they are safe, and they feel safe.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are exceptionally positive. Time is used well throughout the school day. Pupils arrive with smiles on their faces, ready to learn. Transitions between lessons and breaktimes are smooth, with no time being wasted.
- Pupils regulate their own behaviour exceptionally well. They solve minor disagreements without the need for adult intervention. Pupils are expected, and enabled, to develop a sense of responsibility, both for themselves and for the roles they play in the school community.
- Pupils are polite and courteous in their interactions with each other, adults and visitors. It is the norm for pupils to hold doors open for each other and to wait patiently for others to pass when necessary. They take turns and follow the clearly explained rules for using play equipment at break and lunchtimes.
- School records indicate that racist incidents and bullying occur exceedingly rarely and that they are dealt with effectively through a collaborative approach between school adults, parents and pupils.
- Pupils with complex special educational needs behave very well, even when tackling challenging tasks, because they are well supported. Their achievements are widely shared and celebrated, promoting their pride and subsequent willingness to take assessed risks.
- Pupils' attendance is significantly better than average. Leaders take a robust approach towards unauthorised absence and follow up unexplained absence promptly.

Outcomes for pupils

are outstanding

- Children generally start school with skills and abilities typical for their age. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year is well above average. This proportion was higher in 2015 than in the previous year. The proportion of children exceeding the expectations in each area of learning has increased significantly over the last three years. A similar proportion of disadvantaged children meet the early learning goals as other children nationally.
- Those children who exceeded the early learning goals at the end of the Reception Year (the most able), continue to make excellent progress. The school's assessment information indicates that these pupils, currently in Years 1 and 2, are on track to maintain this level of attainment.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been well above average for the last three years. The regular support they receive helps pupils who did not reach this standard to make rapid progress during Year 2.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 has been significantly above average in reading, writing and mathematics for the last five years. The rate of boys' progress in writing has increased as a result of a focus on improving their writing skills. However, a gap still remains between the proportion of boys who exceed the expected level of attainment at the end of Year 2, and that of girls.
- Scrutiny of pupils' workbooks indicates that they are working at, or above, the standard expected for their age. Pupils' work is well presented, with cursive handwriting being promoted from the outset.
- Gaps between the proportions of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the school reaching the expected level of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics have narrowed significantly over the past three years. The gap is now in favour of disadvantaged pupils for reading and mathematics when compared to others in school and others nationally. Disadvantaged pupils make progress equal to, or faster than, others in the school.
- Pupils in the Busy Bees classes make outstanding progress from their starting points. This is due largely to the care taken to make sure that activities, and the support provided, are closely matched to individuals' needs. Pupils make particularly strong progress in the development of their self-awareness and confidence, and their ability to manage feelings.
- Pupils' attitudes, commitment to learning and levels of attainment equip them well for the next stage of their education. They leave the school exceedingly well prepared to tackle their learning at the junior school.

Early years provision

is outstanding

- Leadership and management of the early years are outstanding. This leads to the provision being well organised, staff well trained and activities well planned. Children make outstanding progress and achieve well-above-average outcomes at the end of the Reception Year.
- Teachers have a thorough understanding of what children are already able to do, what they should learn next and how best to address their next steps. Teachers continuously assess children's understanding, adapting their teaching accordingly. They achieve a good balance between ensuring that children have a robust understanding of concepts, and enabling rapid progress. Children build resilience as they tackle activities which involve taking considered risks.
- Adults ask questions which make children think more deeply about concepts. For example, children using sand to explore the concept of capacity were asked to justify their prediction that one container would hold more than another.
- Children behave extremely well and have very positive attitudes to learning. They respond promptly to any requests from adults for their attention. They use their 'magnet eyes' to focus on the person talking. Children concentrate for sustained periods, take turns fairly and listen respectfully.
- Activities both outside and inside are carefully selected to challenge children's learning across the curriculum. A focus on writing has had a demonstrable impact on children's ability to form sentences and to begin to use punctuation correctly. A review of children's writing during their time in the Reception Year shows outstanding progress from their starting points at the beginning of the year.

- The phonics teaching programme is detailed and taught consistently throughout the year group. A key strength of the teaching of phonics is the manner in which adults enable children to apply what they have learned. For example, the adult supporting a group of boys to create a wanted poster for a character in a fairy story helped them to make the link between sounds and letters to spell words correctly.
- Children particularly enjoy their visits to the nature area in the school grounds set aside for outdoor learning. Having put their waterproof clothing and wellington boots on, they create traps for dinosaurs, identify insects and plants, and dig in the mud. During the inspection, children's enthusiasm, engagement and sustained positive attitudes were notable, despite the onset of heavy rain. At all times, indoors and out, children are kept safe.
- Having developed extremely positive attitudes to learning and reached high levels of proficiency in the core skills of mathematics, reading and writing, children leave the Reception Year well prepared for Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	138611
Local authority	Bromley
Inspection number	10001482

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	558
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of the board of directors	Diane Moss
Chair of the governing body	Sue Hannay
Executive headteacher	Andrea Carter
Head of school	Wendy Giles
Telephone number	01689 826320
Website	www.croftoninfantsbromley.info
Email address	admin@crofton-inf.bromley.sch.uk

Information about this school

- The school is significantly larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school converted to academy status as one of two schools in the Crofton Schools Academy Trust in September 2012.
- The school's two Busy Bees classes provide 18 places for pupils with severe and complex needs.
- A higher proportion of pupils than average have an education, health and care plan.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium, additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils, is lower than average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is lower than average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all classes, some jointly with senior leaders, to observe teaching and learning.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, the head of school, other senior leaders and leaders of English and mathematics. A meeting was held with three directors, including the chair of the academy trust.
- Inspectors spoke with two groups of pupils and with others during visits to classrooms and in the playground at lunchtime.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day and considered the 69 responses to Parent View.
- A meeting was held with a group of staff comprising teachers and teaching assistants. Staff views were also considered through the analysis of 51 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including that relating to the school's own evaluation of its performance and to safeguarding arrangements.

Inspection team

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Edison David	Ofsted Inspector
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Michelle Thomas	Ofsted Inspector

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