

Inspection of a good school: Crosshall Junior School

Great North Road, Eaton Ford, St Neots, Cambridgeshire PE19 7GG

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 March 2024

Outcome

Crosshall Junior School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Anne Eardley. The school is the only school in a single academy trust, Crosshall Junior School Limited, which means that other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Damien Lippett.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils delight in sharing their school experiences. Visitors are welcomed warmly into the 'CJS' community. Class ambassadors step up with self-assurance in lessons to explain their learning. Pupils love to read and share stories with adults. They get excited when the well promoted, and eagerly anticipated, 'books on tour' arrive in their classroom. Pupils build positive relationships with adults and their peers. They understand the boundaries of good behaviour and so they respond well. Pupils trust staff to look out for them. They feel safe in school. Bullying is rare and dealt with quickly. Pupils are taught to make safe choices, including when playing games online.

Pupils' personal development is exceptionally well planned and supported. They enjoy the different clubs and interesting activities on offer, in school and out in the community. Pupils take pride in the school's inclusive culture. They speak confidently about how this helps new pupils to settle in quickly. Pupils like having responsibilities, such as being class monitors, or elected members of the school councils. They are respectful as they listen to other's views, knowing that 'It is fine to be different in our school.' Pupils are prepared well for secondary education.

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

Pupils learn across a wide range of subjects in this vibrant and close-knit community. The school's values, achievement, resilience, and creativity, underpin pupils' eagerness to learn and so they achieve well. The curriculum is reviewed regularly to make sure that it meets pupils' needs. This strong focus on improvement continues to raise standards, including in reading and mathematics.

The curriculum is well-considered and ambitious. Pupils enjoy learning and sharing their ideas. Teachers ensure that any misconceptions are corrected quickly. However, in a few subjects, recent developments are still being evaluated. As a result, some activities are not matched as well as they could be to the learning intentions. Where this happens, pupils do not always learn as much, or as deeply, as they do in most subjects.

The promotion of a love of reading across the school is a joy. Pupils appreciate the well-stocked library and its impressive range of books. Their excitement is infectious as they speak about visiting authors, the books they read and the stories they remember. Pupils understand the importance of reading and its link to their future success. When they join the school, those who need extra help to catch up with reading are well supported.

Approaches to support for older pupils who have fallen behind with their reading are still being refined. For a few pupils, the gaps in their phonics knowledge limit the accuracy of their spelling and writing. Further staff training is focused on reducing these inconsistencies.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported and so they achieve well. Teachers' curriculum adaptations are informed by helpful guidance from the special educational needs coordinator. These well-considered changes mean that pupils with SEND typically experience the same curriculum as their peers.

Pupils learn and play well together. Good behaviour is the norm in lessons and during breaks. Pupils are respectful and cooperative. The behaviour curriculum ensures they understand the importance of 'doing the right thing.'

Pupils' character development is exemplary. They relish opportunities for responsibilities such as being class ambassadors and sports leaders. Everyone has a role. Trips, residential and contributions from visiting speakers are well matched to the ambitious provision. The school's 'Future Me' programme offers early insight into the world of work and personal finances. Pupils are well prepared to begin their journey on to secondary education.

Governors and trustees ensure that the acting co-headteachers have the support they need to lead the school. The strong focus on positive mental health and wellbeing for all is well established. Staff make good use of the continuous professional development opportunities available. This includes ongoing support from subject, and other leaders, which continues to improve the quality of education across the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Arrangements to support older pupils who have fallen behind with their reading are still embedding. For some of these pupils, the gaps in their phonics knowledge reduce the accuracy of their spelling. This impacts negatively on their writing. Planned training should be completed quickly, so that all staff are confident to deliver reading catch up consistently and well.
- In a few subjects, curriculum leaders are still evaluating what is working well and what needs to improve. Consequently, some activities teachers set are not as carefully matched to the intended learning as they need to be. Where this happens, pupils do not learn as much, or as deeply as they could. The school should ensure that subject leaders have any further support required to complete the reviews and to implement any necessary improvements.

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 May 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](#)' 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

Unique reference number	136339
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10295028
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	434
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Damien Lippett
Headteacher	Anne Eardley
Website	www.crosshalljunior.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 and 10 May 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- At the time of the inspection a team of two acting co-headteachers were in post.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in the evaluation of the school.
- The inspector conducted deep dives in the following subjects: English, including early reading, mathematics and physical education. To complete each deep dive, she discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, and spoke with teachers. She also spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.

- wider sample of curriculum plans were considered beyond the deep dives, including those in geography and design and technology.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector looked at safeguarding policies, the school's record of pre-employment checks on new staff and a sample of child protection files. The inspector took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector spoke with a group of governors and trustees, including the chair of governors.
- Meetings were held with the acting co-headteachers, who also have roles as designated safeguarding lead and deputy designated safeguarding lead. The inspector held further meetings with the special educational needs coordinator, other leaders, school staff and groups of pupils.
- The documents checked, included behaviour logs, attendance records, minutes of governors' meetings, school improvement plans and school policies.
- The inspector also spoke with the school improvement partner who works closely with the acting co-headteachers.
- There were 124 responses to the on-line questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, which were considered alongside 124 free-text responses from parents.
- The inspector also took account of 38 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for school staff. There were 138 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for school pupils that were considered.

Inspection team

Christine Dick, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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