

Inspection of West Croft School

Coronation Road, Bideford, Devon EX39 3DE

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 February 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have high expectations of what pupils can achieve at West Croft. They want all pupils to become well-rounded learners. Leaders have constructed a curriculum that supports pupils not only academically, but also personally.

Pupils learn through a range of purposeful experiences, both inside and outside of the classroom. They develop tolerance and respect for others across all aspects of their learning. Pupils understand that everyone is different. They talk confidently about different faiths and beliefs.

Pupils said that behaviour in the school is mostly good. They understand that, at times, some pupils struggle with their behaviour. When this happens, staff respond appropriately and sort it out. Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel safe. They know what bullying is. They said that it can happen, but adults deal with it well when it does.

Staff take good care of the pupils. They offer support to families and the local community. Parents value the support and guidance provided for their children. They appreciate the 'engaging and imaginative approach to learning'.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders prioritise children's language and communication in the early years. Staff create a language-rich environment. They focus on stories and rhyme. This enables children to join in enthusiastically, and supports the development of talk. Phonics teaching in the nursery, Reception Year and across key stage 1 is effective. Pupils sound out unfamiliar words confidently. They practise their reading using books matched to their knowledge of phonics. As a result, they become fluent readers. Careful assessment of what pupils know and remember ensures that staff support those who need to catch up quickly.

Older pupils develop positive attitudes towards reading. They understand the benefits, such as learning new words. However, some pupils in key stage 2 have gaps in their phonic knowledge, and do not receive consistent support to improve their reading fluency. As a result, they do not progress as well as they could.

The curriculum for mathematics is designed and taught well. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They pick up on pupils' misconceptions quickly, and address these systematically. Pupils enjoy mathematics. They appreciate the support that teachers give them to improve their understanding. Pupils build on what they have learned before, each time a new concept is presented. Staff provide children in the early years with well-planned learning opportunities through their play. Consequently, children explore number with high levels of curiosity and success.

Subjects in the wider curriculum are organised so that it is clear what pupils should know, and the order in which they will learn things. For example, in geography, lessons build on what pupils have learned before. However, assessment is not always used well enough to identify where pupils have gaps in their knowledge. As a result, teachers do not have a clear understanding of what pupils know and remember over time in some subjects.

Leaders, including governors, are ambitious for all pupils, including those with the most complex needs. Staff support this ambition. They understand how to support individual pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities well. Pupils' targets are set and reviewed at regular intervals to enable them to succeed.

The school has high expectations of behaviour and conduct. Pupils behave well in lessons. Most concentrate well and listen carefully to their teachers. Pupils demonstrate good manners around the school site.

Pupils' personal development is carefully woven into the curriculum, including in the early years. As a result, pupils become responsible young citizens. Staff provide pupils with a rich variety of experiences which strengthen independence and build character. Pupils enjoy opportunities to discuss and debate topics in a considered way. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for their next stage of learning.

Governors are knowledgeable about the school's priorities. They provide effective challenge for leaders, particularly in relation to curriculum development. They fully understand their safeguarding responsibilities.

Staff appreciate that leaders are considerate of their workload and well-being. They said that they have been supported well during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders act in the best interests of children. Staff receive frequent and up-to-date safeguarding training. Systems for reporting concerns are effective. Staff understand what to do if they are concerned about a pupil. Pupils are confident that they can talk to staff if they have a worry. Leaders carry out appropriate checks on the suitability of staff.

Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. Older pupils have a good understanding of online safety. They know what to do if they are worried about something that has happened online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, teachers do not have a clear understanding of the gaps in pupils' knowledge. As a result, some pupils do not recall key knowledge well enough. Leaders should ensure that staff use assessment consistently to check how well pupils know and remember the curriculum over time.
- Some pupils in key stage 2 are not fluent readers. Staff do not provide consistently effective support for this group of pupils. This slows their progress. Leaders should ensure that staff provide effective support so that all pupils become fluent and confident readers.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	113132
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10211743
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	574
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Martha Mills
Headteacher	Tom Page
Website	www.westcroft.devon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 and 16 May 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- West Croft School is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- There have been some leadership changes since the last inspection. The current headteacher took up post in October 2019. A new deputy headteacher was permanently appointed in September 2020. The school has a new chair to lead its governing board.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher; the deputy headteacher; the special educational needs coordinator, who is also the designated safeguarding lead;

groups of staff; and members of the governing board. The lead inspector held a telephone call with a representative from the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, history and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke to subject leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils read to an adult in Years 1 to 6.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding documentation, including safeguarding checks carried out on staff working at the school. They considered how well the designated safeguarding leader acts on concerns about pupils' welfare and safety. Inspectors talked to pupils, staff and governors about how the school keeps everyone safe.
- Inspectors considered the 68 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, including 43 free-text responses. Inspectors also considered 80 responses to the online pupil survey, and 53 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Heather Barraclough, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Craig Hayes	Ofsted Inspector
Jayne Keller	Ofsted Inspector
Paula Marsh	Ofsted Inspector

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