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3 October 2016

Mrs Trudie Colotto  
Headteacher  
Croft Church of England Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Colotto

### **Short inspection of Croft Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 13 September 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in November 2011.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You are a dynamic and effective leader. Since your appointment one year ago, you have successfully gained the trust and confidence of your staff, pupils and the parental community. This is a considerable achievement as prior to your appointment, staff morale and parental confidence were extremely low. As one parent put it, 'The school has come on leaps and bounds over the last year, with the appointment of a new headteacher. I feel much more confident with everything, the school looks and feels fantastic, the morale has improved greatly, staff and children are motivated!'. This noteworthy success is much to your credit.

You and your leadership team have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of your school. Your self-evaluation is accurate and you have acted with urgency to address gaps in pupils' attainment in mathematics, reading and writing.

School assessment data shows that pupils across key stage 1 and key stage 2 are making good progress in learning, with many pupils making outstanding progress in mathematics and reading in particular. This is because you know each pupil well and teachers focus precisely on their learning needs. You acknowledge that not all

pupils are attaining age-related outcomes in writing in Years 3 and 4. Your school improvement plan highlights this and you and your senior leaders are acting quickly to address the issue.

The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is small in your school. However, it is clear that you track the learning and progress of this group of pupils very carefully. Current school assessment information shows that the majority of these pupils make accelerated progress in mathematics, reading and writing and are working within age-related expectations.

Your school development plan highlights the needs of the most able pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Current school assessment information for the end of key stage 2 shows that a greater proportion reaches the higher standard than others do nationally. However, at key stage 1, challenge for the most able in reading and writing is not as high as in key stage 2. You and the governing body know this and appropriate plans are in place to address this urgently.

Your pupils are well behaved, polite, and, like their parents, they are proud of this school. They appreciate the support and guidance they receive from their teachers. One pupil said, 'The teachers help me when I am stuck and I like learning at this school.' In Ofsted's pupil questionnaire, other pupils agree that the support they receive helps them learn. Pupils say that they are helped to appreciate and respect people from backgrounds different from their own. This is because of the opportunities you provide to help them gain a more rounded understanding of the diversity of British culture. You do this through building friendships with other schools in different circumstances and by visits to a variety of different places of worship.

Outcomes in the early years have improved over the last three years. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development in 2016 was broadly in line with the national average for 2015. This is an improvement from previous years. However, not enough children exceed this measure and, as a result, the most able children in the early years do not reach their full potential. You have identified this within your school development plan and are taking appropriate action to rectify this weakness.

Your school has recently added an existing pre-school setting to your early years provision, creating a nursery within your school. You have begun to build systems to ensure that you track the progress of the very youngest children so that they have a seamless journey through the early years. However, this is in the early stages of development and leaders' understanding of the effectiveness of the whole of the early years is limited. The accommodation within the nursery setting, while adequate to meet the needs of two- and three-year-olds appropriately, is somewhat shabby, particularly in the outdoor classroom.

The governing body is fully committed to ensuring that pupils reach their full potential. Governors know and understand the strengths and weaknesses of the

school. They offer the appropriate challenge to school leaders to bring about the necessary improvements. The governing body takes its duty to keep pupils safe very seriously. Governors regularly check the effectiveness of their policy through meeting with staff, checking the quality of school recruitment procedures and speaking with their pupils.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

It is clear that you place the highest priority on keeping your pupils safe. You ensure that the curriculum provides pupils with the information they need to make safe choices in different situations. Safeguarding is threaded throughout the curriculum and the day-to-day running of the school. For example, you have engaged with the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) to teach the pupils about child sexual exploitation at age-appropriate levels. You have also made the older pupils aware of honour-based violence. Your staff apply their child protection training in practice and are vigilant in recording any concerns they have regarding child protection. You keep the paperwork relating to child protection securely and in good order. It is clear that you are committed to developing strong professional relationships with the parental community. This has resulted in parents sharing their concerns and working with you to support their children.

### **Inspection findings**

- There is a strong sense of purpose within this school community. Morale is high and the very rapid changes brought about by the new headteacher have secured good-quality teaching and learning. Where there are weaknesses, the plans to address these are effective and bring about the necessary changes in the outcomes for pupils.
- Unvalidated data for the 2016 key stage 2 tests shows that the proportions of pupils achieving the expected standard and achieving the higher standard are above the national average for reading, writing, mathematics and grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Currently, there is no national data published for the 2016 key stage 1 tests. However, the school's own data shows that pupils achieve well at the expected standard in mathematics, reading and writing and their progress across the key stage is good. Leaders are aware that not enough pupils reach the higher standard in reading and writing.
- The majority of current pupils in key stage 1 and key stage 2 make good progress in mathematics and reading and writing. However, in Year 3 and Year 4, attainment gaps in writing remain.
- The headteacher has appointed effective new leaders to key roles. Leaders at all levels have a very clear understanding of strengths and areas for development within their subjects. Subject leaders have effective plans in place to close learning gaps for the small minority of pupils not attaining age-related expectations, particularly in writing.

- The staff team provides pupils with the support they need to make the best progress possible. Sharply focused intervention groups precisely identify pupils' needs to ensure they catch up quickly.
- Attendance has improved considerably during this year. Overall attendance is now above the national average for 2015. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils has also improved as a result of the school's persistent monitoring and challenge to parents.
- The learning environment is well presented, clean and tidy. The Christian ethos of this school shines through in the way pupils speak with one another and their attitudes to learning. Within this, leaders ensure that pupils have a sound understanding of faith and beliefs beyond the borders of the school. The school works closely with the Thomas Estley Teaching Alliance and the local authority. The support of both the alliance and the local authority has helped you to bring about rapid improvement and secure the good-quality education at the school.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- gaps in writing are closed quickly so that pupils reach at least age-related expectations in this subject
- teachers challenge the most able pupils to achieve more in reading and writing, particularly at key stage 1
- leaders develop a system for tracking achievement across the Nursery and Reception classes so that leaders have a comprehensive understanding of the learning and challenge for all groups of children, particularly the most able.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the diocese of Leicester, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Leicestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jan Connor  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher, the subject leaders for English and mathematics and the early years leader. I met with the chair and another member of the governing body. I also met with a local authority representative. I toured the school, visiting all the classrooms to observe teaching, to speak with pupils and to look at their work in their books. I observed pupils' behaviour both in class and around the school. I listened to a group of most-able and less-able readers. I considered a range of school documentation including assessment information, the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation documents. I took into account the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View and the 25 free-text responses from parents. I also spoke with parents in the playground. I took into account the 12 staff and 12 pupil responses to Ofsted's online questionnaires. I checked the single central record of recruitment checks and other documentation relating to safeguarding. The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.