

# Inspection of Croft Church of England Primary School

South Parade, Croft-on-Tees, Darlington, County Durham DL2 2SP

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Inspection dates: 24 and 25 May 2022

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| <b>Overall effectiveness</b> | <b>Good</b>  |
| The quality of education     | <b>Good</b>  |
| Behaviour and attitudes      | <b>Outstanding</b>   |
| Personal development         | <b>Good</b>  |
| Leadership and management    | <b>Good</b>  |
| Early years provision        | <b>Good</b>  |
| Previous inspection grade    | Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Ofsted has not previously inspected Croft Church of England Primary School as an academy school under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections.

Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection of the predecessor school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

This is a school full of positivity and respect. Staff care about the pupils. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They focus and concentrate well in lessons. Pupils are advocates of the school and are articulate about their learning.

Croft is a calm and orderly school. There are clear routines and expectations for behaviour that pupils follow in an exemplary manner.

Pupils understand what bullying is. They know not to tolerate any forms of bullying. Pupils say they would tell a member of staff if bullying happened and the adult would sort it out.

The school's Christian vision underpins the curriculum. Leaders have put 'happiness' at the heart of it. They want pupils to leave the school with three gifts – independence, respect and perseverance. Staff believe these gifts will help to ensure pupils succeed in life.

Pupils use digital devices as an integral part of their learning, starting in the early years. The devices support pupils learning in all subjects. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) use digital devices particularly effectively. This helps to ensure they can work at their own pace and with independence.

Pupils play an active role within the community. For example, they raise money for the local food bank and link with residents called the Silver Ladies.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders continue to develop and evolve the curriculum. Leaders have created milestone documents for subjects. These identify the knowledge they want pupils to have by the ages of five, seven, nine and 11. Leaders also have learning overviews for each unit of work. These contain the learning objectives, vocabulary and links to social action or world culture. Some subject leaders have identified they now need to decide on what is the essential knowledge from the learning overview objectives. This will help to ensure pupils are always building on prior knowledge.

There is ambition for all pupils within the curriculum. In lessons, pupils have challenges that increase in difficulty or test another skill. Leaders are ensuring there is a balance of work recorded in pupils' books and on digital devices. Curriculum access for pupils with SEND is often through digital use. For example, if a pupil struggles in the classroom environment they can continue the lesson, accessing the teaching slides, on a device in a quieter space.

Leaders have recently introduced a new phonics programme. There is a structure to each phonics lesson. Teachers use this structure so pupils do not have too much

information at once. This helps to ensure they are completely focused on practising phonics. There is a teaching assistant dedicated to providing phonics interventions to pupils who need more support to become confident, fluent readers. To promote a love of reading the 'Star of the Day' in early years takes home a bear and book to share with their family. Each class has a dedicated book list that is age-appropriate. Teachers select from this for their daily story session. This ensures books are not repeated across the key stages.

The mathematics curriculum builds on what pupils already know. Teachers use assessments to check pupils' mathematical understanding at start and end of each unit. In lessons, teachers do daily checks and use the information to shape the next day's lesson.

There are clear routines for children in the early years. Staff quickly build positive relationships. Children with SEND have adult support to integrate into the 'play to learn' times. Leaders are using a digital platform to communicate, inform and engage with parents. They offer 'stay and play' sessions every half term so parents can watch teaching and experience the environment.

There are many opportunities for pupils to be leaders. The school environment is highly inclusive and pupils can apply for all the roles on offer. These include working alongside subject leaders on projects like developing the school's spiritual garden. The school offers a wealth of pastoral support to pupils in keeping mentally healthy. For example, there is a social, emotional and mental health library available to parents, pupils and staff. These books support topics such as kindness, jealousy, friendship, and family relationships.

The executive headteacher has high expectations of all the staff. Leaders provide training for staff in a range of subjects. They are keen to promote opportunities for professional development. Staff early in their teaching careers feel well supported by their mentor and the teaching team.

Governors are supportive and challenging. Link governor roles are established and governors regularly visit the school to meet with their link subject leader. Leaders at all levels are challenged through these conversations. This means governors have a good understanding of what is happening in the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There are robust systems in place to ensure the checks on people who work at, or visit the school are completed. Staff have annual safeguarding training and receive regular updates in staff briefings. Leaders have identified online safety as a particular risk in the school community. Some pupils are accessing online games inappropriate for their age. To address this, leaders have written to parents and ensured online safety is woven through their computing curriculum. Pupils can

report concerns to an adult or post a note in the class 'Don't worry be happy' box. Pupils are clear that adults at Croft look after them.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Leaders have created a curriculum structure for the foundation subjects. Leaders have established the learning objectives for each learning overview. They have not identified the essential knowledge in some subjects they want pupils to commit to their long-term memory. Without this curriculum thinking, pupils will not have the right prior knowledge to build upon. Leaders should ensure the curriculum is always building on what pupils already know from Nursery to Year 6.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## **Further information**

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 144156  |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | North Yorkshire   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10199286  |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary   |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Academy converter<br>Voluntary controlled                                 |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 3 to 11   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed   |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 103   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | Board of trustees   |
| <b>Chair of trust</b>                      | Rt Revd Paul Ferguson   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Simon Robson, Executive headteacher                                       |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.croft.dalesmat.org">http://www.croft.dalesmat.org</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | Not previously inspected  |

## Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average sized primary school.
- The school joined the Dales Academies Trust in 2018.
- As the school is designated as having a religious character, it is inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The last section 48 inspection of the school was in March 2018. The timescales for reinspection have been extended because of COVID-19.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine onsite inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, curriculum leaders, staff and pupils. Meetings were also held with representatives of the trust, the governing body and the diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, computing and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with curriculum leaders, spoke to pupils and teachers, visited lessons and looked at their work. Inspectors heard pupils read.
- Inspectors examined safeguarding records, attendance figures, curriculum plans and policies.
- The views of parents were considered from the 31 responses to Ofsted’s parent questionnaire.
- The views of staff were considered from meeting with them and from the 16 responses to Ofsted’s staff questionnaire.
- The views of pupils were considered from meetings with them and from their response to Ofsted’s pupil questionnaire.

### **Inspection team**

Alison Stephenson, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Christine Durand

Ofsted Inspector

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