

The Croft Primary School

Hesketh Crescent, Swindon, SN3 1RY

Inspection dates 4–5 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Outstanding 1
Achievement of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Through highly effective leadership and planning, this new school has got off to an exceptional start.
- Children in Reception are making rapid gains in their learning.
- Pupils in Year 1 are making outstanding progress and standards in reading, writing and mathematics are high.
- Pupils are confident readers and write high quality extended pieces. They successfully solve mathematical problems.
- Excellent teaching successfully promotes high quality learning for pupils.
- Teaching and support help to make sure that all groups of pupils make at least good, and often outstanding, progress.
- Leaders and staff have created a very positive atmosphere and a stimulating environment where pupils learn and develop.
- Pupils are enthusiastic learners who participate well in the learning activities.
- Pupils are extremely well behaved and work very well with others.
- Attendance levels are above average.
- Procedures to ensure pupils are safe are highly effective. Pupils feel safe and very well looked after by staff.
- Pupils enjoy the wide range of learning activities provided including sports clubs and educational visits.
- The executive headteachers and Principal provide strong leadership in promoting pupils' achievement and in developing teaching.
- Subject leaders and staff support the senior leaders well. Governors work very well with the school and are committed to its future development.
- The White Horse Federation of schools work extremely well together and the sharing of expertise benefits pupil achievement and staff development in all the schools.
- Parents rightly hold very positive views about the care and education provided.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in 10 lessons. Some of these were seen jointly with an executive headteacher and the Principal.
- Discussions were held with an executive headteacher, the teacher in charge, staff, governors, pupils and parents.
- The inspector took account of 62 responses to the online survey, Parent View.
- Questionnaires from 11 members of staff were analysed.
- The inspector examined school policies, information about pupils' attainment and progress, teachers' plans, pupils' work, safeguarding procedures and the school's development planning.

Inspection team

Derek Watts, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Croft Primary is a new school which opened in September 2012 with the admission of Reception children.
- The school is part of the White Horse Federation, a Swindon-based Multi Academy Trust that sponsors six primary schools, a special school and one secondary school.
- The school currently has two classes of Reception children and two classes of Year 1 pupils. It will gradually build up to an all-through primary school with pupils from Reception to Year 6.
- About two thirds of the pupils are White British. Other pupils come from a range of ethnic heritages, including other White backgrounds and Indian.
- About a third of the pupils speak English as an additional language. Languages spoken other than English include Hindi, Polish and Portuguese. A number of pupils are at an early stage of learning English.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- A below average proportion of pupils are supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school is led by two executive headteachers, who also work in other schools, and a Principal who is based at The Croft.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the role of new subject leaders, as planned, so that all are fully involved in observing learning and planning for future developments in teaching.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Children enter Reception with a range of knowledge, understanding and skills but their overall attainment on entry is generally below that expected for their age. A significant number of children enter with limited language skills in English.
- The children in Reception make rapid gains in the areas of learning because of high quality teaching and support. Children at an early stage of learning English make exceptional progress in acquiring and using English.
- Pupils make outstanding progress in Year 1 and by the end of the year, attainment is high in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Additional funding is used well to provide extra support to eligible pupils and to accelerate their progress. As a result, in most cases these pupils achieve as well as their peers.
- An above-average proportion of pupils are attaining high levels. This is because teachers set challenging and demanding activities which extend the most able.
- Pupils from different ethnic groups achieve equally well.
- By the end of Year 1, pupils who speak English as an additional language attain similar standards to the others in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make at least good progress. They receive effective support and work is well adapted to their needs.
- Pupils enjoy reading and make exceptional progress. They show a very secure knowledge and understanding of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent). Pupils apply their reading skills well to support their learning in different topics.
- Pupils make rapid progress in writing and they apply writing skills successfully to different topics. For example, in Year 1, pupils wrote an exciting account of their visit to Barbury Castle where they met a brave knight and created fierce dragons. In describing their visit to 'Butterfly World', they used adjectives and time connectives to great effect.
- Pupils write very good quality extended pieces. Their handwriting is very well established. Letters are well formed and most pupils are joining letters effectively. The use of punctuation, including speech marks, as well as spelling and grammar is developing very well.
- In mathematics, pupils achieve exceptionally well as they acquire a secure knowledge and understanding of different mathematical operations. They apply their knowledge, understanding and numeracy skills competently to solve challenging problems.
- Pupils are developing healthy lifestyles and physical fitness well through the school's physical education programme and the additional sports opportunities provided, such as hockey and netball.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- The high quality teaching contributes significantly to pupils' outstanding learning and achievement.
- All the parents who responded to Parent View stated that their children were well taught. Pupils remarked, 'Teachers challenge us.' These views reflect the inspection findings.
- Teachers establish very positive relationships with their pupils and expect them to do their very best. The pupils respond very well to these high expectations and learn exceptionally well.
- Teachers' very clear explanations and instructions promote pupils' learning extremely well. Questioning is used skilfully to challenge pupils' thinking and to check their understanding of new work. Pupils are articulate and clear in their responses.
- The teaching of essential skills is highly effective. Speaking and listening skills are promoted very well, particularly for those pupils at an early stage of learning English.
- Pupils make rapid progress in consolidating and extending their knowledge and understanding

of phonics. Teachers provide very clear demonstration and guidance to develop pupils' writing skills. The effective teaching of handwriting means that most pupils in Year 1 are writing with a fluent and joined hand by the summer term. Numeracy is taught successfully and pupils are given plenty of opportunities to use their mathematical knowledge and skills to solve interesting problems.

- In a highly effective lesson in Year 1, pupils made outstanding progress in classifying and sorting items and numbers. The high quality learning resources provided inspired the pupils and enhanced their learning. They used mathematical vocabulary well in describing the characteristics of the items. They responded extremely positively to the teacher's questioning and feedback. Pupils explained their findings clearly and presented these in the form of Venn diagrams.
- Teachers make good use of the information about pupils' attainment to plan their teaching and to set suitably demanding work for different groups of pupils. As a result, pupils are challenged well, engaged and their interest is sustained. They make considerable gains in acquiring knowledge, deepening their understanding and applying skills.
- The teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is effective.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. Small group teaching and individual support in literacy and numeracy works well.
- Teachers and teaching assistants give good quality feedback to pupils so they know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. As the pupils said, 'Teachers tell us how we are doing.' The marking of pupils' work is detailed and helpful. Teachers acknowledge good work by providing encouragement and praise. Constructive comments guide the next steps of pupils' learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is also outstanding. As a result, pupils feel safe at school and are very well looked after by the staff. Pupils' very positive attitudes to learning and their first-rate behaviour contribute to their rapid learning.
- All parents who completed the Parent View questionnaire stated that the school makes sure that pupils are well behaved and that it deals effectively with bullying. All parents also believe their children are happy, safe and well looked after at school. These very positive responses from the online survey reflect the findings of the inspection.
- Children in Reception have settled very well into school because of positive relationships that adults form with them. They thoroughly enjoy the range of learning activities provided. They share, take turns and work very well together.
- Pupils in Years 1 show a passion for learning. Their comments to the inspector included, 'We love phonics', 'We have good topics' and 'Numeracy is fun'. Pupils clearly enjoy the topics studied such as 'Castles', 'Traditional Tales', 'Lighthouses' and 'The Great Fire of London'. They were particularly enthusiastic about the numerous visits and the clubs provided.
- Throughout the school, pupils are courteous, friendly and they show consideration and respect for others. They work well in pairs or in small groups when required to do so.
- Discussions with pupils indicate that they show a clear understanding of bullying and know the steps to take to overcome it. They correctly reported that bullying can involve 'saying horrible things' and 'it goes on and on'. Pupils correctly commented, 'People can bully you on the internet.' Pupils were confident that there was very little bullying in the school because teachers quickly sort it out.
- Parents are supportive of the school and the pupils are eager come to school and learn. Attendance levels are securely above average.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The executive headteachers and the Principal successfully convey ambition, determination and vision in developing the new school. They set high expectations in promoting pupils' excellent achievement and in providing high quality teaching.
- Other leaders, governors and staff share the senior leaders' high ambitions for the school. Teamwork among the staff is a strength and all strive to do the very best for the pupils and their families.
- There is a highly effective partnership between the schools within the White Horse Federation. All schools benefit from the partnership in raising pupils' achievement and in developing teaching. There is a shared vision for the schools and effective policies and procedures are adopted. Leadership experience and expertise can be deployed where needed. Teachers share successful practice and ideas. Staff from different schools check the accuracy of pupils' attainment levels. Teachers have opportunities to work in other schools in the federation to broaden their experience.
- The checking and reviewing of the school's performance by leaders is accurate and thorough. As a result, leaders, staff and governors know what the school does well and what needs to be improved. This information is used well to plan action and bring about improvements.
- Some subject leaders are new to their post but they are developing well. These leaders receive outstanding support from senior staff and other colleagues from within the White Horse Federation. However, they have not yet had time to be fully involved in developing teaching by observing learning and planning future actions. There are well-thought-out plans for this to happen.
- There is a strong emphasis on development of teaching. Senior leaders and an external adviser check the quality of teaching. Newly qualified teachers receive good guidance and support so that they become effective members of the organisation as quickly as possible.
- There are good procedures for managing the performance of teachers. Targets are well linked to pupils' progress and to the school's improvement priorities. Effective training and support are provided to extend teachers' skills.
- The school provides an exciting curriculum which enables pupils to achieve extremely well and to make outstanding progress in their personal development. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the additional activities, such as clubs and educational visits. The expertise and interests of the staff are used well in offering enrichment activities for pupils. All groups of pupils thrive in the school's harmonious community and there are no signs of discrimination.
- The primary school sports grant has been used well to extend pupils' sporting opportunities. A physical education specialist has been enlisted to support the school's physical education lessons. This specialist provides high quality teaching to pupils and also provides useful training to staff to increase their skills.
- Additional funding is used effectively to provide eligible pupils with extra support. Support for parents, small group work and other initiatives are having a positive impact on pupils' progress.
- Discussions with parents and the good response to Parent View indicate that parents are very happy with the care and education provided for their children. Typical comments included: 'Very happy with the school', 'Wonderful school', 'My child loves it here' and 'Staff are brilliant'. The school has provided successful workshops to help parents support their children's learning in phonics, literacy and numeracy.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Members of the governing body are supportive and show considerable commitment to developing the new school. They possess a clear understanding of pupils' attainment and progress and of the quality of teaching. Their clear overview of pupils' achievement and of teaching enables them to raise questions about performance and hold the school to account. Governors are familiar with the school's performance management procedures and ensure that promotion and pay awards reflect the progress that pupils make. They know how additional funding is used and check the impact of spending on raising pupils' achievement. The school has signed up to the local authority's training programme for governors. The governors have attended useful courses and training to help improve them in their role. All safeguarding

requirements are met.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	138424
Local authority	Swindon
Inspection number	440093

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	94
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Poole
Executive headteachers	Nick Capstick and Lauren Connor
Principal	Candida Hutchinson
Telephone number	01793 430084
Email address	admin@thecroft.swindon.sch.uk

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