



Croft Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120125
LEA Leicestershire
Inspection number 280740
Inspection dates 1 February 2006 to 1 February 2006
Reporting inspector Graeme Bassett AI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Brookes Avenue
School category	Voluntary controlled		Croft
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Leicester, Leicestershire LE9 3GJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01455 282643
Number on roll	131	Fax number	01455 282643
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Phil Staples
Date of previous inspection	10 January 2000	Headteacher	Mr Adrian Gyles

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 1 February 2006 - 1 February 2006	Inspection number 280740
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This smaller-than-average primary school serves the village of Croft to the south of Leicester. The school also serves as the village community centre and has a playgroup for children aged three and four. Most pupils are White British and no pupil speaks English as an additional language. The economic status of the local area is broadly average, as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. The school has received a Healthy Schools Award and two School Achievement Awards. The headteacher took up his appointment at the beginning of January 2006.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is an effective school that gives good value for money. Pupils achieve well, although not consistently so across the year groups, and standards are extremely high by Year 6. Currently, leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has recently experienced some significant staff changes and is in a period of change with the appointment of a new headteacher. He has added to the school's own evaluation, which is mostly in line with the inspection evidence. The headteacher has a clear vision for the future and has already identified areas that need to be improved. The school has successfully addressed the issues from the last inspection and has good capacity to make further improvement.

Teaching is good overall, although it varies across the school. It is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6, it is good and often excellent, especially in Year 6, where standards are extremely high and pupils' progress is outstanding. Provision for the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and most reach the goals expected of them by the time they enter Year 1. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' progress is satisfactory and standards are broadly average, although the more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged.

The curriculum and pupils' personal development are good. The pupils behave well. They are cheerful, enthusiastic and show interest in all that they do. This reflects the good care, guidance and support given by the staff.

The subject coordinators have not yet had sufficient opportunities to develop their leadership skills. Good initiatives taken by individual teachers have been trialled to improve assessment procedures. In the past, senior management has not taken a strong enough hold of these initiatives, which has slowed the development of whole-school procedures for using the assessments to show what pupils can do.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use assessment records more precisely to plan relevant and challenging tasks, especially for the higher-attaining pupils, and to raise standards and achievement in Years 1 and 2.
- Help subject coordinators to improve their monitoring and evaluation skills in order to raise standards and expectations.
- Establish a whole-school approach to assessing and recording pupils' progress and achievements.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The achievements of pupils are good overall. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress. Standards on entry to the Foundation Stage are broadly average. Pupils settle quickly into the school's routines and those who entered in January have already made good improvements in their personal and emotional development. By the time children enter Year 1 they have all made satisfactory progress and most reach the expected targets for their age. Over the past two years there are

been many staff changes in Year 2 and pupils' progress has been affected by these disruptions. Their achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average but some pupils, including the higher-attaining pupils, do not do as well as they should. It is a school priority to raise standards in this year group, especially for the higher-attaining pupils.

There has been a concerted drive to raise standards throughout Years 3 to 5. This has been successful and, as a result, pupils make good progress. By the end of Year 6, pupils' achievement is outstanding and standards are extremely high in English, mathematics and science. Because of good and often excellent teaching, over three quarters of the pupils reached the higher Level 5 in mathematics and science in the most recent national tests. The targets set for English and mathematics, which are suitably challenging, have been surpassed for the past two years. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are above average.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy their lessons and concentrate well. Attendance is good. Children adopt safe practices and feel safe. Older pupils readily take on responsibility for younger children in the playground and in school where, for example, pupils in Years 4 and 5 have reading partners in Year 1 and the Reception class. They learn effectively about healthy lifestyles and how to deal with difficult choices in later life. Teachers promote pupils' self-esteem well. Consequently, they develop self-confidence and an ability to express their views with assurance and listen to others with respect. This self-confidence and the good progress pupils make in literacy, numeracy and ICT make a good contribution to the pupils' future economic well-being.

Pupils contribute effectively to the life of the community in school and through the community centre. Pupils' spiritual development has improved significantly since the last inspection and their social, moral, spiritual and cultural awareness is good. The school's link with a multi-faith school in Leicester and opportunities in religious education lessons mean that pupils are developing a good understanding of other faiths.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good overall and, as a result, pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their work and behave well. In Years 3 to 6, the teaching is particularly strong, providing pupils with very good levels of challenge. This is reflected in the good and often very good progress made by these pupils. In Year 6, teaching is often excellent and pupils attain extremely high standards and make outstanding progress in English, mathematics and science. Teachers are well organised and provide

stimulating tasks that build well upon each pupil's previous learning. Good use is made of interactive whiteboards to encourage and sustain pupils' learning, as was seen when 'throws' at a graphical dartboard inspired pupils to combine numbers in different sequences.

In Years 1 and 2, the teaching is satisfactory. This age group has suffered many disruptions recently, with a succession of supply teachers sharing the teaching of this class. Communications between these teachers are not reliable enough to ensure that assessment records are rigorously maintained and used regularly. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and all areas of learning are planned well to ensure children progress steadily towards the targets set for them. Currently, there is insufficient difference in the tasks planned for the children in the Foundation Stage and those in the same class who are in Year 1. Some children take too long to settle between activities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Pupils enjoy a wide variety of experiences in all aspects of the curriculum. Many of these activities involve practical work and include opportunities to work together in teams and to discuss ideas. Curriculum in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and covers all areas of learning. Provision for ICT has improved since the last inspection and is now good. These factors make a good contribution to the pupils' future economic well-being. Pupils have good opportunities to take on responsibilities in the school community and beyond.

The teaching assistants provide effective support to help pupils, especially those with learning difficulties and disabilities, make good progress. Pupils are well informed about the requirements of healthy and safe lifestyles. They value the annual visits of the 'Health Caravan' and are able to explain how this is supported by work in science and personal, health and social education lessons. Pupils appreciate the many opportunities they have for after-school activities in sport, art and drama. 'There are seven clubs a week at the moment,' said one boy. An innovative development is the homework club for pupils in Year 6 and for those in their first year at the high school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support given to pupils are good. Staff are committed to the promotion of health and safety. Arrangements for child protection are good. The governors complete risk assessments conscientiously. Pupils are well supervised in the playground, including before school begins. Playground equipment is used well to create an active environment where pupils feel safe. Pupils in Year 6 speak maturely of how they aspire to rise to the school's expectation that they will show self-discipline and take care of each other. In this safe and secure environment, pupils meet and often exceed the challenging targets set for them. The school is making good progress in helping pupils to check their own progress against learning targets but this development is less secure in Years 1 and 2. Pupils at risk are identified early and the

school has close contacts with outside agencies to seek advice. Parental questionnaires indicate very high approval of the care provided by the school. Two parents of children with learning difficulties spoke very positively of the consideration shown to them and their children by the staff.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new headteacher has a good understanding of the school's performance and has a clear vision for the future. The inspection evidence supports his initial evaluation of the school. The school's own evaluation about standards, teaching and the curriculum are well supported by the inspection evidence but some aspects of leadership and management are not yet as good as the school states. For example, the subject coordinators have not had opportunities to develop their management skills sufficiently. Guidance to aid them in monitoring pupils' work, evaluating curriculum planning and undertaking lesson observation has been limited.

Teachers in Years 3 to 6, and particularly in Year 6, have initiated new procedures for recording what each pupil can do in English, mathematics, science and ICT. These have been trialled successfully by some teachers. They have also made a concerted effort to raise standards, which has resulted in outstanding progress and extremely high standards by the end of Year 6. In the recent past, senior managers have not taken a strong enough hold on these initiatives. Consequently, there is still no whole-school agreement for recording the regular assessment of pupils' progress and achievements in every class. However, the tracking of pupils' progress at the end of each year is good.

Since the last inspection the provision for ICT has improved and has been instrumental in improving pupils' skills and understanding. This is an example of the school's effective use and management of resources. All other issues from the last inspection have been fulfilled and the school is well placed to make the necessary improvements in the future.

The parents are consulted well to gain their views of the school and give good support. The governing body provides good support and monitors the budget and school developments effectively.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Children

Thank you for making us so welcome and telling us about your school. We can see that you all enjoy coming to school and that you have many friends. We enjoyed looking at your books and chatting to some of you about your school.

What we liked most about your school

It is a good school and your new headteacher is settling in well.

Your teachers teach you well and plan interesting tasks for you to do.

You behave well and get on together.

You make good progress and the quality of your work, especially in Year 6, is good.

What we have asked your school to do now

Help the children in Years 1 and 2 to improve their work to reach higher standards.

Give your teachers more help so that they can look after subjects such as literacy, mathematics and science better.

Make better use of the information they collect about what you can do and what you find difficult.

We hope that you continue to enjoy your lessons.

Yours faithfully

Graeme Bassett Lead inspector