

Croft Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120125
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	327205
Inspection date	4 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Frances Gillam

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	112
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andy Greasley
Headteacher	Adrian Gyles
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Brookes Avenue Croft Leicester LE9 3GJ

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	4 March 2009
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Telephone number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

- The effectiveness of strategies to promote pupils' writing skills across the curriculum and the impact of this work on pupils' progress, especially that of the more able boys.
- The impact of leadership and management on driving improvements, particularly for girls in mathematics in Years 1 and 2.
- The effectiveness of strategies to improve pupils' adoption of safe practices, their enjoyment of education, and their understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work.
- Evidence was gathered from the following.
 - Discussions with the headteacher, governors, pupils and staff.
 - Visits to classrooms and observations of teaching.
 - Scrutiny of pupils' work.
 - Observation of other aspects of the school day, such as assembly, break-times and lunchtimes.
 - The analysis of parents' questionnaires and school documentation, in particular data on pupils' progress and school development planning.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Almost all pupils who attend this small school are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage who are of Reception age are taught in a class with pupils in Year 1, and the governors provide childcare for 23 three-year-olds in the Croft pre-school group. The percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Croft Primary is a good school. Pupils thrive in its warm and friendly environment. Predominantly good teaching enables pupils to achieve well from their broadly average starting points in Year 1 and to reach well above average standards by the end of Year 6. Teachers plan activities that match most pupils' individual needs accurately and this enables pupils to make good progress. The small numbers of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive well-focused support in lessons. This support, and the timely intervention of learning support assistants, enables these pupils to take a full part in lessons and to make good progress in their learning. Pupils do particularly well in reading. They make good use of their reading skills to research information and to develop their learning successfully across a range of subjects. Pupils' progress, however, is not as rapid in writing as it is in reading, mathematics and science. Staff have been working hard to improve pupils' writing skills, especially for the more able and for boys, but with mixed results. Pupils say they enjoy their education but would like it even more if they could have a greater say in what they write about! They also comment that they do not always have enough time to think about and plan their writing or to get all their ideas down on paper. This, together with some missed opportunities for pupils to use and develop their writing skills across the curriculum, means that pupils, including the more able boys, do not always have the chance to use their well-developed writing skills to good effect.

Children get off to a good start in the pre-school group. Staff here pay close attention to devising activities that spark children's interest and meet their needs successfully. The pre-school is a happy environment where children soon settle and quickly gain confidence in their learning. Children in the Reception Year, however, do not make the same good rate of progress. This is because staff do not always make sufficient use of the information from tracking children's progress and from assessing their achievements to identify the next steps in learning. This means that some children, often the more able, are not always challenged to do as well as they can.

Pupils' personal development and the care, guidance and support they receive are good. Pupils like to learn, they get on well together and their good behaviour helps lessons to run smoothly. These positive features and the pupils' competence in literacy and numeracy help to prepare them well for the future. Many pupils comment positively on their involvement in helping their school to be a better place. They are proud of their participation in recycling schemes and the opportunities they have to help others, for example with road safety and in selecting library books. Through this work, pupils make a strong contribution to their school community. Pupils also make a good contribution to the local community. They take part in a broad range of events, including carol singing and raising funds for charity. These activities forge positive links with people living locally. Pupils have a secure understanding of cultures and faiths different from their own but senior leaders recognise that pupils' understanding of their place in the wider and global communities is not yet sufficiently well developed.

Parents have confidence that the school will take good care of their children. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements and staff routinely remind pupils of how to keep safe and stay healthy. Pupils show a very high level of care for others and they act very sensibly in and around the school. They have an excellent level of awareness of how to stay safe. Consequently, pupils say they feel safe and free from harm. Many pupils stressed that there is always someone on the staff that they can go to if they have any worries or concerns. Pupils appreciate the help and advice they receive from staff, and most pupils have a secure understanding of how well

they are doing and how they can improve their work. Pupils work hard because they feel their efforts are valued.

Good processes to evaluate the school's work provide governors and staff with a clear idea of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. As result, senior leaders identify the correct priorities to drive improvements. Standards in Years 1 and 2 have improved since the last inspection and pupils, including the more able girls in mathematics, now do well in these year groups. Standards also remain high by Year 6. Subject leaders are now more involved in evaluating the quality of provision in their subjects. These features show that the school has a good capacity to improve further and that leadership and management are good.

The school actively seeks the views of parents but a small number of parents feel their opinions are not always listened to or valued. Senior leaders and governors acknowledge this. They are taking suitable steps to ensure parents are fully aware of how their views are considered and taken into account.

The good curriculum provides pupils with a wide and exciting range of activities outside lessons, including residential visits, clubs and visitors into school. These activities support aspects of pupils' personal development successfully and their learning, for example in music and physical education. Pupils make sensible choices about what they eat and participate enthusiastically in sporting events because they recognise the importance of a balanced diet and exercise in staying healthy.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Children's attainment when they start school in the Reception Year is broadly as expected for four-year-olds. Children in the pre-school group achieve well and make good progress from their starting points. Staff in the pre-school group are mindful of children's needs. They devote careful attention to providing activities that enable children to use their natural inquisitiveness to explore and find things out for themselves. Adults engage children in talk and this strengthens vocabulary and helps children to express themselves clearly. In both the pre-school group and the Reception Year, staff and children enjoy positive and warm relationships. Children in the Reception Year make satisfactory progress and this enables most of them to attain the goals expected for their age. However, very few children exceed these goals. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage collates assessment information and tracks children's progress but does not analyse this information carefully enough. This means that any shortfall in the progress of a particular group of children is not being identified well enough to focus support quickly and to investigate the possible causes. More able children do not always do well enough because teachers' expectations of what they can achieve are not high enough. Consequently, the activities are sometimes too easy for them and this hampers the progress these children make.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils are given sufficient time to think, plan and complete their writing activities and that teachers provide better opportunities for pupils to develop their writing across subjects.
- Ensure staff in the Reception Year check more carefully how well different groups of children are doing so as to identify more quickly and meet more effectively the learning needs of children, especially the more able.

- Strengthen the arrangements for promoting community cohesion so that pupils have better opportunities to engage with others from different faiths, cultures and backgrounds.

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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?	2
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

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	3
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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	1
The extent to which 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	2

The quality of provision

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

5 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Croft Church of England Primary School, Leicester LE9 3GJ

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. It was a pleasure to talk with you, to visit some of your lessons and to hear all about the interesting things you do.

You have a good school. The people in charge and your teachers do a good job of helping you to learn. This enables you to reach well above average standards by the end of Year 6 and to make good progress in your work.

Here are some of the things we found were especially good about your school.

- You are very good readers.
- Children in the pre-school group get off to a good start.
- You have a good understanding of how to keep fit and healthy and so you make sensible choices about your diet and take plenty of exercise.
- You are very caring. You look out for others and you are very good at keeping yourselves safe and free from harm.
- You do a really good job of making your school a better place to be.
- Your behaviour is good and you get on well together.
- Adults in the school take good care of you and you say this makes you feel safe and happy at school.

We have asked the people in charge and your teachers to work together on three things.

- To give you more time to think about, plan and to get your ideas for writing down on paper and to make sure you have better opportunities to develop your writing across subjects.
- To check more carefully how well children in the Reception Year are doing so that none of them falls behind in their learning.
- To give you better opportunities to meet with and develop understanding of people from different faiths, cultures and backgrounds to your own.

Keep up the good work!

Yours faithfully

Fran Gillam

Lead inspector