

Inspection of Crowton Christ Church CofE Primary School

Crowton, Northwich, Cheshire CW8 2RW

Inspection dates:	13 and 14 November 2024
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are polite, well mannered and respectful. Staff create a caring and supportive learning environment. Pupils have warm, trusting relationships with adults and they feel safe in school. They behave well. Typically, within lessons, pupils concentrate on their learning. When outside on the playground, they play games together harmoniously. Everyone is made to feel a part of this small school community.

Pupils are proud to take on additional responsibilities in school. They are excited to be part of the school council, so that they can think about how to make improvements to the school. Other pupils become 'junior safety officers'. They support teachers to improve pupils' understanding about how to stay safe, including when they are online.

The school wants the very best for pupils. Recently, the school has made some swift improvements to the curriculum that pupils receive. For example, it is clearer what the key knowledge is that pupils need to know. However, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) at times do not receive effective support to access the curriculum on offer. Furthermore, in some curriculum subjects, pupils' achievement is not as strong as it could be.

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

The school has been through a turbulent time since the previous inspection. Governors have overseen this challenging period of time to ensure that the school continued to offer an effective education while securing more robust school leadership. This has had an impact in a few aspects of the school's provision. However, now that the school's leadership has become more secure, it has started to take the necessary steps to ensure that improvements are made with pace.

The curriculum is broad and balanced. In some subjects, staff use their subject knowledge increasingly well. This helps them to deliver these curriculum subjects consistently. In these subjects, teachers choose with greater precision activities which match the intended curriculum.

That said, staff use the school's assessment strategies unevenly across different subjects. This includes in the early years. Where staff use assessment strategies more effectively, they pinpoint what pupils' knowledge and understanding is. This helps teachers to ensure that pupils' knowledge is secure before moving on to new learning. However, in other subjects, teachers do not check pupils' learning effectively. Gaps in pupils' knowledge can occasionally remain in these subjects. Where this occurs, pupils find it more difficult to build up a rich body of knowledge over time.

Pupils' writing skills are not developed well enough. In the early years, some children do not develop secure early writing skills. Older pupils develop poor writing habits, particularly with spelling, punctuation and handwriting. Also, for some pupils, these weak writing habits persist over time. It affects pupils' ability to produce high-quality written work.

There has been a renewed focus on how the school identifies pupils with SEND. There is a greater focus on early identification. For example, staff spot children's needs in the early years swiftly. Staff receive ongoing training to assist them with this. As a result, staff are becoming more skilled at identifying pupils with SEND. Although staff are developing their confidence in identifying pupils' needs, they are less sure about how to use different strategies effectively in the classroom to support pupils with SEND. These pupils, therefore, do not achieve as well as they could.

Reading is a strength of the school. The school places importance on ensuring that pupils can read well. Pupils enjoy reading. They read a wide range of literature. Children in the early years learn different rhymes, songs and poems, which supports their early reading skills. From Reception Year, pupils follow a phonics scheme that increases their confidence and fluency in reading.

Children in the early years develop positive attitudes to school. They learn to turn take and share with each other. This provides an important foundation for children's positive behaviour, which guides older pupils to behave well. The school uses effective strategies to promote the importance of attendance. Pupils, therefore, attend school regularly.

Pupils experience a wide range of enrichment opportunities. They understand how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy. For example, they use the school's well-being wall to guide them to different strategies to help with this. Pupils learn about different faiths, religions and beliefs. This helps them to gain an appreciation of life in modern Britain.

Staff are incredibly positive about their work and feel well supported, including with their workload and well-being. The headteacher has the confidence of the entire school community. Staff recognise how the improvements made recently have enhanced pupils' education. They particularly value the training they receive to identify pupils with SEND.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Staff do not use their understanding of pupils' needs effectively enough in practice. This means that pupils with SEND occasionally do not receive the correct support needed to access the curriculum. The school should ensure that staff implement effective strategies in the classroom to enable pupils with SEND to access the full curriculum.
- Some pupils, including some children in the early years, do not have the knowledge and skills to write effectively. They have a fragile understanding of spelling rules,

punctuation and handwriting. From time to time, they develop poor writing habits. The school should ensure that staff support pupils' understanding of different spelling, punctuation and handwriting, so they develop more positive writing habits over time.

- Staff do not use assessment strategies effectively in some subjects. They are, therefore, not sure what pupils know and understand. As a result, staff occasionally do not identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. The school should ensure that teachers use assessment strategies more consistently across the curriculum, to help pupils build up a secure body of knowledge.

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	111336
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10321322
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	46
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sarah Thompson
Headteacher	Lauren Hill
Website	www.crowton.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 March 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- Since the previous inspection, there has been some turbulence in the school's leadership. Between November 2023 and April 2024, the school was led by two temporary headteachers from within the local authority. The current headteacher took up post in April 2024.
- A new chair of the governing body has been in post since September 2024.
- This Church of England school is part of the Diocese of Chester. The last section 48 inspection took place on 2 February 2017. The next section 48 inspection is due this academic year.

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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English including early reading, mathematics and history. 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.
- An inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors discussed the other curriculum subjects, spoke to pupils about their learning and reviewed samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. They met with leaders for attendance and behaviour.
- The lead inspectors met with members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body. He also spoke with the school improvement partner on behalf of the local authority.
- 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 at lunchtimes and as pupils moved around the school building. They scrutinised leaders' records of pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at the school. They spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and for pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Stuart Perkins, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lisa Woolley

Ofsted Inspector

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