

Inspection of Crofton Academy

High Street, Crofton, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF4 1NF

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 July 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Crofton Academy is a school transformed since the last inspection. Expectations of pupils' behaviour, and what pupils can achieve academically, have been raised. Pupils are increasingly reaching these higher expectations. Pupils' achievement in examinations at the end of Year 11 have significantly improved. Examination outcomes in 2022 were broadly in line with national averages in most subjects. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 benefit from studying a broad and balanced curriculum before starting their examination courses in Year 10. This allows them to study topics in greater depth and develop a deeper understanding of what they have been learning.

Behaviour in lessons, and around school, is calm. Lessons are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. When they are, it is dealt with quickly and effectively. There are high levels of respect between pupils and with adults. Bullying is uncommon but, when it does happen, pupils know the importance of reporting it and are confident that it is dealt with quickly and effectively. As one pupil noted: 'School is now a community who all work together to make things better for everyone.' Pupils enjoy attending school.

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

Leaders have worked effectively with colleagues from across the Castleford Academy Trust to address areas of weakness. Governors and trustees have provided appropriate support, and challenge, for leaders during the necessary changes. Teachers, pupils and families are supportive of the fact that the school has addressed areas of weakness while maintaining its own identity. Crofton staff are now supporting other schools through the sharing of their own strong practice.

Expectations of pupils' behaviour, in and outside of lessons, have risen significantly. These new expectations, and consequences for not meeting them, are understood by pupils. Rules are applied consistently by staff. After an initial increase, suspensions have fallen. Pupils who have been suspended are positive about the steps that staff have taken to help them improve their behaviour.

Leaders have ensured that simple approaches to improving attendance are consistently applied. Staff work closely with families to identify and address factors leading to pupil absence. Attendance is now above the national average.

Pupils with visual impairments play a full part in school life. Teachers work effectively with the visual impairment unit team to ensure that all pupils can fully benefit from lessons, including adapting physical and printed lesson resources.

Teachers receive high-quality professional development to help them teach effectively. This professional development initially focused on the core features of effective lessons. This structured approach to teaching has resulted in pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), learning more effectively than previously. Pupils now achieve in line with national averages in

most subjects. However, some generic teaching approaches do not always support those who find learning more difficult, and the most able, to achieve as highly as possible.

Conscious efforts have been made to reduce staff workload. Leaders have ensured that staff are supported to be effective in their roles and only asked to do things that will make a difference to pupils.

Leaders identified that personal development, while previously a strength, did not provide pupils with enough opportunities to hear from external speakers who were experts in their field. Leaders made changes to how personal development is taught to increase the opportunities for pupils to hear from outside speakers. Pupils' understanding of aspects of the personal development curriculum is variable. They have very strong knowledge of the features of healthy relationships and protected characteristics. However, their knowledge of the democratic structures in the UK is often poor. While leaders check that personal development sessions are taught well, they have not checked that pupils are learning the intended personal development curriculum in the longer term.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of clubs and societies. Leaders have considered the challenges to extra-curricular club attendance presented by the number of pupils travelling to and from school on buses. They have worked hard to overcome them as far as possible. The proportion of pupils with SEND and those eligible for pupil premium funding attending clubs and societies is high.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that all staff are aware of the signs that a pupil may be at risk and know the systems to use to report those concerns. Any concerns are evaluated promptly and appropriate steps are taken to help keep pupils safe, including working with outside agencies where appropriate.

Pupils are taught about the risks they may face and how to help keep themselves safe. Pupils have adults in school they would feel comfortable speaking to if they were worried about their safety and are confident that it would be dealt with effectively.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The structured approach to teaching has improved learning for all pupils. However, this highly structured approach does not always allow those pupils who find learning most challenging, and the most able, to achieve as highly as they could. Leaders should review how the curriculum is implemented for all pupil

groups to ensure all pupils are supported to achieve their very best.

- Leaders have undertaken quality assurance of the implementation of the changes they have made in school but have not yet, in some cases, evaluated the impact of the changes. As a result, they cannot be sure that the changes have had the positive impact desired. Leaders should evaluate the impact of the changes they have made so that they can make adjustments where necessary.

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	137001
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	10290172
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,027
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Adam Fletcher
Headteacher	Peter Walker
Website	www.croftonacademy.org.uk/
Date of previous inspection	6 July 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school joined Castleford Academy Trust in May 2020.
- The school has a special educational needs unit for up to 12 pupils with a visual impairment.
- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is well above the national average.
- The school uses two unregistered providers of alternative education on a part-time basis.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the deputy headteacher and senior and middle leaders. The lead inspector met the chief executive officer of the trust and the trust's director of secondary education.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, science and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors visited lessons in a range of other subjects and spoke to subject leaders about pupils' work in those subjects.
- Inspectors spoke to the leader in charge of reading and heard some pupils read. An inspector also visited some support sessions for those pupils at the earlier stages of their reading.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead to discuss the arrangements for safeguarding. This included reviewing the school's single central record and a range of safeguarding logs. Throughout the inspection, inspectors spoke with teachers, non-teaching staff and pupils about their safeguarding knowledge.
- Inspectors met with other leaders, including the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, and those responsible for pupils' wider personal development and careers. An inspector also met with some early career teachers, along with their mentors.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils, formally and informally, throughout the inspection. This included pupils with leadership responsibilities in school, as well as some pupils who had received more than one suspension from school. Inspectors also observed breaktime and lunchtime arrangements.
- An inspector spoke on the telephone to representatives from one of the registered alternative providers used by the school and to a pupil who attends that provision.
- Inspectors considered a range of school documentation. This included external evaluations of the school, the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan and minutes of meetings of the board of trustees and local council.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents, staff and pupils gathered through Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

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