

Croft Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	124054
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	380787
Inspection dates	13–14 March 2012
Lead inspector	Raymond Lau

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	186
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Gunn
Headteacher	Joanne Millett
Date of previous school inspection	24 April 2007
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Age group	4-11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Raymond Lau

Additional inspector

Peter Lawley

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspection team sampled 11 lessons, of which three were observed jointly with the headteacher. A series of brief observations of learning in classrooms were also conducted. Seven teachers and four support staff were seen as part of the sampling. Meetings were held with parents and carers, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, scrutinised documentation including improvement plans, records of the analysis and the tracking of pupils' progress, and of sampling pupils' work. They listened to pupils read, and looked at the school's attendance figures and monitoring information. They analysed questionnaire responses from 21 staff, 100 pupils and 164 parents and carers.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average-sized primary school. Most pupils are White British, and a few have other heritages. All pupils speak English as a first language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average. The Early Years Foundation Stage is provided as part of the Key Stage 1 provision. The school holds the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the Activemark Gold and Healthy Schools Award. The school exceeds the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. The caring ethos is well fostered through a strong culture of learning. A parent commented, 'The school is well run and friendly. Our children grow and develop in this good environment.' This is evident in pupils' outstanding behaviour and understanding of how to stay safe. The school is not outstanding because teaching and learning do not ensure achievement is outstanding over-time for all pupils, especially for the more able, and particularly in mathematics.
- Achievement is good. Improvement in pupils' progress has been sustained and, consequently, attainment is above average, and especially strong in English. Attainment in mathematics continues to rise rapidly, but standards are average. Some more-able pupils do not progress as rapidly as their peers.
- Staff have very strong relationships with pupils. Teachers plan work that is generally well matched to the needs of different groups. Occasionally, the planning and teaching of more-able pupils lacks sufficient challenge. Questioning stimulates pupils' thinking. While teachers' marking is regular, it is sometimes inconsistent in providing guidance to help pupils improve across all subjects.
- Pupils make an exceptional contribution to their peers and to their own learning. They conduct themselves extremely well. Pupils are courteous and polite to each other and towards staff. They are articulate and very clear on dangers and on how to keep safe. Their attendance is considerably above average. Pupils' contributions to the school are exceptional.
- The headteacher and senior leaders provide strong leadership in driving improvement and in managing and improving performance since the previous inspection. Consequently, achievement has risen, particularly in English and in the quality of teaching. The curriculum is generally well matched to pupils' needs. However, insufficient opportunities exist for pupils' to develop their

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numeracy skills throughout the curriculum.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement by July 2014 to outstanding for all learners, in particular the more-able pupils across the school, by:
 - increasing attainment in mathematics to be consistently above average by the end of Year 6
 - developing greater opportunities for the use of numeracy across the curriculum
 - ensuring planning of work and teaching always challenge all pupils to accelerate progress
 - making the quality of marking consistently effective across all subjects in providing specific direction to pupils on how to improve their work, and ensure that they always respond to the guidance they receive.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Parents and carers agree that their children make good progress and inspection findings endorse their views. Children enter Reception with skills at least 6 months behind the development expected for children of this age. The children enjoy and concentrate on the activities they choose themselves and those directed by the adults and make good progress. By the end of the Reception Year, children reach secure levels in all areas of their development.

By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in writing is above average. Their attainment in mathematics and reading are average. In a series of short observations of learning in phonics (letters and sounds), pupils were able to read and spell out words accurately and apply these skills to their reading in other contexts. Pupils stated that they enjoyed reading and actively read at home. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils were seen to choose descriptive words very well to enhance their writing. They were well challenged to use their five senses as they imagined being an injured soldier being cared for by Florence Nightingale.

In Key Stage 2, pupils make consistently good progress. Consequently, their attainment is above average, particularly in English. Their above-average attainment in reading rises considerably and is slightly higher than their writing. Progress is less in mathematics, but attainment is in line with the national average and continues to rise. Pupils' current good achievement and learning are shown in the quality of their work and in their positive, enthusiastic response in lessons. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils collaboratively and enthusiastically demonstrated how to calculate the areas within perimeters. Occasionally, some more-able pupils across the age range do not always reach the levels of which they are capable, as they are not always

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challenged enough to extend their learning fully across all subjects. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs consistently make good progress, as seen in a Year 2 lesson where they were keen to use adjectives in their writing and were able to do so accurately.

Consistently effective teaching is closing any slight gaps in achievement between different groups of learners. There are occasional slight variations in achievement between girls and boys dependent on relative abilities in different year groups. These differences are attributable to variations in the school's small year groups. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals achieve well and fully in line with others.

Quality of teaching

All pupils, parents and carers agreed that there is good teaching at this school. The inspection team supports this view as most pupils consistently make good progress over time. The support given by teachers and support staff is effective in challenging the pupils to think, reflect and learn through effective questioning. Teaching and the curriculum much enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, pupils actively discussed the impact of natural disasters on different peoples. They were reflective and appreciated the devastating effects of such events on people's lives. Teaching particularly helps pupils to form well-considered views which they express well in discussion, advancing their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Teachers' planning of lessons is usually effectively followed through in ensuring good learning. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils were preparing to write to a famous author and followed very well-sequenced activities that catered for all learners' needs within the class. There were good opportunities for learners to be actively involved in a wide range of practical activities. The resulting buzz of excitement and enthusiasm for learning was reflected in pupils' outstanding progress. The more-able pupils were suitably challenged with complex activities.

On occasions, the planning of activities does not fully match the needs of the class, particularly those of the more able, for whom activities sometimes lack challenge. For example, sometimes pupils sit too long on the carpet passively listening to teachers with insufficient time to develop their own learning, which limits their progress.

The use of assessment to support learning is generally effective. Marking is regular and sometimes helpful to pupils in taking learning forward, particular in literacy books. However, the quality of feedback through marking is variable across the school, as guidance to pupils on how to improve is not always consistent, especially in topic and mathematics books. It is not clear how pupils respond to the teacher's feedback so consolidation of their learning is inconsistent. There are missed opportunities for pupils to use mathematics in topic work and across the curriculum in general. Consequently, pupils' understanding and practice in using number across the curriculum are not as well advanced as are their reading and use of English.

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Behaviour and safety of pupils

The rise in pupils' attendance to be consistently above-average demonstrates that they overwhelmingly enjoy coming to school. Pupils and parents and carers are very positive in their views about the, typically, very high standards of behaviour across the school and inspection findings fully endorse their views. All pupils say they feel very safe in the school and this was further confirmed by the parental questionnaire response. Pupils were able to explain what constitutes unsafe situations and how to keep themselves safe. The school is proactive in road-safety schemes that enable pupils to gain an excellent understanding of how to keep safe when walking or riding a bicycle to and from school. Very few parents expressed concerns regarding bullying. Pupils said the school tackled any bullying very effectively. They have an excellent understanding of different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying. Pupils were very articulate about safety when using the internet, especially regarding social networking.

Over time, the school has created a very positive ethos for learning. Consequently, pupils have exemplary attitudes to learning and show high levels of conduct within lessons and around the school. Pupils are extremely positive and proactive in supporting each other and themselves to learn. Even when lessons are not very stimulating, pupils' attitudes and behaviour remain positive. Systems of rewards and of behaviour management are very effective. Pupils commented that the systems were fair and clearly understood the consequences of any actions. Positive guidance and support for conduct effectively enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils sang enthusiastically in assembly and reflected on moral values and on their own potential as learners and citizens. Pupils interviewed demonstrated an excellent understanding of racism and discrimination. One commented, 'It is not fair to judge people by their skin colour.' The other pupils interviewed articulately justified their thoughts and feelings. The breakfast- and after-school clubs provide a safe learning environment for pupils to learn and socialise with each other.

The pupils' contribution to promoting a positive learning ethos is exceptional. The active school council fundraises for local and national charities. They also contributed to the 'sensory garden', the 'outdoor classroom' and conduct health and safety walks with the headteacher around the school. The eco-committee has helped organise for the installation of solar panels. Older pupils help younger children with reading, promoting their confidence and self-esteem.

Leadership and management

Leaders and managers have been successful in tackling weaknesses from the previous inspection. In particular, achievement in English has accelerated and attainment is above average. The school makes more consistent use of assessment and while there are some variations in the quality of feedback to pupils, the

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initiatives taken have been successful in improving pupils' achievement. For example, support staff are now effectively delivering well-targeted phonics sessions to assist younger pupils' learning and achievement. These advances and pupils' more consistent attendance indicate the school's capacity to sustain improvement further.

The school's promotion of equality of opportunity is good. There is no discrimination. Assessment systems are used effectively to track and monitor the achievement of all groups of learners, including that of disabled pupils and of those with special educational needs. Action is taken over any differences in performance. However, some more-able pupils are not yet achieving their potential and the school has plans to tackle this situation.

Staff morale is very high and all staff is highly committed to improve. The management of teaching and the performance of staff are good. Information gathered from monitoring is utilised for professional development purposes. The headteacher is astute in developing her staff by understanding their particular strengths and using their skills to the full. The middle leaders are committed and enthusiastic, participating in a range of monitoring activities. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and its development plan focuses on the right priorities within achievement and the quality of provision.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets pupils' learning needs and interests. In particular, the approach to learning by topics enables pupils to comment that, 'Learning is fun.' Pupils have good art and music learning opportunities – such as to learn to play the violin. The personal, social and health education curriculum and religious education strongly develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. While literacy provision is effective, the development of numeracy across the curriculum remains weaker. The governing body is proactive in informing itself about the school, and effectively holds it to account. The arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.

15 March 2012

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Croft Primary School, Rugeley, WS15 4AZ

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We thoroughly enjoyed talking to you. We saw that you enjoy coming to school from the manner in which you promoted its good features when some of you proudly showed us round. These are our findings about your school.

- You go to a good school that is improving quickly. Your headteacher and staff are united in working together to make your learning, 'fun and exciting'.
- All of you feel safe and were able to say very clearly how to keep safe. In the questionnaire that most of you completed, almost all of you said you liked attending school and this is shown by your high levels of attendance.
- We agree with you that teaching is good at your school.
- We think your behaviour is outstanding. You are very polite, courteous and extremely friendly to each other, especially when the older children support the younger children with their reading and mix socially in the playground.
- You have excellent attitudes to learning when lessons are well structured with activities that enable you to work on your own, in pairs and small groups.
- Your work is proudly displayed in classrooms and across the school. There are a good range of musical opportunities and your art work is good. There are a range of visits that enhance your learning and all these activities support your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

We have asked your headteacher and teachers to make your school even better by:

- improving how well you achieve in all subjects, especially in mathematics, including your use of it in other subjects
- making sure that class activities always challenge you to learn, in particular those of you who can learn quickly
- using marking to help you think more about your work and help you move on to the next level.

You can help to make these improvements yourselves by continuing to support each other, taking note of marked work and following up what teachers say so you develop your confidence in your own ability to learn for yourselves.

Yours sincerely

Raymond Lau
Lead inspector

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