

# West Croft Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113132
<b>Local Authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	289518
<b>Inspection dates</b>	26–27 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Paul Sadler

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	371
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Peter Lawrence
<b>Headteacher</b>	Peter Evans
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 April 2002
<b>School address</b>	Coronation Road Bideford EX39 3DE
<b>Telephone number</b>	01237 473548
<b>Fax number</b>	01237 423440

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<b>Age group</b>	7–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about average. There are few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and none who has English as an additional language.

At the time of the inspection the school was led by an acting headteacher, the previous postholder having retired in 2006. A permanent headteacher has been appointed to take up the post in September 2007.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with some good features, correctly described by a parent as 'a happy, well balanced and very supportive school'. Pupils enter Year 3 having attained average standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2. At the end of Year 6 they also reach average standards in English, mathematics and science. This is satisfactory achievement. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well, as a result of careful planning of their work and the good support they receive.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Their behaviour is outstanding, representing a considerable improvement on the recent past and a success for the management strategies introduced recently. Pupils also have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy as a result of the very good opportunities that the school provides for healthy eating and exercise. Pupils say that they enjoy school a lot and speak with confidence and assurance about the many opportunities available to them.

Teaching is satisfactory, with good features including teachers' lively presentation of material in a way that is relevant to pupils' lives and their skilful use of questions. Although teachers are beginning to plan work that matches all pupils' abilities in lessons, this is not yet precise enough to ensure that all pupils make good progress. Pupils do better in mathematics than in English, where weak spelling and some weaknesses in punctuation hold back progress. Teaching assistants are skilled, but their impact is variable as there is no whole-school plan for their deployment to make sure that their skills are used where they are most needed in each class. The curriculum is good, in particular because pupils are offered a wide range of opportunities in areas such as physical education and the creative arts. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Pupils are cared for well on a personal level although academic guidance is not as strong. The school has started to set targets to help pupils to understand where they need to improve their performance, but this is not yet fully established and some pupils do not understand how to use their targets effectively.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall but with positive impact beginning to show. For example, effective action has been taken that has ensured that some challenging targets are met in reducing unacceptable behaviour. The school has planned suitable actions to remedy other weaknesses when the new headteacher is in post. The acting headteacher, ably supported by other senior staff, has undertaken a thorough and accurate evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. All staff understand the need for improvements in teaching and in pupils' achievement, and are working effectively towards further success. With the existing team about to be strengthened further, the school has good capacity to improve.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that work in lessons is precisely matched to all pupils' abilities to support them in making the best possible progress.
- Provide all pupils with clear guidance about how to improve their performance and make sure that they understand how to use their targets effectively.
- Improve pupils' standards of spelling and punctuation.
- Carefully plan the deployment of teaching assistants to ensure that their skills are used to the maximum benefit of all pupils.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

In 2006, pupils' attainments at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science were below average. The school assesses that pupils currently in Year 6 will attain average standards, and this is confirmed by inspectors' scrutiny of their work. The improvement is particularly marked in mathematics where examples of work of a high standard were observed, for instance pupils learning to solve simultaneous equations. There is also some good work in English, especially when pupils speak at length about their ideas and observations. Pupils' skills in spelling, and to a lesser extent punctuation, do not develop quickly enough in the lower years. Above average standards are attained in some other subjects including art and physical education. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well, in part because information and communication technology (ICT) is used well in helping them learn.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, especially their moral and social development as is shown by their excellent behaviour. Pupils report that there is little bullying and that any that occurs is dealt with effectively. Pupils enjoy school a good deal and their attendance is satisfactory, reduced only by illness and holidays in term-time. They have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy. They run their own healthy tuck shop and influence the lunchtime menus. They enjoy the many opportunities for sport and exercise. Pupils have a good knowledge of how to keep safe, for instance when using the Internet or when walking to school. They make a good contribution to the community, especially within school where many take on responsibilities such as being playground friends or librarians. Overall, their development of the skills they will need in later life is satisfactory, although their collaboration and teamwork are good. Pupils show initiative and self-confidence, for example when choreographing and practising dance routines.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching has a number of strengths. Teachers plan interesting lessons that are relevant to pupils' lives. They use ICT well and are especially good at 'open' questioning that does not suggest a right or wrong answer and elicits lengthy, thoughtful responses from pupils. Marking is satisfactory. It is diligent and the best shows pupils how to improve their work. Recent analysis of data has shown that lessons are not yet planned with sufficient precision to ensure that each pupil makes the best possible progress. This is largely because activities are not varied enough for the wide range of abilities of pupils in the class. Staff recognise this as an area for development and have planned improvements. Teaching assistants are able, but there is no clear plan for their deployment and some are used more effectively than others.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils find the curriculum exciting, especially the opportunities for sport, art, drama and outdoor and adventurous activities. There are many activities that contribute much to their personal development. ICT is used well in different subjects. There is a wide range of clubs, some of which the pupils initiate and run themselves. The lack of precision in planning lessons slows progress in some areas, resulting, for instance, in a lack of emphasis given to spelling and punctuation not only in English but also in other subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are given activities that help them make good progress.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils are cared for well and all requirements for child protection are in place. Pupils contribute their ideas through the school council and have been widely consulted by staff in their evaluation of the school's effectiveness. Parents feel involved in their children's education. At the time of the inspection, one month before the school year ends, Year 6 pupils reported little contact with the secondary school they will attend in September. Academic guidance to help pupils improve their work is developing, and is currently satisfactory. Targets for improvement are starting to be used but this system is not fully established and effective. Some pupils are unclear about the purpose of their targets.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Well led by the acting headteacher, staff have carried out a thorough evaluation of the school's effectiveness and have begun to take the action needed for improvement. Monitoring of teaching has led to an accurate view of areas in need of development. For example, when a class was identified as making especially good progress, the pupils were interviewed to discover the reasons and the good features of teaching that they identified were adopted by other teachers. This is good use of monitoring and evaluation to support improvement. The staff work well as a team and some very effective middle managers have contributed to rapid progress, for instance in returning standards in mathematics to a level that is acceptable given the pupils' starting points. Appropriate action has also been taken to improve the quality and use of assessment. The school recognises that the improvements made so far have had a significant impact in some areas, such as in improving behaviour and in raising pupils' self-esteem, but have yet to have a similar impact on pupils' overall achievement. As a result, the overall effectiveness of leadership and management is currently satisfactory rather than better than this. Governors support the school well and their impact is satisfactory. Much has been achieved under the leadership of the acting headteacher and all staff are keen to work with the new headteacher to put in place the improvements which they have already identified and planned. They are well placed to do this.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

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

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

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3

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



## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

- 28 June 2007 Dear Pupils Inspection of West Croft Junior School, Bideford, EX39 3DE We very much enjoyed talking and listening to you and seeing your work when we visited your school recently. We want to thank you for spending time with us. We especially enjoyed seeing your rehearsals for 'The Wizard of Oz' which we thought was very good. Your school is a satisfactory school with plenty of good things about it. The most important things are:
- You make steady progress and standards in your work are about average.
- Pupils who need a bit of extra help do well.
- Your behaviour is excellent, you enjoy school and say there is little bullying.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy.
- You have lots of opportunities for sport, drama, art and using information and communication technology (ICT).
- Teaching is satisfactory and has a number of good points, such as the way teachers make the lessons interesting and ask good questions that make you think.
- All the staff look after you well.
- The school is led and managed in a satisfactory way and you and your parents think highly of it. It is good that the staff have asked you about what helps you to learn, and are using your ideas to improve the teaching. There are ways in which the school can be improved. We have asked the teachers to:
- Make sure that the work in lessons is always at just the right level for each of you so that you all learn as quickly as possible.
- Tell you all clearly how to improve your work and how to use your targets.
- Help you learn to spell correctly and to improve your punctuation.
- Make sure that the teaching assistants are always used in a way that helps you best. Yours faithfully Paul Sadler Lead Inspector