

Croft Church of England Primary School

Address: Brookes Avenue, Croft, Leicester, Leicestershire, LE9 3GJ

Unique reference number (URN): 146621

Inspection report: 24 February 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Current rates of attendance at the school are close to, or above, the national average. This includes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders complete detailed analysis of attendance data to identify any patterns or trends. They use this to inform well-considered actions that remove barriers to attendance, both overall and for individual pupils. As a result, the positive picture of attendance over time continues to improve. Similarly, the number of pupils who are frequently absent is reducing.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' conduct. Staff model and reinforce these expectations consistently. Pupils respond well. They enjoy working towards rewards for demonstrating positive behaviour. This contributes to the welcoming atmosphere in the school. Pupils are polite, friendly and respectful. Generally, pupils use their time in lessons productively. When pupils do fall short of leaders' expectations for behaviour, staff address this effectively. This includes providing adjustments and additional support for pupils when required. Bullying and other acts of unkindness are infrequent and never tolerated. Pupils recognise improvements in behaviour since the last inspection, and they feel safe in school. They raise with staff any concerns that they may have. Pupils are confident that staff will act to resolve these concerns.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders identify pupils' individual needs quickly and accurately. They strive to ensure that pupils receive the right support at the right time, drawing on specialist advice when necessary. Leaders' high expectations for all pupils are embedded in the school's vision that every child will achieve and thrive.

Staff understand the barriers pupils face. In many cases, they make appropriate adaptations to their teaching that prioritise pupils' long-term success and build their independence. Leaders closely monitor the impact of the support pupils receive. Leaders work alongside teachers to refine this, planning precise support for pupils as their needs change. In a small number of cases, leaders arrange for pupils to attend alternative provision. This contributes positively to pupils' education.

Overall, staff receive appropriate professional learning. This includes training in meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and in supporting pupils' emotional wellbeing. Training from the trust and local authority further strengthens staff expertise.

Leaders work well with partners, such as families, external professionals and social workers, to shape support effectively for disadvantaged pupils. This includes pupils who are known or were previously known to social care. Leaders make effective use of additional funding. They have used this to secure improvements in attendance for disadvantaged pupils and to provide increased access to educational visits and wider enrichment opportunities.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have a clear and ambitious vision for providing high-quality education to all pupils. Inclusion is at the heart of this vision, and the decisions leaders take are made in the best interests of all pupils.

There have been changes to leadership since the last inspection. During this time, trust leaders have provided continuity and ensured that the school has the resources it needs. As a result, the school has maintained effective leadership despite key staffing changes.

Leaders take a strategic approach to improvement. They identify the right priorities to ensure the best possible outcomes and experiences for pupils. Leaders know the school's strengths and weaknesses well. There is evidence of the positive impact their work has made in many areas since the last inspection.

Leaders and those responsible for governance fulfil their duties effectively. They work together to balance challenge and support. Trustees and governors assure themselves that the information they receive on the school's work is accurate and up to date. They maintain a high profile with staff, pupils and their families. This has led to constructive relationships between leaders, parents and carers.

Trustees and governors ensure that staff wellbeing, including that of leaders, is a priority. Leaders carefully consider staff workload when making decisions. They ensure that staff receive a programme of professional learning that supports them to develop their expertise and is carefully linked to the school's priorities. This means that staff feel valued and increasingly well equipped to do the best they can for all pupils.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders provide a coherent and well-sequenced personal development programme. This begins in the early years and builds carefully through to the end of Year 6. Through the school's personal, social and health education curriculum, pupils learn important information about how to remain safe, including online. Pupils know to be cautious when sharing personal information and understand the steps that they should take to report cyberbullying.

Pupils' understanding of fundamental British values such as democracy and the rule of law is largely secure. Pupils understand difference in the world. They have an age-appropriate understanding of concepts such as ethnicity or religion. Pupils know the importance of treating others equally and create an environment where everyone is welcomed in the school. Leaders ensure that pupils receive the important information that they need as they grow up. For example, the relationships and health education curriculum helps pupils to understand how their body develops and changes as they grow older.

Pupils' wellbeing is prioritised. Leaders provide effective pastoral support for pupils and their families. This is well considered and can be accessed quickly when needed. As a result, pupils feel well supported.

There is a range of opportunities that enrich pupils' education. For example, many pupils go on educational visits, such as to the national space centre. Pupils are consulted on the

nature of the clubs that they would like to attend. This contributes to a broad range of activities that are well used by pupils. Leaders carefully monitor participation in the school's enrichment offer. They take steps to remove barriers to attendance where possible, such as by offering some activities during the school day for those pupils who cannot stay after school.

Pupils value the opportunities to undertake leadership roles. They understand that these responsibilities help them prepare for the next stage of education and the world of work.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Pupils' attainment does not match leaders' ambitions. At the end of key stage 2, pupils do not consistently achieve highly in national tests in reading, writing and mathematics. This limits their preparation for future stages of their education.

Pupils' knowledge of a range of subjects is developing. However, sometimes, pupils struggle to replicate in their work in wider curriculum subjects the same standard of handwriting, spelling and grammar that they show in English.

Recently strengthened approaches to securing the basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics are showing impact and improving current pupils' readiness for future learning. For example, programmes to improve pupils' recall of number facts are helping them to be better prepared for the Year 4 multiplication tables check. In younger years, pupils make a positive start in reading. This is reflected in the school's Year 1 phonics screening check outcomes, which are close to the national average.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

There are inconsistencies in the way staff deliver the curriculum. Where practice is most effective, teachers explain new concepts clearly, make links to what pupils have learned previously and use questioning well to check pupils' understanding. However, this is not consistently the case. In some instances, staff subject knowledge is less secure and their use of teaching strategies is less effective. Leaders recognise inconsistencies in teaching and have acted to strengthen staff expertise further.

Leaders and staff know pupils' needs well. Some staff adapt their teaching appropriately for pupils with additional needs. In the most effective lessons, these adaptations enable pupils to learn successfully. However, this is not yet consistent across the school.

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of provision. They make informed decisions to drive improvement. For example, leaders have constructed an ambitious, broad and balanced curriculum. It identifies essential knowledge and is carefully sequenced across subjects and phases. The curriculum is progressive and supports pupils to build secure understanding over time.

The curriculum prioritises teaching the basics in reading, writing and mathematics. Strategies such as targeted phonics support, structured reading programmes and the use of practical resources in mathematics generally support pupils who need help to catch up. Vocabulary is explicitly taught, and pupils have opportunities to revisit and apply new language.

Early years

Needs attention 

Leaders have acted to address weaker aspects of provision in the early years, for example through staff training. However, more time is needed for the impact of this work to be seen. The quality of interactions between staff and children is not consistently high. Sometimes, staff do not make the most of opportunities to develop children's learning effectively. An uneven approach to the teaching of early reading, letter and number formation leads to errors and misconceptions that are not routinely addressed.

The curriculum in the early years is well planned and carefully sequenced. Language and communication are a clear priority, starting in the Nursery Year. Early reading, writing and mathematics are prioritised for children in Reception. Where practice is most effective, staff skilfully build children's knowledge and skills. For example, they help children to develop their vocabulary and enhance their use of language. Generally, children are well prepared for key stage 1.

Leaders and staff quickly and accurately identify children who face barriers to their learning and wellbeing. Staff develop positive relationships with children. They communicate effectively with parents and build constructive partnerships with them. This helps children to settle well and develop secure attachments.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils experience a nurturing, happy and inclusive education. The school's vision for 'every child at Croft to achieve and thrive to be the best they can be' is starting to be realised.

Staff understand pupils' needs thanks to the high-quality training they receive. If pupils face barriers to learning, for example due to special educational needs and/or disabilities or because they are disadvantaged, these are removed or reduced. Keeping up is prioritised over catching up. However, some pupils have gaps in their basic knowledge of reading, writing and mathematics. That said, leaders' actions are starting to have a positive impact on pupils' learning. Overall, most pupils are ready for the next stage of their education by the end of Year 6. Children in the early years start well. They leave the Reception Year well prepared for key stage 1.

Pupils enjoy learning. They speak with confidence about their work across the curriculum. However, the quality of pupils' work is not consistently high. This is because staff do not always insist on the same high standards for all curriculum subjects.

Pupils behave well in lessons and at playtimes. Bullying is rare, and any falling out is dealt with quickly and effectively. Low-level disruption to learning is infrequent. Pupils work well

together. They enjoy earning whole-class rewards. There are opportunities for pupils to take on leadership roles, such as by being wellbeing ambassadors or school councillors. These, along with various class jobs, develop pupils' sense of responsibility.

Relationships throughout the school are warm and positive. Pupils trust that there are staff they can talk to if they have any worries. As a result, pupils feel safe at school and attend well.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that they securely embed curriculum and teaching improvements so that practice is consistently strong within and across subjects, leading to high standards of achievement in every area of learning.
 - Leaders should ensure that they strengthen the quality of interactions between staff and children in the early years, so that children receive effective and consistent support to develop their learning and achieve as well as possible.
 - Leaders should sustain and deepen their work to continue to drive rapid, measurable improvement across the school.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Embrace Multi Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Paula Jones, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by John Haggart.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other senior leaders from the school and trust, including the chief executive officer, during the inspection. The lead inspector spoke with members of the trust board.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in April 2018.

The school makes use of one alternative provision, which is unregistered.

The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection. The headteacher took up his post in January 2026.

Lead inspector:

Mark Westmoreland, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Jackie Stirland, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 24 February 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

100

Well below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

175

Below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

17.00%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

7.00%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

22.00%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	53%	61%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	25%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	61%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	55%	60%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	69%	74%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	63%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	70%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	70%	73%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	71%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	75%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	78%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	60%	71%	Below

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	69%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	50%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	65%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	80%	73%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	0%	46%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	S	47%	S

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	44%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	67%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	S	63%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	60%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	22%	59%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	58%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	11%	60%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	59%	S

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	0%	68%	-68 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	66%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	67%	80%	-13 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	78%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	22%	78%	-56 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	77%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	11%	80%	-69 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	S	79%	S

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	5.3%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.1%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	5.3%	5.9%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	15.4%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	10.3%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	12.9%	16.2%	Close to average

Our grades explained

Exceptional 

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard ●

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard ●

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention ●

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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