Crossley Fields
Junior & Infant School

Unity, Perseverance, Positivity, Loyalty, Individuality, Ambition

Crossley Fields – The Context

Crossley Fields is a large well established school on the edge of the town of Mirfield. Our intake of children has changed over the past few years as birth rates in the immediate catchment area have dropped. 55-60% of our intake come from out of catchment by choice, with only 35-40% coming from the immediate locality. We take children as far away as Brighouse, Dewsbury and Thornhill and all areas in between. This means in many ways our school is unique in the authority as it serves not just the immediate community but several others too. This also allows for a mix of cultures and religions more akin to Kirklees as a whole, but not specifically Mirfield. We embrace this ethnicity in all that we do, and believe it to add to the very special make-up of the school.

The recent drop in birth rates has seen numbers in school fall over the past three years, especially with Reception numbers, but we find that numbers of children joining us mid-year has also increased, for example 28 children joining us between January 2022 and July 2022.

The school is organised into three classes per year group, although for 2021-2022 we ran with five mixed Y1-2 classes due to lower numbers and we may need to consider this again in the future. Despite some initial concerns when this plan was raised, it did lead to a very successful year for both year groups. As the school was originally built as two schools, we do have spacious buildings and grounds including two halls, which is essential for the size of the school. From September 2022 we are anticipating around 560 on roll and this means that playtimes, lunchtimes and organisational matters including staffing across both buildings have to be considered carefully.

The teaching staff of the school remains stable, but we encourage all staff to be conscious of their own professional development and career path, meaning we saw two established SLT members (including the SENCO) leave at Easter 2022.

The SLT now consists of the Head Teacher, the Deputy Head for Curriculum & Standards, and the Deputy Head for Inclusion, the Assistant Head for FS/KS1 and the Assistant Head for KS2. The Deputy Head for Inclusion was absent due to serious illness, for the first half term, and then again the final three months of 2021-22, her work was back-filled by other SLT members and the SENDCOs. We also promoted two existing teachers to jointly take on the role of SENCO from Easter, a larger role with the increased number of EHCP children we are beginning to see entering school in Reception. PPA cover is provided by our own, fully qualified teachers. We have three Early Career Teachers who started in September 2022, as well as nine new Teaching Assistants to support children predominantly with complex need.

In the past year or so the Governing Body membership has changed greatly, and we have a group of people led by a very experienced Chair that are dynamic, supportive and challenging, and who want to learn, and have a direct hands on approach to their role.

The outcomes for our school since the last inspection have increased steadily, and culminated in a set of results in 2022 that we felt fully reflected the work of the school since 2017, and especially since the pandemic began in 2020. These clearly evidence the success we have with all of our children and families and we pride ourselves on maintaining a broad and balanced curriculum throughout the school. This has been a key part of our work over the past three years, with a move away from established schemes such as the International Primary Curriculum and a move back to using the National Curriculum more directly to lead our learning. Every member of staff has been involved in

this, and are invested in making the curriculum the best it can be for the cohort of children we provide for.

Our core values, developed in the pandemic, reflect that which is important to us and were born out of a time when children wanted that greater positivity, unity and loyalty, but also recognised that there was a place for perseverance and ambition in the work that they undertook. The core value that has 'changed' the mind-set of many is that of individuality and with diversity of need, creed and culture that now exists in school.

Crossley Fields is a school which is becoming increasingly involved with the local community through the work of the Community Hub, which the Head Teacher leads. It is building on strong parental support and is in the process of re-establishing the PTA which declined some years ago. Our parents are very supportive of the school. By asking questions and being involved in the daily life of the school, they play a key role in keeping our school at an outstanding level as seen in the parent questionnaire of March 2022. The Head Teacher addressed each area raised as a concern by the parental body through a video put up on the website, and addressing these as key indicators for the school.

The school has engaged greatly with LA initiatives over the past three years and have supported LA advisors in any specific work, most recently in Maths and Reading. The LA is increasingly using the school's practice especially in leadership and SEND as models for best practice, and the Head Teacher took a position as an Associate Kirklees Learning Partner from September 2022, having supported two schools in his NLE role from February 2022. The Assistant Head Teacher for FS/KS1 also works as an associate for the LA specifically for Early Years.

CPD for staff is mapped out in line with the SDP, and a commitment to support the whole staff is a large part of our work from students, through to ECT support, and staff becoming involved in NPQ's for Early Years, Literacy, Leading Teaching and Headship.

Whilst the pandemic did affect the school badly over the past two and a half years, including two major outbreaks in October 2021 and January 2022, we do not want it to define us, or to be seen as an reason for work not to be completed during that time. In fact many aspects of our work have improved over the past two and a half years, directly because of the pandemic, and whilst we would never wish to see the disruption it caused ever again, it has allowed us to be more reflective in the work that we do and what we want for our children and their families, and our school development planning has resulted from this.

As we started the new academic year in 2022, we felt confident that our curriculum is stronger than it was in March 2020, our relationships with home are stronger, and the way we approach our work is more nuanced, and more directly focused on what will have the biggest impact. Attainment across school continues to rise, and provisional progress measures for the Y6 21-22 cohort, are incredibly pleasing, in reading from 2017 to 2022, it is 6.2 points higher, in writing 4.8 points higher and in Maths 4.8 points also.