

# Crosshill Special School

Haslingden Road, Blackburn, Lancashire, BB2 3HJ

**Inspection dates** 8–9 July 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- All groups of students achieve well because they are taught well and work hard. All students leave with qualifications and nearly all go on to further study in college or into training at the end of Year 11.
- Teaching is good. Teachers show a thorough understanding of the way their students learn and how to help them when they have difficulties in understanding things. Teachers do everything they can to make learning interesting and enjoyable.
- Students behave well. They pay attention to their teachers and try hard to do their best work. They are happy and friendly and can often be seen helping each other.
- Parents are very happy about the way the staff keep their children safe. A lot of attention is paid to making sure that students are never put at risk in any activity. Students are given good advice about how to keep themselves away from harm and avoid unwanted attention.
- Leadership, management and governance are good. The many changes over the past two years have been managed effectively. There is a successful drive to keep improving teaching and achievement for students. Parents are very happy about the way the school is led and managed and the way their children are taught. Staff morale is high.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not outstanding. The work set for students is not always hard enough to enable them to exceed the expectations laid down for them when they first join the school.
- Teachers do not always check up sufficiently on the impact on students' progress of activities led by support staff.
- The targets teachers are set to improve their performance do not focus enough on how their role can become more effective and have an impact on students' progress.

## Information about this inspection

- Ten lessons were observed.
- The views of 22 parents who responded to Ofsted’s on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into consideration when inspectors were considering judgements.
- Meetings were held with senior staff, a group of three governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Many informal conversations were held with students and staff.
- Samples of students’ work were checked and also the surroundings in which students learn and play.
- The way that staff and governors make sure that students are kept safe was checked.
- Documents relating to school improvement and the way the leaders and managers keep track of the effectiveness of the school’s performance were scrutinised.
- At the time of the inspection, Year 11 students had left, following completion of their exams. On the second day of the inspection, Key Stage 3 students were on a school trip and Year 10 students were all on work experience.

## Inspection team

Alastair Younger, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Christine Potter

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- All students have a statement of special educational needs. The student population is rapidly changing with a growing intake of students with severe learning difficulties matched by a reduction in those with moderate learning difficulties.
- Boys outnumber girls. Over a half of all students are known to be eligible for free school meals. There are four looked after children. About a half of all students are eligible for the pupil premium. This is well above average. The proportion of minority ethnic students is well above average.
- The school occupies a suite of rooms in the newly built BCHS secondary school. The school moved from its previous premises two years ago. This coincided with the appointment of a new headteacher, a significant reduction in student numbers and a corresponding reduction in staffing.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and progress by:
  - ensuring that the teacher responsible for the class is more involved in the planning of activities led by support staff so that they have a more positive impact on progress
  - checking that activities are always hard enough to ensure students make as much progress as possible to achieve the targets set for them.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that the targets teachers are set to raise their performance are linked more closely to improvements in students' progress.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- All students enter the school at a level of learning that is well below average. This is usually below that registered by the National Curriculum. As they go through the school, all groups of students make good progress and all of them leave with an appropriate range of awards and qualifications at the end of Year 11. These qualifications usually recognise attainment within the early stages of the National Curriculum.
- The school chooses courses leading to awards and qualifications very carefully to make sure that what they achieve will be of use and relevance in later life rather than just contributing to making the school look better. The importance of this is that it helps students to achieve success in the things that are most important to themselves and their parents.
- There is no difference in achievement in mathematics or English. In such a small school, small variations from year to year can nearly always be traced to the under, or over, performance of a single student. Reading is taught well and students enjoy their books. Students do well in mathematics because teaching is good and pupils enjoy their work.
- Staff strongly promote equality of opportunity and, as a result, no group of students performs significantly differently to any other. The progress of girls and boys and those from different ethnic groups is very similar to other students.
- Students supported through the pupil premium, either because they are eligible for free school meals or because they are looked after children perform every bit as well as all other students. The school keeps a very close check on their performance and uses the extra funding very effectively for a wide range of support for learning and financial help to encourage participation in out-of-school activities, including residential experiences. Some funding has been used very effectively for extra drama lessons which have contributed noticeably to students' speaking and listening skills.
- The most able students make good progress. They benefit from attending selected lessons in the co-located secondary school. There are currently two students attending mathematics lessons to help them study towards getting a higher level of accreditation than is currently being offered at Crosshill.
- All students are able to make similar progress because teachers vary work very well to match their needs. In all lessons, subtly different tasks are set for individuals or small groups of students with specific needs.
- Students achieve particularly well in information and communication technology. The school is particularly well resourced to support this, a legacy of the days when it had specialist status for technology.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers are skilled in balancing the need to keep reinforcing old learning and introducing new learning opportunities. This keeps activities fresh and explains why students enjoy learning and work hard to achieve success.
- Teachers also show a good awareness of how much guidance and support individual students need. They perceptively recognise when individuals need a bit more help to be successful in their tasks.
- Teachers promote communication skills very well. The impact of teaching can be seen in the way that students who have speech use it confidently and politely when speaking to each other and to adults. Teachers check that students look at people who are speaking to them and listen carefully to what they have to say.
- Staff are becoming increasingly skilled in supporting the increasing number of students with limited speech or ability to communicate who are being admitted. This is a targeted area for development identified and being acted upon by leaders and managers.

- Teaching effectively promotes students' literacy skills in all lessons, not just in English lessons. The nature of students' learning difficulties means that a lot of worksheets are used. These are selected with extreme care and used creatively to help students to improve their reading and writing skills. Teachers grasp every opportunity to extend reading as in reading instructions for themselves rather than having them read to them. It is only occasionally that worksheets are misused and the work is too easy, such as when perfectly capable older students waste time colouring in bar charts or pictures.
- Teachers plan carefully to promote learning for all individuals and to vary tasks that are meaningful to all students in groups that frequently have a wide range of age and ability. In a science lesson, for instance, all students were studying the features of faces. Some were writing the names of features, some were copying or 'over-writing' prepared labels and some were recognising words from their initial sounds, cutting them out and sticking them in the right place. They all learned about the features of faces and they were all able to record their learning in a way that matched their ability. This was an example of how well the school promotes equality.
- Teachers help students to learn by using a wide range of technical equipment if needed. Students are well equipped to use computers very capably but it is never lost to teachers that sometimes a sheet of paper with a word or a picture on it can be just as effective a learning aid as a computer.
- Sometimes activities led by support staff are not planned with sufficient care. At times, the pitch of work is inaccurate to the student's need and too much is expected of the students. In some spelling books, for instance, all students are being set the task of learning words they can neither read nor understand. When they get most of them wrong they are roundly praised, explaining that they got close and only a few letters were out of place in each word. The work of support staff is not monitored closely enough and teachers do not intervene promptly enough to avoid these difficulties and ensure learning is always effective.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The behaviour of students is good. It contributes well to the good progress they make. Lessons tend to be free of distractions caused by minor misbehaviour but there is occasional stubbornness and mischievousness.
- During the inspection, the students were a delight. They showed respect to staff and visitors at all times. They are clearly at ease in this school and feel safe and happy. It was wonderful to see that the school shares its timetable with its co-located school and that lunch and break times coincide to help all students to mix with other people of their age and ethnicity in a friendly sort of way.
- Parents and staff have very few concerns about the behaviour and safety of students. They agree that it is good and well managed. There is no bullying and students are considerate in their actions
- Occasionally, students overstep the mark in terms of their behaviour and are moved to other forms of provision more suited to their needs.
- An important aspect of the school is the 'warmth' and 'care' it provides to students and their families. Parents are almost unanimous in saying that behaviour in this school is good; when misbehaviour happens it is well managed and that their children do not in any way feel marginalised or intimidated.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Not all requirements were met at the start of the inspection but it took a matter of minutes to remedy these. The risk in all of the many excursions out of school is always carefully considered. Governors are often involved in the process. Students develop a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, especially when they use computers and other forms of technology.
- Students are not cosseted. They are made very aware of the fact that they may be taken advantage of because of their learning difficulties and they are given a lot of help to make sure that this does not happen to them. Students attend whenever they can.

**The leadership and management are good**

- Leaders, managers and governors have successfully steered this school through a period of great change. They have been successful in making arrangements that secure the futures of students attending their school. Parents express total confidence that this school is serving their children well. Staff are proud to work here.
- The leadership of the school concentrates very forcefully on what is best for every individual and staff go out of their way to achieve this aim. Virtually all parents would recommend this school to other parents in the same circumstances.
- Teachers are the middle managers in this school. They lead effectively the programmes for individuals and manage effectively the additional needs for students. These leaders do not always keep a close eye on the effectiveness of the work of support staff in the classrooms.
- Leaders and managers regularly visit classrooms to look at the quality of teaching and learning. The outcomes lead to implementing good initiatives to improve students' experience of school and the progress they make. A good example of this is the way that individual students have been followed around school for a day to help leaders and managers to understand what it must be like to be a pupil on a typical day in school.
- Teachers are given good advice about the strengths and weaknesses of their practice. This information is used to set staff targets for improvement. These are not always fully effective because they link too much to the role of the job rather than how actions can become more effective in raising students' progress.
- The rich and varied curriculum is matched well to students' main needs. It is exceptionally well enriched with many trips and visitors always closely linked to what students are doing in class. It strongly promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The local authority has supported the school well. It has perceptively identified where improvements have needed to be made and has supported a new headteacher well. Where the school needs more support from the local authority is to know what its plans for the future of the school are. Leaders, managers and governors need to know what is going to be expected of their school in the near future to support their plans for improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors keep a good eye on this school. They are keenly aware of how it operates from day to day and often spend time in school seeing what goes on and to what effect. Many governors have a long history of involvement with the school either as former parents or staff. Governors are keenly involved in checking how well the school is being run by the headteacher. They monitor his performance carefully. Governors are particularly careful to make sure that students are kept safe and well cared for. They have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and the progress students are making. They take a keen interest in checking up on the progress of different groups of students, especially those attracting the pupil premium. Governors have little say in linking salary progression to performance because for historical reasons, nearly all staff are already at the top of their relative pay scales.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	119858
<b>Local authority</b>	Blackburn with Darwen
<b>Inspection number</b>	439940

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	51
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Roger Harling
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ian Maddison
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 July 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01254 667713
<b>Fax number</b>	Not applicable
<b>Email address</b>	crosshill@blackburn.gov.uk



Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)  
[Store St](#)  
[Manchester](#)  
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2014

