



Royton and Crompton School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105734
LEA Oldham
Inspection number 277396
Inspection dates 5 October 2005 to 6 October 2005
Reporting inspector Ms Ruth James HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Blackshaw Lane
School category	Community		Heyside
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		Royton, Oldham OL2 6NT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01706 846474
Number on roll	1144	Fax number	01706 842874
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Diane Williamson
Date of previous inspection	11 October 1999	Headteacher	Mr D Herlihy

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 16	5 October 2005 - 6 October 2005	277396

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three of Her Majesty's inspectors and four additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Royton and Crompton School is an urban comprehensive school located near Oldham. It is a Specialist Science College of above average size for boys and girls aged 11 to 16. There are slightly more boys than girls. About one tenth of pupils come from very disadvantaged areas and the proportion receiving free school meals is in line with national figures. The number of minority ethnic pupils is lower than the national average. Pupils enter the school with results slightly below the national average. The number of pupils with additional learning needs is low.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is an improving school which has much better general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) results than at the time of the last inspection in October 1999. In 2005, the proportion of pupils gaining five A* to C grades was well above the national average. The 2005 results indicate that the rate of pupils' progress has improved, particularly for girls. However, the boys could do better, especially in English and mathematics. The results at the end of Key Stage 3 also indicate that the younger pupils are making faster progress than in previous years. This is partly because some of the facilities have been improved. The school's specialist science college status is being used well to improve pupils' opportunities both in science and across the curriculum. However, there are still weaknesses in some pupils' progress in English and mathematics, and also significant variations in the quality of pupils' experience across the school. The school provides a satisfactory education. Teaching is satisfactory overall although some is good. Pupils are well cared for and their personal development is satisfactory. Although the behaviour of most pupils is good, a minority do not behave well in some lessons and this hinders the learning of the whole class. The curriculum is good with a good range of extra-curricular opportunities. Pupils have a wide choice of GCSE subjects and vocational courses. The school is led and managed satisfactorily and provides satisfactory value for money. Its capacity to improve is good. In some aspects of its work the school judged itself to be better than it is. Recent changes in systems, particularly those for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, place the school in a sound position to be better informed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good.
- Improve the GCSE results in English and mathematics, particularly for boys.
- Improve the poor behaviour of pupils in the minority of lessons where it is hindering learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Standards at Key Stage 3 were below average until 2003 when they improved. However, until 2005, pupils were not doing as well as expected given their results in the tests at the end of Key Stage 2, especially in English. The results from 2005 indicate that pupils' progress is now satisfactory overall. After a few years when standards were below average, the school's GCSE results improved in 2004 and 2005. In fact, the percentage of pupils achieving 5 grades A* to C in 2005 was much higher than in previous years. Girls achieve better than boys. In several subjects, pass rates at higher grades increased over the period 2003 to 2005. Pupils perform particularly well in science, Spanish, drama, music, textiles and health and social care. In English, however, the higher grade pass rate fell slightly in 2005. Although the results in 2005 are indicative of better progress, particularly for girls,

too few boys achieved five A* to C grades including English and mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve at a satisfactory level. The achievement of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is also satisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils are reasonably positive about their school and generally feel that teachers treat them fairly. Friendly relationships prevail in this orderly community and pupils say that when bullying or other harassment occurs, staff deal with it effectively. Pupils move around the difficult site with care and generally behave well. Attendance is improving but is below the national average although unauthorised absence is slightly less than the national average. The number of exclusions has reduced markedly over the past year due to the school's good efforts to help those pupils who find self-discipline hard. However, in some lessons, the inattention and low level disruption of a significant minority fragment pupils' learning. In the best lessons; for example, when pupils in Year 10 became dairy analysts testing milk, or pupils in Year 9 learned about recruitment in First World War, all the pupils enjoyed their learning and made good progress. Pupils' overall personal development is satisfactory, with strengths in their social development. The school works hard to promote pupils' self-esteem and uses a good range of rewards to encourage good behaviour. Many pupils are involved in the school council, environmental work and the recently introduced School Nutrition Action Group which is helping to improve school lunches. Different areas of the buildings are now identified with names of famous scientists which helps to develop pupils' cultural awareness, as do special days such as the recent one devoted to refugees. Pupils develop useful life skills to prepare them for the workplace, such as collaborative working and negotiation.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the most effective lessons, teachers had good relationships with the pupils, understood their learning needs, and pupils worked at a brisk pace. Learning objectives were clear and the use of good questioning techniques encouraged the pupils to think for themselves. However, prompt starts to the lessons were often hampered by the late arrival of some pupils. In the weaker lessons, pupils' learning needs were not always met appropriately. A lack of clear guidance from the teacher, along with pupils' inappropriate attitudes and behaviour often made the situation worse. Consequently, teachers were unable to engage and hold the pupils' attention for very long. Homework is usually set although there are inconsistencies in the quantity and quality of work given. Assessment is satisfactory. Despite variations in marking, most pupils receive helpful comments on how well they are doing. In the best lessons observed, such as in GCSE applied science, pupils assessed their own performance well and knew how to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good; it meets the needs of pupils and fulfils statutory requirements. New vocational courses have been introduced at Key Stage 4 and these have helped to improve pupils' achievement. There is adequate provision for the development of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils are clear about progression routes and the options system offers appropriate pathways at Key Stage 4. The science curriculum offers a variety of courses including separate subjects and applied science; this is a strength of the school. The school offers good opportunities for all learners and the programme for gifted and talented pupils is well established. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities ensures that they make satisfactory progress. Work related learning and enterprise are development priorities and effective links have been established with other agencies. A few pupils do vocational courses at a local college. There is a very good range of extra curricular clubs and activities. Pupils are encouraged to develop healthy and safe lifestyles and the programmes for citizenship and personal, social and health and careers education are effective.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The commitment of the pastoral team and their effective leadership ensure that there is a culture of support and inclusion in the school. Staff promote health and safety and form tutors are clear about their responsibilities. Child protection arrangements are in place and reviewed regularly. Risk assessments are undertaken. Relationships between pupils and staff are mainly positive and guidance over choices and progression from Key Stage 3 to 4 is effective. High quality displays underline the school's values. The school works with parents and a range of agencies to support pupils. Children in public care are supported and make good personal progress. The school has a range of new strategies in place, which is leading to an integrated and multi-agency approach. The Achievement Centre, which caters for pupils with attendance and behaviour difficulties, is effective. Special arrangements are in place to help integrate pupils who join the school at times other than the start of Year 7.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has made significant improvements, particularly in the last three years, leading to better GCSE results. However, there are still weaknesses, most importantly in some pupils' progress in English and mathematics, and also significant variations in the quality of pupils' experience across the school. The headteacher has a clear aim to provide a first class education for all pupils. His vision is shared by the senior leadership team who are enthusiastic and committed to raising standards. Governors are supportive and well informed about the school. The school's specialist science college status is being well

used to improve pupils' opportunities both in science and across the curriculum. The school improvement plan identifies relevant priorities and strategies and is making a difference to what happens in the classroom. However, the school did not respond quickly enough to indications from national data that there were weaknesses in pupils' learning in Years 7 to 9.

The school's self-evaluation is satisfactory. Inspectors agreed with the school's judgements that the curriculum and care, guidance and support are good. In other areas, the school judged provision to be better than inspectors found. The school consults parents and pupils to determine their satisfaction with aspects of the school. The monitoring of teaching and learning by the leadership team is well established but not always as sharp as it could be. In many observations, there is more emphasis on what teachers do, rather than how well pupils learn. The result is that the school has a more positive view of its teaching than is justified by pupils' test and examination results. The school has introduced systems for self-review and monitoring of teaching within departments, therefore taking action on a weakness identified in the previous inspection. The systems have only recently been upgraded and are not yet being used to full effect in many departments. However, the arrangements are of good quality and with the school's recent rise in GCSE results, indicate that the school has good capacity for further improvement.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for contributing to the recent inspection of your school. We enjoyed visiting Royton and Crompton School. We were able to visit lessons and to talk to a number of you and to the staff. We also looked at the results of questionnaires sent in by your parents. They are mainly supportive of the school, but a few are concerned about the behaviour of a few of you in some lessons. Overall, we are satisfied with the education your school provides.

A lot has improved since the last time inspectors visited. We noticed the new science laboratories. The results have improved. For a while, your school's results were below average. In 2005, the GCSE results were much better. Many more pupils now get at least five higher grade GCSEs. The Key Stage 3 results are also better. We are satisfied with the progress you are making. Girls in particular are now making better progress. Boys' progress has also improved, but not as much. Boys now need to work hard to catch up with the girls, especially in English and mathematics at GCSE.

Teaching is satisfactory overall. A lot of you told us that you particularly enjoy science lessons. In some lessons, a few of you do not pay enough attention and behave badly, which stops you and others from learning as well as you could. You have a good choice of courses at Key Stage 4, including GCSEs and vocational courses. These include several different science courses. Some of you also have the opportunity to attend the local college. The school provides a good range of interesting activities for you.

The school cares for you well. You told us that you feel safe at school and that bullying incidents are dealt with. Older pupils said they had seen an improvement in behaviour. The Achievement Centre particularly helps some of you who find school difficult.

Your headteacher knows what he wants to do to make things even better for you. He has worked hard with his staff to make sure that GCSE results improve and that you know what he expects in terms of behaviour. The most important thing the school has to do now is to keep up the standards, make the teaching even better and to think about the other suggestions in this letter. We feel confident your headteacher and staff can do this and we know you are willing to put in the hard work. We wish you every success for the future in all that you do.