

# Inspection of Croftway Academy

William Street, Blyth, Northumberland NE24 2HP

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Inspection dates: 17 and 18 January 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Outstanding**

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The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Early years provision

**Outstanding**

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5  
of the Education Act 2005

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

Croftway is an inspirational school where pupils flourish. This is underpinned by the excellent relationships throughout the school between staff, pupils, and parents and carers. Pupils appreciate that staff respect and care deeply for them. Leaders have very high aspirations for all pupils both academically and socially. The rich, well-planned curriculum reflects this. This is delivered through high-quality teaching, and pupils make excellent progress.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Pupils have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. They behave maturely in their classrooms and around the school. Pupils are proud of helping others through their many leadership roles. Pupils feel safe and happy in school. Bullying is rare. Leaders carefully monitor and address any incidents. Pupils know that adults listen to their concerns and help them. Pupils value the support from the in-school counselling service.

Pupils love all the extra opportunities they have outside the classroom. They enjoy their themed days, clubs, trips such as theatre visits and residential visits.

Children in early years enjoy the learning activities they are given. The classroom is a bustling and dynamic place to be. Staff know the children really well and ensure that they have the best learning outcomes.

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

Leaders have ensured that sustained and rapid progress has been made in all aspects of school life since joining WISE Academies, a multi-academy trust, in September 2018. Leaders make every effort to meet the needs of the local community. They have created an extremely ambitious curriculum for all pupils starting from early years. Safeguarding, personal development (PD), spiritual, moral, social and cultural, and careers education thread through the curriculum. This contributes strongly to pupils developing aspirations for themselves. Pupils are enthusiastic in their learning, even when they find some subjects difficult.

Leaders prioritise reading. The teaching of phonics is well structured and consistent throughout school. Teachers are adept in delivering the phonics programme. They ensure that the books that pupils read match the sounds that they know. Some children join early years midway through the academic year. Staff assess their needs quickly and use a bespoke programme to get them ready for learning. In early years, children are very keen to listen to and join in with songs and rhymes. Children focus really well on their learning, with some making rapid progress from their starting points. Across school there is a sense of excitement about reading. Older pupils are enthusiastic about reading and access a wide variety of books. By the end of key stage 2, pupils read fluently and accurately.

Pupils were significantly affected by the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This is especially so in mathematics and writing. Teachers are very aware

of this. They use assessment well to identify gaps in learning. Teachers address any gaps, and pupils catch up quickly. Lessons include recaps on learning to help pupils remember more and make connections with new learning. Pupils gain confidence in the way in which their learning is built up in small steps to become more complex. They are rightly proud of their work.

Leaders have highly effective systems to identify pupils who may have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers use a wide range of strategies to support pupils with SEND in accessing learning. Provision is seamless, with all pupils working alongside each other. Leaders are tenacious in seeking additional support from external agencies. Pupils and parents are fully involved in reviews. Pupils reflect on their own needs and contribute to their own support plans. Pupils with SEND are as independent as possible in their learning and play.

Leaders encourage positive behaviour, and pupils respond by being courteous, polite and ready to learn. Pupils enjoy coming to school, and attendance has improved significantly. Leaders promote mental health and well-being as well as academic success. Pupils have an excellent understanding about their own mental health needs and those of others. Many pupils benefit from counselling and the therapeutic services provided.

Pupils develop a deep understanding of PD issues. Local employers, clubs, charities and the regional college support the wider curriculum. Many assist with themed days, for example on drug awareness. Leaders help pupils develop their talents and interests by introducing them to new activities and external clubs. Pupils who are from different countries enjoy sharing their heritage with others.

Leaders at all levels are relentless in their drive and determination. The governing body and trust offer support and challenge. They know the school well. Staff appreciate the opportunities for training and the consideration of their well-being.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff are well trained in safeguarding. Adults spot signs of concern and report these promptly. Leaders are experts in understanding pupils' vulnerabilities and past experiences. They are successful in getting extra help from external partners. Safeguarding records are kept up to date.

Staff help pupils to feel safe at school and in the community. Pupils receive bespoke and sensitively delivered education around their own personal safety. For example, pupils are taught about peer pressure and exploitation. All are taught how to stay safe when online.

Leaders make sure that rigorous recruitments processes are followed. All staff are vetted pre-employment.

## 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.

## 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>	146545
<b>Local authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	10255555
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	410
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Margaret Wright-Stephenson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Deborah Ward
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://croftway.wiseacademies.co.uk">https://croftway.wiseacademies.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	25 April 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Croftway Academy converted to become an academy school in September 2018. When its predecessor school, Croftway Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate.
- Croftway Academy is part of WISE Academies, a multi-academy trust, with 12 other schools.
- Many leaders, including the executive headteacher, work in Croftway, Morpeth Road School and Malvin's Close School.
- The school runs a breakfast club for pupils.
- The school currently uses one alternative provision to support pupils with specific needs.

## Information about this inspection

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

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

- 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 met with the headteacher, other senior leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. Meetings were also held with the early years leader, subject leaders, class teachers and pupils. Further meetings were held with early career teachers and some support staff.
- The lead inspector also met with representatives of WISE Academies and members of the local governing board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, computing and design technology. For each deep dive, inspectors looked at curriculum planning, conducted joint lesson visits with leaders, spoke to pupils about their work and looked at books and samples of work.
- Prior to the inspection, the lead inspector reviewed documents on the school's website, as well as published information about the school's performance and previous Ofsted inspections.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, around the school and at playtime and lunchtime. They spoke with pupils about their views of the school and their learning, behaviour and safety.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors spoke to staff, parents and governors. A range of safeguarding information was scrutinised, including the school's policies and records. Inspectors spoke to pupils and observed relationships between pupils and adults. The lead inspector also met with the designated safeguarding lead.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their views of the school. As well as speaking to parents at the school gate, inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. Staff's views were taken into account through a number of meetings, as well as their responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

## Inspection team

Mary Cook, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Kathryn Fenwick

Ofsted Inspector

Chris Baines

Ofsted Inspector

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