

St Crispin's School

London Road, Wokingham, Berkshire, RG40 1SS

Inspection dates 3–4 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students make good progress in English and mathematics and achieve well.
- The quality of teaching is good and some of it is outstanding. Teachers know their subjects well and convey high expectations so that students learn successfully.
- Students' behaviour is very positive. They show high levels of maturity both in lessons and around the school. Students say they feel safe and the school has robust structures to support every student.
- The sixth form is good and improving, with the curriculum offering academic and vocational choices which meet students' needs and interests well.
- Carefully designed additional opportunities are offered to students and these promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively.
- The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The wider leadership team shares the recently appointed headteacher's ambitious vision for the school.
- The governing body is outstanding. It holds the school fully to account, has a thorough knowledge of its strengths and weakness and provides exceptional support.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The achievement of students in science is not as good as in English and mathematics and is uneven in the sixth form
- Students are not always given enough feedback on how they can improve their work.
- In some lessons, insufficient opportunities are provided for students to work independently so that they can apply new learning for themselves.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors saw 37 lessons of which six were jointly observed by senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders and middle managers, governors, a representative from the local authority, and three groups of students.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on students' progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents and carers, including 136 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire and 74 staff surveys.
- Inspectors looked at samples of students' work across age and ability groups.

Inspection team

Mary Myatt, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Heidi Boreham	Additional Inspector
John Collins	Additional Inspector
George Rayner	Additional Inspector
Carol Worthington	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Crispin's School is larger than the average secondary school.
- Most students are of White British heritage. The proportion of students who are from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are both below average.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average. This is additional government funding to support students known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and students with a parent or carer in the armed forces.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- A small number of students attend part- or full-time alternative provision at Bracknell and Wokingham College and the Foundry College, which supports students with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school has a support programme for students at Key Stage 3 who need additional provision.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school works closely with other local schools and provides training for newly qualified teachers in information and communication technology, which is one of the school's specialist areas.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of teaching which is outstanding and maximise students' achievement, particularly in science and in the sixth form by:
 - consistently using questioning to both elicit the level of understanding and further challenge students' thinking
 - developing expertise in marking and the feedback given to students so that these make clear what they have achieved and guide them specifically on how to improve their work
 - enhancing the opportunities for students to work independently so that they can use and apply their new learning for themselves
 - sharing the features of the very best teaching and learning across the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students enter the school in Year 7 with a range of skills but attainment is typically above average. Students make good progress and achieve well so that the proportion leaving Year 11 with at least five GCSEs at grade C or above, including English and mathematics, is above the national average. The dip seen in achievement at the end of Key Stage 4 in 2012 has been eradicated due to the school's highly effective actions, with current students back on track to achieve above average attainment.
- Vulnerable students make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress in Key Stage 3. The school makes careful arrangements for these students, including considerable flexibility so that they are included in all subjects studied by others. Students and parents spoke very highly of how this approach helps their children to become successful learners.
- The school provides well-planned additional support to improve the achievement of students at risk of underachieving. For example, after the GCSEs in 2013, 48 students who were at risk of not achieving five A*-C or equivalent were invited to return to school for a two-week intensive course in nutrition and health. All achieved the equivalent of grade B at GCSE.
- Some students are entered early for mathematics in Year 11. They achieve well and are provided with additional challenge after their examinations. The whole-school approach to improving students' literacy skills helps students to progress well in the subjects they study. Good examples were seen where students used technical language in a drama lesson, for example.
- The small number of students who attend part-time alternative provision make expected progress.
- Students' progress in the sixth form is good, and improving rapidly due to strong leadership. In a small minority of subjects, students' achievement is not as positive as it is in most others. For example, students do less well in science and computing studies than in business studies, art and design, economics and religious studies. The school has strengthened the monitoring of students' progress in the sixth form so that it can see more quickly if anyone is in danger of not making at least the expected progress, and take appropriate actions.
- Students who take part in the support programme, many of whom have severe behavioural and emotional needs, make outstanding progress from their very low starting points. This is a result of the school's excellent provision and partnerships with specialist institutions.
- Students who are disabled or who have special educational needs, as well as those supported through the pupil premium, do well, showing how the school successfully promotes equality of opportunity. The gap in attainment between students supported by premium funding and their peers is reducing over time. The grades of students who were eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority achieved a grade lower in English and a grade and a quarter lower in mathematics than for other students in 2012. This is similar to the national differences in achievement for these groups but is closing rapidly for other students in school.
- The progress of students in science is not as good as in other subjects. This is largely because some students were not following courses which met their needs. The school has taken prompt action to address this, and some students have taken a science BTEC course for the first time this year. The school recognises that more work remains to accelerate some students' progress in science by further raising the standard of teaching.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good in the main school and in the sixth form, and some is outstanding. Regular reviews on the impact of teaching leads to students achieving well in English and mathematics, plus a range of other subjects, over time.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and they are adept at using different approaches to

make learning interesting and memorable. For example, in a history lesson, students made outstanding progress because of the teacher's very high expectations and enthusiasm for the subject, engaging and involving students through high quality questioning and role-play.

- When learning is most successful, students work on projects which they say are relevant to them and where they are able to contribute original ideas. In these lessons, there are excellent relationships between the teacher and students. As a result, students show outstanding attitudes to learning as they engage with difficult concepts and explore them through high quality discussion. For example, in an art lesson, students were asked to evaluate what worked well and how the layout of an art gallery could be improved.
- Literacy is taught well across the curriculum. Subject-specific vocabulary is well promoted; students use this well, especially in science, design and technology, geography and history, to explain their ideas when speaking and in written work.
- The quality of teaching for students with special educational needs is outstanding. Students in this group come in to the school with very low attainment and some have severe emotional and behavioural difficulties. As a result of the school's exemplary provision, they make outstanding progress.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for students who need additional support, including those with special educational needs. As a result, they make good progress, with some making outstanding progress.
- Much of teachers' questioning extends students' thinking and enables them to consolidate their learning but sometimes opportunities are missed. In most lessons, teachers listen to, carefully observe and skilfully question students in order to reshape tasks and explanations to improve learning. Students are given chances to use the skills they have learnt and to work together. Good examples of this were seen in English, physical education and history lessons.
- While many teachers provide helpful feedback on what students need to do to improve, this is not applied consistently across the whole school. Where there is high quality feedback, it is accurate and helpful. Written comments provide clear guidance and indicate what students need to do to improve. However, too high a proportion of marking is inadequate and does not help students improve. The school recognises that high quality feedback needs to be consistent in every lesson. Some subjects such as the science and the BTEC courses have developed ways of feeding back to students through the school's IT system, but this is still to be applied across all curriculum areas.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students' behaviour around the school is very positive and attitudes to learning are good. The school has very good strategies for encouraging positive behaviour and respectful relationships. For example, it has incorporated suggestions from students in the recently updated behaviour code. The reducing rate of exclusions, which is half that seen nationally, reflects the success of the school's approach.
- Students are very aware of how to keep safe and of different forms of bullying. The school's ethos ensures that racist or homophobic language is unacceptable and action is swiftly taken on the rare occasions that it occurs.
- The school works well with external agencies to ensure that students with emotional and behavioural difficulties are given the support they need to work successfully with others. The attendance, safety and progress of students who attend college are monitored closely.
- Parents are invited to e-safety meetings; personal safety matters also usefully form part of the Key Stage 3 curriculum. From September 2013, the school will become a 'family first' pilot school.
- Conversations with students show that they value the school's care for their well-being. They say that when anyone needs additional support with their behaviour, they are sensitively well integrated in lessons. They value highly opportunities to contribute to the school council and know that their views are listened to and acted on.
- Sixth form students provide very good role models for younger students. They act as mentors,

and conversations with younger students show that they appreciate this support. A large number of students regularly volunteer their time to help with projects such as the 'International Support Group'.

- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school's support for behaviour and safety. Several contacted the inspection team to give examples of how the school had made exceptional provision for their children.
- Attendance is broadly average. The attendance of students who have free school meals was lower last year than in previous years. This was due to a number of students who had particular medical issues which affected their attendance.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher has been in post since January 2013. Her absolute focus on the school's priorities has already had a significant impact. She has reorganised the senior leadership team and has balanced experienced leaders with new staff. She has moved quickly to ensure that subjects such as science are providing courses which meet the needs of all students. She has provided absolute clarity on the school's focus for improvement and has created the conditions for all staff to feel included in driving standards forward.
- The focus on excellence in all of the school's activities is shown by all levels of leadership to strongly maintain the highest levels of achievement for all students.
- Leaders focus relentlessly on improving teaching and learning and provide focused professional development for all staff.
- The school has a robust approach to performance management. Teachers are accountable for the progress of students they teach. They only receive salary increments when they meet their performance management targets.
- The school's checks of its own performance are accurate and it sets itself ambitious targets to secure outstanding practice. It analysed the reasons for the dip in performance in 2012 and has taken swift action to make sure that results for 2013 are back on track. For example, the drama department, supported by the deputy headteacher, analysed the reasons for the lower numbers of students achieving A* in 2012. As a result, staff have helped students to improve the standards of written work. They have also improved the quality of written teacher feedback. As a result, students are on track to make above average progress at the highest levels.
- Since the last inspection, the school has improved outcomes for disabled students and those with special educational needs.
- Staff are committed to the school and its continued progress. The questionnaire responses were positive and many commented on the high quality support they receive from the headteacher.
- Careful tracking of students' progress means that resources are used where they are most needed to prevent underachievement.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and makes good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school has reviewed its provision for science and is now providing BTEC courses in science as well as sport, business studies, engineering, and travel and tourism.
- A wide range of additional opportunities enhance students' achievement in lessons. Students appreciate the chance to be involved in the school production, music, sport and the school council. They also enjoy mentoring other students. One student spoke highly of the opportunity to coach primary pupils in trampolining. The rehearsals for the school production were used as a stimulus for learning for groups of students in Years 7 and 8. The school's choir had recently returned from singing in Paris.
- The school makes good use of the pupil premium. An assistant headteacher is the pupil premium champion and, together with the head of special needs provision, is providing outstanding leadership. The school has used knowledge of its students and the findings of research to inform its priorities. It has provided extra support for students who need help to make progress. It has made effective feedback a priority for every member of staff and this is reflected in the performance management targets. The school's information shows that the gap is closing for the

students who have additional funding.

■ The leadership and management of the sixth form are good. Leaders are focused on improvement and share the vision of the new headteacher. The introduction of BTEC Level 3 courses will ensure that the curriculum caters for all levels of ability. The school provides a range of enrichment activities and provides careful guidance for option choices. During the inspection, an excellent induction day was in place to introduce Year 11 students to A level courses.

■ Safeguarding meets current requirements.

■ **The governance of the school:**

– The governance of the school is outstanding. Governors are very involved in the life of the school and use their wide-ranging skills to provide support and high-level challenge. They use information about the achievement of students and the quality of teaching to look critically at what is working to students' best advantage. They know precisely how well the school's performance compares with that of other schools nationally and have robust structures in place to ensure that the quality of teaching is linked to salary progression. They keep very close checks on how the additional funding for the pupil premium is spent and evaluate the impact of this on the progress made by students. The governing body carries out robust checks on the effectiveness on its own work and impact. It ensures that all its statutory obligations, including for safeguarding students, are met.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	110059
Local authority	Wokingham Borough Council
Inspection number	412103

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1102
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	180
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Geoff Wilde
Headteacher	Ms Ginny Rhodes
Date of previous school inspection	25–26 May 2010
Telephone number	01189 781144
Email address	contact@crispins.co.uk

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