

Inspection of a good school: Crook Primary School

Croft Avenue, Crook, County Durham DL15 8QG

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 May 2023

Outcome

Crook Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils describe adults in school as welcoming, kind and helpful. Pupils are happy and relaxed. They make the most of all the school has to offer. Leaders and teachers expect pupils to be the absolute best they can be. Pupils respond to this by working hard, having a go and not giving up. They pursue 'gems', awarded for showing a school value or characteristic. Pupils collect rubies for being kind or helpful, and sapphires for listening and refusing distractions. The pupil with the most gems receives a book token each half term.

Pupils know that they are safe because they trust adults implicitly to look after them. They are aware of site safety and the many locked doors that are fob access only. Pupils are proud of the school. They love the climbing frames, displays and mud kitchen outside, and the wall of school leavers' names written on the huge mural of people and places in Crook in the school entrance.

Behaviour is good. There are no reports of bullying, and pupils trust teachers to deal with any misbehaviour swiftly and fairly. Occasional 'falling out' does happen between pupils. Pupils say they use their 'diamond gem power' of independence to try to resolve issues themselves.

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

Following the pandemic, many pupils returned to school with significant gaps in their learning, especially in English and mathematics. This was despite leaders' efforts to ensure that pupils received education when not at school. Leaders and staff have adapted the curriculum for these subjects and for phonics to ensure that they identify and address these gaps. The impact of this can be seen in what pupils can now remember and in the quality of their current work.

Leaders have developed a curriculum of good quality. In most subjects, key ideas that link knowledge are clear. Pupils are increasingly skilled in using and applying this knowledge in

different contexts. They are quickly becoming adept historians or mathematicians. The order in which pupils acquire new knowledge helps them build on what they already know. The key pieces of knowledge that pupils must remember at the end of a unit of work are clear. Teachers use assessments and daily checks to clarify what pupils have grasped. This means that future lessons can be changed or extra help can be given to pupils so that everyone keeps up. A few subjects, such as science or geography, need further work so that they are equally well planned and sequenced.

Leaders have improved the teaching of reading. Daily phonics lessons follow the same routine. Newly learned words are recapped regularly. Children in Reception know most of their phonic sounds. Unknown words are decoded and blended back together. Leaders have purchased new books, matched to pupils' interests. These include many non-fiction books. Books used by pupils to practise their reading match their phonics knowledge. Pupils who are at risk of falling behind read aloud to the 'reading champion' at least three times each week. Most pupils are quickly becoming skilled and fluent readers.

Pupils' good behaviour in lessons helps them learn. They listen, concentrate and try their best. Children in the Nursery learn and play together with maturity, enjoying the rain when outside. Children in Reception celebrated the Coronation by designing crowns using mathematical repeating patterns. They added together groups of sausage rolls or biscuits, getting ready for the Coronation picnic.

Leaders are determined that pupils make the most of their one chance in primary education. Leaders consider the needs of all pupils and address them in this inclusive school. Leaders make sure that any pupil with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receives the support they need to succeed. Adults spot issues quickly, often in the early years. Older pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their classmates. Work is adapted, for example, in the way adults present new learning or how pupils record work. No-one misses out.

Pupils describe the display of sustainable development goals as the most important in school. They discuss issues and their aim to make the world a better place with fire in their eyes. Pupils understand the need for climate action, gender equality and good health, led by the 'junior global committee'. They share projects with pupils from schools in Tanzania, India, Botswana and Zimbabwe. These projects help to build an understanding of equity and parity. Pupils take part in team-building activities and learn about green technologies. They visit museums and the local castle, enjoy the theatre and experience residential stays. School talent shows or a day of 'muddy mayhem' are favourites.

Staff report that this is a happy school in which they feel valued and trusted. They talk of strong teamwork and leaders having a real understanding of the need for a work-life balance. Staff know that leaders are open to new ideas to reduce the workload of staff.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure safeguarding training for all staff and governors is relevant and up to date. Consequently, staff know how to spot even the smallest issue that could be a concern. All adults keep a watchful eye on pupils. Staff know the local safeguarding risks. The 'strategic team' offers pupils the help that they need without delay. Staff record all incidents online in detail. Safeguarding leaders deal with each situation immediately.

Leaders and office staff keep detailed records and vetting checks for new staff. The linked safeguarding governor checks on systems and records. Pupils learn how to stay safe online. 'Crook Crusaders' teaches pupils to keep themselves safe in all circumstances. Pupils are confident to raise safeguarding issues with school staff.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A few foundation subjects are not sufficiently well planned. In these subjects, the essential substantive knowledge that pupils need to know at the end of each unit is not sharply defined. Key concepts that link learning are unclear. As a result, some pupils find it difficult to link new knowledge and build on what they already know. This makes it harder to remember new knowledge in these subjects over time. Leaders must ensure that all curriculum areas are carefully structured, planned and sequenced so that pupils can achieve well across the curriculum.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2018.

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

Unique reference number	114056
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10269204
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	409
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing	Jackie Gent
Headteacher	Antonella Lupton
Website	www.crookprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 and 9 March 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses one registered alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

The inspector carried out this graded inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, curriculum leaders, and other school staff.
- An inspector met four members of the local governing board, including the chair. He also held a telephone conversation with the school development partner from Durham local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with leaders, looked

at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons where available, spoke to teachers and teaching assistants, spoke to pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector listened to a range of pupils read from different year groups.
- The inspector looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about a range of curriculum subjects.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour during lesson visits, at break time and at lunchtime. He spoke to pupils about their views of behaviour. A group of pupils gave the inspector a tour of the school.
- The inspector looked at the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. He looked at documents and records relating to safeguarding. The inspector spoke to leaders, teachers, governors and pupils about safeguarding.
- The views of parents who responded to Ofsted's Parent View were considered, including all written comments.
- The inspector met with staff to discuss their well-being and workload. He considered the responses and comments from Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Phil Scott, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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