

Crofton Academy

High Street, Crofton, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF4 1NF

Inspection dates

23–24 May 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- In 2016, disadvantaged pupils underachieved in their examinations. The gap between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally was wide. The most able pupils and those who had special educational needs and/or disabilities also made less progress than their peers did nationally in a range of subjects.
- Historically, teaching has not enabled pupils to make the progress of which they are capable in some subjects. Teaching is now improving, but continues to vary too much across subjects and between classrooms. As a result, current pupils do not make consistently good progress.
- Strategies, led by school leaders, to improve the quality of teaching are not yet consistently effective across all subjects. Teaching is not routinely challenging enough, and work is not always sufficiently well matched to the different abilities of the pupils.
- The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is not as strong as it is for other pupils.
- Some pupils do not take sufficient pride in their work. Tasks are sometimes left incomplete. There is some low-level disruption in class, particularly where teaching lacks challenge.
- The skills of middle leaders require further development so that they make an effective contribution to the school's improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher, supported by governors and a new and capable senior leadership team, has accelerated the pace of improvement. They have accurately identified weaker areas of the school's work and are acting decisively to address them. Their ambition for the school is palpable. The school is improving strongly.
- As a result of effective improvement planning, the rate of progress that the most able pupils are making is increasing. Programmes put in place for disadvantaged pupils are also having a positive impact.
- Pupils achieve well in English because the quality of teaching is consistently good.
- Systems to keep pupils safe are good. Pupils feel safe and are safe in school. They know how to keep themselves healthy. High-quality careers advice and support ensures that pupils continue in education or training at the end of Year 11.
- Governors are strong and have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- As a result of recent improvements, school leaders are increasingly ensuring that 'every individual is cared for, supported and challenged to maximise their potential'.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good in all subject areas, thus ensuring that all pupils make at least good progress by:
 - ensuring that all teachers have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve
 - ensuring that the work set challenges pupils of different abilities
 - improving questioning in lessons, so that it is used skilfully to check pupils' learning and deepen their understanding.
- Improve the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils by:
 - eradicating any instances of low-level disruption
 - making sure that pupils' work is consistently of a high standard, complete and well presented
 - further improving the attendance rates of disadvantaged pupils.
- Further improve the impact of leadership at all levels by:
 - ensuring that professional development opportunities are used increasingly effectively to strengthen the quality of teaching
 - ensuring that middle leaders further develop their skills in planning and implementing strategies to improve learning in their subjects
 - being more precise when evaluating the impact of whole-school strategies, for example, the numeracy strategy.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The progress that disadvantaged pupils made in 2016 was not good enough. In addition, some pupils who had special educational needs and/or disabilities did not make enough progress. Nor did the most able pupils make the progress expected of them. Standards are improving, but the quality of teaching remains too variable for pupils to make consistently good progress. For these reasons, leadership and management require improvement.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been major staffing changes. There is a new headteacher, two new deputy headteachers and two new assistant headteachers. A strong governing body, and a very strong senior leadership team at school now ably support the headteacher.
- The headteacher, senior team and governing body are aware of the school's current position. They have an incisive understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and plans are in place to improve the quality of teaching across the school.
- The headteacher and senior team are highly ambitious for the pupils in their school. Their hunger for improvement is palpable. Systems and structures to track the progress that pupils are making, to ensure that they are focusing on their learning and to monitor the quality of teaching, are good. They are effective in identifying areas needing focus. Leaders are ensuring that the quality of education is improving, but they have not yet ensured that teaching is consistently good.
- The impact of middle leaders on the quality of provision in their area is improving. Many middle leaders are new, and they are benefiting from professional development programmes to help them in their new roles. They are aware that their skills need further development and are eager to have an impact in school. Some whole-school strategies are in place, but evaluation of their impact is less secure – for example, the whole-school numeracy strategy.
- Arrangements for the management of staff performance are in place. Staff receive effective professional development and this has led to some improvements in the quality of teaching. School leaders are aware that increasing the impact of professional learning on classroom practice will further improve the quality of teaching. Inspectors agree.
- The use of funding to support disadvantaged pupils currently in school is having a positive impact on their rates of progress. Leaders are increasingly effective in removing any barriers to learning for these pupils, and their progress is improving across the curriculum. Year 7 catch-up funding for those pupils entering secondary school with below-average standards in English and mathematics is used well. Overall, the funding for those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has not been used as effectively as it might have been and outcomes for these pupils are mixed.
- Leaders think deeply about the curriculum on offer at the school. There is a wide choice of subjects for pupils taking GCSE and other courses. The school judges the quality of these courses, and the extent to which they will support pupils when they leave school, when making decisions about the curriculum offer. Pupils enjoy the clubs

available to them in art, sport, music and additional study sessions. There is good provision to support pupils' understanding of democracy, extremism, tolerance and respect. Leaders' responsive and flexible approach to curriculum design is supporting improvements in outcomes for the pupils.

- The vast majority of parents are very supportive of the school and have a positive view of the school's leadership and quality of education on offer.
- The school receives effective support from a school improvement partner and other external education professionals. These partners have helped the school correctly identify the areas that require improvement.
- There is clear capacity for improvement within the school. The headteacher and senior team have sensible and yet ambitious plans in place, and their efforts are ensuring that the school is not only improving but that the pace of improvement continues to increase.

Governance

- Governance is strong. Governors know the strengths and areas for development of the school well. They have a very good range of relevant skills, with some having worked in senior posts in education. They have used performance management to hold leaders to account, and ensure that they fulfil their statutory duties in as far as finance and safeguarding are concerned.
- The governors have also supported the staff and pupils pastorally during times of difficulty and transition. Governors have led the school in reshaping the senior team and in making staffing appointments to strengthen provision for the pupils. For example, their leadership in the recent appointment of an assistant head to focus on the progress of disadvantaged pupils is beginning to have a positive impact.
- Governors have reflected on their own effectiveness and changed the structure of their meetings in order to have a greater level of impact on the school and the quality of education on offer.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a clear ethos across the school that sets the safety of the pupils as a high priority. Staff are well trained and also vigilant. There are close links to external agencies in order to support the most vulnerable pupils and their well-being. Pupils are clear about how to raise any concerns they may have about safeguarding.
- The school fulfils all of the requirements for checking staff's suitability for working with children. Policies and procedures for safeguarding pupils are in place and effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not consistently good across the school. Across departments and within departments, teaching is too variable and therefore requires improvement. While there are clear strengths in the teaching of English, physical education (PE),

drama and history, for example, teaching in other subjects remains inconsistent. Teaching in mathematics, science and geography, for example, requires improvement.

- Teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of are not high enough. Work set is not consistently well planned to challenge pupils effectively. As a result, pupils' progress is not good. Inspectors noted some examples of high expectations where challenging work leads to good progress, particularly with the most able pupils, but this was not always the case.
- Pupils were observed thriving in lessons where teachers plan activities that match the ability and understanding of the pupils. For example, teachers set interesting and engaging tasks, and shape learning in 'real time' as they gauge how quickly pupils are grasping complex concepts. Classroom routines are clear, and a good relationship between pupils and adults based on mutual respect can be seen. Marking and oral feedback is timely, and helps pupils identify their next steps. More and more teaching is of this quality, and senior leaders are aware of where this is taking place in school.
- Pupils were observed faltering where lessons were characterised by a 'one size fits all' approach. In these instances, teaching does not stimulate all of the pupils and some low-level disruption can occur. Pupils also told inspectors that this is the case. Sometimes questioning does not push pupils' understanding further or check exactly what the pupils know and can do. There is inconsistency in the way teachers apply the school's marking and feedback procedures.
- Teachers promote equality of opportunity well through their teaching, and most classrooms are highly inclusive environments that support learning.
- Some teachers display very good subject knowledge and, as a consequence, involve pupils fully in learning. Resources are often well used to stimulate and deepen discussion.
- Teachers are aware of the different pupils and their needs in their classroom. Although planning does not always match their needs, the use of assessment information to shape intervention programmes, specifically for disadvantaged pupils, is an emerging strength of the school. This is supporting their improving rates of progress.
- The support that visually impaired pupils receive is good. Practical support is given to them on an individual basis and the pupils are able to access the curriculum successfully.
- Senior leaders know the strengths and areas for development in the profile of teaching across the school. As a result, the strategies they are employing to improve teaching are effective. The quality of teaching is improving and becoming more consistent.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils and parents report that school is a safe place to be. Inspectors agree. Pupils say that they feel safe and that they know whom to report any concerns to. They say that the school does not accept bullying and that any incidents are dealt with well by staff.

Pupils show a good understanding of different types of bullying, and of e-safety. They are aware of the potential risks surrounding the use of the internet.

- Pupils are well versed in the skills they need to contribute effectively to life in modern Britain. They spoke of the school's culture of respect for diversity. The school uses 'drop-down days' and assemblies to teach about issues linked to personal development and welfare, and to allow discussion or reflection on national or international issues.
- The school ensures that transition arrangements are well thought out and effective. Pupils report that they felt at home straightaway in their new school.
- The school is generally calm, orderly and harmonious.
- The school site is well kept. It is secure and well supervised. Pupils respect the learning environment which is free from graffiti and litter.
- Pupils know how to eat healthily, and the importance of keeping fit. They understand the dangers associated with smoking, drugs and alcohol.
- School leaders ensure that the welfare of pupils accessing courses off-site with other providers is strong.
- Careers advice and guidance are also strong. Careers advice, lessons and events take place from Year 7 through to when pupils leave school. The school has partnerships with external providers and local colleges. Leaders work effectively with businesses and education providers to ensure that all pupils have pathways and choices after their examinations in Year 11. As a result, the number of pupils who are not in education, employment or training when they leave school is very low.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Some pupils, and more often boys, have not developed sufficiently positive attitudes to learning. When teaching lacks challenge or expectation, pupils do not always focus on the task in hand, or, indeed, low-level disruption is present. Pupils say that behaviour in class varies, depending on the teacher.
- Too many pupils do not take enough pride in presenting and completing their work. Nonetheless, pupils are generally polite, courteous and well mannered. Uniform standards are generally high. Pupils look smart. The use of derogatory language is rare in lessons and around the school. Movement between lessons is usually purposeful, and pupils arrive to class on time.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school, and the vast majority of pupils attend school regularly. School leaders have identified that the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is too low.
- There is a culture of respect in school. Staff and pupils say that the school is welcoming and friendly, and that a real community ethos pervades the daily functioning of the school.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2016, the progress made by disadvantaged pupils and some most able pupils was not good enough. In addition, the progress that some pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities made was also not good enough. The progress

made overall by Year 11 pupils was no better than the national average. There was underperformance in several subject areas across the curriculum.

- The progress of current disadvantaged pupils is improving, but remains variable. Recent innovations and programmes that have been put in place to ensure that current Year 11 pupils achieve well have had a positive impact. For example, targeted pupils have improved their rates of attendance since these programmes have been in place. However, inspectors looked closely at pupils' exercise books, spoke directly to groups of pupils in receipt of the pupil premium and found their progress and experience at school to be variable.
- The progress of the most able pupils is improving. Some teachers, but not all, are increasingly effective in questioning the most able pupils in order to develop their understanding and deepen their knowledge. Adherence by staff to the school's marking policy and feedback for the most able pupils is strong, and helps them see the next steps in their learning.
- The identification of need for those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is strong, and teachers are made aware of pupils' individual needs. Teaching assistants support many of these pupils. However, as with other groups of pupils, their progress is not good due to the variations in the quality of teaching.
- Pupils who are visually impaired and who access the specialist resource base make good progress. They receive high levels of practical support on an individual basis and this supports their emotional and academic progress. The support is well matched to individual needs.
- Pupils make good progress in English in all year groups. Teaching is consistently good in this subject area. Progress is stronger in PE, drama, history and several practical subjects. In other subjects, such as mathematics, science and geography, variation in teaching quality leads to a variation in outcomes for pupils.
- Current school assessment information indicates that progress across the school is improving, and inspection evidence confirms this. School leaders believe that the progress that pupils make across the curriculum is good, but inspectors judge that the current profile of teaching is not strong enough to lead to consistently good outcomes for pupils. Direct observation of lessons, scrutiny of pupils' work over time and the views of current pupils show this to be the case.
- The school promotes reading well, and ensures that weaker readers receive additional support to improve their skills successfully.
- School leaders know their school well, and are moving quickly to address any areas that require improvement. Inspection evidence confirms that their actions are having a strongly positive impact.

School details

Unique reference number	137001
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	10002559

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,006
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carole Stevenson
Headteacher	Peter Walker
Telephone number	01924 862 985
Website	www.croftonacademy.org.uk
Email address	headteacher@croftonacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	28–29 November 2011

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- Crofton Academy is an average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have support for their special educational needs and/or disabilities is average.
- The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is well above average.

- The school has an additional resource base for pupils with visual impairment. Four pupils currently benefit from provision in this specialist resource base.
- In 2016, the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- The school does not use any full-time alternative provision for pupils. Some pupils access courses or option subjects at Wakefield College, Chevin Construction or the 'Young Firefighters' scheme.
- There have been significant changes to staffing and leadership since the time of the previous inspection. There is a new headteacher, two new deputy headteachers and two new assistant headteachers. Many middle leaders were also not in post at the time of the last inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in lessons and groups of pupils working. Tours of the school to see teaching and learning in progress were conducted with senior staff and findings discussed. A joint observation took place with the headteacher.
- Inspectors talked to pupils in lessons and about their experience at school and looked at work in their books. They talked to specific groups of pupils to glean their views about the school, about the behaviour of pupils and the quality of teaching.
- Inspectors observed pupils moving around the school and at social times.
- Inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body and school staff including senior leaders. An inspector spoke to the academy's school improvement partner.
- Inspectors took into account the 119 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised a range of documentation including the school's view of its own performance, monitoring records, information about pupils' progress, improvement planning, and records of behaviour and attendance. They looked closely at records relating to safeguarding and child protection, and at policies, including those published on the school's website. Inspectors took into account the views of other education professionals working with the school.
- Inspectors looked at the quality of provision and impact of the resource base for pupils with visual impairment.
- A range of other evidence, including displays, the school's website and evidence representing the school's wider achievements beyond the classroom, was also considered.

Inspection team

Michael Wardle, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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Darren Stewart	Her Majesty's Inspector
Nick Horn	Ofsted Inspector
Lesley Powell	Ofsted Inspector
Iain Veitch	Ofsted Inspector

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