



# Cromwell High School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 106279  
**LEA** Tameside  
**Inspection number** 277525  
**Inspection dates** 12 October 2005 to 13 October 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Mrs Rosemary Eaton CfBT Lead Inspector

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special	<b>School address</b>	Yew Tree Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community special		Dukinfield
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16		Cheshire SK16 5BJ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 3389730
<b>Number on roll</b>	68	<b>Fax number</b>	0161 3389731
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Albert Hatton
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	3 July 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Andrew Foord

<b>Age group</b> 11 to 16	<b>Inspection dates</b> 12 October 2005 - 13 October 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 277525
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

## **Description of the school**

This is a school for pupils with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Many pupils also have physical or sensory impairment, medical conditions, and communication, social or emotional and behavioural difficulties. All pupils have statements of special educational need. Most live in Tameside: three are 'looked after'. The ten pupils from minority ethnic groups are in the early stages of learning English. Significant, recent staff changes mean the majority of teachers are relatively new to working with pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Since the previous inspection, the school has been co-located with a mainstream sports college. They share corridors and dining and recreation facilities.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school with many outstanding features, providing good value for money. The school was cautious when judging its performance, but the view of its overall effectiveness was accurate. All pupils achieve well although, owing to their learning difficulties and/or disabilities, the levels they attain are significantly lower than those found in mainstream schools. Their personal development is outstanding and they learn to do as much for themselves as possible. They behave well and are seldom absent unless they are ill. The school is an extremely happy place.

A very strong feature of the outstanding curriculum is the attention paid to work-related learning and helping pupils to prepare for their lives beyond school. The quality of teaching is good. Pupils are looked after extremely well and supported very effectively by strong links with a variety of professionals.

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership, inspiring all staff to do their utmost to provide the best they can for each pupil. Staff and governors contribute effectively to the systems for finding out how well the school is performing, although more recently appointed teachers have not yet taken full responsibility for leading and managing subjects. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection and the school is extremely well placed to improve further. This is a demanding yet very supportive place in which to work and learn, where barriers to progress are tackled with energy and creativity.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Further improve the quality of teaching by using the expertise of senior and established teachers to develop the specialist skills of newer members of staff.
- Ensure that all subject leaders are able to identify and implement changes that will lead to pupils' achievement becoming even better.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Owing to their learning difficulties and/or disabilities, pupils' standards are very much lower than those expected for their age. However, pupils achieve well and make good progress building on what they have learned. Some pupils have complex medical conditions. They are helped to retain their skills for as long as possible. All pupils achieve equally well, regardless of their particular learning difficulties, disabilities or personal circumstances. Those whose first language is not English also make good progress, benefiting from the school's focus on developing the communication skills of all pupils. Challenging targets are set regularly for each pupil and these are frequently met or even surpassed.

By the end of Year 11, all pupils have been successful in accredited courses, which acknowledge their good achievement. They gain certificates at Entry level, and ASDAN awards at Bronze, and occasionally at Silver, level. They also gain accreditation for

Life and Living, and National Skills Profile awards. Last year, through the links with the sports college, one pupil went on to achieve six GCSE passes.

When they leave school, pupils invariably continue their education. The majority go on to the specialist provision within a local college of further education. Higher attaining pupils move successfully into the mainstream of the college, to follow courses such as catering.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development and well-being is outstanding. Collective worship demonstrates how all pupils are valued and this makes a significant contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. During the inspection, the impact of the recent earthquake in Pakistan was described sensitively, signing and projected images making pupils aware that people now feel sad. Special events, such as 'Africa Week', enable pupils to experience elements of other cultures and add significantly to the outstanding approach the school takes to equality and anti-discrimination.

Pupils' exuberant responses to lessons and clubs show how they enjoy school. They behave well and absences are usually due to ill-health. Staff challenge pupils to be independent and, because they have such confidence in the adults, pupils make enormous efforts to achieve their personal targets. This is one of the ways in which pupils are helped to prepare for their lives beyond school - developing appropriate attitudes and skills. Working and socialising with mainstream pupils and becoming accustomed to the bustle of the shared dining room boosts pupils' confidence and self-esteem. They learn to contribute to the school and wider community by raising money for charities or looking after their environment. The school's success in enabling pupils to stay safe and healthy is demonstrated by the work of the recently formed school council, which was successful in ensuring that the tuck shop now offers healthy options.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning is good. Teachers are skilful and adapt their methods to suit pupils' learning needs. For instance, those pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are offered activities that encourage them to use all of their senses. During an exciting science lesson, older pupils enjoyed plenty of time to experience different textures and sounds as they learned in very finely graded steps about solids, liquids and gases. Amidst the numerous activities, the teacher never lost sight of the scientific focus of the lesson.

Lessons are structured carefully and teachers let pupils know what is going to happen. This helps those with behavioural or communication difficulties to feel more secure.

Consequently, pupils focus on their tasks and learn well. These pupils are often taught to work through individual tasks in a systematic way, promoting their personal development and learning. Teaching assistants make very strong contributions to their success, by supporting and encouraging, but not doing too much for pupils. Teachers new to working with such pupils are still refining their skills. In a minority of lessons taught by these teachers, pupils occasionally become restless, lose concentration and make unsatisfactory progress because they spend too long as part of a large group.

There are very well organised systems for collecting, analysing and presenting information about how well pupils are learning. Senior staff use this data to check if pupils are making good enough progress. They work with teachers to tackle problems if results dip. Pupils who meet their targets early are set new challenges.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The conviction that pupils all have an 'entitlement to mature' is central to the outstanding curriculum. Continuous improvements increase vocational elements for pupils in Years 10 and 11, for example. Higher attaining pupils undertake a very good car maintenance course. 'I am so lucky', says one, donning overalls to become part of the world of work. The curriculum responds to pupils' individual needs. Through impressive links with the sports college, many work alongside their mainstream peers. Others attend colleges, to build on their particular interests and aptitudes. Great emphasis is placed on personal, social and health education and citizenship. For example, pupils learn well about sex and drugs education.

Popular clubs and holiday activities help pupils to learn. National Curriculum subjects are enriched as staff seek exciting ways to broaden pupils' experiences and enable them to use community facilities, enhancing their personal development. Pupils relish physical challenges in orienteering and sailing, and develop their creativity through dance, drama and visual arts.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Issues related to pupils' health, safety and well-being have extremely high priority. Comprehensive child protection arrangements are supported by the staff's detailed knowledge of each pupil. They are very quick to spot any changes that might indicate a pupil is unwell or troubled. Concerns are followed up, helped by strong links with supporting agencies. Potential risks are minimised. Sports college pupils who assist Cromwell's pupils by pushing wheelchairs undergo formal training.

Pupils say they feel safe in school. They know what to do if worried. When the school wanted to gather pupils' views, sports college pupils acted as mentors, helping them to complete a questionnaire. Preparing pupils for independent adulthood is a key feature of the school's work. The information collected about each pupil's achievement and personal development is put to excellent use. This supports them and their parents and carers when future options are being considered. The Connexions adviser and

staff from the specialist college work closely with the school to help identify the best pathway for each individual. All the above ensures that the care and support given to pupils is outstanding.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good: the headteacher's leadership is outstanding. His

extremely high aspirations and ability to enthuse those around him ensures that every effort is made to provide the best quality of education for each pupil. Staff comment on

the approachability of senior staff and their support.

Comprehensive systems are in place to effectively gather information about how well the

school is performing. The views of pupils, parents and carers are sought and acted on well. The school is overly modest about how well it is doing but it evaluates its strengths and weaknesses very accurately. All staff and governors are involved in the high quality self-evaluation, but newer teachers have not had time to take on all aspects of subject leadership. Teachers benefit from the arrangements made with a local university to support and accredit their induction.

This is an outward-looking school, eager to extend pupils' experiences and equally keen

to share staff's expertise within the wider community. All managers ensure each pupil has

equal access to all aspects of education on offer. Governors are very supportive and work hard to help the school move forward, lobbying successfully to increase the amount of therapy provided. Links with the sports college are beneficial to the staff and

pupils of both schools: their headteachers are committed to developing these. Cromwell has improved well since the previous inspection. The exceptionally strong leadership of

the headteacher, combined with the support and hard work of governors, demonstrates an excellent capacity to further improve the school.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	NA

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	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	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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 being so friendly and helpful when I visited your school. I know that some of you find reading difficult, so your teachers will tell you what is in this letter.

What I liked most about your school:

- You all learn a lot, make good friends and are keen to have a go at all the things your teachers ask you to do.
- The oldest amongst you pass exams. They practise doing jobs, so they are ready to go to college when they leave school.
- Mr Foord and everyone who works at Cromwell High do their very best to make sure you are safe in school and have lots of interesting clubs and visits.
- Both you and your parents/carers think Cromwell High is a good school, and so do I.

What I have asked your school to do now:

- Share the skills and expertise of the very experienced teachers with the newer teachers so that they all help you to further improve your work
- Make sure that teachers in charge of subjects check on how well you are doing and look at ways to make things even better for you.