

Crofton Academy – Specialists In Maths and Computing: With Visual Impairment Resource

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	137001
Local authority	Not Applicable
Inspection number	385562
Inspection dates	28–29 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Glynis Bradley-Peat

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	969
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carole Stevenson
Headteacher	Jeremy Horsley
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 36 lessons, observed 35 teachers and held meetings with the headteacher, senior leadership team, teaching staff, members of the governing body and students. They observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books. The inspectors checked documents including the school improvement plan, systems for tracking students' progress, documentation regarding safeguarding students and school policies. They also analysed information from 429 questionnaires from parents and carers, in addition to those received from staff and students.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- What current data show about attainment and progress, particularly of boys.
- Whether teachers use assessment information to re-shape tasks during lessons and if their written and verbal feedback ensures students move forward in their learning.
- Whether leaders at all levels ensure that the quality of teaching and learning are evaluated rigorously and whether improvement has been driven through in all subject areas.
- What the key factors are which contribute to the school's successful track record.

Information about the school

Crofton Academy is an average-sized secondary school. It became an academy in August 2011. The largest group of pupils is of White British heritage, with the remainder coming from a wide variety of different heritages. A very low proportion speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average but rising year on year. Almost a sixth of all students, a proportion lower than that found nationally, have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school hosts the visual impairment unit for the Wakefield area, for secondary-aged students.

The academy has specialist mathematics and computing status. It has gained numerous awards including Healthy School status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Crofton Academy is an outstanding school where there is no room for complacency. The headteacher's passion for high achievement is infectious. This ensures that leaders and staff at all levels are dedicated and committed. He is extremely well supported by his senior leadership team. Teamwork is a key factor in the academy's success along with hard work and pride. Without exception, staff believe the academy to be well led and managed. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and full of praise. One wrote, echoing the views of many, 'I have nothing but praise for Crofton Academy. My daughter loves going to school and has become a confident, mature 11 year old.'

Insightful self-evaluation clearly identifies the academy's strengths and areas for improvement. This, combined with excellent data analysis, makes sure that any potential underachievement is dealt with quickly and that no child is left behind. The school identified that boys were not achieving as well as girls, particularly in English. Leaders took rapid action and made effective adjustments to the curriculum and teaching to enable boys to engage better. The quality of departmental and year leadership is exemplary and focuses its energy on ensuring that every student gets the chance to excel. The governing body is highly skilled and works hard to support the academy. Governors ensure that targets set are highly challenging. The academy and its students have responded well to these as is demonstrated by improving progress, attendance and behaviour. Safeguarding students is paramount. There are excellent systems in place for child protection and health and safety which ensure that students learn in a safe environment. The academy has tackled the issues from the previous inspection with vigour, and improvements are clearly evident in the outstanding outcomes achieved by students. Leaders and managers across the academy are highly effective; there is excellent capacity for further improvement.

Students' achievement is outstanding because of the attention the school pays to ensuring the success of every single individual. The percentage gaining five A* to C GCSE grades including English and mathematics is consistently high and considering the average starting points of the majority of learners, the progress they make is good. Those students with special educational needs and/or disabilities also achieve well because their needs are met effectively, particularly those in the visually impaired unit where support is exemplary.

Behaviour is excellent because all staff and students have high expectations and there are clear procedures and systems which are used consistently. Students benefit from a joint approach that addresses their academic and pastoral needs. Care, guidance and support are exemplary. Attitudes to learning are outstanding and students' enjoyment of school is reflected in above average attendance figures. Students feel safe and secure. They are extremely active in the school and local community. Strong relationships underpin good learning. Teaching overall is good. High levels of engagement and good subject knowledge promote the good progress made by students. Teachers' planning has improved but sometimes they talk for too long in lessons which limits the time available for students to work and think things through for themselves. Teachers do not always check students' understanding of what they are learning as rigorously as they could during lessons and a narrow range of activities and experiences do not always challenge all learners well enough, especially those who are higher attaining. The excellent curriculum ensures outstanding outcomes because it is flexible and consistently tailored to meet every student's needs. It offers a range of stimulating experiences which enhance and extend what is learnt in the classroom.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching in order to accelerate progress towards outstanding by:
 - challenging students to think for themselves
 - reducing the amount of time teachers spend talking in lessons
 - checking all students' understanding of what they are learning more rigorously during the lesson
 - ensuring a wider range of activities and experiences which challenge all learners, particularly the higher attainers.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

From average starting points on entry to the school, students make good progress overall. Progress in English is improving and in some subject areas, for example in mathematics, progress has been consistently outstanding. This is linked with the good questioning skills of teachers which encourages students to explain their strategies and reasoning. In a Year 11 lesson, students were prompted to consider the implications of information provided on comparative pie charts and talked to each other about their findings. The teacher's style of questioning ensured all students prepared responses and, as a result, they made at least good progress. Boys' achievement has improved and the gap between them and the girls has narrowed considerably. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress because of effective support for their learning. Those students who are visually impaired make excellent progress because of the highly effective use of the support they receive. Their achievement and enjoyment are outstanding.

Students have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe and show maturity when dealing with hazardous situations. Their behaviour is excellent and they demonstrate a real desire to learn. Relationships between adults and students

are extremely positive. As a result, they are confident to ask questions of their teachers in lessons. Students are extremely proud of and are committed wholeheartedly to their school community. One said, 'Coming to school is like coming to your second home ... we all feel safe, everyone gets on with each other and teachers don't talk down to us, they treat us as adults and we respond.' They participate enthusiastically in large numbers in a wide variety of activities to improve the academy and its community, notably through the 'student voice'. Students are routinely involved in the selection process for new teachers. They have a good understanding of how to lead healthy, fit lives. This reflects work carried out to gain the Healthy Schools Award. Students are extremely well prepared for the world of work. Basic skills are well above average and the academy has worked hard to improve attendance which is now above average.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	1
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	2
Pupils' attendance ¹	
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good and improving steadily. The excellent relationships evident in the vast majority of classes promote high levels of engagement. Teachers know their students well and understand their individual strengths and weaknesses. In the majority of lessons teachers encourage students to explore and develop their own ideas. Their questioning strategies prompt deeper thinking. This engenders in students a thirst for knowledge and promotes some lively debate. In a geography lesson in Year 11 about industrial location, students were able to think logically and follow enquiry routes. They took responsibility for their own learning. The teacher's high quality verbal feedback ensured students moved on in their learning swiftly. In a physics lesson in Year 10, the students were experimenting with bouncing balls and calculating energy loss. They were encouraged to work independently and used their prior learning well, applying it to a new context. However, this practice is not always consistent. In a few lessons students do not make the progress of which they are capable because lessons are dominated by teachers talking for too long. Opportunities are missed to involve them more creatively in their learning. Teachers do not always ensure that the most able students are provided with work to

¹The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

challenge and promote their learning. In these classes the narrow range of activities does not stimulate students well enough and the pace of learning slows. Teachers' written feedback provides effective guidance about how work should be improved.

The curriculum is highly effective at meeting the needs and interests of all students; for example, a range of cross-curricular themes and enrichment events ensure that learning is more enjoyable. These complement a wide variety of subject areas, for example 'Industry Day' and 'Safe Places Day'. Many visitors to the academy add quality to the curriculum such as the African dance and associated workshops which promoted an in-depth understanding of culture and beliefs. There is a huge range of extra-curricular activities which celebrate musical, sporting and cultural experiences. Alternative provision is made available for students with very specific needs and this is monitored exceptionally well by the school. The academy's specialism continues to have an excellent impact on learners and the percentage of students who are leaving the school with A* to C in mathematics is high. All students leave the academy with an information and communication technology qualification.

The target-setting process and use of data to spot any underachievement is sophisticated. As a result students whose circumstances make them more vulnerable do extremely well in their personal and academic achievement. This group also benefit exceptionally well from highly effective links with external agencies which support their development. A particular strength of the academy's outstanding care, guidance and support is its transition work. Strong relationships with primary schools and post-16 providers ensure that no learning time is lost when moving between establishments. The academy's work alongside parents and carers contributes very well to the outcomes achieved.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides exceptional leadership and works with a senior leadership team to create a thriving, purposeful academy with achievement and care at its heart. Their determination to bring about further improvements is impressive. Consequently, the vision for the future of the academy is embraced by all staff and capacity to improve is excellent. Strategies for supporting and challenging relatively weaker teaching have been very successful. Training for teachers is based firmly on what leaders observe in classrooms. A variety of monitoring activities pinpoints weaknesses and celebrates strengths through the sharing of good practice. The impact of its work to move good teaching to outstanding is beginning to pay dividends and is gathering momentum. The importance of data to plan effective and challenging lessons is now more fully understood by staff. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties and has had an excellent impact on the work of the academy through its role of critical friend. Members have a thorough understanding of the

performance data and are meticulous in carrying out their safeguarding duties. The academy has exemplary procedures for safeguarding and risk assessment which have served as a model for other schools.

The academy has a commitment to ensure that every pupil has an equal chance to learn. It has worked well to eradicate differences between girls' and boys' performance. Currently there is an understanding that those higher-attaining students in each class are not always fully challenged to achieve as well as they can. A number of visually impaired students are integrated well and are equal members of the academy community. Parents and carers feel very much part of the academy and are exceptionally well informed through a wide variety of media. Their views are respected by leaders who use them constructively in the decision-making process. Outstanding partnership links promote students' personal development, their understanding of citizenship and first-rate achievement. This is because they are sharply focused on students' particular needs. Leaders and managers have an excellent understanding of the religious, economic and social context of the academy. However, it realises that there is insufficient engagement with a range of community groups beyond the immediate locality.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

Almost half of the parents and carers returned the questionnaires, a much higher proportion than is typical for a secondary school, and almost all of these were extremely positive about the school. There was a low level of disagreement with any of the statements. Parents and carers think the academy is led and managed well. Inspection evidence endorsed this view. Just over a quarter of parents and carers made additional comments. Some spoke of the particularly caring and supportive ethos of the academy. Some wrote about how much they appreciate the hard work of the headteacher, leaders and staff. Leadership and management were commented on as being highly effective. The inspection evidence supports these positive views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Crofton Academy - Specialists In Maths and Computing: With Visual Impairment Resource to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 429 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 969 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	194	45	217	51	14	3	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	211	49	212	49	3	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	258	60	155	36	11	3	1	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	217	51	188	44	16	4	3	1
The teaching is good at this school	201	47	213	50	6	1	1	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	167	39	225	52	22	5	4	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	113	26	269	63	26	6	4	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	190	44	211	49	2	0	2	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	190	44	218	51	15	3	2	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	172	40	210	49	22	5	3	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	152	35	232	54	17	4	4	1
The school is led and managed effectively	224	52	190	44	1	0	1	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	248	58	168	39	7	2	4	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



30 November 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of Crofton Academy – Specialists In Maths and Computing:
With Visual Impairment Resource, Wakefield, WF4 1NF**

On behalf of the inspectors and myself, I would like to thank you very much for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your academy recently. We very much valued the discussions we had with you and seeing you at work. We were particularly impressed by your excellent behaviour and attitudes to learning. You, your parents and carers told us that Crofton is a very caring and safe place to be. You and they told us that you feel the school is well led and managed. Inspectors agree with this and believe that the school provides an outstanding standard of education.

Your headteacher works exceptionally hard and is very proud of you and the academy. We believe his leadership in particular to be outstanding. The great majority of you are making good progress and getting well above average GCSE results and other qualifications at the end of Year 11. We think your teachers teach you well. However, even in outstanding schools there is always more to be done.

We have asked your school to:

- look closely at how long teachers spend explaining to you during lessons and to reduce this to provide more time for you to work independently
- check more carefully on how well you understand things in lessons
- challenge all of you, but particularly the more able among you, to think for yourselves more frequently in lessons
- ensure that lessons include a range of activities and experiences.

You too can play your part in improving the school by working hard and talking to your teachers about your learning. We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Glynis Bradley-Peat
Lead inspector

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