



# Cramlington Community High School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 122357  
**LEA** Northumberland  
**Inspection number** 281241  
**Inspection dates** 16 May 2006 to 17 May 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mr Paul Hancock

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary	<b>School address</b>	Highburn
<b>School category</b>	Community		Cramlington
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	13 to 18		Northumberland, NE23 6BN
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01670 712311
<b>Number on roll</b>	1568	<b>Fax number</b>	01670 730598
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Derek Nicholson
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 November 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Derek Wise

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
13 to 18	16 May 2006 - 17 May 2006	281241

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Cramlington is a large community high school for learners from the ages of 13 to 18 located in an industrial area of Northumberland. There are 330 students in the sixth form. The school became a specialist science college in 2002 with support from local pharmaceutical companies. Nearly all the students have English as their first language and come from white British backgrounds. The number of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. On entry to the school, the majority of students have average results and skills; there are fewer students with very high levels of skills and results than is usually the case.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

The school is modest in thinking it is a very good school. It has many strengths which combine to make it an outstanding school and science college. It was judged to be highly effective when it was last inspected and improvement since then has been substantial. Pupils receive excellent care, guidance and support. As a result, behaviour is exemplary, students thoroughly enjoy learning, and their personal development is outstanding. Results in Year 9 have risen and the number of students gaining higher GCSE and GNVQ grades has increased from 64% to 76% in the last four years. The progress of students is very good and is reflected in the 'mock' GCSE results for this year. They show another significant increase to 84.5% which is well above average. The curriculum is outstanding and there is a more extensive and accessible curriculum in place for students aged 14 to 16. Teaching and learning are consistently very good with frequently excellent features.

Leadership at all levels is excellent. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher, supported by a highly effective governing body and senior management team, is innovative and visionary. The school continues to move forward and rightly thinks the capacity to improve is excellent. Science college targets have been met and links with the business community are very good. Resources are very effectively deployed to achieve excellent value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- The school's successful, innovative, and relentless drive towards maximising the learning of every student should be maintained, developed, and shared with other professionals.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 1

All students, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make rapid progress in response to the consistently very good teaching. Results in Year 9 national tests are above average and standards are well above average by Year 11. Progress becomes even more rapid in the sixth form. Students make very impressive headway compared to their starting points and capabilities. The 2005 GCSE results were the best ever, with more than three-quarters of students achieving five or more A\* to C grades. These well above average results exceeded the school's challenging targets.

Standards in many subjects are above average, with strong results in English, physical education (PE) and design technology (DT). Results in science have improved significantly with specialist science college status. The school was aware that results in drama and history were not high enough and decisive action to raise standards is already working. The GCSE results of boys are improving and strategies are in place to further improve the proportion of A\*/A grades achieved.

Achievement and standards were consistently very good or better in work seen during the inspection. This, together with early entry results in English and the mock examination results, supports the school's prediction for further significant improvement in the 2006 results.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Personal development and well-being are outstanding because the school places the achievement and well-being of students at the heart of its work. The school's focus on individualised learning and the consistent promotion of very positive relationships quickly develops the students' sense of pride, confidence and self-esteem. As a result, behaviour in classes and around school is exemplary and students' attitudes to work are excellent. Students say that they feel very safe and trust the anti-bullying policy. Permanent exclusions are very low and the vast majority of students enjoy and attend school. The school has developed a robust approach to improving attendance through strategies such as first day response, individual attendance plans and targets, letters, and discussions with parents to discourage taking their students out of school for holidays. Holiday absence impacted on the overall attendance rate in 2005, which were similar to national averages. The school is on track to meet its attendance target for 2006.

The school's excellent well-being programme embraces students' personal, health, enterprise and community development. It also enhances students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is very good. This is evidenced, for example, in their respect for themselves and others, and their ability to express their views and tolerance of others' opinions. Cultural development is enriched through activities such as 'global citizenship' and 'multi-cultural' weeks. Healthy lifestyles are promoted very effectively through the PE and well-being curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities. The school is aware of the need to continue to encourage students to adopt healthy lifestyles. It is enhancing provision by taking part in the Healthy Schools Award programme from September 2006 and the preparatory audit is very thorough.

Students know their opinions matter and change happens as a result. This can be seen through the work of 'school leadership' groups who are consulted on important matters. Students also make a large contribution to the wider community; for example, through the 12 charities that they have determined to support annually, and science activities which Year 10 students have chosen to undertake with local special school students each Wednesday afternoon. Science college status has helped improve the already extensive business links and students value the variety of opportunities and careers guidance provided.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are consistently very good or outstanding because the teaching has a sharp focus on how individual students think and learn. It is raising students' awareness of what they can achieve and impacting very positively on standards.

Units of work and individual lessons are planned and shared across the whole school through the intranet. The high quality lesson planning always includes a range of strategies which prompt students to be more involved and to think more deeply about their own learning. Students are aware of how their work is marked and receive very good feedback on how well they are doing. They understand their targets and talk confidently about their own progress.

Students respect and appreciate that the whole learning process is shared openly with them which helps them understand the relevance of particular topics. The use of computers to assist learning is excellent and students extend their work using the school's independent learning network which provides homework tasks as well as additional information. The first group of students to experience this teaching are now completing their courses, and mock examination results show well above average numbers due to achieve five A\* to C grades at GCSE. The quality of teaching and learning in this school is exceptional because students have become equal partners in learning.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding because there is a very extensive choice of vocational and academic courses which meet the needs of all learners. Another strength of the curriculum is that students can choose individual option subjects in such a way as to package them together to meet their particular needs and interests. The curriculum is reviewed regularly and innovative changes are made. For example, students are given opportunities to spend extended periods of time studying academic subjects and completing personal challenges. 'Super science week' allows students to concentrate on specialist science projects and display their skills and knowledge to parents and friends.

Students say they thoroughly enjoy taking part in the wide range of extra-curricular activities which the school offers. A well planned and comprehensive personal, social and health education programme encourages students to stay safe and pursue healthy lifestyles. In summary, this outstanding curriculum helps students to quickly become very mature and confident learners who are prepared very well for the world beyond school.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 1

This is an inclusive school in which every student matters. The school operates well documented safety procedures, and risk assessments are carried out very thoroughly. Robust arrangements are in place for child protection and the care, support and education of vulnerable groups of students. Staff invest heavily in individual support and guidance for students, and keep parents well informed of their progress. The vast majority of parents are supportive of the school.

Students are very effectively involved in their own learning and quickly take on more responsibility for their own performance. For example, the 'Learn 2 Learn' programme in Year 9 develops positive attitudes to learning and students' independence skills which are carried through into the rest of the curriculum and their future years in school. As a consequence of rigorous target-setting and monitoring of personalised learning and achievement targets, students' progress in lessons is often very good or better. Very effective transition arrangements are in place as students move from year group to year group and into post-16 education, employment or training.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 1

The quality of leadership and management at all levels is very high which results in a vibrant learning ethos. The needs of all students are met and other stakeholders such as parents are fully consulted. The dynamic and creative leadership of the headteacher is outstanding. He receives highly effective support from governors, and senior and middle managers. The school has an excellent and innovative management structure where senior leaders clearly distinguish between operational and strategic matters. Leaders and managers are at the forefront of researching, developing and disseminating best practice, particularly in teaching and learning.

Considerable progress has been made since the last inspection. Recent improvements, for example in the curriculum and in teaching, are helping to accelerate the pace at which students learn. The school knows itself very well and priorities for further improvement are firmly rooted in rigorous self-evaluation. The headteacher's innovative and shared vision for the school goes well beyond school improvement. It successfully focuses on transforming students' education by providing them with personalised learning programmes which better meet their needs and inspire them to learn.

The school provides outstanding value for money. It deploys resources very effectively, makes the best use of available accommodation and has high quality processes for the selection of staff. It attracts additional funding from local industry and through its work, which has a well deserved national reputation, as a provider of training for teachers. It has very strong links with partner schools and outside agencies.

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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>	1	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

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

<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>	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

<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

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The Students

Cramlington Community High School

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19 May 2006

Dear Students

Thank you for all your help when we inspected your school on 16 and 17 May. We particularly enjoyed hearing your views and listening to you talk about the work you were doing. Please would you pass on my thanks to your parents and carers for returning the questionnaires and say we took all their views into account.

I thought you might like to know what we thought about your school.

You go to an outstanding school which has a lot of strengths. It was judged to be very good when it was last inspected and it has improved a lot since then.

The leadership of your headteacher is innovative, visionary and outstanding. He is supported by a highly effective governing body and senior management team.

Excellent leadership and management at all levels make sure standards are high and you receive the very best support and guidance.

You make rapid progress and achieve highly because the teaching is consistently very good.

The sixth form is outstanding and standards have risen significantly in the last year. The proportion gaining the highest grades is significantly above average.

Your behaviour is exemplary and the school's approach to your personal development is excellent.

Your teachers and the staff work very hard and want to make the school even better. To help them do this, I have asked if they could:

maintain and develop the school's successful, innovative, and relentless drive towards maximising your learning.

I would like to congratulate you all on your mature and self-disciplined approach to your studies and wish you every success in all you do in the future. It is very well deserved.

Yours sincerely

Paul Hancock

Her Majesty's Inspector