

Crabbs Cross Academy

Evesham Road, Crabbs Cross, Redditch, B97 5JH

Inspection dates 14–15 July 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Early years provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Since the school opened as an academy, senior leaders have demonstrated an impressive clarity of focus, establishing high expectations and effective procedures. These have rapidly improved the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
- Leaders' skill in using information about pupils' progress has developed quickly. This has enabled them to hold teachers to account, identify pupils at risk of falling behind and provide well-planned additional teaching to help them to catch up.
- Governors use their professional skills well to support the school and to provide an appropriate level of challenge for leaders. The academy trust plans its support for the school carefully.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress, which is helping them to catch up with pupils nationally.
- Parents confirm that their children both feel, and are kept, safe whilst they are in school.
- Pupils make good progress in almost all subjects, including English and mathematics. Attainment and rates of progress have risen markedly during this academic year.
- Teaching is good. Pupils are encouraged to think for themselves, to express their ideas clearly and fully and listen attentively to others. Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' successful learning.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and social development strongly, and ensures they develop respect for people from all cultural backgrounds.
- Pupils enjoy school, and behave consistently well in lessons and outside. Their positive attitudes help them to learn.
- Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The vibrant learning environment in this setting ensures children achieve well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not encourage pupils to write often enough so they do not develop their literacy skills as fully as they might.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make) is not always precise enough. Leaders have not checked rigorously on the quality and effectiveness of phonics teaching across the school.
- Sometimes teachers' planning does not allow for pupils making rapid gains in knowledge and understanding. As a result, some activities given to those who learn quickly do not always extend and deepen their learning.
- Subject leaders do not always provide staff with sufficient guidance on how to raise their expectations and challenge pupils in all aspects of their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 12 lessons taught by nine different teachers; one observation was conducted jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors also visited an assembly and a dramatic performance, and observed children’s conduct at social times.
- Inspectors held discussions with senior leaders, other leaders, class teachers, governors and a representative of the academy trust.
- Inspectors met two groups of pupils, who were selected at random, and spoke to many others informally. Inspectors listened to pupils reading.
- Inspectors looked at pupils’ work in lessons. They scrutinised in depth a considerable number of exercise books from several year groups, and checked the standards against the teachers’ assessments of attainment and progress. They also looked at information on pupils’ targets and current levels of attainment.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents. These included: development plans and their evaluations; records of how leaders check the quality of teaching; minutes of governing body meetings; case studies; policies; records showing how the school investigates pupil’s non-attendance; and records showing how the school supports children whose circumstances makes them vulnerable.
- Inspectors took into consideration the 46 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire and the results of the school’s own survey of parental opinion. They spoke informally with parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors also considered the 23 questionnaire completed by staff.

Inspection team

Martin Spoor, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Diana Pearce

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Crabbs Cross Academy is smaller than the average primary school. It provides for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by means of two full-time Reception classes, which children join in the term before they reach the age of five.
- Crabbs Cross Academy opened as an academy school on 1 September 2013. It is sponsored by the Redditch West Schools Trust. The trust also sponsors The Vaynor First School, which is located nearby. In addition to the headteacher, there is an executive headteacher who also serves as the executive headteacher of this other first school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and receive support from the pupil premium is average. The pupil premium is the additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care.
- As this is a first school that takes pupils up to the age of nine, the government floor standards setting the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in Year 6 do not apply.
- Several teachers have been appointed since the academy opened.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by making sure that teachers:
 - consistently follow the school's policy for the teaching of phonics, and structure their teaching carefully so that pupils make systematic gains in their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make as they move through the school
 - plan extension activities more effectively so that they take account of the needs of pupils who finish tasks quickly and continue to deepen their understanding and develop their ideas further
 - provide pupils with a wider range of opportunities to express their ideas in writing, in order to reinforce and advance their literacy skills.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring subject leaders provide staff with examples of challenging activities that demonstrate the high standards they should expect in all the subjects they teach, and check that staff use these, and comparable activities of their own, to extend pupils' thinking and increase their progress.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and the executive headteacher have focused single-mindedly on improving pupils' learning. Since the academy opened, they have secured the confidence of the school community, laid down clear rules for pupils' behaviour, reorganised and improved teaching and made sure that all staff recognise that they are accountable for the work they do. The result is an enthusiastic school culture fully centred on improving teaching and further raising pupils' achievement.
- Senior leaders set ambitious targets for individual pupils, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and carefully monitor their progress. They know exactly how well pupils are learning, and act immediately when they see that individuals or small groups are at risk of falling behind. Leaders are skilled at identifying and providing precisely the right kind of additional teaching that is needed to fill gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding, so that they catch up quickly.
- Subject and other leaders are effective at checking standards in their areas of responsibility. They share senior leaders' commitment to high standards, and understand how they can contribute to the progress of the school. Subject leaders provide guidance to teachers about new developments in their subjects and check to make sure that the pupils make good gains in knowledge and understanding. However, subject leaders do not always lead teachers' planning in a way that helps them to maintain the highest possible expectations in all subjects or ensure that the activities they set fully reflect pupils' increasing progress and breadth of academic interest.
- Leaders make sure that teachers' judgements made about pupils' work are consistent within the school. They further check their accuracy by comparing the results with those of other schools, particularly those of the other first school in the trust. The school has thoroughly examined a number of approaches to assessment following the removal of National Curriculum levels, and has chosen a commercial scheme for implementation in September 2015.
- The school's curriculum is broad. Teachers plan lessons which link different subjects together effectively, and incorporate pupils' ideas about what they want to learn into lesson activities. This helps maintain pupils' high levels of interest in their learning. However, leaders have not monitored standards in phonics sufficiently or ensured that all teachers follow the school's programme for building up pupils' knowledge of sounds and letters precisely enough.
- Leaders' judgements about the quality of teaching agree with those of inspectors. Their evaluation of the school's work is accurate and is based on a broad range of evidence. Improvement plans are well-structured and frequently updated. Shorter-term plans are effectively linked to the school's comprehensive three-year strategic plan, and these documents are discussed in detail with governors and the academy trust.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. Through assemblies, taught lessons, school trips and special events, pupils learn to behave courteously towards each other and to respect a wide range of traditions and cultures. Pupils' understanding of British values and institutions is outstanding because the school has organised formal elections to help them understand the nature of democracy, and developed an ethos in which pupils' opinions are clearly valued. As a result, important foundations are laid that prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- The school makes good provision for disadvantaged pupils. The pupil premium is spent effectively on providing additional teaching, and on strategies to ensure that disadvantaged pupils engage fully with the school. Staff monitor their progress carefully, and ensure they learn effectively. They provide additional teaching or social support if disadvantaged pupils are at risk of falling behind, for example in their acquisition of speech and language skills.
- Leaders pay close attention to the learning and welfare of individuals. Their good support for disadvantaged pupils and the school's clear willingness to tackle discrimination ensures they promote

equality of opportunity effectively.

- Pupils benefit from a wide range of after-school clubs and activities, including a number of physical activities such as Zumba and archery alongside traditional team games. The primary sports funding has been spent effectively to recruit sports coaches to provide specialist instruction for pupils to improve their skills, and to train the staff to be able to do likewise. As a result, pupils' participation in physical activity and sport has increased.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding are strong and meet statutory requirements. Staff are well-trained and able to identify pupils who may be at risk. The school's robust procedures ensure that it is able to act quickly to involve other agencies to help pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable.
- Staff establish strong working relationships with parents as soon as their children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage, and maintain very effective communication as they move up the school. Parents are regularly invited into school to recognise their children's achievements and learn more about their work. Parents recognise the rapid improvement that has taken place in the school, and lend the school their increasing support.
- Senior leaders evaluate teachers' performance very effectively and use the results to make decisions about pay rises and promotion. Staff report that training is proving very helpful in improving their skills. The school has provided training for teaching assistants that has had a significant impact in increasing their effectiveness in the classroom.
- The academy trust provides good support to the school. It has facilitated the appointment of effective staff, including senior leaders, and enabled staff to learn from best practice, both within the other school in the trust and more widely. The school has benefitted from the trust's efficient arrangements for the purchase of goods and services, such as school meals.
- The governance of the school:
 - Governors are providing effective oversight of the school. Some governors contribute specific skills, for example in finance and site management. Governors have made sure that they are well trained and informed, and they visit the school regularly to check on progress. Meeting records show that governors ask challenging questions about students' attainment, in order to compare this with other schools nationally. Governors regularly review the quality of teaching in the school and the impact of the pupil premium.
 - Governors check that the school complies with all safeguarding requirements. They check the arrangements for school trips and monitor rigorously the safety of the site. They ensure that the school provides a good range of cultural and wider educational opportunities, and so start to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. Governors have checked that the school's new approach to assessment is well suited to the pupils.
 - The trust works closely with the headteacher to operate the school's robust performance management scheme. It ensures that the school only rewards good teaching and identifies quickly where there is weaker performance. The trust ensures that the school works within its budget.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the children's own enthusiasm for learning and the setting's well-established routines mean that they concentrate well, and comply quickly with adult requests. The school's readiness to take into account pupils' views about how they learn best and what interests them helps to sustain these very strong attitudes in later years. They want to succeed, and understand well how to bring this about.
- In lessons, pupils listen carefully to each other, collaborate well and share classroom equipment willingly. They take a pride in their work, and this is generally reflected in the neat presentation of their books. Pupils report that low-level disruption is very rare, and inspection evidence confirmed this.

- Behaviour in assemblies, around the building and at social times is very orderly and responsible. At break times, children play happily together, and make good use of the rather limited play equipment provided. When breaks end, pupils line up quickly and quietly to enter the classrooms. Pupils show adult visitors respect and courtesy. They take care of the school buildings, and made sure that they use the litter bins provided. Pupils take good care with their appearance.
- Just occasionally, a few pupils' interest flags in lessons. This is typically when additional work set for those who have completed the original task fails to follow on from pupils' previous learning or does not engage their interest.
- The school's procedures for managing behaviour are clear and fully understood by all pupils and staff. Leaders have not excluded a pupil since the school opened as an academy.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they always feel safe in school, and all the parents who expressed a view agree. Pupils say that bullying occurs very rarely if ever, and that they know who to turn to for support. Teachers act promptly to ensure minor issues are resolved 'there and then' without fuss.
- Inspectors found that the school premises are well maintained and checked regularly so that pupils are able to work and play safely on a secure site. First aid and medical arrangements are very well organised. All necessary policies and risk assessments are in place, including those for school trips. The school checks all staff rigorously prior to appointment, and ensures that visitors to the school pose no risk to children.
- Older and younger pupils know how to protect themselves from different sorts of risk, including those relating to their use of the internet and to their safety when near traffic. They have a strong understanding of the importance of tolerance in building a successful school community.
- The school has worked very effectively with other agencies to protect pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. This has included identifying any possible risks to these pupils' safety.
- Staff pursue pupil absence keenly, fully aware of the links between attendance, safety and academic progress. As a result, attendance is rising steadily, and is now broadly average.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers encourage pupils to think for themselves, to put forward their ideas clearly and fully, and to discuss different interpretations or solutions to problems. As a result, they become confident communicators, respect each other's opinions, and develop their natural curiosity about the world and what it contains, and explore it further. For example, in a mathematics lesson, two pupils discussed at length how to run an experiment a number of times to achieve a more accurate result.
- Relationships between teachers and their classes are strong. Teachers are knowledgeable, both about their subjects and their pupils' needs and interests. They use subject terminology accurately, and insist that pupils do the same. Teachers check regularly on pupils' progress, for example by asking them to show their answers on mini-whiteboards, so that they are able to adapt the learning if necessary. They set varied tasks for homework, including extended projects, so that these hold pupils' interest and make a good contribution to their learning.
- The teaching of mathematics is good. Teachers link mathematical ideas and calculations with practical situations well, so that pupils understand how the skills they are learning can be used to solve problems. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils were performing a range of calculations in preparation for opening a smoothie shop for pupils in Year 4. Teachers encourage pupils to explore different ways of approaching problems, and this helps to sustain their interest. Pupils and their parents spoke particularly warmly of their learning in mathematics.

- The school promotes reading well. The school has recently overhauled the way in which it encourages the reading of fiction, with the result that pupils are reading a greater number of challenging texts at home and demonstrating a high level of understanding of what they are reading.
- Pupils are confident readers in lessons and when reading to themselves, and they are able to use their knowledge of letters and sounds to pronounce unfamiliar words. However, the teaching of phonics in the younger years is variable. Sometimes, knowledge and skills are not taught precisely enough or in the best order to ensure that all pupils learn as quickly and securely as they might do.
- Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to write in a range of different styles, so that they learn how to adapt their writing for different purposes. All teachers have high expectations for spelling, punctuation and grammar, so that pupils work hard to improve the accuracy of their writing. However, teachers do not encourage pupils to write often enough so that their literacy skills become really secure and they make even faster progress.
- Teachers build effectively on the existing skills of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Teaching assistants are well trained to help identify learning needs, and consistently skilful at promoting the learning of groups of all abilities. They provide prompts and questions at an appropriate level which allow pupils to grasp the necessary ideas. Leaders are adept at selecting precisely the right learning programme to enable pupils with particular needs to catch up.
- Teachers mark work regularly, and identify specific points for improvement. As a result, pupils are clear about how they can do better and deepen their understanding.
- Teachers have high expectations of their pupils, both in terms of their behaviour and their learning. During the inspection, activities were almost always challenging for students of differing abilities. As a result, in the large majority of lessons, pupils made good progress. However, occasionally when pupils' enthusiasm led them to complete the work set quickly, the teacher did not provide additional tasks which built precisely on what the pupils had already achieved. As a result, progress slowed a little.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage and this is built upon in the later years. In 2014, pupils' attainment at Key Stage 1 was below average in reading and writing, but average in mathematics. However, according to data supplied by the school, checked with other schools and confirmed by inspection evidence, standards have risen to the point where they are now above the latest available national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- A higher-than-average proportion of Year 1 pupils met the required standard in the 2014 national screening check on how well pupils know the sounds that letters make (phonics). The school is aware that this proportion dipped in 2015, although the progress of this class in reading is now beginning to rise.
- Pupils' progress is good throughout Year 3 and Year 4, especially in reading. Information supplied by the school indicates that almost all Y4 pupils have made at least expected progress this academic year.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve well and make good progress. In 2014, there was only a minimal gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and that of their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's own assessment information suggests that this picture is likely to be repeated this academic year.
- From their different starting points, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress, especially in writing. This reflects the care with which the school staff monitor their progress, and the skill with which teachers and leaders provide work that builds on what they can already achieve.
- The most-able pupils in each year group typically make good progress because the work set for them takes into account the knowledge and understanding they have already attained. They respond

particularly well to the opportunity to contribute to the planning of their own work. They enjoy the challenge of working out how to approach a problem before they have to solve it.

The early years provision

is good

- Children join Reception with skills which are broadly typical for their age, although many have weaker skills in communication and language. They make at least expected progress, achieve well and leave well prepared for Key Stage 1. The school ensures that those children with particular needs are helped to catch up, for example by providing therapy for children with delays in speaking. The school's own assessment information suggests that this rise will continue in 2015 and the overall good level of development is likely to be at least in line with the national average.
- Staff ensure that children settle quickly when they join the school, and pay particular attention to any child who is known to have additional needs. Parents are fully involved in their children's transition to school, and they are welcomed into Reception regularly to celebrate children's achievements and discuss their progress. This openness is repaid with parents' whole-hearted support for the teachers and leadership of this setting.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is consistently good. This is because the vibrant learning environment and the well-planned activities on offer stimulate children's interest and help them to build their concentration. For example, children were able to explain how to care for three ducklings which had hatched recently and describe the stages of their development. Teachers seek children's views on their own learning from the outset when planning activities, and this helps to secure their engagement.
- Teachers question children skilfully, helping them to deepen their understanding and develop fuller spoken responses. They insist that other children listen and wait patiently, so that speakers grow in maturity and confidence. Children quickly develop resilience, and want to complete tasks even if they encounter a setback. Teachers have high expectations for children's progress, but their teaching of phonics does not always ensure that pupils learn as effectively as they might.
- Children's behaviour is good, as they respect both the environment and other children and respond well to the school's clear routines. They work and play happily with each other, take turns and begin to help each other when the opportunity arises. Children are very safe during the Early Years Foundation Stage, because the environment is well maintained and staff are vigilant.
- Leaders have demonstrated great skill in developing the Early Years Foundation Stage provision. They have planned the indoor and outdoor environment imaginatively and carefully, providing children with an exciting range of experiences and opportunities. They have visited other settings to explore good practice, and have provided effective professional development for their colleagues. As a result, all staff contribute effectively to the regular supervision, support and assessment of children, and some have developed specialist roles.
- Leaders ensure that teachers' assessments of children's progress are consistent and accurately recorded. They check the school's judgments against those of other schools, and less frequently with the local authority. Leaders have an accurate view of the quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision, and are ambitious to improve it further.

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	139825
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	450162

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

Type of school	First
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	212
Appropriate authority	Redditch West School Trust
Chair	Joanne Lumley
Headteacher	Rachel Roberts
Executive Headteacher	Sue Foster-Agg
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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