

Inspection of Crooksbar Primary School

Petrel Crescent, Crooksbar Estate, Norton, Stockton-on-Tees TS20 1SN

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 April 2022

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Ofsted has not previously inspected Crooksbar 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?

Most pupils attend school regularly. They enjoy school and feel safe. However, leaders' expectations for some pupils are not high enough. This is particularly the case for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Some pupils with SEND do not receive the help that they need. Pupils who struggle with learning to read do not get the right support to help them catch up quickly.

Most pupils follow the school rules, 'ready, respectful, safe'. They work hard to earn house points that reward their effort and kindness. However, some pupils do not behave well outside the classroom. Pupils spoken to say that bullying is rare. Some parents raised concerns about how the school manages bullying. Inspectors found that leaders take action to address issues of bullying. However, some pupils feel that leaders could do more to support them in this regard.

Pupils develop respect for people's individual differences. Pupils learn about a range of relationships and people of different faiths. Leaders have invited a refugee into school to speak to pupils, which has helped them to understand why some people immigrate into the area.

Pupils have the opportunity to take part in extra-curricular clubs, such as mini-chef, eco-club and sport clubs. Pupils who need support with their mental health can access 'talk about it' groups, where they discuss their worries.

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

Subject leaders, supported by staff from the trust, have developed a well-considered curriculum. Pupils learn about a range of interesting topics. Subject leaders have designed the curriculum so that pupils' knowledge builds on prior learning. However, there is some variation in how well the curriculum is taught. Some teachers do not follow the curriculum set out by leaders. In some cases, this limits pupils' achievement. Some subject leaders have begun to work with teaching staff to develop their subject knowledge. This is resulting in improvements to how well the curriculum is taught in subjects such as geography and mathematics.

Reading is not taught consistently well. Leaders have not ensured that staff have the knowledge that they need to teach the school's curriculum for reading. Teachers do not provide pupils with enough opportunities to practise reading the new sounds that they are being taught. The books some pupils read are not well matched to the sounds they know. As a result, some pupils develop gaps in their knowledge of phonics. Some teachers' checks do not precisely identify what pupils need help with in order to catch up. As a result, additional reading sessions for these pupils are not as effective as they could be in helping them to learn to read well. Leaders have thought carefully about the books that adults read to pupils. However, pupils who are fluent readers are not given enough opportunities to read a wide range of rich and interesting books independently.

In the early years, positive relationships with adults help children to settle into school life. Pupils quickly learn the routines of school. Children's curiosity is developed through well-chosen activities and the skilled questioning of adults. Children with SEND in the early years are quickly identified and strategies to support them are effective. However, some of the weaknesses in the curriculum for reading mean that children begin to develop gaps in their reading knowledge when they are in the Reception Year.

Leaders have not ensured that some pupils with SEND in Years 1 to Year 6 get the help they need. Staff do not identify some pupils' specific needs well. Plans for support do not accurately identify pupils' next steps or how they should be helped in lessons. As a result, the support that pupils receive is not as effective as it could be in developing their independence and enabling them to achieve well.

Pupils typically behave well in lessons. However, when pupils do not follow the school rules, some staff use strategies that are not part of the school's behaviour policy, such as asking pupils to leave the classroom. Some unkind behaviour happens outside of lessons. While behaviour incidents are recorded, leaders do not routinely analyse the information that they have about pupils' behaviour outside of lessons. This means that leaders do not have a clear picture to help them to choose the best actions to improve behaviour.

The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged or who have SEND who are persistently absent is high. Leaders' recent work with families to address poor attendance for these pupils is beginning to have an impact.

Leaders, including the board of trustees, have an overly positive view of the effectiveness of the school. Leaders' improvement plans are not sharply focused on the actions needed to address the areas that they want to improve. Trustees and the local academy committee do not challenge leaders strongly enough about aspects of the school that need to improve.

Staff are proud to work in the school. Leaders are mindful of staff's workload. Teachers at the early stages of their career receive effective support from the phase leaders and subject leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders for safeguarding know vulnerable children and their families well. Leaders ensure that staff receive regular training to ensure that they can identify if a pupil might be at risk of harm. Staff report any concerns about pupils' safety promptly. Leaders act appropriately, making thorough records of their actions. Leaders work with external agencies, when necessary, to ensure that pupils are safe from harm.

Pupils learn about how to stay safe when using the internet. The police have visited to

speak to older pupils about knife crime. Pupils learn about road safety, including how to ride their bikes safely.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders, including governors, have an overly positive view of the school's effectiveness. As a result, they have not tackled quickly enough some key areas that need to improve. Leaders should strengthen their processes to evaluate the school's effectiveness and to plan for improvement. Trustees and the local academy committee should take suitable steps to assure themselves that leaders' actions are successful in improving the school.
- Some staff do not have the knowledge that they need to teach early reading well. As a result, some pupils do not learn to read quickly enough. Pupils who fall behind in reading do not consistently receive the right support in order to catch up. Leaders should provide support to staff in order to improve teaching of early reading so that all pupils become fluent and confident readers.
- The needs of some pupils with SEND are not identified consistently well. Support for some pupils with SEND does not help them to develop independence and achieve well. Leaders should ensure that staff precisely identify the needs of pupils with SEND and use appropriate strategies to support them.
- Leaders' expectations of pupils' behaviour outside the classroom are not consistently high. Some pupils do not behave well outside of lessons. Leaders should analyse where poor behaviour happens and take steps to reduce it. They should ensure the behaviour policy is implemented consistently by all staff.
- Leaders do not consistently follow up on their actions to respond to incidents of bullying to ensure that they have been fully resolved. As a result, some parents do not have confidence in the actions leaders take. Leaders should ensure that appropriate checks are made so that they know whether their actions to address bullying have been effective.

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

Unique reference number	145689
Local authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	10236998
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	310
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Christopher Simmons
Headteacher	Christopher Twiby
Website	www.crooksbarb.adastra.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Crooksbarb Primary School converted to become an academy in April 2018. When its predecessor school, Crooksbarb Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium grant is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below the national average.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and members of the school's leadership team, including the special educational needs coordinator.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, geography and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited samples of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of work. Curriculum leaders were involved in all activities alongside inspectors.
- An inspector held a meeting with members of the local academy committee and members of the board of trustees. An inspector also spoke with the chair of the local academy committee by telephone.
- An inspector spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised documents related to safeguarding and spoke to the school's designated safeguarding leaders.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and spoke to parents informally in the playground.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Tim Scargill-Knight, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Julie McGrane	Ofsted Inspector
Angela Spencer-Brooke	Ofsted Inspector

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