

Inspection of The Croft Primary School

Marlborough Lane, Swindon, Wiltshire SN3 1RA

Inspection dates:	15 and 16 October 2024
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Elaine Murphy. This school is part of The White Horse Federation, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Dan Nicholls, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ninna Gibson.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since June 2014. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at The Croft Primary School. They talk proudly to visitors about their learning and recommend the school wholeheartedly. The 'Croftie' values lie at the heart of the school. Pupils strive every day to embody these and 'be a Croftie'. They feel safe because of the excellent relationships they build with their peers and the adults in school.

Staff care deeply for all pupils. Staff give pupils every chance to succeed and to shine. The school has extremely high expectations of pupils. Pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve exceptionally well. As a result, they are exceedingly well prepared for the next stage of their learning.

Pupils' conduct and behaviour for learning are exemplary. From the early years, they grow into highly motivated, confident and independent learners. Across the school, pupils speak about the importance of showing support and encouragement to each other.

Pupils delight in the many clubs and trips the school offers that develop their talents and interests. They relish the wide range of opportunities to assume leadership responsibility. For example, pupils can be house captains, sports captains, head pupils and part of the 'Croftie Crew'. There is an active pupil parliament. Its members enact change within the school in response to feedback from their peers.

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

Pupils follow a rich and ambitious curriculum. This exceeds the breadth and depth of what is expected nationally. Starting in the early years, the school has expertly and meticulously crafted the curriculum. Essential building blocks of learning are clearly identified. These are subsequently broken down into manageable steps. This enables pupils to build on their prior learning very effectively.

Pupils with SEND experience the same curriculum as their peers. Staff skilfully adapt their teaching to meet pupils' needs. This ensures that these pupils can learn the curriculum and achieve exceptionally well. Teachers regularly check pupils' understanding. This allows staff to address any gaps or misconceptions. No pupil is left behind in their learning. Consequently, all pupils achieve highly across the curriculum. Provisional outcomes from 2024 show that pupils attain significantly above national averages. The high-quality work that pupils complete in school reflects this. Pupils talk about their learning with interest, enthusiasm and pride.

A love of reading permeates the school. This work begins in the early years, where children quickly learn the sounds that letters represent. Staff have the knowledge and skills to teach reading extremely effectively. Pupils receive the targeted help that they need if they find reading difficult. This ensures that they keep pace with the phonics programme. The books that pupils read closely match the sounds they know. This helps them to become confident, fluent readers who understand what they read.

Pupils adore reading for pleasure. They enjoy recommending books to each other and love spending time in the classroom 'book nooks'. Pupils value the rewards that recognise their regular reading habits. The books that teachers share with pupils at the end of the day entrance them. These texts are chosen carefully as part of the rich reading canon.

The warmth and trust between pupils and staff are clear to see. Pupils eagerly embrace the 'Croftie' values and the behaviour expectations of 'show me 5'. They rarely need reminding to do their best. These behaviours start when children join the school in the Reception Year. Children happily share with their friends and commend each other on their good work. Older pupils can join the 'Croftie Crew', which looks out for their peers at social times. Pupils are delighted to come to school. This is reflected in their high attendance.

Staff take every opportunity to enhance and ignite pupils' curiosity and thirst for learning. Carefully selected trips and visits enrich learning beyond the classroom. The school's curriculum, personal development, 'Croftie' values and behaviour expectations are all interwoven. Pupils show a deep understanding of fundamental British values. They learn to understand and appreciate a range of religions and cultural influences. Pupils celebrate differences and understand that they should treat everyone with respect. This results in them being very well prepared for life in modern Britain.

The trust, governors, school leaders and staff are proactive and relentless in ensuring that each and every pupil receives high-quality education and care. The academic and personal development of every pupil is a priority. As a result, pupils love their school and being part of the school community. This extends to staff, who benefit from highly effective professional development. Parents and carers rightly hold the school in the highest regard.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	138424
Local authority	Swindon
Inspection number	10344636
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	419
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ninna Gibson
CEO of the trust	Dan Nicholls
Headteacher	Elaine Murphy
Website	www.thecroft.swindon.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	4 and 5 June 2014, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of The White Horse Federation.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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.
- An inspector met with the CEO of the trust, a trustee and members of the local governing committee.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, curriculum leaders, teachers and pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, computing and art. 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 considered the curriculum in other subjects. They met with leaders, spoke with pupils and reviewed some pupils' work in these subjects.
- 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.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around school and at social times. They considered pupils' views about behaviour and bullying in school. They also spoke with staff about pupils' behaviour, their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's pupil survey and Ofsted's staff survey. They also considered responses to the parent survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text messages.

Inspection team

Frances Bywater, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lizzy Meadows

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