

# Inspection of Croft Church of England Primary School

Brookes Avenue, Croft, Leicester, Leicestershire LE9 3GJ

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Inspection dates: 26 and 27 September 2023

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

The executive headteacher of this school is Felicity Clarke. The school is part of the Embrace Multi-Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Sharon Mullins, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Russell Andrews. The executive headteacher is responsible for this school and one other.

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

This is a friendly and inclusive school. Most pupils feel happy and safe. Pupils know that staff care about them. They know who to talk to about any worries that they have. Relationships are typically positive and trusting. Most pupils behave well. Sometimes, there is disruption in lessons.

The school is becoming more settled and stable following a period of turbulence in leadership and staffing. A number of changes are taking place to improve the school rapidly. Most pupils, parents and carers recognise that these changes are for the better. Relationships and trust between the school and the local community are being restored.

In the past, pupils and children in the early years have not achieved well. Recently, pupils' achievement has improved, particularly in reading and mathematics, by the end of each key stage. However, staff expectations of what pupils can achieve in all subjects and year groups are too variable. Children in the early years, particularly in Nursery, do not all develop the knowledge and behaviours they need to become successful learners as they grow.

Opportunities for pupils to take part in trips and visits are expanding, including residential visits. However, pupils say they would like to take part in a broader range of regular clubs and activities.

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

Current leaders, including trust leaders, have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. They are working with determination to improve all aspects of the school. They are realistic that there is much to do to restore the school's standing in the local community. Their efforts, together with staff, are beginning to bring about rapid improvement. The trust has supported the school to strengthen its financial position. Staff morale has recovered in recent months.

Subject leadership is strengthening. Many leaders are new to the role. They benefit well from the support of staff at the partner school.

The content of the curriculum is being developed so that teachers know precisely what is taught and when. This work is helping to ensure that the new curriculum builds from the early years to the end of Year 6. This development is not yet complete, but it is well under way.

Teachers' subject knowledge is mostly secure. They typically use this to plan purposeful learning activities. However, teachers and other supporting adults do not consistently check pupils' understanding before moving their learning on. Sometimes, pupils are not clear about what they are learning or why. Pupils' misconceptions are not always swiftly picked up and remedied. When this happens,

pupils lose concentration and drift off task. Gaps develop in their knowledge. Pupils do not all achieve as well as they might. This is particularly the case in mathematics.

Children in the early years do not receive a consistently well-implemented curriculum, noticeably in Nursery. Activities are sometimes led by children. Routines and learning behaviours are not consistently well established. As a result, children are easily distracted. They are not all well prepared for the next stage of their education. Provision in Reception is stronger. Children's learning in the 'forest school' is an exciting and valued part of the school's provision.

The school nurtures a positive culture of reading. Pupils say they enjoy reading, especially during class reading time. Pupils enjoy selecting books from the visiting mobile library. Early reading is prioritised. Leaders have recently introduced a new scheme for the teaching of phonics. The proportion of children who reach the required standard by the end of Year 1 has improved. Leaders know there is more to do. Staff do not always make sure that pupils at an early stage of learning to read use their phonic knowledge to decode and blend difficult words. Sometimes, staff are too quick to read for pupils rather than ensure that pupils' reading skills are fully developed.

The school has strengthened its oversight of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including by engaging with parents. However, the academic needs of pupils with SEND are not consistently prioritised in the delivery of all subjects. The needs of pupils who require close adult support are met effectively.

Most pupils attend well. The school is calm and orderly. Pupils typically get on well with one another in lessons and in the playground. Sometimes, pupils are less considerate when listening to the ideas of others or when taking turns.

Pupils understand the importance of treating everyone equally and fairly. Incidents of disrespectful behaviour are low. However, pupils' understanding of the British values is not well developed. Pupils do not routinely have opportunities to discuss important issues in depth. As a result, pupils are not all well prepared to become responsible citizens.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- Staff expectations of what pupils can achieve and how they should behave are not consistently high across all subjects and year groups, in the school's mixed-age classes. Sometimes, teachers move pupils on to new tasks before they are ready. Pupils are not always sure what they are learning or why they are completing tasks. When this happens, pupils' concentration drifts and they lose

focus. Some leave work incomplete. Low-level disruption sometimes occurs as a result that disturbs other pupils' learning. The school should ensure that all staff have the knowledge and skills they need to promote consistently high expectations in all subjects and year groups, so that all pupils behave and achieve well.

- Children in the early years, particularly in nursery, do not consistently receive the attention they need from adults to help them remain on task and complete their work. Children do not always follow routines and instructions as well as they should. As a result, children are easily distracted and lose focus. They are not as fully prepared for the next stage of their education as they should be. The school should ensure that staff have the skills they need to help all children develop the knowledge and learning behaviours they require to be successful as they grow.
- The use of assessment is not fully developed across all subjects to ensure that all pupils develop their understanding fully and securely, particularly in mathematics and for some pupils at an early stage of learning to read. Staff do not always check for pupils' misconceptions and remedy them swiftly enough. As a result, some pupils do not demonstrate their knowledge and understanding as fully and as fluently as they could. The school should ensure that teachers and supporting adults have the skills they need to check pupils' understanding over time systematically, thereby supporting all pupils to become confident learners.
- The oversight of pupils with SEND has strengthened. Staff receive the information they need to help meet the needs of pupils with SEND. However, these pupils' academic needs do not always receive the priority they require. This means that these pupils do not always complete tasks or achieve as well as they could. The school should continue to ensure that all staff have the skills they need to provide the right support for pupils with SEND, so that these pupils engage and achieve as well as they can.
- The school's curriculum for personal development is not as effective as it needs to be. Pupils do not experience regular opportunities to discuss and debate issues that deepen their thinking and understanding. Pupils struggle to articulate their understanding of the British values. As a result, pupils are not all well prepared to become responsible citizens. The school should ensure that the school's curriculum for personal development equips pupils with the knowledge and skills they need to become thoughtful and responsible citizens.
- Pupils say that they would like a broader range of regular opportunities to develop their talents and interests. They are not short of ideas. The lack of opportunities means that pupils are missing out on rich experiences that promote their wider personal development and well-being. The school should ensure that the range of extra-curricular opportunities has the necessary breadth to enable pupils to explore their talents and interests fully.

## 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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	146621
<b>Local authority</b>	Leicestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10288371
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	136
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Russell Andrews
<b>Executive Headteacher</b>	Felicity Clarke
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.croftprimaryschool.co.uk">www.croftprimaryschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school converted to become an academy in April 2019. When its predecessor school, Croft Church of England Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Leicester. The most recent section 48 inspection of this Church of England school, which is an inspection of the school's religious character, took place in April 2018.
- The school works in close partnership with one other local school, overseen by the executive headteacher.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative education provider.

## Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher and other members of the school's leadership team, alongside leaders from the partnership school, including those with responsibility for pupils with SEND.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the board of trustees. He also met with two members of the new local governing body, which oversees both schools in the partnership, including the executive chair.
- The lead inspector met with two trust leaders, including the chief executive officer.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, art, history and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about 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 also considered curriculum documentation for a range of subjects across the school, including geography, music and science.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils from key stage 1 and Year 3 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site during playtime. They spoke with several groups of pupils, both formally and informally.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record, took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils, and considered the extent to which the school has created a positive and open culture around safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and Ofsted's surveys for pupils and staff. They also spoke to some parents. The lead inspector took account of the school's own surveys of pupil and parent views about the school.

## Inspection team

Chris Stevens, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Chrissie Barrington	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Lowther	Ofsted Inspector

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