

Crosshall Junior School

Great North Road, Eaton Ford, St Neots, Cambridgeshire PE19 7GG

Inspection dates

9–10 May 2018

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Good |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Good |
| Outcomes for pupils | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Good |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The commitment and vision of the headteacher have been fundamental to recent good school improvement. She is ably supported by the assistant headteachers, the governing body and trustees.
- Middle leaders are knowledgeable about their subjects. They do not play a full part in improving teaching because they do not visit lessons often enough.
- Pupils are taught well and make good progress. Teachers have high expectations and regularly check pupils' progress so that they can adapt work to meet individual pupils' needs.
- Pupils' attainment is rising in the current year, especially in English. Pupils develop new skills quickly in reading and writing, with the most able challenged well.
- In mathematics, work is not consistently demanding enough for the most able. Too little attention is given to some aspects of the mathematics curriculum, such as the development of reasoning skills.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are supported well and make good progress.
- The happy atmosphere in school reflects the way that leaders value and respect all members of the community.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress most of the time, but leaders are not sufficiently evaluative when analysing the impact of the pupil premium on outcomes.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. They feel safe and take good care of each other. They are friendly, polite and courteous.
- Work in and out of lessons makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Key values, such as tolerance, citizenship and responsibility, are strongly promoted and are reflected in all aspects of the school's work.
- The school enriches learning very successfully by providing a high number of clubs, visits and visitors. These contribute enormously to pupils' great enjoyment of school.
- The school has a strong partnership with parents and carers. Most are very happy with the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment in mathematics, especially the proportion reaching greater depth by the end of Year 6, by:
 - ensuring that there is always sufficient challenge for the most able
 - ensuring that all aspects of the mathematics curriculum are given sufficient focus.
- Improve the impact of the pupil premium on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils by being more rigorous in checking and reporting on the effectiveness of spending so that adjustments each year can be made on a clear understanding of what has worked well and what needs refining.
- Develop the impact of middle leaders on improving provision by ensuring that they play a full part in looking at the quality of teaching and pupils' learning in lessons.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The comparatively new leadership team is having a positive effect on the work of the school. The headteacher and assistant headteachers have high expectations and communicate these well to staff. Their shared commitment to improve outcomes for pupils shines through. The impact of recent initiatives is already seen in improved attainment in the current year across the school, especially in English.
- The senior leadership team carries out rigorous checks on the quality of teaching and learning. The findings from monitoring are linked carefully to targeted training for staff and this has helped, especially in the current year, to improve pupils' progress across the school.
- Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have robust systems for measuring pupils' attainment on entry and make good use of tests in each year group to check progress across the school. They use this information carefully to formulate plans for further improvements. For example, leaders have identified the need to provide more support and challenge for the most able pupils. As a result, they have implemented a new programme of support for gifted and talented pupils in the current year. This is already having a positive effect.
- Middle leaders, such as those in charge of subjects, are playing an increasingly important part in supporting the senior team to secure improvement. They are able to monitor provision by looking at books, talking to pupils or scrutinising teachers' planning. However, they do not visit lessons frequently enough to help them get a clear picture of where teaching is strongest or where more support is needed. This limits their capacity to help teachers to improve.
- Special needs provision is well managed. The leader is very knowledgeable about the needs of individual pupils and ensures that staff receive appropriate training to meet their needs. The quality of support is checked regularly by the leader and this helps to ensure that special educational needs funding is being used effectively.
- Leaders, including the governing body, ensure that the pupil premium is used well to support the academic and the social development of disadvantaged pupils throughout the school. Leaders do not, however, monitor the impact of spending thoroughly enough so that they can adjust it from year to year in the light of successes or failures.
- The school sports funding is used effectively to enable pupils to participate in a wide variety of physical activities. Experienced coaches work alongside teachers to take a range of sports clubs. Many children take part in sports competitions. Pupils are very clear about why eating healthily and taking exercise is so important.
- Pupils enjoy a broad and balanced curriculum. Writing and reading are embedded well across the curriculum because topics are linked together much more closely than in the past. In mathematics, pupils' books show that not all aspects of the curriculum are covered in sufficient detail, restricting opportunities, particularly for the most able, to develop reasoning skills and to cover in depth aspects such as shape and data handling.

- Teachers make good use of school visits, such as the recent residential visit to the Isle of Wight, to broaden pupils' understanding of subjects. These help to make learning purposeful and contribute well to pupils' enjoyment of school. Pupils also have extensive opportunities to develop skills in the arts. This was seen to good effect during the inspection, with pupils showing off their musical skills in a performing arts assembly.
- There is a strong and effective focus on supporting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils show good concern for the needs of others by, for example, supporting a local foodbank. Pupils have many opportunities to learn about British values and, as a result, are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They have a good understanding of values, such as tolerance and respect, and learn about the world beyond St Neots by, for example, communicating through postcards with pupils from other countries.
- Leaders have established a good partnership with parents. The vast majority of parents would recommend the school to others. They say that their children are happy, safe and making good progress. They typically make comments such as, 'The dedication and skill of the teaching staff is very apparent' and, 'My son rarely comes home with anything other than positive things to say about his day and his teachers are really getting the best out of him.'

Governance of the school

- Trustees and members of the governing body provide effective challenge and support to other school leaders. They have been kept well informed about recent initiatives and understand why they have been introduced.
- As a standalone academy, trustees are aware of the need to seek external checks on the school and they make good use of their links with outside providers to do this. They have also established clear systems for checking provision for themselves. This means that they have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and can play a full part in securing further improvement. They have good systems for rewarding good teaching through performance management arrangements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- School leaders have secure arrangements in place to ensure that children are kept safe. Appropriate checks are carried out on all staff prior to employment and the identity of visitors is carefully checked. The headteacher provides staff with frequent training to keep them up to date on school and national expectations. For example, all staff are trained in the 'Prevent' duty and know what to look out for to keep pupils safe in relation to areas such as extremism and radicalisation.
- The school has established good links with other agencies and with parents to ensure that pupils are kept safe. Staff are vigilant in looking for potential problems and respond quickly should they arise. The overwhelming majority of parents spoken with, or who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, indicated that their child feels safe in school and that their children are well looked after.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers plan pupils' learning carefully, based on a good understanding of their individual needs, be they social or academic. They make good use of praise and rewards to encourage pupils to work without fear of failure. As a result, pupils embrace new learning and are keen to do well.
- Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and have high expectations of their behaviour. Teachers reinforce expectations about behaviour calmly and effectively, ensuring that pupils are clear about what is expected of them. Occasionally, however, they accept work from pupils that is not their best.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and they make good use of technical vocabulary, especially when teaching grammar. This helps pupils to quickly develop their knowledge and understanding and make good progress. An extensive scrutiny of pupils' work shows the positive impact that teaching is having in securing good outcomes for pupils in the current year.
- Teachers are becoming increasingly aware of the need to provide a high level of challenge for the most able. In English, they do this successfully most of the time. They use very effective questioning that assesses, probes and develops pupils' understanding well. This helps teachers to identify and correct pupils' misconceptions quickly so that they can make good progress.
- Pupils' learning in English is also supported effectively by the way that teachers give them plentiful opportunities to read and write purposefully in different subjects. For example, in their topic work on rivers, pupils in Year 5 learned about different geographical terms while also improving their writing skills.
- In mathematics, work does not always demand enough of the most able pupils. While there is some good practice, for example in a Year 5 class, where most-able pupils produce some high-quality work on problem solving and reasoning, this is not consistently strong across the school.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well to support pupils, especially when working with those who have SEN and/or disabilities. They are well informed most of the time, helping pupils sensitively to improve their skills and knowledge.
- Nearly all parents feel that teaching is at least good. Teachers make good use of homework to extend work. Pupils report that they enjoy their homework because, as one said, 'It is not just worksheets.'

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils develop good levels of confidence and are keen and enthusiastic learners. They understand the importance of doing well at school and respond positively to the school's well-structured rewards system.

- The school works successfully to raise the aspirations of pupils. Through the school's 'Future Me' project, pupils learn about the world of work and the choices they may face in later life. Visits from scientists, authors and engineers help pupils to learn about what they can achieve if they work hard. The school uses these visits diligently to break down gender stereotypes, resulting in one girl telling an inspector that 'I thought that all scientists were men, but now I want to be one.'
- Pupils work hard in lessons and support each other well, especially during group reading sessions when one takes a lead in recording the views of their classmates. Pupils' work is often neat and tidy, but this is not always the case. While most pupils are proud of their school, a few do not always take enough care with their work, resulting in some being scruffy and poorly presented.
- Pupils feel safe at school. They say that staff are kind and caring and they are confident that their worries will be tackled quickly. The learning mentors play a key role in this and pupils say that they 'are always willing to listen'. Work in class helps pupils to learn about different types of bullying. They say that it happens occasionally in school but is dealt with quickly by staff. School records confirm this.
- Pupils are knowledgeable about the dangers they may face in the wider world. They understand the potential pitfalls of the internet and know what to do if they encounter a problem. Talks from, for example, magistrates and community police officers help pupils learn about the importance of rules and why they should be followed. As one pupil commented, 'These talks made us think about what we can and cannot do outside school.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and around school. They are polite, friendly and courteous and behave sensibly most of the time.
- Leaders keep detailed records of any incidents of poor behaviour and these show the effectiveness of procedures for improving it. The school is a harmonious community where pupils get on well together.
- At playtimes and lunchtimes, there is a happy atmosphere because staff provide lots for pupils to do. There are clubs for pupils who want to keep busy at lunchtimes and these, such as the craft club, are greatly enjoyed by pupils.
- In lessons, pupils respond positively to teachers' praise by concentrating on tasks and trying to do their best. There are, however, occasions when they do not listen well enough when the teacher is talking, resulting in them not always being clear about what they have to do when they start their work.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and attend regularly, with rates of absence lower than the national averages. A breakfast club that was initiated by a learning mentor in the current academic year is already helping to improve the attendance and punctuality of a small number of pupils who were more frequently absent.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The school carries out thorough assessments at the start of Year 3 and this gives a clear measure of pupils' attainment on entry. Although Crosshall Junior School has been identified as a 'coasting' school, based on national test results over the last three years, a detailed scrutiny of pupils' books and observations in lessons show that pupils make good progress from their starting points in Year 3.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard for their age was above average in reading and mathematics at the end of Year 6 in 2017. Pupils' attainment is improving further in the current year, especially in writing, where attainment was below average in 2017. Leaders have responded promptly to the areas which were weakest in their own assessments and in national testing at the end of Year 6 in 2017.
- Pupils acquire new skills quickly in English. Pupils write enthusiastically, making accurate use of punctuation and increasingly complex grammar. By Year 6, pupils have developed a good sense of audience and they adapt their writing style according to its purpose. Pupils read confidently. The most able make good progress in reading and writing skills. They express clear preferences for what sort of books they especially enjoy. They can talk about favourite authors. They skilfully use their reading and writing skills to support their learning in other subjects, for example when researching life in London during the Blitz.
- In mathematics, pupils' progress, while often good, is more uneven because work is not always demanding enough of the most able and not all aspects of the curriculum are covered in sufficient detail. While pupils have good calculation skills by the end of Year 6, too few are working at the higher standards for their age (greater depth) because reasoning skills, in particular, are not given enough attention over the year.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities receive good support, enabling them to acquire new skills and knowledge quickly. There are well-tailored programmes for pupils with especially complex needs that cater successfully for their social, emotional and academic development through well-focused one-to-one support.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making good progress in the current year. As a result of the school's work to engage these pupils more in writing by making it purposeful and by linking it to activities outside lessons, their attainment has improved. For example, more disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 are already working at the expected standard or beyond in writing than by the end of the year in 2017.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 136339 |
| Local authority | Cambridgeshire |
| Inspection number | 10046101 |

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

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| Type of school | Junior |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 7 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 467 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair | Keith Prentice |
| Headteacher | Anne Eardley |
| Telephone number | 01480 475972 |
| Website | www.crosshalljunior.co.uk |
| Email address | office@crosshalljunior.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 25–26 February 2015 |

Information about this school

- This is larger than the average-sized junior school, with 16 single-age classes. It became a standalone academy in October 2010. The school is managed by a board of trustees and the governing body.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average.
- The school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school meets the Department of Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 2 academic performance in 2015, 2016 and 2017.

- The school has had a new leadership team since September 2016, when a new headteacher and two assistant headteachers were appointed.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in lessons, many of which were observed jointly with the headteacher or the assistant headteachers. In addition, the inspectors made some short visits to observe learning at other times.
- Discussions were held with pupils, staff, a member of the governing body and a trustee.
- The inspectors took account of the views of 125 parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also talked with parents at the end of the school day.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read, looked at their work and school documents, including: the school's own information about pupils' learning and progress; planning and monitoring documents; the school development plan; records relating to behaviour and attendance; safeguarding information; and health and safety documentation.
- The inspectors analysed responses to inspection questionnaires from 47 members of staff.

Inspection team

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|-----------------------------|------------------|
| Mike Capper, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Paul Andrew | Ofsted Inspector |
| Lesley Stevens | Ofsted Inspector |

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