

# Croftlands Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112198
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	319245
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 March 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Tony Anderson

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	201
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Colin Hewson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Jackie Dower
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 February 2007
<b>School address</b>	Oakwood Drive Ulverston Cumbria LA12 9JU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01229 894183
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## Introduction

When Croftlands Junior School was inspected in February 2007, it was given a Notice to Improve and asked to address a number of issues related to raising pupils' standards and achievement, the withdrawal of pupils from class for extra support and to extend good practice in ensuring all pupils received guidance on how to improve. It was subsequently visited in October 2007, when it was judged to be making satisfactory progress.

The current inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Croftlands is an average sized school which serves a diverse community. The majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is around the national average as is the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school is federated with another local school: the headteacher works for both schools for part of each week.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Croftlands Junior is a satisfactory and improving school. It has some good features in pupils' personal development, and in the quality of teaching and leadership. It provides satisfactory value for money.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Standards are broadly average on entry to Year 3 and by the end of Year 6. Following intensive initiatives by the school, standards in English are showing the same signs of improvement as mathematics and science did the previous year. Pupils' current standards indicate further improvements in all subjects. Even so, although there have been recent improvements in the teaching of literacy, standards in writing still lag behind those in reading.

Pupils have positive attitudes to school and behave well. This contributes very effectively to their personal development and well-being which is good. Attendance has improved to a good level, indicating an increase in pupils' enjoyment. Pupils say they feel safe and secure because staff look after them well. The school council takes a keen interest in pupils' enjoyment and safety. It has been instrumental in introducing a range of games equipment in the school playground leading to improved access to healthy activities.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. It has improved since the last inspection due to improved monitoring and the sharing of good practice. It is enabling pupils to make good progress in lessons and to overcome previous weaknesses. The best lessons are marked by good pace and challenge: pupils are encouraged to take some responsibility for their own learning. In some lessons, however, the inconsistent use of time occasionally leaves insufficient opportunity towards the end of the lesson for the teacher and pupils to assess their learning.

The curriculum provides a satisfactory base to support pupils' learning although the use of cross curricular links, to extend writing opportunities, for example, is at an early stage. A good range of extra-curricular clubs and activities enrich pupils' knowledge and enjoyment.

The school very successfully meets the pastoral needs of vulnerable pupils. This group is exceptionally well supported by the teaching and support staff and this helps raise pupils' self-esteem. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory and sometimes better progress because there is an accurate match of tasks to their individual needs. The academic guidance given to pupils to ensure they are consistently aware of what they need to do to make progress is satisfactory and improving; particularly in the advice given to pupils in teachers' marking. However, this is not consistent across all subjects.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is well supported by staff and governors where team spirit is strong. Leadership has responded with drive and determination to the outcomes of the last inspection and readily accepted the local authority's constructive help and guidance. The school is well aware of its strengths and areas for development. As a result a number of successful initiatives have been introduced to raise standards. Prominent among these is the monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress and the effective use of information to raise standards. There are clear signs of improvement in key areas of the school's work and the school's well founded projections demonstrate confidence that improvement will be sustained. Governors provide good counsel, for example, they played a key role in guiding the

school towards very effective recovery from its previous difficulties. The school's capacity for further development is good.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve pupils' achievement and standards in English, particularly in writing.
- Improve links between subjects so that pupils have plentiful opportunities to develop their skills in literacy.
- Improve the assessment of pupils' progress in lessons.

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**

From typically average standards on entry to Year 3, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. As a result, standards by the end of Year 6 are broadly in line with the national average. Since the last inspection, an extra focus on mathematics and science led to improved standards and progress in 2007. Subsequently, the school has turned its key focus to raising standards in English. Information from lessons and the analysis of school data indicate some improvement in English, particularly in reading: writing is the weakest element. Although the pupils' range and use of vocabulary has improved their style of story writing and poetry other writing is not as well developed. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and make similar and sometimes better progress than other pupils as a result.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils are confident and enjoy school as reflected in their recently improved levels of attendance. There are very strong relationships between adults and pupils. The pupils' contribution is highly valued and adds much to their progress. As a small group of pupils commented, 'we like our teachers and enjoy our learning'. Pupils' behaviour is generally good, although in less challenging lessons pupils' concentration lapses: as a result their progress slows. Pupils agree they feel safe and well looked after by adults and know who to turn to if they have a problem. They say that any rare incidents of bullying are quickly dealt with. Pupils know about the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle and enjoy a variety of sporting activities which helps them keep fit. The school council enjoy their proactive role and are proud of the work they do to support teachers and their fellow pupils. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong and is fostered through many facets of school life, such as discussion in lessons and in assemblies. For example, pupils took an active part in an assembly devoted to the key messages of Easter readily sharing their knowledge, empathy and insight.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. It has improved since the last inspection and is enabling pupils to make good progress to overcome past weaknesses. This is because lessons

and pupils' work are regularly monitored. Appropriate challenge for more able pupils and extra support for those with learning difficulties means that both groups of pupils do equally well. Most teachers use pace, variety and resources to sustain motivation very effectively because they know their subjects well. Together with constructive marking of pupils' work this helps to ensure that pupils know what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve. However, some inconsistency remains in the use of assessment in lessons and the level of involvement of the pupils in checking their work.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory. The school gives priority to numeracy, literacy and science and achieves a balance across the rest of the curriculum. Drama and discussion are used well to enhance learning. There are some helpful links between some subjects, for example, information and communication technology is used well for investigations and to record learning. However, links to support literacy are not yet thoroughly woven into other subjects which means that teachers do not utilise the full range of writing opportunities. As a result, pupils are not strong writers because they are not given sufficient time to practise. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities which adds to pupils' enjoyment and supports their personal development.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The quality of care, guidance and support for pupils is satisfactory with some good features. Child protection and arrangements for safeguarding pupils are in place. Vulnerable pupils are very well supported because of the dedication of staff and of the high quality links with external agencies. Many aspects of personal and social education are embedded within the school's ethos and this has a strong impact on pupils' personal development. The school has good procedures in place for inducting new pupils into the school and close pastoral and academic links with local secondary schools enables pupils' smooth transition to their next school. Academic guidance to enable pupils to fully understand their next educational steps and to maximise their learning is mixed but satisfactory overall. It is developing well in basic subjects through marking and advice given in pupils' books. There are weaknesses a minority of lessons in ensuring that teachers and pupils have a clear idea about the progress made towards reaching the lesson's learning objectives.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher reacted decisively to the falling standards, detailed in the last inspection, by setting a clear direction for rapid improvement, introducing the necessary changes and maintaining the required momentum. Very successful work to introduce accurate tracking of pupils' progress and its effective use in lessons is helping to raise standards. This is further supported by the improved use of challenging targets. As a result of staff training, rigorous monitoring and the review of policies, teaching is effective in meeting pupils' needs. Intensive support from the local authority has also enhanced leadership and management at all levels. Staff evaluate their work, share good practice and work as a

strong and developing team. As a result of these initiatives, pupils' progress has accelerated and a greater proportion is attaining at least an average level.

Governors are highly supportive of the school and recognise its many strengths. They also systematically monitor the success of recent changes. Governors bring new knowledge and skills to the school's leadership team. They also help develop constructive relationships among members of the federation so that resources are utilised efficiently and economically. Although some governors are relatively new, their contribution is effective because they challenge information and rationale. The leadership team of staff and governors are now becoming much more effective in ensuring accountability across all aspects of school life. As a result, the school has a good capacity to improve.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	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	3

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	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>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
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	2
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**

21 March 2008

Inspection of Croftlands Junior School, Cumbria, LA12 9JU.

Dear Pupils

Thank you so much for the warm and enthusiastic welcome given to the inspectors during our recent visit to your school. You were very eager to talk to us throughout the inspection. We were particularly impressed by your good behaviour and friendly attitudes and you told us that you like your teachers and that you feel you are making good progress.

We know that your school has improved since it was last inspected a year ago. It provides you with a satisfactory education with strengths in your personal development and the quality of teaching and leadership.

Areas for the school to improve upon include giving you lots of opportunities to get better at English and in particular at writing in other subjects. Also for you and your teachers to check how well you have understood your work in order to plan the next steps in your learning.

You can help by working very hard at writing. I wish you every success in the future.

Tony Anderson

Lead inspector