



Croft Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 125605
Local Authority Warwickshire
Inspection number 293307
Inspection dates 11–12 January 2007
Reporting inspector Ted Wheatley

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Northumberland Avenue Stockingford Nuneaton CV10 8ER
School category	Community	Telephone number	024 76387319
Age range of pupils	7–11	Fax number	024 76387319
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Chair	Jenny Tedds
Number on roll (school)	325	Headteacher	Belinda Bollans
Appropriate authority	The governing body		
Date of previous school inspection	7 October 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average and pupils come from mainly White British backgrounds. A very small number of pupils who have Urdu, Nepalese or Dutch as their first language are in the early stages of learning English. Attainment on entry is average and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which until recently was well above average, is falling and is now closer to the national average. The headteacher took up appointment in September 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory and improving standard of education under clear direction from the headteacher and with strong support from governors. Standards are broadly average and achievement is satisfactory, although pupils achieve well in mathematics.

Past underachievement in English is being dealt with. Pupils' achievement is now satisfactory, although some more able pupils do not do well enough, especially in their writing. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The relatively new headteacher has been instrumental in moving the school forward. Together with senior staff, she has accurately identified the school's strengths and weaknesses. The senior leadership team works well together, and although their individual monitoring and evaluation skills vary, they are improving and leading to an increasingly sharp focus on what the school needs to do to continue its improvement. The school has good links with a range of outside bodies, such as other schools, social services and businesses that support its work.

The improving progress of pupils is a result of a better match of work to pupils' learning needs. Teaching is satisfactory, and there is evidence of high expectations, well planned work and improving use of assessment information. However, the full impact of improvements in teaching is yet to be seen. Assessment information is still not used well enough to consistently plan work matched to pupils' needs and marking does not always provide good enough guidance for pupils to ensure they know their targets and how to meet them.

The curriculum is satisfactory with improving links between subjects to provide interest and motivation for pupils. There is a good range of visits and visitors that enrich pupils' classroom experience. The planning of work to improve literacy skills is improving though there are not enough opportunities to develop writing skills. The range of optional activities outside the classroom is good and the level of involvement by pupils is extensive, especially in physical activities.

The personal development and well-being of the pupils are good. They are happy, well behaved and enthusiastic learners. This reflects the close attention to their welfare that enables them to feel safe, grow in confidence and enjoy all that the school offers. Pupils take on responsibilities willingly and maturely. Care, support and guidance as a whole are satisfactory rather than good because academic guidance is not consistently given to pupils. Consequently, they are not always sure about what they need to do to improve their work.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' progress in literacy by providing more opportunities for writing, especially for the most able pupils.
- Improve the use of assessment information so that teachers match work consistently to the needs of pupils.

- Improve the quality of marking and the process of setting targets so that all pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are average in most years, though they are below average in Year 3, where attainment was particularly low on entry to the school. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and improving because the school is starting to use assessment information to match work closely to pupils' learning needs and teachers' expectations have risen. The impact of these improvements is now being seen, most noticeably in mathematics. However, there is still some way to go, particularly to ensure the most able pupils make the progress they are capable of, especially in improving their writing skills. The school's targets are challenging and realistic and carefully matched to the progress pupils make. However, individual pupils do not know well enough what their targets are.

Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress due to effective support from teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils whose first language is not English make good progress due to good support both from the school and specialist staff visiting the school to support them. The school has a steady trickle of pupils entering the school during the year; it assesses their needs thoroughly and they make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils much enjoy coming to school and their attendance is good. Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and around school and they get on well together. Their contribution to the school community is good, as they contribute ideas to the school council for school improvement, which in turn passes suggestions to the school's senior management. This has led to improved wet-day play equipment, which pupils raised funds for, and gains in self-confidence and responsibility. However, pupils are not actively involved in identifying and planning how they support charitable causes.

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong, and show respect for each other's opinions and feelings. Their understanding of world faiths and cultures is good, and acquired mostly through religious education, with few opportunities to learn about them in other subjects.

Pupils have a good understanding of the benefits to be gained from exercise and a healthy diet and pupils and parents work closely with the school to support healthy living. The great majority of pupils participate in sport and Year 6 pupils benefit from a one-week residential experience in Shropshire. Pupils develop the personal skills they need for their future lives and their numeracy skills are good. However, their skills in literacy and information and communication technology, which they will also need, are no more than satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Satisfactory and improving teaching contributes to the steady progress pupils make throughout the school. Lessons have clear learning objectives and work is mostly challenging, indicating that teachers generally have high expectations. However, occasionally teaching presents insufficient challenge for more able pupils. For example, teachers do not provide writing tasks that expect the most able pupils to explain their understanding in sufficient depth. Pupils contribute enthusiastically to class discussion and develop interpersonal skills well through working in pairs or small groups.

Assessment is satisfactory. Teachers' marking usually tells pupils how well they are doing, but occasionally does not give enough guidance on how to improve their work. Pupils' targets are clearly presented in the front of their books, but pupils are not always sufficiently aware of them in their day-to-day work.

The teaching of pupils with learning difficulties and those who are at the early stages of learning English is good. Teachers and teaching assistants work closely with them to ensure they take a full part in lessons, so that they work at a rate suitable to their needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is carefully planned and makes a sound contribution to pupils' satisfactory progress. The school has close links with infant schools that ensure the curriculum meets pupils' needs and helps them to quickly integrate into the life of this school and prepare for the next stage of learning. The school is focusing on supporting pupils' literacy development and this is leading to improved achievement, although there are still not enough opportunities for pupils to write.

There are a good range of visitors and links with the local community that help to engage pupils' interest. For example, Year 6 pupils talk enthusiastically about a visit to Land Rover to study computer-aided design systems. One pupil said 'The visit was fun and we learned a lot about how cars are designed and made.' The school is aware of the need to provide more opportunities for developing pupils' creativity, for example, through investigation work in science, and plans to improve this are advanced. Healthy lifestyles are promoted effectively and the wide range of music and cultural clubs and physical activities outside of school time is well supported by pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Arrangements for pupils' health, safety and well-being are effective. Relationships are very good and pupils feel secure, knowing there is always an adult to turn to if they have worries. All procedures, including those for child protection, are thorough and

there are good links with outside agencies to provide support for pupils with learning difficulties.

The monitoring of academic progress is satisfactory and improving. Recently introduced systems to detect underachievement have already begun to have an effect on raising standards in English. Some pupils know their targets and what they need to do to achieve them, but a significant minority do not. The great majority of parents are very happy with the care their children receive.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher provides sensitive, firm leadership and gives clear direction for the school's improvement. She is well supported by senior staff and enables them to carry out their responsibilities well, although their skills vary in how well they monitor and evaluate the school's effectiveness.

Nevertheless, there is a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The priorities for improvement are accurate and understood by staff and governors. The most significant factors have been in raising teachers' expectations and improving the use of assessment information to plan lessons that are carefully matched to pupils' learning needs, though there is still room for further improvement in the latter. The impact of improved teaching and better use of assessment information to match work to pupils' needs are in the early stages, but there is strong evidence of improvement in pupils' achievement. The capacity for further improvement is sound.

Governors support the headteacher and staff well in the improvements they have started. They work hard and are developing the skills they need to become well enough informed to provide suitable challenge to ensure the school sustains its efforts to improve.

Links with the local community and other schools are good and benefit the curriculum and how readily pupils transfer from school to school. Collaboration with parents and pupils is good and the school takes their opinions and concerns into account when planning its work.

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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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	2

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 behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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?	3
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

¹ 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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
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

We very much enjoyed our time at your school. You made us feel very welcome and were very friendly and polite to us. We spoke to quite a number of you in meetings, lessons and around school and you helped us to build a clear view of your school.

These are the main things we found out about your school

- Your school gives you a satisfactory and improving education.
- Your progress is satisfactory, and in mathematics it is good.
- Your attitudes and behaviour are good, you enjoy school and your attendance is good.
- The headteacher, teachers and governors know what the school needs to do to improve and the headteacher is giving good direction to help this happen.
- The school takes good care of you and gives you lots of opportunities to learn about healthy lifestyles.
- You enjoy all the out of school activities and trips and a very large number of you take part in physical activities.

To improve things further, we have asked the school to

- Plan work to make sure you improve your writing, especially the most able of you.
- Make sure that teachers use what they know about how well you are doing to plan work to help you do even better.
- Make sure that you know and understand your targets and what teachers say you need to do to improve your work.