

# Croftway Primary Academy

William Street, Blyth, Northumberland NE24 2HP

## Inspection dates

25–26 April 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Inadequate</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Inadequate</b>
Early years provision	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- Weak teaching, learning and assessment over time have resulted in pupils in key stages 1 and 2 failing to achieve as well as they should.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress is weak. Their attainment is well below that of other pupils nationally by the end of key stages 1 and 2.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not make as much progress as other pupils nationally with similar starting points.
- While the overall outcomes for children in the early years have improved over time, the difference between outcomes for disadvantaged children and others nationally has not been sustainably diminished.
- Prior to the arrival of the current acting headteacher, leaders had not tackled weaknesses in the quality of teaching or leadership to improve outcomes for pupils.
- Pupils' personal, development, welfare and behaviour requires improvement. Where teachers do not set clear expectations or the work is not well planned, some pupils do not fully concentrate on their work.
- Attendance levels for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are too low. Some of these pupils have levels of persistent absence which are too high.

### The school has the following strengths

- The current acting headteacher is beginning to tackle weaknesses with decisiveness and rigour. His guidance and vision are enabling other leaders across school to have a greater impact in their areas of responsibility.
- Opportunities for developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development help develop their citizenship skills. Consequently, they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Following clarification of their roles and responsibilities, senior leaders and subject leaders have begun to take action to improve the quality of teaching and to check its impact. There are early signs that this is beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' progress.
- Trustees and the recently established local academy committee are bringing improved levels of support and challenge to school leaders.

## Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Urgently improve the quality of teaching, so that it is at least good, in order to improve progress for all groups of pupils by:
  - planning and delivering teaching that is well matched to pupils' needs and that ensures gaps in learning are promptly addressed
  - having higher expectations for pupils' outcomes based around the school's recently established pupil-progress tracking information that is linked to the national curriculum
  - improving opportunities for pupils to improve their English grammar, punctuation and spelling skills and to apply these in their writing
  - further developing the consistency of the teaching of reasoning and problem-solving in mathematics
  - making further use of the stronger practice which exists in the school to provide models of effective teaching for other teachers
  - improving the deployment of teaching assistants so that their impact upon pupils' learning is greater
  - ensuring that the early years provision helps disadvantaged children to make accelerated progress so that the differences between their outcomes and others nationally is diminished year-on-year.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
  - further developing pupils' resilience and determination when faced with challenging tasks
  - increasing attendance levels and reducing persistent absence for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership by:
  - implementing phase and subject leaders' planned actions to rapidly improve pupils' progress, particularly in writing and mathematics, and regularly checking for impact
  - improving the planning, monitoring and evaluation of pupil premium spending and funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to ensure that their progress improves.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- The trust's executive head, who is currently the school's acting headteacher, has brought marked improvements to the school since November 2016. He has established clear roles and responsibilities for leaders and more structured systems of accountability. As a result, leaders now fully understand the priorities for improvement, take action to address weaknesses and check regularly for impact. All staff who responded to the staff questionnaire agreed that they have a clear understanding of the goals the school aims to achieve. In meetings with inspectors, leaders demonstrated high levels of motivation towards improving outcomes for pupils.
- The acting deputy headteacher has a thorough understanding of the school's assessment approaches and systems to track pupils' progress. Staff training and work alongside staff in other schools is helping most staff to make accurate assessments and to use this tracking system effectively. As a result, information that is more accurate is available for teachers to use for planning and leaders can check where pupils' progress needs to accelerate more readily.
- Phase leaders now understand the priorities for improvement in their areas. Their initial focus of improving pupils' progress in reading is beginning to bear fruit. Pupils' progress in reading in Year 2 is building more successfully upon the good phonics skills which pupils attain in Year 1. A more consistent approach to teaching reading across the school is benefiting pupils in both key stage 1 and key stage 2. There are signs of early improvement in pupils' books and the school's pupil-progress information.
- The recently appointed mathematics leader has quickly identified the need to improve the teaching of reasoning and problem-solving in mathematics. She has provided training and relevant resources to support teachers within this area and checks that this is beginning to be implemented. Consequently, teachers are beginning to teach these aspects more regularly, although this is not consistent across the school. However, it is too early to identify the impact of this work and the school's pupil-progress information identifies that progress in mathematics needs to accelerate further in most year groups to tackle existing weaknesses.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is now clear about her role. She has taken effective action to ensure that support is in place for pupils with an education, health and care plan, who require high levels of provision to overcome barriers to learning. As a result, these pupils succeed well and their progress is similar to that of others nationally. However, pupils identified as requiring additional support for special educational needs and/or disabilities do not make enough progress. Spending of the additional special educational needs funding has, therefore, had a variable impact.
- Leaders' spending of the pupil premium as a means to improving disadvantaged pupils' progress has not been effective. The differences in disadvantaged pupils' progress and that of other pupils nationally are not diminishing. Current leaders, including trustees, have identified this, and they have recently commissioned an external review of the spending of pupil premium.

- The leader for physical education (PE) plans the use of additional funding for PE and sport premium for primary schools carefully and checks for the impact on pupils' engagement and enjoyment of sport and active lifestyles. As a result, the opportunities pupils have to enjoy physical activities and to be involved with competitive sports have increased. Staff have also had the opportunity to learn from the specialist PE teachers. This has improved the staff's skills and the quality of teaching in this subject. The school has received national recognition for the quality of its PE provision.
- The school's topic-based curriculum provides coverage of all the national curriculum subjects. Pupils also benefit from specialist teaching in music. They have access to various after-school clubs, which mainly encourage participation in sports and healthy lifestyles. Leaders' recent review of the curriculum has identified the need to improve aspects of the English and mathematics curriculum to increase pupils' progress in these subjects.
- Work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well matched to the needs of pupils. Assemblies, the personal, social, health education curriculum and class discussions focus rightly on developing pupils' personal qualities such as resilience and determination. The recording of pupils' responses in class 'big books' shows that pupils are provided with a range of opportunities to develop their citizenship skills and prepare them well for life in modern Britain.
- Improved systems to manage the performance of staff are in place. Governors ensure that pay progression is linked to achieving agreed objectives. Staff benefit from a range of training, which is starting to enhance their leadership and teaching skills. Support with the planning and modelling of effective teaching by phase leaders and subject leaders is assisting improvements in the quality of teaching. However, this approach is not fully developed.
- Leaders have benefited from guidance and development provided by the trust's executive headteacher and from the headteacher from Malvin's Close Primary Academy. As a result, leaders are more rigorous in their approaches to school improvement.

## **Governance of the school**

- There have been changes to the trustee board and the local governing body since the last inspection. The board has been restructured and the local academy committee has replaced the local governing body. These changes have brought a far sharper view on school improvement and increased support and levels of accountability for leaders.
- The board has taken action to strengthen leadership, including local governance arrangements. Trustees have ensured that solid interim arrangements have been in place since the previous headteacher left the school. The deployment of the executive headteacher from the trust to strengthen leadership has paid dividends. He has both provided the necessary leadership vision and restructured the leadership team to enable leaders to work in a more cohesive and effective manner. Additional support from another headteacher in the trust is also supporting the development of leaders' skills. The trustees have secured the appointment of an experienced headteacher to take up the substantive post from September 2017. Well-considered arrangements are in place to ensure that this leader has a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses during this term.

- The members of the local academy committee have a wide range of experience and expertise, which they are using to support and challenge leaders in key areas such as safeguarding, the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' outcomes. Regular meetings with leaders and visits into school are providing committee members with a more detailed view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Consequently, they are well informed to both challenge leaders and to report accurately to the trustees.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders complete careful safeguarding checks for all staff, governors and volunteers.
- The safeguarding policy meets the current national requirements and staff understand the procedures and their own responsibilities. Staff and governors receive regular and appropriate training so they know how to keep pupils safe, including training about how to protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism. Leaders, governors and staff have a good understanding of how this training relates to the community the school serves.
- The recently created 'family team' bring a wide range of expertise to ensure that all aspects of safeguarding for pupils are addressed in a coordinated fashion. This is helping to ensure that leaders and staff support effectively the needs of pupils and families who may be vulnerable.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Inadequate

- The quality of teaching over time has been weak and this is why pupils' outcomes are inadequate.
- Teaching of mathematics is much too variable. While opportunities for pupils to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills are developing in some classes, in other classes opportunities are more limited or not used to deepen learning effectively.
- Evidence in pupils' books show that the teaching of English grammar, punctuation and spelling is not improving pupils' skills promptly enough across the school. Leaders have recently increased the teaching time allocated for improving pupils' spelling. However, a consistent approach to improving and applying these key skills is not evident.
- Teachers are beginning to develop pupils' writing skills through an interactive speaking and actions approach. While this is beginning to engage pupils more with the writing process, this approach is not fully embedded.
- The recently introduced assessment system and opportunities to check assessment with staff in other schools is starting to help teachers improve their understanding of the age-related expectations in the national curriculum. This is beginning to help teachers plan work better matched to pupils' needs. However, on occasions, work is too easy and repeats learning that pupils have already grasped. Sometimes work is too hard, causing pupils to struggle.
- Teaching assistants are supportive of pupils' behaviour in lessons and they encourage pupils to engage with their work. However, their impact upon pupils' learning is more variable.

- A well-structured approach to the teaching of phonics is adopted with early years and key stage 1 pupils. This is ensuring that most pupils make strong progress in developing their phonics skills. However, teaching is not building effectively enough on these early reading skills to enable pupils to work at the expected standards for their age by the end of key stage 1.
- Training has helped teachers to improve their teaching of reading in key stage 2. Evidence in pupils' books is showing that this is beginning to improve pupils' understanding of texts. As a result, pupils' comprehension skills are developing more consistently.
- Pupils receive a range of homework to support the development of their English and mathematics skills. In some key stage 2 classes, pupils have homework tasks which are linked well to their curriculum topics. The choice of topics provided encourages pupils to become more independent learners.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

**Requires improvement**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Sometimes when pupils are presented with challenging tasks, their levels of determination are too low or they are highly dependent upon adult support and they give up easily. Leaders and staff are taking action to improve these aspects but there is still more to do.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to take on roles and responsibilities such as young leaders, eco-club and school council. As a result, pupils develop self-confidence as they progress through the school.
- Lessons and assemblies help pupils know how to stay safe, including online. Pupils who have roles as digital leaders help other pupils and parents to understand strategies for online safety.
- Strong systems are in place to support pupils' emotional well-being. Drop-in provision to assist pupils who may be experiencing anxieties, helps ensure that pupils receive prompt support to meet their needs. The additional resources in the school's 'nest' and 'pod' provision provide pupils with well-planned nurture and emotional support to enable them to be successful socially and to better access learning in class.
- Pupils understand the different forms of bullying, and while they report that incidents do occur, they believe that these are well addressed by staff. School records show that leaders take any incidents of bullying seriously and that they deal with these promptly and appropriately.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. In the majority of lessons, pupils are well behaved and keen to learn. However, where teachers' expectations are not clear enough or the work is not well matched to their needs, some pupils' interest wanes and this results in less positive behaviour.

- During playtimes and lunchtimes, pupils generally behave well, socialise suitably and choose between well-organised games or accessing the playground equipment such as the climbing frames.
- Overall attendance rates are very close to those found nationally. However, levels of attendance for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are low and some of these pupils have high levels of persistent absence.
- Some parents raised concerns about pupils' behaviour and bullying. Leaders monitor behaviour and bullying carefully. They use this information to put in place strategies to help pupils to improve their behaviour and to provide specific support for individuals. There is evidence that these approaches have a positive impact on improving behaviour in school.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Inadequate

- Pupils' progress across key stage 2 is too slow in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's current pupil-progress information and pupils' books show some improvements in pupils' progress in reading following a focus on improving the quality of teaching in this subject. However, evidence of improving progress is more limited in writing and mathematics.
- In key stage 1, the progress made by lower-attaining and middle-attaining pupils is too slow. As a result, their attainment at the end of Year 2 is often well below that of similar pupils nationally.
- The low levels of attainment achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6 mean that not enough pupils are ready for their next stage of education.
- Progress for pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is weak. The differences between the progress made by disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally are not diminishing. As a result, too many disadvantaged pupils do not attain the expectations for their age by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make variable progress. Those who have education, health and care plans make progress broadly in line with others nationally. However, those who are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, but without an education, health and care plan, are making significantly less progress than others nationally with similar starting points.
- In 2016, the most able pupils generally made similar progress to that found nationally by the end of key stages 1 and 2. The school's pupil-progress information shows that these pupils are currently making good progress, although this was not always supported in the books of the most able pupils reviewed by inspectors.
- At the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in English grammar, punctuation and spelling was substantially below that found nationally in 2016. The teaching of these key English skills is too variable.
- Pupils make good progress in developing their phonics skills. Consequently, the proportions who achieve the expected standard in the phonics screening check are generally above the national figure. By the end of Year 2, almost all pupils have met the expected standard on this check.



## Early years provision

## Requires improvement

- Early years provision requires improvement because disadvantaged children do not make enough progress. They are making less progress when compared to other pupils nationally. The additional funding has had variable impact, which means that the differences have not diminished over time.
- Children start in the early years with skills and abilities that are generally below those typical for their age, particularly in communication skills and personal, social and emotional development. The overall proportion of children achieving a good level of development has improved year-on-year. As a result, an increasing proportion of children are well prepared for Year 1. However, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development remains below the national average.
- The leader of the early years has a clear understanding of the learning needs of the children. For example, along with early years staff, she has taken effective action to improve opportunities to improve children's reading comprehension and writing provision for boys. This has helped to improve boys' outcomes and to address the differences found when compared to boys nationally in 2016.
- Staff provide a good balance of adult-led teaching combined with provision where children choose activities to support their learning. However, sometimes staff do not check that children are engaging well when they choose learning activities and staff sometimes do not intervene quickly enough to deepen or stretch children's learning.
- The early years staff place a clear emphasis on supporting children with their speaking, listening and language skills and their personal development and social skills. As a result, most children's language skills progress well and they are happy to share their thoughts and listen to other children's ideas.
- Staff make effective use of assessments, which are well recorded in children's learning journals. As a result, staff plan learning which is generally well matched to children's needs and interests. However, the proportion of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities who are achieving a good level of development by the end of Reception has fallen over the last three years. As a result, the proportion of these pupils who are ready to start Year 1 has reduced.
- Early years staff work well with parents and other agencies. Parents are involved with children's assessments and staff provide meetings to help parents understand how to support their child's learning. Parents are very positive about the support provided by early years staff.
- Children feel safe and secure. Safeguarding is effective and all welfare requirements are met.



## School details

Unique reference number	139743
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10031986

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	468
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Zarraga
Headteacher	Mike Bell (Acting Headteacher)
Telephone number	01670 353 258
Website	<a href="http://www.croftway.northumberland.sch.uk">www.croftway.northumberland.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:michael.bell@tbqt.co.uk">michael.bell@tbqt.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	19–20 March 2015

## Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is well above that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities requiring additional school support is above that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is below that found nationally.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

- The school is part of The Blyth Quays Academy Trust. The school has received support for leadership from the trust's executive headteacher and the headteacher from Malvin's Close Primary Academy.
- Since the last inspection, the headteacher has left the school and interim acting headteacher arrangements have been put in place. The trustees have appointed a substantive headteacher to take up post in September 2017.
- The school runs a breakfast club and after-school provision.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about key stage 2 results on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in 25 lessons or part lessons. The acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher joined inspectors for four of the observations in lessons.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around school and reviewed the school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The inspectors observed pupils in the playgrounds and during lunchtime.
- Meetings were held with the acting headteacher, the acting deputy headteacher, phase leaders and the teachers responsible for leading English, mathematics and the early years, as well as the SENCo. The lead inspector met with two members of the local academy committee and three members of the trustee board. The lead inspector discussed the work of the school improvement partner by telephone. A meeting was held with the school's family team who provide support across a range of areas including safeguarding, special educational needs and behaviour.
- Two groups of pupils discussed their opinions about the school and their learning with the inspectors. The inspectors listened to six pupils from key stage 1 and key stage 2 read.
- The inspectors held discussions with parents at the beginning and the end of the school day and considered the 30 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. Consideration was given to the 10 responses to the staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaires.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including minutes from meetings of the trustee board and the local academy committee, information about pupils' achievement, the school's evaluation of its own performance and its development plan. Behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding were also considered. The inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in their books.

## Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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