

Crow Orchard Primary School

School Lane, Skelmersdale, Lancashire WN8 8QG

Inspection dates

12–13 December 2017

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
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has high expectations. Her effective leadership, coupled with the commitment of staff, has improved the school. Standards have risen. Pupils make good progress.
- Leaders and governors understand the context of the school and are ambitious for pupils. They are determined to provide the very best education.
- Teachers know individual pupils, work with their strengths, capture their interest and support them where needed.
- Leaders use additional funding effectively to provide for pupils and families, particularly the disadvantaged, who need additional support. This results in improved attainment and progress for these pupils.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils are confident and respectful and have good manners. They experience many stimulating and challenging opportunities that allow them to learn and grow. They are proud of their school and of their achievements.
- Staff apply the behaviour policy consistently. Pupils enjoy their learning and behave well.
- Leaders' successful efforts to raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics led to key stage 2 results in 2017 being above the national average.
- Key stage 1 results in reading, writing and mathematics are typically broadly in line with the national average. However, few boys are writing at greater depth by the end of Year 2.
- The proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check has been above the national average for three years.
- Many children enter the school with limited basic skills but make good progress during the early years and achieve a good level of development. However, adults in early years do not consistently extend learning for the most able children to enable more to exceed this level.
- Effective staff training has resulted in improvements in teaching, particularly in English and mathematics. However, some leaders have lacked opportunities to develop the quality of teaching and learning across other areas of the curriculum.
- Pupils are making good progress in their learning overall. Progress is strongest in English and mathematics and is not as consistently strong in other subjects.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve pupils' outcomes by:
 - ensuring that adults consistently challenge the most able children so that more exceed the expected early learning goals at the end of early years
 - ensuring that a greater proportion of boys are working at greater depth in writing by the end of key stage 1.
- Strengthen the role of subject leaders beyond English and mathematics in developing the quality of teaching and learning in their subject areas in order to further accelerate pupils' progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and governors have high aspirations for the pupils who attend this small school. Leaders have created a stimulating and challenging learning environment, where each individual pupil is able to develop physically, socially, emotionally and intellectually.
- The school aims for all pupils to achieve their potential in a safe and happy environment, while developing self-discipline, so that they can become good citizens in the future. Underpinning this is a strong moral code with clear messages about respect for others and personal responsibility.
- The enthusiasm of senior leaders and the high-quality support that they provide means that staff are highly motivated to do well. The school provides training and development for new entrants to the profession. Leaders ensure that staff benefit from a wide range of professional development opportunities. These include external courses and local network meetings in which good practice is shared. Staff meetings enable teams of staff to work on key development areas such as literacy, numeracy and assessment. This has led to an improvement in pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders use additional funding effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. A positive, nurturing learning environment with a wide range of opportunities supports their learning. Workshops for parents and carers, breakfast and after-school clubs, support for attendance, additional staffing, specialised resources and trips all enhance pupils' learning. The difference between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and that of others reduces as pupils proceed through school. This is because of the highly effective support provided for pupils over time.
- Leaders have planned an enrichment programme to support the academic curriculum. It gives pupils experiences to help them to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will prepare them for life in modern Britain. For instance, as part of work to explore democracy, a local MP visited Year 3 pupils.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is strong. Staff make good use of the religious education syllabus to promote pupils' appreciation of their own beliefs and those of others. Leaders also provide pupils with many opportunities to explore aspects of British sporting and artistic culture. For example, pupils sing with the choir or they learn to play the flute. Pupils also participate in sporting competitions and they visit world-class sporting venues, such as Old Trafford.
- Pupils also learn to understand the rule of law. For example, school council members were involved in the creation of the school's behaviour policy.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium is used to buy in specialist support. This is to provide specialised PE provision, to train school staff and to support pupil participation in a range of sporting activities during school and through extra-curricular clubs. Pupils compete in sporting events all over West Lancashire. The funding has also been used to train some key stage 2 pupils to become playground leaders.
- Leaders use the additional funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities effectively to buy in external professional support, such as the educational

psychologist. They also use it to provide additional materials, such as dyslexia-friendly resources. As a result, this group of pupils is well supported and makes good progress.

- There has been a successful focus on raising standards in English and mathematics. Senior leaders and governors now recognise the need to deliver even more effective teaching and learning across the broader curriculum, including in subjects such as history and art. They have made this a key focus for the current school improvement plan and have begun reviewing provision. Lesson observations and work scrutiny confirm that 'topic' work is not consistently of the same high standard as that typically seen in English and mathematics.
- There is a range of experience among the middle leaders in the school. Leaders of 'core' subjects such as mathematics and English have had many opportunities to engage in training, to attend networks and to lead in-school development work. Other subject leaders have had fewer opportunities to develop their leadership skills. They have not yet developed fully effective systems to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects. Senior leaders have plans to address this issue.

Governance of the school

- Governors are ambitious for the school. They are well organised and highly knowledgeable about the quality of provision.
- Governors know their role and typically carry out their statutory duties with care. However, they acknowledge that the school website is in need of attention and have plans to review it early in the spring term to bring it fully up to date.
- Governors keep their skills updated by undertaking training, including in safeguarding, organised both by the school and externally.
- The governors understand the school well. They have a good working relationship with the senior leadership team and are not afraid to challenge leaders when necessary. For example, governors challenge leaders in committee meetings by asking the headteacher to provide the evidence to support information about pupils' progress and to give information about the effectiveness of leaders' actions to improve the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has made all necessary checks in the recruitment of staff and the checking of volunteers and visitors coming into the school. Staff and governors are well trained, to appropriate levels, including in the 'Prevent' duty. They receive updates throughout the year. Staff are highly alert and vigilant.
- There is a culture of safeguarding in the school. Procedures are in place to support any pupils about whom there are concerns. The school works closely with other appropriate professionals.
- The school makes sure that pupils learn how to stay safe online. Leaders help parents to keep their children safe, for example by providing information about e-safety. Pupils have a good understanding of the potential dangers of life in modern Britain.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching is good. It has improved because of the ongoing staff development delivered by leaders and the support that staff provide for one another. Effective training that focuses on improving provision in reading, writing and mathematics enables pupils' outcomes in these areas to continue to improve.
- Teaching ensures that pupils leaving Year 6 are well prepared to move on to secondary school.
- Teachers work well together to ensure the rigour and accuracy of assessment. They take part in local assessment network meetings to make sure that the school applies the same standards as other schools in the area.
- Teaching assistants are highly skilled and well trained, so they make an effective contribution to pupils' learning. Teachers deploy them well. Teaching assistants provide support in class and they run support groups. They understand the needs of the pupils and the way in which the teacher intends tasks to be delivered. Teaching assistants encourage pupils to talk through their work so that they clarify their thinking and learn well.
- There is good teamwork among teachers, teaching assistants, volunteers and student teachers. When necessary, suitably qualified teaching assistants stand in for teachers, helping to minimise the effect of staffing changes on pupils' learning.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and caring. As a result, pupils want to do their best in class. They are keen to learn and they focus well on new learning. Adults use questioning techniques that prompt pupils to think for themselves and to extend their responses so that they improve their understanding of new learning.
- Teachers are clear about behaviour and learning expectations. Most pupils respond well to teachers' high expectations. Many pupils have become keen learners who are curious, stay focused and are resilient when they find work difficult. In addition to classwork, teachers set homework regularly for pupils. It focuses on reading, spelling and multiplication tables.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. Teachers plan phonics sessions well. For the last three years, pupils' outcomes in the Year 1 phonics check have been above the national average. Those pupils who struggle with their phonics knowledge are given specific support from teachers.
- Reading is taught well throughout the school. Many pupils enjoy reading. Teachers explore quality texts in class with pupils and teach them the techniques to successfully answer comprehension tasks. Pupils are encouraged to take part in a range of reading challenges and a reading for pleasure programme.
- Leaders have put a range of strategies in place to ensure that writing is taught effectively. Teachers and teaching assistants plan activities to develop pupils' phonic knowledge, to teach spelling and grammar, as well as to improve pupils' vocabulary and develop their writing styles. Most pupils make strong progress over time because teachers plan learning systematically. There is also a specific focus on developing boys' writing, such as entering a writing competition based on football. This has generated enthusiasm for writing from boys. Despite this, few boys develop the skills needed to

work at greater depth in writing in key stage 1.

- Teachers plan mathematics lessons to help pupils to really understand mathematical ideas. Practical resources are used well to support learning in all year groups. Work in pupils' books suggests that pupils are typically working at or beyond expected levels. When pupils struggle to understand concepts, they receive additional support before moving on to the next stage in their work. As a result, gaps in learning are filled. Some pupils respond well to additional challenges set for them by teachers.
- Teachers link subjects such as history, geography and art into topic-based themes. Much of the work covered during these topics is practical in nature. However, teachers do not make the most of potential opportunities to develop pupils' writing and mathematical skills as part of their learning in these other subjects.
- Leaders work with class teachers to monitor pupils' progress on a termly basis. The school's own assessment information indicates that most pupils are making good progress. Inspection evidence confirms this view.
- Teachers provide targeted support for any pupils who make less-than-expected progress so that they catch up. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities receive appropriate support and resources to help them to progress in their learning.
- The school gives parents accurate information about how well pupils are progressing. This is through formal reports, formal meetings, informal day-to-day contact and the sharing of information electronically. Parents are enthusiastic about the recent developments in communication from the school, which enable them to keep up to date with their children's learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident. They are proud of their school and of what they are learning. They want to talk about their work. They are respectful and have good manners. This is particularly noticeable as they move about the building, opening doors for adults and for each other and showing visitors around the school.
- Leaders work hard to raise pupils' aspirations, creating a mind-set in which anything is possible. They also help pupils to develop resilience in times of difficulty. There is a strong personal, social and health education programme that helps pupils to focus on personal goals. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness through a range of activities such as assemblies and workshops. Pupils also take part in sporting events and arts activities, such as all of Year 4 learning to play the flute. They take trips to many interesting places, which help them to develop their self-confidence and self-esteem while learning about the wider world.
- The school provides an inclusive, nurturing and caring environment and leaders ensure that all pupils, including those who are potentially vulnerable, are well looked after. For example, a dedicated counsellor works closely with parents. When difficult issues arise, they are tackled promptly and sensitively. School leaders and staff liaise closely with

parents. As a result, pupils like and trust their teachers.

- The school site is safe. Pupils are safe and they said that they feel safe. Pupils said that there is no bullying in school. They understand the difference between bullying and falling out with their friends.
- Pupils develop their leadership skills by taking on roles such as 'playground buddies', or by representing their class on the school council. Council members are very proud of their role. Older pupils from Years 5 and 6 have a chance to stand as one of the two representatives of the school in the local pupil parliament.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education. There are particularly strong transition arrangements supporting the transfer of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities to their secondary schools. The leader responsible for SEN and/or disabilities works with parents to identify the best school for a pupil to move to. They then support the application process and ensure that the pupil's transition to their new school runs smoothly.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are happy at school and enjoy their education.
- Staff manage the behaviour of pupils well. The school is orderly and calm. Their learning behaviour is good in class. Many pupils are capable of learning independently, remaining focused and showing resilience when given problems to solve. However, some pupils take less care with their presentation of work than most others do.
- The student council has created the 'golden rules' and the 'logical consequences', which underpin the school's behaviour policy. These documents contain very clear guidelines about what is right and what is the wrong behaviour. Pupils know that if they do not behave well, according to the 'golden rules', then they will have to face 'logical consequences'.
- There is a 'zero tolerance' approach to any form of inappropriate language throughout the school. Leaders ensure that pupils are taught not to stereotype people. Staff apply the 'golden rules' and the behaviour policy consistently.
- Attendance has improved and is close to the national average for primary schools. The school uses strategies that are known to be effective in reducing absence. The learning mentor has established contact with families in which absence is an issue and is working hard to improve the attendance of these pupils. Links have been established with the local authority and community organisations to help build on this contact with families and further improve attendance. This work is leading to improvements being made so that fewer pupils regularly miss school.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Over time, there has been a positive, upward trend in outcomes for pupils. The school's assessment information, work in pupils' books and observations in classes indicate that current pupils across the school are making good progress, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics.

- In 2016, the school was disappointed with key stage 2 results, particularly for reading. Although attainment in mathematics was high in relation to the national average, the progress scores were less impressive. Attainment and progress were particularly weak for disadvantaged pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders quickly analysed the reasons why this happened, and staff have successfully implemented strategies to bring about improvements. As a result, in 2017, all key stage 2 results were above the national average at the expected standard. Attainment in reading and writing was well above the national average. Progress scores were positive. At the higher standard or greater depth, there were also strong results, particularly in writing.
- In 2017, disadvantaged pupils' outcomes recovered strongly. They achieved in line with or above the national average in the key stage 2 assessments in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Outcomes in the Year 1 phonics check have remained above the national average for three years, and disadvantaged pupils achieved phonics results in 2017 that were broadly in line with the national average. This reflects effective provision in phonics.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 1 was broadly in line with the national average in both 2016 and 2017. Similarly, a broadly average proportion of pupils were working at greater depth in the three subjects. However, while most-able boys' achievement was good in reading and mathematics, no boys achieved greater depth in writing in either year.
- Across the school, assessment information shows that the longer a disadvantaged pupil remains in the school, the less difference there is between their achievement and that of other pupils nationally. This is because the support that they receive helps them to catch up.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points as is shown by the school's own assessment information. Close monitoring of their progress means that leaders can provide timely and effective support. Any pupils at risk of not reaching their targets are identified, and support is put in place to help them to catch up.

Early years provision

Good

- Many children enter the school with skills and abilities that are below, and for some children well below, those that are typical for their age. However, they progress steadily, and in some cases rapidly, and make good progress over time. Over the last three years, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development each year has been above the national average.
- The early years leader is clear about the importance of getting children off to a good start in school. School leaders have a clear vision for developing early years education, which led to the opening of a new Nursery unit in 2016.
- The Nursery class is building on a successful first year. Staff carry out baseline assessments as children arrive at the nursery. These show that many children arrive having speech and language difficulties and limited basic skills. The school's

information shows that the children make good progress from their starting points.

- Teachers know their children well. There is a focus on developing speaking and building a wide vocabulary. Teachers plan a wide range of activities for children to develop pencil control and mark-making skills, which lead to a range of informal writing opportunities. The most able children are beginning, with support, to write sentences. However, staff acknowledge that opportunities for writing could be developed further, particularly for the most able children.
- Phonics activities are well taught. Children use the learning from formal phonics sessions in other activities throughout the day in both Nursery and Reception classrooms.
- Teachers and teaching assistants carefully structure learning opportunities to teach and reinforce good behaviours for learning. For instance, in Nursery, children are taught how to line up and how to walk quietly one behind another across the hall while they go out onto the yard for outdoor work.
- Teaching in early years is good. Due to the expertise and commitment of staff, and the range of effective learning activities, most children make good progress during their time in the early years. However, there is scope for most-able children to be challenged further so that more exceed the expected early learning goals.
- Additional funding is used effectively to support disadvantaged children, for instance by running well-attended workshops for parents about topics such as handwriting or phonics, to help them understand how to support their children's learning.
- Staff carefully monitor children's learning. This enables staff to tailor activities that build on what the children have learned, and to identify where further support is needed. Where necessary, funding for children who have SEN and/or disabilities is used to provide targeted resources and to involve the support of external professionals. Adults who work with these children receive appropriate guidance, so that they can plan activities to enable children to access their learning.
- Communication with parents is good. In addition to informal daily contact, and regular formal meetings, the school uses electronic communication systems to share pupil activities with parents. Parents value this involvement in the education of their children.
- Leaders make sure that the welfare requirements of the children are met and that the children are safe. The school's policies apply across early years. Safeguarding is effective. Parents said that children are well looked after and that they make good progress during the early years.

School details

Unique reference number	119334
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10037794

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	147
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cheryl O'Connor
Headteacher	Ann Hedges
Telephone number	01695 724046
Website	www.croworchard.lancs.sch.uk/
Email address	head@croworchard.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–20 June 2013

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information on its website because information about the pupil premium and the physical education and sport premium needs to be updated.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- An inspector spoke with parents as they brought their children to school. They reviewed the responses made by 29 parents to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View and text comments added to this made by 20 parents. They also considered responses made by four pupils through the online questionnaire to pupils. A survey of pupils, undertaken by the school, was taken into account.
- Inspectors visited lessons and reviewed pupils' books. Meetings were held with the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team. They also met with members of the governing board, middle leaders and a selection of other staff.
- The lead inspector spoke to the school improvement partner by telephone.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, met with pupils formally to consider their views and talked with them informally at other points during the inspection.
- A wide range of the school's own documentation and information was considered, including the school's information on safeguarding.

Inspection team

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Ofsted Inspector

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