

Inspection of a good school: Cropthorne-with-Charlton C of E First School

Main Street, Cropthorne, Pershore, Worcestershire WR10 3NB

Inspection date:

12 March 2024

Outcome

Cropthorne-with-Charlton C of E First School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school and attend regularly. They embrace the school's values of 'honesty, peace, love and forgiveness'. The school has high expectations for all pupils to do well, which they achieve. By the end of Year 2, all pupils have attained the expected standard in phonics, irrespective of their different starting points.

All pupils, whatever their needs, experience a full curriculum. They are included in every aspect of school life. Pupils are enthusiastic in French lessons, singing songs, rhymes and playing games such as 'Jack a dit' ('Simon says'). They have many sporting opportunities, including a recent netball tournament.

For a small school, there are numerous extra-curricular opportunities available, including coding and photography. There is a film club, where pupils made a film and shared it with parents. Pupils have been excitedly preparing for their end-of-term production, 'Star Warts – the umpire strikes back'.

Pupils behave well in lessons and at breaktimes. Outside there is a wide range of activities on offer to keep them fully engaged. They feel safe in school and know what to do if anything worries them. Staff are vigilant in checking pupils' welfare, and they report any concern, however small.

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

The school has put in place an ambitious curriculum. It sets out clearly the end points it wants pupils to achieve in each subject, as well as the knowledge and vocabulary it expects them to learn. Where there are split-age classes, the school has thought carefully how to ensure that the curriculum is sufficiently sequenced and challenging so no learning is missed. It delivers a two-year programme well, that revisits themes but enables older pupils in the class to work at greater depth.

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Pupils get off to a rapid start learning phonics in Reception. The recently introduced reading scheme is now well embedded and pupils achieve well in their reading. Individuals who fall behind, are at an early stage, or find reading difficult are supported well to catch up. By Year 3, all pupils have gained the knowledge and skills to read with confidence and fluency. Additional adults have received appropriate training to ensure that they deliver the phonics programme consistently well.

Subjects, such as French, make curriculum links with other subjects, including music. Pupils read widely and often across the curriculum. French texts are carefully chosen to match the English texts, such as 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' and 'Winnie the Witch'. The school has successfully adopted and adapted a commercial scheme based on pupils' mastery and fluency in mathematics.

Pupils are developing the knowledge and key skills they need to do well. Teachers use additional resources effectively in order to enhance pupils' learning. They also adapt the delivery of the curriculum well to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

In the early years, termly topics set out clearly the intended outcomes for children. However, the activities designed do not consistently enable children to meet these planned outcomes. It is not clear whether activities are designed to be initiated by the child or led by a teacher. As a result, there is potential for some children to miss key learning opportunities.

Teachers and additional adults check closely how well pupils are doing in lessons. They use a range of effective strategies, such as questioning and short activities, to check what pupils have learned and where there are gaps in learning to be addressed.

The school makes full use of its rural environment. Younger children met 'Dave the lamb' when he visited the school recently. The school has strong links with the local church. It also promotes cultural and religious diversity well. Older pupils recently learned about 'Rosh Hashanah', the Jewish New Year, and tasted food associated with the festival. There are many trips, such as to a museum about space science and astronomy. Pupils take on additional responsibilities, such as members of the school council. They have a secure understanding of fundamental British values, including democracy and the rule of law.

Rates of pupils' absence and persistent absence are consistently well below the national average. The school engages with parents and carers effectively and relationships are strong. All of those responding to the survey said they would recommend the school to another parent.

Leaders are very mindful of workload because each member of staff takes on numerous responsibilities. As one staff member put it, 'We all wear many hats, but there is always someone to help.' Governors know the school's strengths and priorities well. Members have a range of expertise and experience which they use to support and challenge leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Activities planned and carried out in the early years do not consistently match the intended outcomes for children. As a result, some children miss the intended key learning. The school should ensure that planned child-centred and teacher-led activities enable children to achieve the intended outcomes.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 2014.

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 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	116800
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10294521
Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5 to 10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	88
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Hilary Harris
Headteacher	Robert Bothma
Website	www.crophthorneschool.org
Date of previous inspection	11 September 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher has been appointed to start in April 2024.
- There are four classes in total. Two of these are mixed-age classes for Reception and Year 1 pupils, and Years 3 and 4 pupils.
- Pupils leave at the end of Year 5 to go to middle school.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- The school has a Christian ethos. The school's last section 48 inspection was in October 2019. The next scheduled inspection is due in 2025.

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 inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior teachers and other staff.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils.
- Inspectors met three members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair.
- Inspectors took account of responses to the Ofsted Parent View free-text service, the online questionnaire and the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.
- Inspectors considered information on pupils' behaviour, attendance and personal development.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, French and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also listened to pupils read and discussed the curriculum in some other subjects, including in the early years foundation stage.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Mark Sims, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Chris Ogden

Ofsted Inspector

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