

INSPECTION REPORT

CROSSHILL SPECIAL SCHOOL

Blackburn

LEA area: Blackburn & Darwen

Unique reference number: 119858

Headteacher: Mr M Hatch

Lead inspector: Greg Sorrell

Dates of inspection: 8th – 10th December, 2003

Inspection number: 258888

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Special
School category: Community special
Age range of pupils: 11 to 16 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 94

School address: Shadsworth Road
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Appropriate authority: Governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mr Ron Woods

Date of previous inspection: 10/11/97

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school caters for pupils between the ages of 11 and 16 years. Pupils come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. The school has 94 pupils on roll and has the capacity for 120. It is smaller than most similar special schools. All pupils have special educational needs, the most common being moderate learning difficulties. There is a small number of other pupils with sensory impairment, physical disability, autistic spectrum disorder or emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. Two thirds of pupils are of white European origin while the remaining third are of Asian origin, several of whom receive additional language support. There are twice as many boys as girls on roll. The school is part of several initiatives, including, Inclusion, The Children's Fund and Best Practice Scholarships. It was the first special school in the country to receive specialist technology college status. It is an Investor in People and has also gained the Schools Achievement Award and an Award for ICT in the Community.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an effective school. Good teaching and effective learning opportunities have resulted in good achievement for all pupils. Links with parents, carers and the community contribute significantly to pupils’ learning. Leadership and management are good and ensure the commitment to succeed is shared by all. The school provides good value for money.

The school’s main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Excellent links with other schools and the college ensure a broader range of learning and development opportunities for both Crosshill and mainstream pupils. The school’s commitment to educational inclusion is very good and has a positive effect upon the pupils’ achievement.
- The headteacher has a very clear vision for the technology college and its role within the community. The strategic planning by the headteacher, other managers and governors to secure approval for these and further developments is excellent.
- Leadership and management overall is good and would be improved further with greater consultation and clarification about new roles and responsibilities within this rapidly developing school. For example, the management and co-ordination of English as an additional language and special educational needs could be improved.
- The overall quality of teaching and learning is good which leads to the pupils’ good achievement and prepares them well for life after school. Teachers, support staff and other specialists work closely together for the benefit of the pupils.
- The pupils’ attitudes, behaviour and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good and are a result of the respect shown by all staff.
- Parents and the wider community hold very positive views of the school and are much more supportive than they were at the last inspection.
- Additional training in ICT needs to be provided to ensure that it is used more widely than at present across the curriculum and by all staff.

The effectiveness of the school has improved well since the last inspection despite the many significant changes the school has experienced. All weaknesses identified have been addressed since then but because the school has changed so much, some management issues need to be reviewed once more in order to increase effectiveness. The curriculum is much improved and the school is becoming more effective in assessing pupils’ performance within it. Strengths identified at the last inspection have been retained.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils’ achievement at the end of:	in relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	Personal and social education
Year 9	Good	Good
Year 11	Good	Good

Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor.

Achievement is good. The pupils’ achievement is good for all ages and capabilities in English, mathematics, science, music, French and physical education. Pupils from ethnic minorities achieve as least as well as other pupils due to the good additional support for English as an additional language. By the time they leave school, many pupils have achieved success in entry level GCSE courses in English, mathematics and science. Although pupils’ achievement in using ICT is good in specific lessons often taught by specialists, they achieve less well using ICT in some other lessons due to

limited opportunities to improve their skills in other subjects. The pupils' personal and social development is very good due to the wide range of experiences provided, notably by opportunities for inclusion in mainstream schools, a local college of further education and work experience. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also very good as a result of being in a school that is faithful to its ethos of inclusion and respect for all.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good. The teachers, support staff and local education authority specialists work very well as a team to provide good teaching that enables the pupils to achieve well. Very good teaching is often seen where teachers have specialist expertise which encourages them to have appropriate expectations. A number of teachers do not yet have sufficient confidence to use ICT effectively in other subjects. The curriculum is good and is very well enriched by off-site experiences in mainstream schools, a local college and work experience for older pupils. The improved provision for the use of ICT has a very positive effect in areas such as the use of multi-media although this improvement has yet to be fully realised in all subjects.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher brings outstanding commitment to achieving his vision for this rapidly developing school. There have been many changes and challenges faced by the school. Whilst being successful overall, some new approaches to day-to-day management are needed to bring senior staff together to secure further improvements. Strategic planning and management of financial requirements have been very well addressed by senior managers and governors. The governors fulfil their statutory duties well. Subject managers have maintained their commitment to raising the achievement of the pupils. The overall management of special educational needs and English as an additional language requires a review; however, the management of inclusion opportunities for pupils is a strength.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and carers think very highly of the school. They like the quality of teaching. Parents and pupils also enjoy the opportunities for attending local mainstream schools for some lessons.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

Ensure that all managers are secure about roles, responsibilities and expectations in this rapidly developing school.

Ensure that all staff receive appropriate training to enable them to use ICT effectively across the curriculum for the benefit of all pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Taking account of pupils' previous learning and their special educational needs, the achievement for all ages and capabilities, including ethnic minority pupils, is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good for all ages and capabilities in English, mathematics, science, music, French and physical education.
- Through the extensive inclusion opportunities in Years 10 and 11, many pupils achieve external accreditation that serves them well for life after school.
- Although pupils' achievement in using ICT is good in specific lessons often taught by specialists, they achieve less well using ICT in some other lessons due to limited opportunities to improve their skills in other subjects.

Commentary

1. The pupils' achieved well overall at the time of the last inspection and this has been maintained. The good achievement comes about in some subjects because they are taught by specialists who have a very good subject knowledge as well as knowing the individual needs of the pupils. There are no significant differences between the standards achieved by boys and girls. Analysis of work by ethnic minority pupils suggests that they achieve at least as well as all other pupils. This is due to the very good support provided by teachers, LEA staff and support assistants, some of whom are bi-lingual. In addition, most teachers are aware of additional needs and ensure all pupils achieve at least equally well. The accommodation has improved so that all pupils with physical disabilities have equal access to all areas of the school thus enabling all to receive the same learning opportunities as their peers.

2. At the end of Key Stage 4, the pupils' good academic achievement is marked by success in examinations. In English, mathematics and science they gain entry level passes in GCSE examinations. The school, pupils and parents are justifiably proud of their academic success. Courses are well planned and in mathematics, for example, pupils gain much from their inclusion in local mainstream schools where their social and academic development is very well supported. These experiences are closely monitored by the school's inclusion manager who has high expectations of what is offered to the pupils.

3. Achievement in English is good overall. The pupils achieve well in speaking and listening because they are given many opportunities to discuss work and offer their views, for example, when describing characters from novels. True to the school's ethos of respect for the views of others, they listen with respect to peers and teachers. Reading is also an aspect where the pupils achieve well. This is because they are usually provided with a rich supply of books, although the library area is rather dull and uninviting. When writing, pupils' achievement in Key Stage 3 is good as a result of regular opportunities to write in a variety of forms, in Key Stage 4, fewer opportunities are provided which results in them achieving less well. In mathematics pupils achieve well in all areas of the subject. The use of spreadsheets in ICT lessons and data gathering in physical education also assists their achievement in mathematics. The pupils' achievement in science, music, French, physical education and citizenship is also good. This is because these subjects are essentially practical. Pupils are fully engaged in activity, experimentation or vigorous discussion and learn well. The pupils' achievement is also good in specific ICT lessons. In these lessons, pupils are frequently taught by specialists whose subject knowledge and confidence using the equipment is very good. The pupils' overall achievement is adversely affected by limited opportunities in other subjects. Whilst there are examples where some

pupils' achieve well in other subjects, opportunities are missed to fully extend pupils, for example, in ICT where some teachers lack sufficient confidence to embrace fully the potential of computers.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

4. Attendance levels overall are satisfactory and pupils arrive at school in good time and in positive spirits. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and their personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are all very good and impact positively on their achievement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The monitoring and follow up of absence is thorough and flexible strategies have been used successfully with some pupils to encourage regular attendance.
- The vast majority of pupils enjoy attending Crosshill, engage well in their learning and cooperate enthusiastically in the daily routines.
- All pupils respect the behaviour code and isolated instances of unsatisfactory or oppressive behaviour are not allowed to disrupt others' learning. The school is an orderly and positive learning environment in which pupils feel safe and enjoy very good relationships with each other and with all staff.
- Pupils are proud to take responsibility for tasks around the school.
- Pupils mature rapidly and show significant gains in their personal and social skills as they progress through the school.
- Pupils show very good levels of awareness of others' needs and feelings and very good levels of multicultural development.

5. Attendance is satisfactory overall but absence levels increase as pupils get older. The school is thorough in the monitoring and follow up of absence and uses a range of effective incentives to encourage regular attendance. The small number of pupils who have major difficulties with attendance are well known and sensitively supported by the school and educational support services. Punctuality to school is good and pupils arrive happy to be there and keen to get involved with the day's routines.

6. Pupils like attending Crosshill School. They are enthusiastic young people enjoying their studies and making the most of what the school offers. Pupils highlighted a wide range of subjects as being their favourites, indicated involvement in a number of clubs, particularly sports related, and spoke excitedly about outings and residential visits that they had enjoyed. Older pupils value the opportunities to study some courses at mainstream schools and college and speak maturely about their careers and further education plans. Pupils feel able to make their views and opinions known and agree that they feel comfortable at the school, although there is some regret that they have failed to get changes to the present lunch arrangements.

7. The standards of behaviour in the school are very good. Pupils follow the behaviour code, respond enthusiastically to rewards and incentives and show pride in the school, particularly the new facilities. At breaks the school is an orderly environment in which pupils mix well with each other and adults in a friendly and polite manner, showing good regard for the rules governing play and movement. In lessons pupils often become engrossed in their work and activities and older pupils show signs of starting to take responsibility for their own learning and development. Occasional examples of unsatisfactory behaviour in lessons are very rare and do not disrupt the learning of others because they are quickly and effectively dealt with. A Year 10 girl explained that she had been subject to some low level bullying but that the school had been very helpful and ensured it was rapidly stopped. Overall the school is a very safe and orderly environment free from harassment and oppressive behaviour which positively encourages pupil achievement and development.

8. Pupils' personal and social skills improve rapidly during their time at Crosshill and the improvement in their levels of confidence and self awareness is very good. This is due to the way in which staff relate to the pupils and the range of inclusive opportunities they receive. They happily take responsibility for tasks around the school. Older pupils are proud to act as prefects and take seriously the opportunities available to support younger pupils with reading in the library.

9. The consistently high level of expectation of staff coupled with the wide interaction with other schools, college and the community increases pupils' social awareness and ensures very good levels of social development. Pupils adjust very well to a range of social contexts, show respect for other people, listen to their views and have a well developed understanding of the world around them. Opportunities to reflect about situations effectively help pupils to develop their own set of values which ensure a balanced perspective on life. For example, pupils were given time to discuss the feelings of victims of bullying and to develop their own views and values on the subject.

10. Pupils at the school show very good levels of awareness of each other. They naturally help and support each other regardless of physical disability or impairment. There is a high level of racial harmony and cultural diversity in the school, pupils enjoy and are eager to learn about each others beliefs and traditions. Two very good examples exist in recent videos produced in media studies courses. In the first example they studied the food, clothes and religious aspects of Eid and Christmas and in another they adapted West Side Story, with the rival gangs acted out by pupils and reflecting the ethnic mix in the city, eventually coming together as a mutually supportive group.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	8.3	School data	3.0
National data	8.2	National data	2.1

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

*figures for pupils from similar schools.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Any other ethnic group

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
70	10	0
22	0	0
2	0	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

11. The quality of education provided is good. Teaching and learning are good. Good and very good teaching and learning were seen in all age groups. The links with other schools, a local college of further education and the community are also very good and enrich the curriculum greatly.

Teaching and learning

12. Teaching and learning are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers, support staff and other local authority specialists work closely together and this contributes well to pupils' learning.
- Most staff in most subjects have a very good subject knowledge and know the pupils well which assists them to meet their needs in lessons.
- Close attention is given to the promotion of equality of opportunity for the pupils.
- Teachers do not always provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to improve their writing and computer skills in other subjects.

Commentary

13. As at the time of the last inspection, the quality of teaching is good. The proportions of good and very good teaching have remained largely similar, although during this inspection no unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Three quarters of all lessons seen were good or better, with one third being very good. One lesson was excellent. Where teaching is very good, this is often because lessons are taught by subject specialists who work very hard to engage pupils in learning. In most lessons the pupils learn well and respond enthusiastically to teachers' questions and many are able to reflect upon their achievements. This is best illustrated in lessons where plenary sessions take place and enable the pupils to consolidate what they learned in readiness for future learning.

14. The school has rightly identified the need to improve pupils' writing as another way of raising their achievement. Some teachers encourage this well, although some teachers make too few demands upon pupils, for example, suggesting that no more than a sentence is required. There is additional evidence that some pupils re-draft their work using word-processors, although this practice could be more widespread, especially for higher attaining pupils. Several teachers need more training to make best use of the significant amount of ICT equipment available. As a result, some teachers lack confidence to more fully integrate ICT into their lessons. Occasionally, work provided is not sufficiently challenging which leads some pupils not to achieve their potential in some lessons.

15. The staff work effectively as a team and take time to plan collaboratively with learning support staff. In order to meet individual needs such as specific learning difficulties or English as an additional language, staff are used successfully for small group and individual work so pupils get more attention, thus increasing their rate of learning. A number of staff speak the home language of ethnic minority pupils which assists them greatly in meeting the needs of this particular group of pupils.

16. The quality of learning support staff is a strength of the school. In some cases, for example, running "family learning" sessions and physical education lessons, their expertise is evident and makes a valuable contribution to the schools' overall provision. Several are pursuing additional qualifications as they seek to enhance their professional development. The overall school programme for updating teachers' skills takes good account of pupils' changing needs.

17. Many pupils take part in lessons in their local schools. Excellent information about their special learning needs is provided by the Inclusion Manager and there is close liaison with subject teachers. She also monitors pupils' work and progress closely in the receiving schools, and evaluates the teaching they receive when there.

18. Most staff have an extensive knowledge of their pupils' needs. In the best learning environments, staff have an acute awareness of pupils' needs, for example, hearing impairment and ensure that they can communicate effectively. Staff ensure each pupil is correctly positioned and comfortable to gain maximum benefit from learning. Staff endeavour to include all pupils in all activities. Teachers' planning for lessons is inconsistent and does not always include clear learning objectives for

groups and individuals, or activities designed to support pupils' individual education plan targets. As there has been nobody charged with overseeing all the extra provision required for some pupils, teachers need to rely on their own knowledge about how best to meet complex additional learning difficulties. They liaise well with the visiting specialist support teachers, but on occasion fail to consider carefully enough the extra barriers these individuals pupils have to overcome. Training for school staff in managing specific impairments is provided, but needs updating.

19. There are some good examples of teacher assessment and the school is trialling a new system that will enable them to track pupils' progress more effectively. This is still in the early stages of development although there are encouraging signs that valuable data can be interpreted to ensure an even closer match between work provided and the abilities of all pupils.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 37 lessons

<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Satisfactory</i>	<i>Unsatisfactory</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Very Poor</i>
1(3%)	12(32%)	15 (41%)	9 (24%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

Curriculum

20. The curriculum is good. It is well supported by a very good range of additional activities, community links, good accommodation and resources.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision for pupils' personal development is very good and is very well supported by the very good work related curriculum and careers education and guidance.
- The use of cross-curricular ICT could be more widespread
- Extra-curricular activities, outdoor education and sport links add much quality to the curriculum
- Inclusion opportunities and their management for Key Stage 4 pupils are excellent.

Commentary

21. The well managed curriculum is improved since the last inspection and is now innovative and outward looking. It draws extensively from outside the school, such as the very useful expertise in mainstream schools for textile elements of design and technology. The timetable is effective because it enables pupils to have access all subjects and is adapted to meet the special needs of pupils in Years 10 and 11. In this way it meets the demands of life skills programmes and work experience which are strengths of the school.

22. The curriculum is managed well, subject managers present reports for the governors to review, subject planners are good, and the teachers provide good back-up materials for all subjects. The individual planning is good and its impact on teaching and learning is now monitored due to recently introduced opportunities for co-ordinators to monitor lessons. The use of the information and communication technology across all subjects is not yet fully established and the implementation of the national strategy for Key Stage 3 pupils is in the early stages. Nevertheless, the school does embrace these challenges well and is currently a pilot school for similar work in ICT.

23. The school has increasingly effective links with schools and colleges, being involved in producing training for staff in link schools. The carousel system for design technology means that pupils have access to first class equipment when they cook, when they prepare meals and when they make

toys. Links with schools and colleges are maintained by the school based co-ordinators. Staff from other schools value these contacts very highly indeed.

24. The school enjoys very good links with the community which significantly enrich the learning opportunities for the pupils. There is a constant stream of visitors some of whom make direct contributions to the curriculum, for example, theatre and music groups. Local amenities and institutions are very well used to bring life to learning and to enable pupils to experience aspects of day to day community life. A very good example is the work that a media studies group have done for social services by filming and assessing their accompanied shopping scheme. Trips and residential visits are very well used to broaden pupils' experiences and to provide a better understanding of the wider world.

25. The school has worked tirelessly to link subjects in lessons and is successful in improving the quality of pupils' personal development through media studies for example. In a current project the topics led to consideration of right and wrong, which developed into making a film. Personal development is enriched through the use of the flat. Self esteem is further increased when pupils complete their work on examination courses. Further work on festivals is combined to raise pupils' awareness of other cultures through preparation for Divali. Pupils shop using mathematics, to work out how much parties cost to organise and run. Visits reinforce the learning in all subjects. Other very exciting work is seen in after school clubs and in family learning sessions.

Care, guidance and support

26. The care, guidance and support given to pupils are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pastoral care is very good, based on very good relationships with all members of staff.
- Induction arrangements for pupils new to the school are very good.
- Pupils appreciate how well the staff know them and are very happy to turn to adults for advice, comfort and support. They also receive very good advice on careers and college opportunities and benefit from well supported work experience.
- Assessment arrangements and target setting are inconsistent so pupils do not always know how to improve work. The school does not yet monitor pupils' achievement by ethnicity.
- The school has been made aware of some improvements needed to health and safety.

27. The care, welfare, health and safety of pupils are satisfactory. Child protection procedures are in line with the local procedures. The school has a very good health and safety officer who has managed the safety of pupils during the recent re-building programme. Advice from the fire brigade is sought and acted upon to ensure that hazards are identified and eliminated and fire drills carried out rigorously. All staff are trained in risk assessment procedures prior to visits off site. All areas of the school are accessible for pupils with mobility problems although many doors are currently too heavy for them to open unaided and the lifts are small. Issues related to school procedures and systems for administering medicines were successfully addressed following the last inspection. However, as a result of changes in the use of rooms, these issues need to be reviewed once again.

28. The monitoring of pupils' achievements and personal development and the provision of sound advice are good. Teachers ensure they are aware of the provision on statements. However, the regular setting and review of targets on individual education plans and discussion with pupils about these targets is inconsistent with the result that some pupils are unsure about what their targets in some subjects are and how they are going to achieve them. Targets set by speech and language therapists are well integrated with targets set for pupils with English as an additional language.

29. Pupils are grateful for the warm support that they receive from the whole school community. They are justifiably confident that there is always someone to turn to who knows and cares for them. Staff are very sensitive to the way circumstances outside the school day can have an impact on learning and behaviour in school. Liaison with parents and a number of agencies such as Social Services, careers service and the police is very good so that there is a consistency and reinforcement of approach in sometimes difficult circumstances. Pupils from ethnic minorities or at the early stages of speaking English are equally cared for and supported because of the high regard the school pays to inclusion. Pupils with sensory impairment are supported in class by the adaptation of resources, the use of radio aids, very good liaison with outside agencies and highly knowledgeable support staff. Currently, the school does not track pupils' progress by ethnicity; however, it is recognised that this is an appropriate next step in the development of the assessment system.

30. The weaknesses in the school's approach to assessment have a considerable impact on the pupils who have additional special educational needs. Detailed information about pupils from primary schools is increasingly transferred electronically, but the Crosshill staff have not been able to access and use this information for the past two years. Teachers adopt their own approaches to using assessment information to shape their planning for pupils. This creates inconsistencies. Class teachers devise individual education plan (IEP) targets for pupils as best they can but these vary in quality, usefulness in terms of precision and detail, and are not all sharply focused to give pupils clear guidance about how to succeed.

31. There is no mechanism at present to identify individuals who may need additional provision that is extra to the differentiated curriculum provided for all pupils. The school does not yet collect and analyse assessment information to search for patterns of achievement and progress and then make coordinated provision in school to give pupils with unusual difficulty in learning, interaction or behaviour extra help. The school is not aware of the requirements in the Code of Practice to review individual education plans at least twice a year. Appraisal and review of pupils' progress over time is not possible as the school does not keep previous individual education plan information each year.

32. Pupils are introduced sensitively to Crosshill, supported by known and trusted staff from the previous school during visits and spend time getting to know and work at the school before official entry. Pupils moving on to college or training are equally well prepared for the transition. Very good careers education and guidance, regular attendance at college and very positive work experience are all factors that contribute to preparation for life beyond school.

33. Pupils feel that their views matter. They have no hesitation in expressing opinions or concerns to members of staff. They know that they can discuss any issue with the head teacher and their views will be taken into account. However, they would value the opportunity of discussing issues more formally through a school council and the prefects would welcome opportunities for more responsibility.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

34. The partnership with parents is good. Links with the local community are very good because they effectively enrich learning opportunities. Links with other schools, the college and other institutions are excellent.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents hold very positive views of the school and are much more supportive than they were at the last inspection.
- The information provided for parents is good and the school is working hard to help parents to support learning at home more effectively. Where appropriate the school offers translated reports in languages other than English.

- The school draws from the local and national community to effectively enrich curriculum teaching and extend learning opportunities for all pupils.
- Excellent links with other schools and the college ensure a broader range of learning and development opportunities for Crosshill and mainstream pupils.

35. The school has succeeded in developing its partnership with parents to the extent that the vast majority of parents have confidence in the school and are satisfied with the progress their children are making. There is universal agreement that the teaching is good, that the standards expected are consistently high and that the school is well led and managed. A few parents raised the issue of bullying as a concern. Records and discussions show that there are minor incidents but pupils themselves say it is not a problem and that it is quickly dealt with.

36. Because communication with homes on aspects of school development and on pupil achievement is good, increasing numbers of parents are now becoming more involved with the life of the school and in providing help and support with learning at home. Where pupils are embarking on inclusion projects the liaison between the inclusion manager, parents and the high school staff is excellent. Parents and pupils are fully involved and the views and experience of the pupils are taken fully into account when planning for the future. Parents are kept well informed of achievements through good news calls and are quickly involved if pupils are experiencing difficulties. Equally the school encourages contact from home and will always arrange meetings to discuss any worries. The school makes very effective use of staff expertise in other languages such as Panjabi, Gujarati and Urdu.

37. The school premises are used by a wide range of clubs and organisations and the high-quality technology facility is starting to be used to provide good quality learning opportunities for parents and other adults living locally. Family learning experiences and a course on digital photography have attracted a hard core of attendees and plans are in place to expand the range of family learning opportunities next year. Access to the state of the art equipment incorporated in the new facility is a significant bonus for Crosshill pupils.

38. The school has developed very good relationships with a number of mainstream schools as well as other institutions, including a university and a local college of further education. There is effective co-operation and collaboration over transition arrangements. The quality of formal and informal links with schools and the college is impressive and ensures that all pupils benefit from opportunities to follow a wider range of learning and to enhance their personal and social skills through wider pupil and student contact. Crosshill facilities are used on a regular basis by pupils from mainstream schools and from the pupil referral unit. They work well with staff at the school where there is a mutual exchange of expertise.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall Evaluation

39. Governance, leadership and management are good. The headteacher brings outstanding commitment to achieving his vision for the school and the pupils. The leadership of technology status and inclusion is excellent, but new approaches to day-to-day management are needed to bring senior staff together to secure further improvement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a very clear vision for the technology college, its role within the community and an absolute commitment to inclusion. Through extensive representative and committee work, the headteacher seeks to influence national policy for pupils with special needs

- The strategic planning by the headteacher, other managers and governors to secure approval for these and further developments is excellent. Financial systems are secure and effective
- Their energetic pursuit of a range of external funds is realised in the new building and the range of leading-edge information and communications technology equipment
- Some issues from the 1997 inspection to do with managing and improving the curriculum, teaching and assessment require further development as do the use of data to track pupils' performance and whole school self-evaluation
- Within the management group there needs to be more engagement and consultation in shaping the school's vision, management responsibilities and improvement priorities. There are not enough minuted meetings to make sure that communication and consultation are thorough and that decisions agreed by the management group are acted upon
- The management and co-ordination of English as an additional language and provision for pupils with special educational needs could be improved is unsatisfactory
- The leadership of projects with local schools by the Inclusion Co-ordinator is first-rate
- Staff at all levels provide very good role models for pupils
- The continuing professional development of staff provision is effective.

Commentary

40. Governors and staff support the headteacher's broad, overarching vision for the school's future and his commitment to inclusion. The school's pioneering work has supported many pupils to visit their local high schools and follow GCSE courses. The close and effective liaison within the central team of headteacher, deputy and project manager is responsible for turning this vision into reality by securing support and funding from many different sources.

41. Crosshill is now a very different school to the one inspected in 1997. The new context for leadership and management of a secondary-phase technology college has been challenging for staff at all levels. The investment in e-learning and resources appears to be running ahead of some teachers' expertise in using it. Not everyone is confident yet in this teaching approach as the key way forward for improving the pupils' learning. The e-learning facilities are almost complete and the headteacher has further plans, including an application for teacher training status.

42. At the last inspection, the school was described as being 'behind national expectations' in some aspects of managing teaching and learning. Since then, school leaders nationally have been expected to collect and analyse an increasingly wide range of data about their school's performance to help them sharpen their improvement planning. The key issues for action in 1997 included putting in place planned developments for curriculum leadership and assessment so that managers could track pupils' progress and attainment closely. These developments remain at an early stage. Monitoring the quality of teaching began in some subjects last year, and in others, only this term.

43. The management of the recent and significant changes has posed many challenges that need to be resolved to ensure that day-to-day practice matches the headteacher's aspirations. Within the senior team and management group there needs to be a shared agreement related to educational values and management priorities in order to promote progress and ensure collective responsibility for leading and implementing change.

44. Meetings between the headteacher and his deputy happen on an ad hoc basis and are not minuted. The informal approach to management saves time and bureaucracy, however, the recently adopted structure needs to be utilised more effectively in order that all managers can be clear about their roles which will enable them to fulfil their responsibilities. The management group meets once each half-term, principally to help prepare the report to governors. The management of bi-lingual support is the responsibility of a senior teacher who rightly recognises the need to monitor more closely the learning outcomes for these pupils.

45. The governing body has a wide range of expertise that equips them well to fulfil their responsibilities. They have a very good understanding of the school finances and have rigorous procedures to secure best value. Increasingly, they seek identifiable outcomes for school developments and are informed on a regular basis about curriculum issues by relevant staff. They fully support the school's commitment to inclusion and stronger links with the community. Within the school they need to ensure that they are fully aware of the implication of the revised code of practice for special educational needs.

46. The overall provision for pupils with additional special educational needs is satisfactory. The pupils who have additional special educational needs such as sensory impairment, speech and language difficulties and physical disabilities receive very good support from the LEA's learning support specialists. The inclusion manager's provision of information about additional needs to schools receiving pupils for integration is very good. Current procedures to identify other pupils with more complex needs and then provide additional tailored support are in need of review as is the school's regard to the revised Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs. The headteacher is the 'responsible person' for special needs provision. Co-ordination, planning and overview of additional special needs provision on a day to day basis has not been clearly delegated since the last review of management tasks in 2000. The recent allocation of responsibilities and lack of job descriptions for the 'extended management group' leaves SEN leadership and management unclear. Many pupils now admitted to Crosshill show an increasing range of complex additional needs. Co-ordination and staff training is needed to plan strategically for this change.

47. The recently opened e-learning centre is managed very effectively and suitable action plans are laid for its continued development. Use by the community has been increasing as intended. For example, many meetings take place and some of the impressive facilities, such as the multi-media suite, are used by pupils from other education establishments. There are significant periods however, when no bookings are taken and the facilities could be usefully offered to the school's own pupils whose class bases are poor by comparison. Senior management have now identified the problem and are seeking ways of addressing the situation.

48. Despite these weaknesses, the vision of an innovative and inclusive school is clear and enthusiastically pursued. Now that the big picture is taking shape, the headteacher and senior staff need to work together to make sure that they focus on assessing pupils' progress and achievement effectively, lead and monitor subject teaching rigorously and provide support and challenge at all levels to ensure that people can fulfil their responsibilities effectively.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1607434
Total expenditure	1377843
Expenditure per pupil	8757

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	121936
Balance carried forward to the next	229591

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

English and modern foreign languages

49. Provision for English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well, but the writing of pupils in Years 10 and 11 is not good enough.
- Good teamwork contributes significantly to good teaching and learning.
- Pupils are willing to work very hard and behave well.
- The use of multi-media is raising achievement in speaking and listening and increasing self-esteem.
- Effective assessment systems are not yet consistently in place and do not contribute sufficiently to the regular setting and reviewing of targets.
- Monitoring of teaching and planning is currently under-developed.

Commentary

50. Pupils' achievement is good in all areas of English and in all years with the exception of writing in Years 10 and 11. Achievement in speaking and listening is good overall and often very good. Pupils have good social skills. They take turns in conversations and adapt their speech for the audience. For example, they move easily from banter with each other to more formal speech with teachers and visitors. There are good opportunities to discuss moral and social issues such as bullying or teenage relationships. Good questioning by teachers helps pupils to be more precise with their answers and to develop their vocabulary. In a Year 7 class pupils suggested 'various, powerful and hard' to describe a character in a novel. The use of drama and multi-media are significant in the very good achievement of some pupils. They are able to improvise, remain in a role and use gesture, language and expression effectively as their work is filmed. Pride in high achievements is evident as they view the results. Pupils with sensory impairment or at the early stages of learning English achieve equally well because of the good support they receive. Regular integration into mainstream schools and colleges, contact with many visitors to the school and work experience are significant factors in developing the social use of language. By the time pupils are in Year 11 the majority are competent communicators.

51. All pupils achieve well in reading. The use of a reading scheme, although not always age appropriate, together with associated support materials contributes to this achievement. What is capturing the imagination of pupils is the recent purchase of good quality class readers. For example, pupils in Year 8, excited by reading the books of Michael Morpurgo, are busy planning a residential visit where they hope to meet and interview him. Pupils in Year 9 have been so captivated by the work of Louis Sachar that they have re-written one of his books for local impact and then filmed it. It is disappointing that the library is dull and does little to encourage browsers with no newspapers, brochures, magazines or comics. Pupils use an increasing range of strategies as they move through the school including their knowledge of phonics, picture clues and context. They use dictionaries and reference books although increasingly they are using the Internet to search for information. Attitudes and relationships are very good so pupils, including those with EAL and hearing impairment, feel comfortable when reading aloud. By the end of Year 7 more able boys and girls read simple work sheets and books, showing understanding and following instructions where necessary. By Year 9 they are following more complicated plots and reading for a wide range of purposes and by Year 11 they have some ability to cope with reading in the everyday world. Pupils with additional special needs are supported to achieve equally well, for example by very good support or the enlargement of reading materials.

52. Achievement in writing is good in Years 7, 8 and 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. This is because there are insufficient opportunities for creative writing as pupils move through the school and

too few opportunities to extend writing skills across the curriculum. This means that by the time pupils are in Years 10 and 11 their achievement in writing lags behind their other skills. Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 write short sentences, often spelling common, regular words correctly and presenting their work neatly. Able pupils sometimes write a series of sentences to form a short paragraph. For example, Year 9 pupils write reviews of a theatre visit, write poetry and produce convincing dialogue. Some less stimulating writing activities in Years 10 and 11, for example writing about what happened each weekend or over concentration on sentence structure constricts writing and stifles the imagination. It is also not helpful to have three different teachers for the oldest pupils preparing for examination work. Although the presentation of some work is enhanced by the use of ICT it is used insufficiently to support writing and spelling due to a limited number of programs available and insufficient use of word processing for re-drafting work.

53. The quality of teaching and learning are good. All lessons are characterised by mutual respect, by hard work of teachers and pupils and by the significant contribution of support staff. In some lessons there is a high degree of challenge, effective support for pupils of all abilities and needs and work which stimulates learning. In these lessons teachers plan a good introduction, support pupils to complete their work and leave time for them to show what they have done at the end. These features were seen in a Year 9 lesson where pupils reviewed a film they had made, showing appreciation of the skills of each other and recognising the teamwork involved. Using good ICT and negotiating skills they then decided how to end the film. Writing skills were well developed in one Year 11 lesson because it was very stimulating. A high level of support for inclusion enabled pupils to complete a newspaper front page using ICT. Where teaching is less stimulating, tasks are more mundane, for example identifying full stops and capital letters, pupils respond less enthusiastically. Assessment is patchy overall. Teachers' questioning is good and some marking includes helpful comments. Where practice is best, for example in Year 8, a new system identifies what pupils already know and shows them how they can improve. However, target setting and the use of targets is inconsistent and assessment has rightly been identified as an area for improvement. For the oldest pupils increasing success in national examinations contributes to their assessment and sense of pride. The setting of homework is satisfactory.

54. There is insufficient implementation of literacy and the Key Stage 3 strategy across the curriculum. Most lessons contain good opportunities for speaking and listening. Many lessons require pupils to read a short amount using a range of resources. This was particularly evident during geography and history lessons. Some lessons support writing but very few lessons provide opportunities for pupils to write more than a sentence. Too few subjects identify and display simple key words and encourage pupils to write and spell them.

55. Through good leadership by example, the new co-ordinator, a subject specialist, has quickly established a team determination to move the subject forward. He has identified sensible and achievable priorities for development including writing and resources. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The monitoring role is as yet under-developed as is analysing results by gender and ethnicity and consistently setting targets for groups and individuals. Overall the curriculum is satisfactory. It is well supported by visits to the cinema and by theatre groups and poets contribute positively to social and cultural development.

56. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. Good standards of achievement and teaching and learning have been maintained and provision for drama is now in place as are schemes of work. However, weaknesses relating to assessment, some resources and the use of English across the curriculum are still being addressed.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

57. Staff place a high priority on developing pupils' communication skills in all subjects. All pupils are expected to listen and contribute as fully as possible. Strong emphasis is given to the development of correct terminology that extends the pupils' vocabulary well, for example, in mathematics, ICT and physical education. The increased focus upon pupils' writing has started to have an impact on the way pupils record their work in some subjects, but there are still insufficient opportunities to write in a range of styles or to write independently in some lessons.

French

58. The provision for French is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils' achievement is good.
- The subject is very well organised and well taught by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable teacher who makes good use of ICT
- The subject is well supported by an annual visit to France that contributes well to the pupils' social and cultural development

Commentary

59. It was only possible to observe one lesson where Key Stage 3 pupils were taught French. In this lesson, the teacher made very good use of an interactive whiteboard to display relevant resources that engaged the pupils and motivated them to respond enthusiastically. Other evidence was scrutinised which included pupils' files and photographs of visits. The subject is well led by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator. The curriculum is well planned and supported by visits to France which bring the language alive. The pupils enjoy these trips very much and gain an insight into other cultures and lifestyles.

60. On entering the school most pupils have had little or no experience of a modern foreign language and within a relatively short time they achieve well. The pupils have an increasingly wide vocabulary, such as saying their names, greetings, parts of the face and ordering food and drink in French. In lessons, their speaking and listening skills are very developed. They also know French numbers which assists their numeracy development.

MATHEMATICS

61. Provision for mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and pupils learn well.
- Leadership, management and curriculum are good.
- There are good opportunities for accreditation at the end of Year 11.
- Results for this year show increase in mathematical ages of pupils.
- The use of Key Stage 2 materials for all pupils reduces the challenge for some.
- Pupils' behaviour and relationships are good and help to create a good learning atmosphere.

Commentary

62. Pupils' achievement in mathematics is good. By the end of Year 9, they are able to use their basic skills in money to solve problems with stamps. They also understand fractions very well, especially when they relate to chocolate and sharing, and they use these skills to explore fractions fully through pattern and design. By the end of Year 11, pupils understand the language of mathematics and use it to improve the presentation of their coursework for General Certificates of Secondary Education examinations. They all understand graphs and how to use them to record a range of choices and colours.

63. Teaching and learning are good and on occasions very good. Very good teachers understand their pupils very well. They present challenging activities that interest and engage pupils. They also produce resources to enrich learning, for example, in lessons on time the pupils are very motivated by a range of little clocks. Every pupil is included in lessons, support staff understand when their skills are needed and they ensure that all make progress. The most skilled teachers have high expectations of pupils to learn and make progress, pupils respond and achieve well. The most successful lessons are those where planning is good and matched to the national strategies, these lessons are well paced, the content is appropriate and pupils are involved in judging how well they have done.

64. Subject leadership is good because there is a clear plan of the development of the subject to address the weaknesses in pupils' mathematical skills, as reported in the previous inspection. There are some areas for development however. It is not possible to examine the progress of different groups due to the assessment processes being underdeveloped. There have been difficulties with technology and the information on what is to be taught is not yet used effectively. Subject management, whilst being good, does not allow the manager to observe lessons in school or in mainstream schools and colleges. Discussions with fellow managers on plans and courses are not yet fully in place. The co-ordinator is a specialist teacher with a clear vision of the future, who is aware of the need to continue to raise standards.

Mathematics across the curriculum

65. Provision is satisfactory. Opportunities are taken to reinforce pupils' skills and understanding in a number of subjects. Pupils are able to use mathematical language correctly when discussing problems about the points of the compass. Weighing and measuring are used well in design and food technology. In music, pupils keep time well and in science they use graphs that display collected data. The media studies sessions address shopping effectively. However, opportunities are missed to consolidate pupils' numeracy in other lessons because they are not planned.

SCIENCE

66. Provision for Science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils achieve well in science
- The specialist teacher has a secure command of her subject and engages' pupils interest well
- The enthusiasm and energy of both non-specialists who teach science is infectious
- There is consistently very good teaching assistant support for small group and 1:1 work including EAL and sensory impairment support
- The science accommodation and textbooks in use at present are barely satisfactory
- Monitoring of teaching, assessment and progression in the subject from Years 7 to 9 is weak

Commentary

67. The overall quality of teaching is good. The most effective teaching shows good use of question and answer with individual pupils to check that they understand the task. More able pupils are prompted to apply their understanding or generalise from it to other situations. Pupils enjoy the subject and show great interest in investigative and experimental activities. Many concentrate hard and behave well, even when breakdowns in computer equipment bring their work to a halt.

68. Results have recently improved for higher-attaining pupils. Pupils with the greatest challenges to overcome, such as sensory impairment or those for whom English is not their first language, receive skilful help and individual support. Work is generally well adapted to meet pupils' abilities, but some tasks rely too heavily on reading text that is too complex for lower-attaining pupils. The school does not make use of the specialist literacy software such as a program that supports symbols or word banks to support pupils whose reading and writing remains at an early stage of development. Lesson planning does not indicate learning objectives, either for groups or individuals or take pupils' individual education plan targets into account.

69. The curriculum provided now meets statutory requirements and the all the attainment targets are covered between Years 7 and 11. A good range of science software is available to illustrate topics or to help individual pupils consolidate their understanding or practise applying their knowledge. More care is needed at times when choosing what to use with pupils, as some programs in use are not appropriate for teenagers. Textbooks date back to 1992 and so do not take account of the changes in the curriculum brought in during 2000..

70. There have been no meetings of the three science teachers or monitoring of teaching by non-specialist teachers until very recently. The absence of any regular mechanisms to review their work together means that assessment practice remains inconsistent, as it was at the last inspection. The top priorities now for raising achievement further are to focus on improving planning, assessing and recording pupils' progress, moderating judgements and to make sure that the programmes of study in Years 7-9 build pupils' knowledge and understanding systematically.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

71. Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision of equipment is very good
- The pupils' achievement is good in specific ICT lessons that are frequently taught by specialists.
- The subject is well led and managed
- Training needs have yet to be fully met for all staff to enable them to maximise use of new and longer established equipment
- There are some good examples of imaginative use of ICT in other subjects, but this is not the case in all subjects
- Occasional technical difficulties with the computer network limit the opportunities to use computer software and some teachers lack confidence in using it effectively.

Commentary

72. The school has developed its ICT provision very well since the last inspection. At the time of the last inspection there was insufficient evidence to judge the progress of pupils. There is now evidence of pupils' good achievement in specific ICT lessons, although they achieve less well in using ICT across the curriculum due to a lack of opportunity to develop skills learned previously. Since that time much

progress has been made in terms of additional hardware and the granting of specialist technology status. Significant additional equipment is now available to all the pupils and members of the local community including pupils from other schools. Whilst the level of equipment have increased dramatically, all teachers' expertise has not yet reached levels to maximise its use. There is also a lack of sufficient programs to assist pupils' development of literacy, for example, those that support symbols and subject specific word-banks. Despite this, the subject is well led and managed by a knowledgeable co-ordinator who has recently resumed the role.

73. The co-ordinator is well assisted by other colleagues who collectively manage the network and provide additional expertise in teaching the subject. Learning support staff, when well briefed, make a strong contribution to pupils' achievement. Where ICT is taught, the quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers make good use of laptops that enable pupils to have excellent access to the technology. Digital cameras are used to good effect as pupils record their work. Despite being a new experience, pupils achieve very well in their use of the new multi-media facilities which engages them in exciting work. Occasional technical failures limit pupils' opportunities and diminish teachers' confidence.

74. The pupils achieve well where teachers have good subject knowledge, bolstered by staff from a local college of further education. Most pupils have a good understanding of using search engines to find out information about a range of topics including aeroplanes and entertainment. Some pupils achieve good results using a computer assisted design program to design key fobs.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

75. ICT is used well in some areas of the curriculum, for example for drafting and redrafting written work, creating graphs from data collected in physical education lessons. Some older pupils have made interesting presentations about themselves that support their record of achievement. The multi-media work has a very positive effect upon pupils' learning because they are very motivated to use the cameras and see the results in "movie" format. Some teachers prepare resources that make appropriate use of interactive whiteboards, for example, in the teaching of French. However, such examples are currently rare as teachers come to terms with the potential for enhancing pupils' learning in this way. The use of computers turned into a weakness in a Year 8 lesson on advertising. Pupils worked in pairs devising advertising slogans using the computer to format their phrases. Their levels of understanding of text editing vary widely and adults are not always able to help the more capable pupils achieve the effects they seek or solve problems. Trying to resolve these takes over from the art activity for higher attaining pupils and some of the lowest attainers pass the time trying to type up, and at times deleting their ideas.

HUMANITIES

76. Too few lessons were seen in geography and history to make a clear judgement about teaching and learning. These subjects are only taught to pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9.

Geography

77. Provision for geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in the one lesson seen was outstanding.
- There are good opportunities to reinforce map work.
- Time for the subject is short making coverage of the curriculum difficult.
- There is no provision for monitoring the subject regularly or assessing work.

Commentary

78. Achievement is satisfactory overall. However, pupils in Year 7 were seen achieving well in the short term because the teacher fired their imagination with a range of activities well prepared for pupils of differing needs. They understand the devastating effects earthquakes cause. They ask questions and understand how the environment affects people. Pupils in Year 8 use co-ordinates to identify features on a map and follow routes on maps of varying scale. Very good use of the Internet enables them to observe a water hole in Africa on different days, and allows them to compare environments and wildlife with that of Britain. By Year 9 pupils' increasing knowledge and skills mean that they use the four points of the compass to follow directions and expand their geographical vocabulary to label features on a map and identify the continents. Boys and girls of all abilities and needs and pupils with EAL achieve equally because of good support to complete work, for example, by using adapted worksheets enlarged where necessary. Attitudes to work are good judging from the care shown in completed work and observation in class.

79. Teachers plan interesting lessons and make good use of the local area and further afield. One lesson was well planned to show an aerial view of the area round the school, allowing pupils to locate their homes before writing their addresses. In the lesson seen, ICT was again used skilfully to capture the pupils' imaginations and increase their knowledge of earthquakes. There were very good opportunities to support learning in literacy and numeracy as well as time for discussion, for example of the devastating effects on people made homeless by disasters. There was some under-use of support staff during part of the lesson but their skilful input later significantly contributed to learning. More able pupils showed independence by completing worksheets unaided.

80. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordinator is new to the role and has not yet monitored lessons, although he is aware of what is happening in lessons through discussion with teachers. Assessment is an area for development as it was at the end of the previous inspection.

History

81. Provision for history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- History extends pupils' opportunities for reading, speaking and listening.
- The subject contributes well to pupils' moral, social and cultural development.
- There are too few opportunities for extended writing.
- There is insufficient monitoring of the subject or opportunities to record assessment.

Commentary

82. The achievement of all pupils including boys and girls with additional special needs or with EAL is satisfactory. This is because of good support that includes signing and occasional use of home language where necessary. Pupils show increasing knowledge and understanding of the past by using a range of sources. In Year 7 they use maps to determine the extent of the Roman Empire and identify similarities and differences between Roman and local markets by studying photographs. Pupils in Year 8 contribute well to discussion about Henry VIII, knowing that 'he wanted a divorce because he wanted a son.' They know that the past can be represented by time lines and start to understand family trees. Good visits out of school develop social skills as well as historical knowledge and empathy, which gives pupils an understanding of how Tudor peasants lived. By Year 9 pupils have some understanding of cause and effect. They compare life before and after the Industrial Revolution, selecting relevant information from their source materials. Work is neatly presented with some made into attractive booklets. Of the two lessons seen, one was good and one was satisfactory. In the good lesson, drama

was used well so that pupils could experience a little of what life was like in a monastery. They worked on illuminated letters in silence, stopping for a Bible reading and prayer at regular intervals. "I liked the silence, it was peaceful," reflected the pupils. However, in this and in the satisfactory lesson, there were missed opportunities for writing. Where teaching was satisfactory, pupils spent time copying rather than recording their own ideas. Warm relationships are a significant strength as is pupils' willingness to try hard. Support staff contribute to the good inclusion of all pupils. Questioning is used well but the recording of assessment is yet to be developed. There is little evidence of the use of ICT. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory, as is progress since the previous inspection.

Religious Education

83. Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good in Year 7 because very good teaching provides pupils with relevant work
- The school uses the local community well to support teaching and learning.
- Pupils show respect and interest in the beliefs and customs of their peers.
- The lack of schemes of work has led to some unsatisfactory continuity and progression of learning.
- Lessons do not always contribute sufficiently to developing pupils' spirituality.

Commentary

84. Achievement is satisfactory throughout the school but is currently best in Year 7. This is because of very good teaching of work relevant to the pupils. They learn from each other in an atmosphere of mutual respect that different religions have leaders, buildings, books and beliefs which are special to them. They know the importance of prayer and write their own: 'Dear Allah, thank you for my parents, the universe and my food.' They understand that all religions have rules and they write their own rules. Achievement in Years 8 and 9 has been constrained through the repetition of some work, although the locally agreed syllabus is now being implemented. Pupils compare some of the major world faiths and show good recall of facts, and development of vocabulary, for example as they name parts of a Sikh temple. Sometimes a lack of resources contributes to silly behaviour so pupils achieve less than they might. In Years 10 and 11 pupils extend their knowledge and discuss religion in the light of world events. They, like all pupils, benefit from the input of a number of representatives from the local community who not only teach them about beliefs but take them to visit their places of worship. Whole school celebration of major festivals such as Christmas or Eid reinforces a sense of shared community. However, an over concentration on the use of ICT in Years 10 and 11 develops computing skills without sufficiently enhancing spirituality. Boys and girls of all abilities, faiths and with additional special needs or EAL achieve equally well.

85. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall although one very good lesson was seen in Year 7. In this lesson very good provision for individual needs as well as genuine interest in the beliefs of peers of different religions contributed significantly to pupils' spiritual development. Very good questioning enabled boys and girls to identify that prayer takes many forms and that love can be expressed in a multitude of ways. In other lessons pupils were also taught, and displayed, a high level of respect for individual beliefs. However, lessons do not always build sufficiently on previous learning and are not always challenging enough. In a Year 11 lesson relationships were a strength as they are in all lessons. However, because ICT systems proved unreliable and there was a lack of planning for alternatives, pupils displayed frustration and learning was restricted including opportunities for spiritual development. Opportunities for speaking, listening and for reading are satisfactory overall but there are too few opportunities to extend writing.

86. Leadership of religious education is satisfactory. The newly appointed co-ordinator has quickly drawn up an action plan to address the shortcomings in the subject and has the drive to get it implemented. Management is unsatisfactory although the co-ordinator has started to monitor lesson planning. The adoption of the locally agreed syllabus is new and schemes of work are still being amended. There is no common approach to recording and assessing work. Progress in the subject since the previous inspection is unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching has declined, pupils' attitudes to the subject, but not to each other, are less positive and resources are still in need of development.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

87. The provision for design and technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement in design and technology continues to be good,
- The development of the technological approach to design and technology.
- The quality of teaching and learning on inclusion projects on textiles and food technology
- Links to other subjects, such as media and ICT
- The curriculum is good
- Assessment is not properly in place, because of the difficulties with the equipment
- The quality of provision on site, despite building issues, is good

Commentary

88. The pupils' achievement in design and technology continues to be good, because of many contacts with schools and the community and because the breadth and depth of each element is good. Pupils are all able to participate, despite some current problems in accommodation.

89. Their work in mainstream schools and colleges reinforces the good work in food technology and in design at school. Pupils use equipment well to produce high quality products. For example, they incorporate their own designs and personal motifs when making soft furnishings, key fobs and toys. This has the effect of making pupils set high standards as well as developing self-esteem and pride in their work. Pupils have opportunities to evaluate their progress in lessons and projects.

90. By the end of Year 9, pupils use computers to help design projects. They are able to bake safely, being fully aware of the dangers and machines. By the end of Year 11, pupils are looking to leave school; they prepare well and make choices in projects which include building. In every aspect of the subject pupils produce work of high quality that delights staff and pupils alike.

91. Teaching is good and at times very good. Very good teachers understand their pupils and work with support staff to produce exciting and challenging lessons in interesting projects in media work which are significantly successful in tying together the many strands of the curriculum

92. The curriculum is good, balanced by the mainstream schools' input. The significant strengths are in the "carousel", whereby pupils experience a range of activities within a term and the individual programmes for pupils in Years 10 and 11. Teachers use every aspect to produce quality work. This enables innovation and uses good links with local expertise.

93. The subject is well managed; some work is needed to train staff to become confident with the most advanced electronic approaches, but leadership is such that everyone will feel able to use the material when all is in order. The co-ordinator has a clear vision for subject development and links with

other aspects of the curriculum. The budget is managed well and resources are fascinating. Pupils enjoy using computerised sewing machines and dedicated staff ensure that individual special designs are kept to identify work. Staff in colleges and in mainstream schools work in close harmony with the inclusion staff at school and value the connections very highly indeed.

Visual and performing arts

ART

94. The provision for art is **satisfactory**.

Commentary

95. It was only possible to observe the subject co-ordinator teaching art to pupils in Years 7 and 8. She has recently taken over art leadership and is not a specialist. She makes up for this with her genuine interest and enthusiasm for the subject, working closely in the planning with a teaching assistant who has considerable expertise and experience of working in art in other settings.

96. Great care has been taken to plan an approach to teaching throughout the school that makes as many links as possible with other themes and topics the pupils are studying. Imaginative examples of this were seen in the Year 7 and 8 lessons, exploring advertising and masks respectively. Teaching is satisfactory, being a balance of strengths and weaknesses. The strengths include good individual support for pupils, and discussions with pairs or small groups working together. Relationships between adults and pupils are good, so much so that the teacher readily accepts suggestions from an able Year 7 pupil on how to improve her lesson plan!

97. The weaknesses arise mainly from the relative newness of the subject matter to the teacher. Greater structure is needed in lessons to make sure that pupils have understood terms or concepts used in previous lessons at the start. Without this, major misunderstandings continue unchecked. One of several examples of this involved an able pupil explaining that you might wear a mask to change your culture, rather than your appearance. At times the task is not sufficiently well-defined for pupils and their confusion shows through in their interpretation of the instructions, for example when decorating the mask. Some terms such as 'identity' and 'carnival' used by adults in discussion or explanation is not well enough explained for less able pupils. Insufficient thought is given in planning about how to adapt the task for pupils with the greatest difficulties, including one who is registered blind and unable to see felt tip marks he makes on gold cardboard.

98. The sketchbooks developed this term are immaculately presented, as time and care is expended by staff sticking in labels, activity sheets and photographs of stimulus material. Pupils are pleased with these, but now need to take more responsibility for managing their portfolios and considering how they wish to present their work. More evidence of drafting and re-shaping work should be included so that pupils can see for themselves how their work develops and changes in light of discussion, evaluation or experimentation. The inclusion projects enable some Years 10 and 11 pupils to follow GCSE art in mainstream, and this will offer opportunities for liaison between the schools to make sure that work in Years 7-9 is challenging enough to prepare the most talented pupils to take part successfully in accredited courses.

Music

99. The provision for music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is good
- Access for every pupil is increased as a result of the support in lessons.
- Enjoyment and engagement of pupils, which produce lively group work.
- Subject is well managed, ensuring high quality learning as a result of good planning and assessment.
- The use of resources, enriching the curriculum via technology and tuned instruments
- The high quality of cross-curricular work in producing films on dance, music and other cultures.
- Teaching and learning are good. Teachers build on basic skills; the style is relaxed, inclusive and positive.

Commentary

100. Pupils all enjoy the subject and the opportunities it offers them to express themselves confidently. By the end of Year 9, pupils are able to use their listening skills when considering stories about wild things. They identify instruments used and then describe what happens next. They establish ideas and explain how the music affects their moods. The youngest pupils can copy very difficult, complex patterns to improve their feeling for rhythm. This basic work enables pupils to build on skills when moving to more challenging work later in their school life, when they perform outside school. Pupils in Year 11 develop multimedia skills, and combine these to produce films including singing and dance. Pupils develop confidence and awareness of the cultures of all pupils in school when they prepare to share festivals and dances.

101. Teaching is always good because teachers engage pupils and encourage them to try their best. Teachers use pupils' enthusiasm to raise the quality of their work in a range of settings and pupils become aware of feelings when they work in groups to produce music. Teachers build on key skills and pupils work well together, often with pupils who have come from different schools. The style of teaching is relaxed, inclusive and positive. The result is good learning, reinforced with presentations and live shows. Pupils all make good progress because of the very careful steps teachers take to record their achievements all tape, video or in lessons.

102. The subject is well managed by the specialist teacher, who has adapted a commercial programme to deliver the fullest possible range of opportunities for pupils. These experiences progress carefully and challenge pupils to do well. The good resources range from drums to the internet; they match the abilities of pupils and ensure that pupils are very interested in activities. The accommodation is used effectively to support learning. The subject continues to be good.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

103. Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and pupils achieve well
- Every opportunity is taken to use the expertise of school staff
- ICT is well used to broaden pupils' understanding of the beneficial effect of physical exercise.

Commentary

104. Pupils achieve well because physical education is given a high status at Crosshill School and all pupils regardless of gender, ability and race are encouraged and supported to succeed. Excellent use is made of the individual abilities of teachers, support staff and external coaches to develop the pupils' knowledge, skills and enjoyment of physical activity. For example, the pupils enter local tournaments which also contribute to their achievement and social development.

105. The curriculum is well planned and managed. Teachers encourage support staff to contribute to lessons and they are able to perform good demonstrations of skills. With this additional support, teachers can record pupils' achievements accurately. Sometimes this is done using spreadsheets from which graphs are produced that show pupils' progress in graphic form. This is a good use of ICT as is the use of web-sites that show animations of the heart during exercise, which enhances pupils' understanding of the positive effects of exercise upon their cardio-vascular systems. Pupils are frequently encouraged to reflect upon their own performance and evaluate those of others. Good lessons are characterised by very good pupil behaviour and enjoyment. A high regard is given to safety and all staff present good role models as they wear appropriate kit and participate enthusiastically in all activities.

PERSONAL SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

106. The provision is **good overall** for both subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The taught programme for both subjects with careers education & guidance is very well supported by other subjects and through daily routines
- Programmes are carefully matched to pupils' needs.

Commentary

107. The pupils make good progress and achieve well because they are taught well and expected to do their best in both subjects. These subjects contribute significantly to the school ethos and result in pupils who are very well behaved, and who are making very good gains in their social skills.

108. In **personal social and health education**, pupils learn about healthy eating and the importance of exercise. When at a local college of further education, pupils plan, prepare and eat the food they have cooked that lesson. The pupils learn appropriately the dangers of drugs misuse and sex education through the taught programme and from visiting speakers. Learning how to behave in public, or with friends, is a major focus of learning, as is learning to speak up for themselves, and expressing their opinions clearly and politely. The pupils' achievement in careers education and guidance is very good. In addition to meetings with the careers officer, pupils have useful opportunities to experience the world of work through lessons and visits. Achievement in **citizenship** is satisfactory as it has only recently been introduced and currently lacks effective co-ordination. Where it is taught, pupils have a growing awareness of democracy, citizens rights and responsibilities. In the one lesson seen, the teacher was well supported by a classroom assistant when discussing the benefits of working and potential problems caused by debt and interest repayments.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	1
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).