

# Mesty Croft Primary School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 103907                   |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Sandwell                 |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 336189                   |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 30 June 2010–1 July 2010 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Clive Lewis              |

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>                      | Primary                                  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Community                                |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 3–11                                     |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                                    |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 386                                      |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                       |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Phil Griffiths                           |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Andrew Kirby                             |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 4 December 2006                          |
| <b>School address</b>                      | St Luke's Road<br>Wednesbury<br>WS10 0QY |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 0121 556 0854                            |
| <b>Fax number</b>                          | 0121 505 3752                            |
| <b>Email address</b>                       | andrew.kirby@mestycroft.sandwell.sch.uk  |

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Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester M2 7LA

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 16 lessons, taught by 14 teachers. Inspectors held meetings with pupils, staff and representatives of the governing body, and a number of informal discussions with parents and carers. They observed the school's work, including a sample of pupils' books, teachers' planning documents, tracking and assessment data, and analysed questionnaires from 57 parents and carers and 26 staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the quality and consistency of teaching between Key Stage 1 and 2
- the impact of strategies to improve attendance
- the opportunities that are in place for pupils to understand what life is like in different communities around the world.

## Information about the school

Mesty Croft is larger than most primary schools. Most of the pupils are of White British origin. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average, as is the proportion of pupils with English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. There is a lower than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has been awarded the Healthy Schools Platinum award, the e-Safety award and the Activemark.

**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: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Mesty Croft is a good school which has improved significantly since the last inspection. All leaders in the school are firmly focused on securing improvement and enabling pupils to do as well as they can. The headteacher provides a clear sense of purpose and direction, clearly linked to school improvement. Strong teamwork between the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and senior staff and the local authority has ensured that teaching and learning has improved, assessment and tracking systems have been strengthened and clear priorities have been set for further improvement. Parents are very supportive of the school, as one parent commented: 'Both my children are really happy at Mesty Croft and are progressing really well. The staff and teachers are always there with help and advice. My children are always happy to go to school and in turn that makes me happy.'

Throughout the school, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress. Most children's skills and experiences on entry to the Nursery classes are well below those expected for their age. Standards have steadily improved since the last inspection, with the result that, in the latest validated national tests, standards in Year 6 were in line with those found nationally. However, the school is aware that standards in writing were not quite as high as standards in reading and mathematics. Arrangements for the evaluation and monitoring of teaching and learning are good and the quality of teaching in most lessons is good as a result.

Pupils' personal development is good. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe and of the need for healthy lifestyles. Parents say their children enjoy coming to school and pupils agree enthusiastically, although this is not yet reflected in above average levels of attendance. Although the school has good systems to monitor and improve attendance, the attendance of a small but persistent minority of pupils continues to give cause for concern. The curriculum ensures that pupils receive a good variety of exciting activities and experiences through visits, residential stays and visitors to school. Pupils particularly enjoy the wide range of after-school activities and clubs, including physical activities. The school has excellent arrangements for the care and guidance of pupils. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully and data analysed rigorously to ensure that any pupil falling behind is identified quickly and support provided. The school has good links with the local community but realizes it could do more to strengthen ties with groups in the United Kingdom and overseas. The school has a good understanding of how well it is doing and what needs to be done next, and has a good capacity to maintain and sustain improvement.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve standards in writing by providing more opportunities for pupils to write across a range of subjects.
  - Improve the school's contribution to community cohesion by formulating a plan to develop pupils' appreciation of different faiths and cultures through links with schools in contrasting settings nationally and globally.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The school's own tracking data on pupils' attainment demonstrates clearly that most pupils make good progress during their time at Mesty Croft. This is confirmed by lesson observations and a scrutiny of workbooks. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress and outperform similar groups of pupils in national tests. This is due to the good support provided by class teachers, teaching assistants and outside agencies. The small proportion of pupils with English as an additional language also make good progress because of the good individual attention and support provided. In most lessons, more able pupils benefit from extension tasks which encourage them to think differently and creatively about a problem. Pupils enjoy school although attendance remains only broadly in line with national averages, due partly to a very small but persistent minority of families who continue to give the school concern and despite the school's rigorous efforts to improve it. Pupils understand what constitutes an unsafe situation and are confident that any issues they raise will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Pupils' good behaviour makes a strong contribution to the good progress they make in most lessons. They behave considerately towards each other and respond quickly to any additional guidance from staff about how to conduct themselves. Pupils are interested in the school's strategies that have led to it receiving the Healthy School award and understand the main threats to their health and how they can be avoided. They take on responsibility and play a constructive role in the life of the school and, through the school council, have had some influence on decisions taken. Pupils' improving standards in the key skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology, together with their good social skills, prepare them well for the future. The pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good although the school recognises it could do more to develop pupils' understanding of life in cultures outside their local community.

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

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| Taking into account:  |          |
| Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>   | 3        |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress  | 2        |
| The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress                      | 2        |
| <b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Pupils' behaviour</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b> | <b>3</b> |
| Taking into account:  |          |
| Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>   | 3        |
| <b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>  | <b>2</b> |

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

Teachers have strong subject knowledge which enthuses and challenges pupils, and contributes to their good progress. Lessons are characterised by good relationships between pupils and adults, and there is a positive atmosphere for learning across the school. Particularly good use is made of resources, including new technology, to motivate pupils and enhance their learning. Support by skilled teaching assistants is well focused and makes an important contribution to the quality of learning in most lessons. As a result of the school's good assessment procedures, teachers plan lessons well to meet the needs of the wide range of age and ability of pupils in each class. In one outstanding Year 5 writing lesson, the teacher encouraged very high levels of motivation by her energy and enthusiasm, maintained a very good pace throughout and very closely matched tasks to pupils' ability so that pupils made excellent progress. However, a small number of lessons were observed where teachers' planning did not take sufficient account of the range of ability within the class so that, initially, work was too easy for the more able pupils.

Teachers listen to, observe and question groups of pupils during lessons in order to improve learning. Good use is beginning to be made of peer assessment, with pupils evaluating their own and their friends' success with their work. The curriculum is adjusted effectively to meet the needs of different ages and ability groups, and a range of pupils with specific needs within the school. Extra-curricular enrichment opportunities are wide and varied, and are much enjoyed by pupils. Pupils receive a good variety of exciting

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activities and experiences through visits, residential stays and visitors to school and the school works with a variety of partners to provide a good range of sporting activities. The school's excellent and very well-organised arrangements for the care of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, contribute significantly to their good development and well-being and support their learning very well. Staff know and care deeply for all pupils and provide rigorous safeguarding and welfare procedures to help ensure the safety of all pupils, including those facing difficult situations.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The quality of teaching</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>The use of assessment to support learning  | 2        |
| <b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b> | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>   | <b>1</b> |

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has consistently communicated to the staff his high expectations about continuing to improve provision and the result of this is clearly evident in the significant improvements made since the last inspection. With the strong support of the deputy headteacher and a well-motivated staff team, he has identified and successfully tackled areas requiring improvement. As a result, nearly all aspects of the school are now good. Subject leaders have good subject knowledge and have developed a good overview of the quality of teaching and standards in their subjects. The governing body is influential in determining the strategic direction of the school and is becoming more involved in evaluating its work. Self-evaluation has identified all the key priorities for development.

As a result of regular monitoring and support, teaching is good overall across the school, and planning is founded on robust evidence and based on good quality data. The school's positive relationship with parents and carers, and its good links with a wide range of partners contribute significantly to improvements in pupils' achievement and well-being. Equality of opportunity is promoted well in all the school's work. Through rigorous analysis of the school's regular and accurate data on pupils' progress, it is constantly alert to any variation in achievement and is pro-active in devising initiatives to overcome any weaknesses. School leaders and governors have a good understanding of safeguarding procedures. The school adopts recommended good practice for safeguarding pupils across all areas of its work and monitors provision regularly. The school promotes community cohesion within its own and the local community very effectively. It is aware, however, of the need to further develop pupils' understanding of those living in contexts which are different to their own, for example through links with other schools in the United Kingdom and with schools overseas.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>The leadership and management of teaching and learning   | 2        |
| <b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b> | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>   | <b>3</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>  | <b>2</b> |

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

When they join the Nursery, children's skills are well below those typically found. Most need considerable help to ensure that they learn how to be independent and work and play together. As children move through the Nursery and Reception classes, they make good progress in all the early learning goals because teaching and learning are good overall. Despite this good progress, however, standards remain below average when children enter Year 1 and the school wisely continues some aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum into the first term of Year 1. Teachers and support staff carefully observe and record children's achievements on a day-to-day basis and use this information effectively to plan the next steps in learning. Happy and caring relationships are established and children settle quickly. Children behave well and are enthusiastic in all that they do. They clearly enjoy school and play happily together and individually. Staff work hard to achieve a strong partnership with parents and carers.

Pastoral care and welfare arrangements are good and help the children to be safe, well cared for and aware of how to be healthy. Adults provide a wide range of interesting learning activities, allowing children to work on things that they choose themselves as well as by taking part in more formal group-work activities with adults. There are good opportunities for children to explore their learning independently in the spacious, well-resourced and exciting outdoor area. There is a good focus on helping children with their speaking skills and ensuring that they develop an ability to work with others in a friendly and purposeful way. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified quickly, well-supported and integrated well into all activities. Adults have a good knowledge of the learning, development and welfare requirements of very young children and use national guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage well to support children's learning.

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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>                   | <b>2</b> |
| Taking into account:   | 2        |
| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage                          | 2        |
| The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage                       | 2        |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2        |

## Views of parents and carers

Parents' and carers' responses to Ofsted's questionnaire were extremely and almost totally positive. In all but one area, 100% of parents responded positively. Only one parent disagreed with one statement and felt that his/her child was not making enough progress in the school. The inspection team looked closely at the progress of all groups and found progress to be good across the school, a judgement echoed by the overwhelming majority of parents and carers.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Mesty Croft Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 57 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 386 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements  | Strongly agree |    | Agree |    | Disagree |   | Strongly disagree |   |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
|   | Total          | %  | Total | %  | Total    | % | Total             | % |
| My child enjoys school  | 48             | 84 | 9     | 16 | 0        | 0 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe  | 51             | 89 | 6     | 11 | 0        | 0 | 0                 | 0 |
| My school informs me about my child's progress  | 46             | 81 | 11    | 19 | 0        | 0 | 0                 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school   | 42             | 74 | 14    | 25 | 1        | 2 | 0                 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school   | 43             | 75 | 14    | 25 | 0        | 0 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning  | 39             | 68 | 17    | 30 | 0        | 0 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle   | 40             | 70 | 17    | 30 | 0        | 0 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment) | 34             | 60 | 22    | 39 | 0        | 0 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs  | 38             | 67 | 19    | 33 | 0        | 0 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour  | 39             | 68 | 18    | 32 | 0        | 0 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns   | 33             | 58 | 24    | 42 | 0        | 0 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively   | 40             | 70 | 17    | 30 | 0        | 0 | 0                 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school   | 47             | 82 | 10    | 18 | 0        | 0 | 0                 | 0 |

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## 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      | 51  | 45   | 0            | 4          |
| Primary schools      | 6   | 41   | 42           | 10         |
| Secondary schools    | 8   | 34   | 44           | 14         |
| Sixth forms          | 10  | 37   | 50           | 3          |
| Special schools      | 32  | 38   | 25           | 5          |
| Pupil referral units | 12  | 43   | 31           | 14         |
| All schools          | 9   | 40   | 40           | 10         |

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Achievement:               | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.   |
| Attainment:                | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.  |
| Capacity to improve:       | the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:     | <p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul> |
| 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.   |

**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.**



2 July 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Mesty Croft Primary School, Wednesbury, WS10 0QY**

Thank you for welcoming the inspectors to your school and for talking to us about what you do there. Mesty Croft is a good school. Those who lead your school do so well and provide you with excellent care and guidance. It was good to see that you clearly enjoy school and that you know how important it is to eat healthily and take regular exercise. It is to your credit that you behave well, and get on well with each other and with all the staff. However, although your standards in reading, writing and mathematics are clearly improving, I have asked the school to further improve standards by:

- helping you to improve your writing even further by giving you plenty of opportunities to write in a range of subjects across the curriculum
- providing you with more opportunities to learn about a wider range of communities and cultures in the United Kingdom and abroad.

You can help by attending school regularly and always trying hard to do your best.

I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Clive Lewis

Lead inspector

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