



Office for Standards
in Education

Crookhey Hall School

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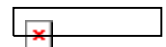
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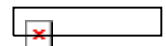
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Introduction and summary

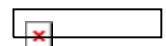


Purpose and scope of the inspection



This inspection was carried out by the Office for Standards in Education under Section 163 of the Education Act 2002 in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school



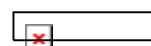
Crookhey Hall School is a day, special school for up to 64 boys between the ages of 11 and 16 years, who have emotional, behavioural and social difficulties. The school is registered and approved by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). Local education authorities (LEAs) fund all of the pupils, who generally come from areas within daily travelling distance. However, a few pupils travel from areas further away, such as Wigan. The school provides transport to and from school for all pupils and key workers play a major role as drivers.

All the pupils have previously attended mainstream or special schools and have been permanently excluded or have refused to attend. In addition, some pupils have specific learning difficulties, and/or mental health problems. Almost three quarters of the pupils have been in the school for less

than two years, and a quarter has been there for less than one year. They have experienced disrupted education and many have not had any education for a long time. Because of this, their attainment levels are below those expected for pupils of a similar age. There are a group of pupils in Years 7 and 8 who have transferred from similar primary educational provision owned by the same company.

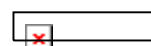
There is a strong emphasis on improving pupils' self-esteem and behaviour, as well as developing their social skills and providing them with recognised accreditation. The school's curriculum is based on the National Curriculum, with a high emphasis on competitive sport and vocational experiences. The school aims to make them ready and willing to engage in further education, training or work, and to prepare to take their full place in society.

Summary of main findings



Crookhey Hall School is a good and improving school. It is successful in meeting the academic, personal and social needs of its pupils. The school achieves its aims by raising the pupils' self-esteem, improving their behaviour, helping them to re-engage in learning, and preparing them for future opportunities. Pupils make good progress, and many achieve General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) accreditation or Entry Level Certification (ELC) in up to seven subjects. As a result, pupils are much better prepared for the future. Overall, teaching is good, especially where subject specialists teach their own subject. However, the teaching of English and the promotion of literacy in other subjects is not as strong, as there is no co-ordinated approach to this area of teaching. The teamwork between teachers and key workers is very good, and helps pupils to improve their attitudes to learning. The school's senior managers have a good insight into the school's strengths and weaknesses.

What the school does well



- it encourages pupils to improve their attendance and to gain a range of external accreditation;
- it fosters positive attitudes to learning and improvement in behaviour, which is in sharp contrast to pupils' previous experience in school;
- it provides a well-developed careers programme, designed to provide pupils with information and opportunities for life after school;
- it provides very thorough annual review reports which are models of best practice;
- it provides opportunities for pupils to excel in competitive team sport; pupils are proud of the school's achievements;
- it has established very good teamwork between all the adults involved in teaching and supporting pupils;
- it has developed good quality policies and practices in relation to the welfare, health and safety of pupils, and
- it provides a bright, clean and attractive learning environment which pupils treat with respect.

What the school must do in order to comply with the regulations

- ensure that all washrooms provide hot water for pupils;
- include in its prospectus additional information for parents and carers, as detailed in section 6 of this report; and
- prepare and submit to the local authorities who fund pupils, and, on request, to the Secretary of State, an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school for each pupil.

What the school must do in order to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA):

- give due regard to its duties under the DDA by undertaking a disability access audit.

Next steps

Although not required by the regulations to do so, the school may also like to consider the following areas, so as, to continue improving and developing the educational provision:

- establish a programme of in-service training for all staff so that the quality of teaching of English is improved;
- develop a co-ordinated approach to the use of literacy across the curriculum;
- implement a more consistent approach to marking; and
- enhance pupils' personal development through their membership of committees that influence the running of the school.

Compliance with the regulations for registration

1. The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of the curriculum

The school's curriculum policy is clear. It focuses on the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, along with personal and social skills and the acquisition of a range of externally accredited certification. It achieves this by providing a mainly broad and balanced curriculum, which

takes account of the National Curriculum. The school provides a good range of subjects for which it has the expertise amongst its staff, and the space and resources teaching. Pupils achieve GCSE passes or ELC passes, in English, English literature, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT), geography, and art and design. Also included in the curriculum are physical education (PE), personal social and health education, (PSHE), including citizenship, and design and technology (D&T).

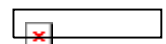
The school is unable to timetable music, because it does not have a music specialist on the staff. Music is, however, included as an optional enrichment activity on one afternoon a week. Although all pupils have access to D&T, the coverage of the subject is narrow. It covers food technology, but otherwise the emphasis is on working with wood, with a minimal amount of design. There are few opportunities to work with other materials, such as metal or plastic. However, pupils do have some opportunities for this when they attend college courses where they complete assignments in welding, plumbing and bricklaying.

The school has recently improved its policies and planning for all subjects, in addition to monitoring the balance of subjects on the timetable. An increased emphasis on English and mathematics has been necessary because of the very low levels of attainment and skills in these areas. Along with additional support from the learning support teacher, this is helping pupils to improve their reading and spelling ability, although pupils do not achieve as well in English at GCSE as they do in other subjects, such as mathematics. The school has started to develop the teaching of literacy across the curriculum with the introduction learning support plans. These provide each teacher with a very good evaluation of the literacy needs of individual pupils, but are not always used when planning individual lessons. The use of ICT to support learning in other subjects is effective, and helps to increase pupils' progress in reading. However, more use could be made of it in teaching and learning in English to increase pupils' confidence, motivation and achievement in this subject.

Revised schemes of work for PSHE now incorporate citizenship. These cover all major aspects of health, sex and relationships, drugs and alcohol abuse, and aspects of individual rights and responsibilities. The programmes of study have been constructed so that they are appropriate for the age, abilities, and needs of pupils. This prepares them well for life after school. Although there is no extended day in which extra-curricular activities take place, areas of study are supported by some visits to places of interest, such as theatres. The school also provides a wide range of additional activities, such as fishing, sport, music and art, on one afternoon a week.

One of the main aims of the school is to prepare and equip pupils with the skills, interest and confidence for the next stage of their education or training. This it does very well. Very good links have evolved with the local Connexions Service, with weekly visits and individual support and guidance from the adviser. Pupils are helped to make the best choices for their future learning. Additional links with the Connexions Service in the pupils' home area enable them to continue to feel supported when they leave the school. The school has established a good range of opportunities for all pupils to take part in work experience and to participate in a wide range of courses at local colleges. The courses are chosen to meet pupils' aptitudes and interests and are mainly of a practical nature.

The quality of the teaching and assessment



The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teaching in mathematics, art and design, ICT, D&T, and science is particularly good. This is because teachers are well qualified and know their subjects well. In all lessons, teachers have high expectations of behaviour and for the completion and presentation of work. In the better lessons, pupils are particularly interested and motivated, and they achieve well. This is because the teachers ensure that the pace of the lesson is brisk, that tasks are interesting and challenging, and that they pay particular attention to the literacy levels of pupils. In the best lessons, the objectives are shared with pupils at the beginning, so they know

what is expected of them, and at the end of the lesson their learning is reviewed. For example, in a mathematics lesson, the teacher used three quick short questions to check pupils' understanding of probability.

ICT is used very well in science to support teaching and learning. For example, pupils have 'on-screen', easy-to-read worksheets with links to safe Internet sites where they are expected to carry out their research. This reinforces the skills pupils have learnt in ICT lessons, as well as providing motivating opportunities for pupils to further their literacy skills. The use of the new interactive whiteboard is proving very effective in mathematics. Pupils found this motivating, especially when a computer solitaire game was used to teach probability.

Teaching is weaker in English, and in some lessons, it is unsatisfactory. This is because it is taught by teachers who have varying levels of expertise in the subject and different expectations of pupils' achievement. Some English lessons are not challenging enough for pupils' abilities. For example, in an interviewing activity, not all pupils were fully involved but were observers when they could have been recording the interviewee's replies. The next stage of the activity was not seen through to the end, but was kept for another lesson, with pupils moving on to a reading activity. The learning outcomes for the lesson were not achieved. The co-ordination and monitoring of the teaching of English and literacy is unsatisfactory and needs improving.

The teamwork between all the adults who work in classrooms is very good. As a result, pupils settle into school well and re-engage in learning. Key workers develop good relationships with pupils and know them well so that they can anticipate and recognise the changing moods of pupils. This has the affect of maintaining a calm environment where learning is not disrupted. There is a consistent approach to managing and promoting socially acceptable behaviour and language.

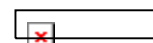
The school has an effective learning support system in place underpinned by good assessment procedures. When pupils start at the school, extensive individual assessment takes place, and along with detailed analysis of pupils' difficulties, contributes to concise and helpful pupil profiles. This information is passed on to teachers to help them plan to meet the literacy needs of pupils in lessons, but is not always considered. This leads to a lack of challenge seen in a few lessons. Teachers have begun to set targets for pupils based on the levels they need to achieve in the external courses. These are displayed in classrooms so that pupils are aware of what they need to achieve.

Individual education plans (IEPs) are of a good quality, with academic and behavioural targets set termly. These are reviewed every two weeks with key workers playing a vital role in the overall assessment and review process. This adds to the strength of the teamwork seen in the school. Records are well organised, and the reports that the school produces for the annual review are of high quality. They specifically report on progress in each subject, the levels at which pupils are working, and set subject targets for the next academic year.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils



The provision for pupils' social and moral development is good, and is stronger than that for their spiritual and cultural development. The main priority of the school is the raising of pupils' self-esteem and confidence. It achieves this very effectively due to the very good relationships between staff and pupils and the individual counselling and guidance pupils receive from their key workers.

The major contribution to pupils' spiritual awareness is from the general ethos of the school, the insistence on calm movement around the building and the low levels of noise. Spiritual development occurs incidentally and mainly in lessons, when pupils are engaged and focussed on their work. However, the use of a formal time for quiet reflection at the beginning or end of the day or in assemblies could be developed further.

The provision for pupils' moral development is good. It is strongly supported by the role models provided by all the adults in the school. Because of the consistent and clearly conveyed expectations for behaviour and the high levels of supervision in the classroom and around school, pupils' behaviour is very good. Pupils have a high regard for staff. They listen to what adults say and take notice. The PSHE programme includes opportunities for discussion of social and moral issues, and pupils are challenged to be aware of their own behaviour. This is done through the regular opportunities they have for counselling with their key workers. Pupils are encouraged to consider others through links with charities, such as Guide Dogs for the Blind. The school has links with the Samaritans organisation and pupils have visited the local branch and discussed its work.

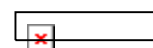
The opportunities for pupils' social development are good. Pupils are provided with discrete areas for relaxation at break and lunchtimes where they interact, learn to share and co-operate with each other. Integration with the wider community takes place mainly through sporting activities, including football and running. The school's success in the local football leagues and in national events plays a significant part in raising the self-esteem of the whole school. Inclusion in the school team is coveted. However, there could be greater encouragement of pupils to participate and take responsibility, for example for social and recreational activities through the development of a school council, and more effective use of tutor times.

The development of pupils' cultural awareness occurs mainly informally, in lessons, especially those in art and PSHE. The school encourages discussion of race and religion, and challenges intolerant views. Cultural experiences are also provided through visits to cinemas, theatres and museums.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils



There is an extensive range of policies that protect and support pupils' welfare, for example, with regard to bullying, child protection and health and safety. There is a named child protection officer and clear procedures are in place to protect pupils and staff. A record book of serious incidents and of the use of physical management is kept in line with regulations.

The behaviour policy is wholly in keeping with the ethos of the school and provides pupils and staff with clear guidelines on the management of behaviour. There is an absence of bullying and oppressive behaviour, and the pupils all report that they feel safe. They are confident that, should any incident occur, staff will deal with it speedily and effectively. Pupils' behaviour towards each other, staff and visitors is generally polite and cooperative. This contrasts with reports in records from their previous schools.

The school takes good care of the pupils' health and safety and First Aid. There is a fully-trained, nominated First Aid officer who always accompanies the pupils on visits. This is backed-up by other trained staff who are on the premises at all times of the school day. Policies and procedures for health and safety on out-of-school visits are thorough and risk assessments are completed effectively. A fire risk assessment was completed and approved by the Fire Service in 2002. The

admission and attendance registers are kept in an appropriate manner.

The school has not yet undertaken an audit of access in compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act (2002).

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

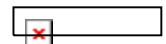
Does the school meet the requirements of the Disability Act 2002?

No.

In order to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), should

- conduct an audit of the accessibility of the curriculum and the buildings, followed by a three-year action plan.

4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff



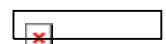
The school is one of two schools jointly owned by two proprietors. It is led and managed by an experienced head and deputy headteacher, who are supported by a small group of senior teachers. They have a significant role in the smooth running of the school. All but one of the teachers are qualified, and they have a vast amount of experience in teaching pupils with similar difficulties, in addition to teaching their specialist subjects. The school is particularly successful in supporting key workers through their training to become qualified teachers. This is beneficial for the school as these newly qualified teachers have experience in dealing with difficult pupils.

There are effective procedures in place for checking the qualifications and suitability of all potential new staff prior to confirmation of appointment. They are consistent with company policy for ensuring that all staff are checked with the Criminal Records Bureau for their suitability to work with young people.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation



The school is located in a large Victorian house. It has been adapted to provide specialist teaching rooms for subject areas; these include an ICT room, art room, science room and a D&T workshop. The building is in good repair and very well decorated. The central hall is used for whole school meetings but is not suitable for the teaching of PE. The school makes good use of local leisure facilities, including those at Lancaster University for teaching this area of the curriculum. The area surrounding the school provides ample space for outdoor games enabling the school to host sporting activities involving other similar schools in the area. Lunch takes place in three small dining

areas where pupils eat with their peers and staff.

All teaching areas are large and appropriately organised and are provided with suitable resources for the age and number of the pupils. The library area lacks a sufficiently wide range of reference material. The displays in the classrooms reflect the areas of the curriculum being studied, including photographs of pupils' activities in and out of school and pieces of their work.

The school has good changing and showering facilities but one of the washroom areas does not have a hot water supply.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

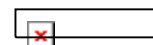
The school complies with all but one of the requirements.

What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- ensure that all washrooms take account of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 and have hot water available for pupils (paragraph 5(k)).

6. The quality of information for parents and other partners



Very detailed information is available for parents, carers and other professionals involved with the pupils. Although the school has all the necessary information, it is not available in a brochure or prospectus format. An informative personal handbook, which provides details of the expectations and routines of the school, including important policies and contact phone numbers, is given to each pupil when they are offered a place at the school. This provides parents and carers with additional information.

The academic and behavioural targets, which are regularly set and reviewed by the school, are shared with parents and those who work with and care for the pupils. Progress reports are reviewed at the annual review, to which all interested parties and professionals are invited and to which they contribute. Details of annual income and expenditure for each pupil registered at the school are not submitted to the funding authorities.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

No.

What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

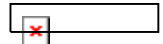
- the name of the headteacher (paragraph 6(2)(a));
- the full name, usual residential address and telephone number of the school proprietor (paragraph 6(2)(b));
- a statement of the school's ethos (including any religious ethos) and aims (paragraph 6(2)(d));
- particulars of the school's policy on and arrangements for, admissions, discipline and exclusion (paragraph 6(2)(e)); and
- particulars of the educational and welfare provision for pupils for whom English is

an additional language (paragraph 6(2)(f)).

In addition, where a pupil, who is registered at the school, is wholly or partly funded by the local authority, the school should:

- provide an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect of that pupil to the local authority and, on request, to the Secretary of State (paragraph 6(7)).

7. The effectiveness of the school's procedures for handling complaints

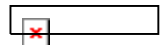


The school has very recently reviewed its complaints policy and it is now clear and very detailed. The school plans to circulate the re-drafted policy to all parents.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

School details



Name of school:	Crookhey Hall School		
DfES ref number:	888/6022		
Type of school:	Secondary day special school		
Status:	Independent		
Age range of pupils:	11 - 16 years		
Gender of pupils:	Boys		
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys 64,	Girls ,	Total 64
Number on roll (part-time pupils):	Boys ,	Girls ,	Total 0
Number of boarders:	Boys ,	Girls ,	Total 0
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need:	Boys 64,	Girls ,	Total 64
Annual fees (day pupils):	£23,526 to £24,544		
Annual fees (boarders):	N/A		
Address of school:	Garstang Road Cockerham Lancaster LA2 0HA		
E-mail address:	edmo@globalnet.co.uk		
Telephone number:	01524 792618		
Fax number:	01524 792684		
Headteacher:	Mr J Rider		
Proprietor:	Mr P Edmundson; Mr G Holliday		
Chair of the governing body:	N/A		
Lead Inspector:	Mrs Frances Gander		
Dates of inspection:	28 June - 1 July 2004		

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