



Crompton House CofE School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105740
Local Authority Oldham
Inspection number 287320
Inspection date 1 November 2006
Reporting inspector John Coleman HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Rochdale Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Shaw, Oldham
Age range of pupils	11–18		Lancashire OL2 7HS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01706 847451
Number on roll (school)	999	Fax number	01706 291454
Number on roll (6th form)	300		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Leon Ashton
		Headteacher	Mrs Victoria Musgrave
Date of previous school inspection	8 October 2001		

Age group	Inspection date	Inspection number
11–18	1 November 2006	287320

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Crompton House School achieved Specialist Arts College Status in September 2005. The headteacher took up her post on 1 September 2006. The admission policy of the governing body gives priority to students who regularly attend an Anglican church but 15% of places are awarded to other Christians from non-conformists groups of Churches Together. The school is oversubscribed. A substantial number of students travel from a very wide area, including from neighbouring local education authorities, to attend the school. Students are mainly White British. A few students have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The sight of smiling students greets every visitor to Crompton House. A warm courteous welcome signifies the strong Christian values found in the outstandingly good relationships throughout the school. Students' achievements are celebrated in the many photographs, trophies and awards displayed in the school entrance area. Headlines from the press such as 'Flying high' proudly celebrate students' sporting success and 'Showtime for musical youth' highlights the strength of instrumental musical activities. These images characterise the wonderful ethos which pervades the school.

The majority of students join the school in Year 7 with standards which are well above those found nationally. Results in GCSE examinations have been high for several years rising to a peak in 2005 when the school was ranked amongst the best performing in the country. In 2006, provisional statistics indicate that GCSE performance is a little lower but this was expected and forecast by the school. Standards in the growing sixth form are also well above average with AS level and A level grades demonstrating sustained high results. Almost all sixth form students move on to higher education, many to universities including Oxford and Cambridge.

Good teaching is the main reason behind the many years of rising standards. The lessons seen by inspectors were characterised by thorough preparation, the strong subject knowledge of staff, clear use of objectives for learning shared with students and a variety of teaching styles which maintains students' interest. Students are strongly of the view that these features enable them to learn quickly. As one student said, 'I enjoy maths because the teacher uses lots of different ways to help us learn'.

Unsurprisingly, most students make good progress as a result of teaching throughout the school which is, overwhelmingly, good or better. Students with additional learning difficulties and/or disabilities also progress well. Progress for the highest attaining students in Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. They could achieve more. A shortfall in the quality of provision arises from the inconsistent way students receive feedback about their work and what to do next to improve. There is a recently reviewed policy for the marking of students' work but the implementation of this across the whole school is at an early stage.

Specialist Arts College status has broadened the curriculum experiences available to students. Since the last inspection, the school has introduced more vocational opportunities. Very effective links with other high schools and colleges provide targeted support for Crompton School students identified as borderline Level 4/5 at Key Stage 3 and GCSE grades C/D. Students speak highly of the range of choices on offer at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form; they are very appreciative of the excellent range of enrichment activities in sport, music and the arts. These add significantly to students' enjoyment and adoption of healthy lifestyles.

Students develop as mature, responsible young people led by the excellent role models provided by the dedicated staff. The views parents expressed to inspectors are overwhelmingly supportive of the school typified by this comment from one parent who states, 'Standards in the school are high and I feel my son has developed very

well both socially and academically'. Students contribute much to the local community through charity work and in musical performances, such as for the local hospice at Christmas. The orchestra and choir perform regularly and students have even graced the Royal Albert Hall. Students' art is displayed in a variety of exhibitions in Manchester, and drama productions feature strongly in school. Good use is made of the local playhouse theatre by the school's A level students.

Since the last inspection, the school has been well led and effectively managed. The outstanding contribution and impact of the recently appointed headteacher is recognised by staff, students and parents. Inspectors judge the guidance given by the headteacher to the governing body to enable improvements to its committee structure to be excellent. Governors are strong supporters of the school's leadership, but do not challenge the information given to them by the school effectively enough. Senior and middle leaders in the school, such as heads of departments, are very effective in their monitoring role. The school has an accurate view of its strengths and areas for development. The school has good capacity for further improvement. Value for money is good.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

not applicable

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure consistent application of the whole school marking policy.
- Raise expectations of what the highest attaining students can achieve in Key Stage 3.
- Enable the governing body to challenge the school effectively where appropriate.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

During the last few years, the school's GCSE results have risen and are well above average, although in 2006 there has been a slight fall. Standards across the school are high, including student performance in mathematics and English. In the sixth form, students gain well above average results in AS level and A level examinations. Most students entering Year 7 have well above average standards in English, mathematics and science; they make good overall progress in Key Stage 3. The very highest attaining students make satisfactory progress but do not do as well as they could. In Key Stage 4, progress for all students is good across the curriculum and this is maintained in the sixth form.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

'My daughter loves coming to school and as time has gone on she has loved it more and more'. This sentiment from one parent is typical of the views of the students who spoke to inspectors. It is no surprise that attendance figures are excellent. Behaviour is excellent throughout the school. Behaviour in all lessons seen was outstanding and a consequence of the excellent example set by all staff. Students' spiritual, moral and social development are outstanding and their cultural development is strong. Students say they feel safe, are well supported and appreciate the care shown to them by all staff. They are secure in the knowledge that they can turn to an adult for help if they need it. They are confident that the little bullying that occasionally takes place is very well dealt with by the school. Students enjoy the rich variety of extra activities on offer and they acquire an excellent knowledge of how to stay fit and healthy. They feel well prepared for life in the future and willingly take on responsibilities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students say, 'lessons are good because teachers make them interesting'. Good preparation on the part of the teachers, together with excellent subject knowledge, makes learning focused. This was seen in lessons where the committed, knowledgeable staff achieved high levels of concentration from students. Teachers use good questioning techniques to elicit thoughtful responses from students. In an outstanding German lesson, the visiting inspector instantly became a part as every opportunity is taken to bring day to day relevance to learning. In this lesson, conducted entirely in German for a Year 7 class just 8 weeks into the course, the teacher was unrelenting in the engagement of students to speak and to listen. Students and inspectors were engrossed as humour abounded and students progressed rapidly.

Inconsistency in the marking of students' work reduces the teachers' ability to build on their learning and to indicate how they can improve further.

Teaching in the sixth form is good and students progress well. There is an effective balance of teaching styles which develop students' independent study skills. Students are well informed about their achievements and there is good use of assessment. Students know their targets for academic grades in examinations.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

In keeping with its specialist status as an arts college, the school ensures that all students at Key Stage 3 participate in an expressive arts GCSE course two years earlier than usual. Largely a GCSE based curriculum, vocational options have been introduced in Key Stage 4 to meet the needs of students. This broadening of choices to include music technology, dance and leisure and tourism is appreciated by students. They also enjoy the wide range of extra curricular activities in both the main school and sixth form. Statutory requirements for ICT are not met for a small number of students in Years 10 and 11; the school has plans to rectify this in 2007.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Crompton House is good at making students feel valued and part of a community. As one parent put it, 'He seeks school rewards - school colours and the headteacher's award - because they mean something to him; he even enjoys wearing the uniform!' Pastoral care for students is excellent. Academic guidance is good, though prompt written feedback to students about their work is inconsistent. Choices are open to all and Crompton House is good at including everyone. For example, students do not have to take a modern foreign language at Key Stage 4 which widens the options of the Key Stage 4 curriculum. By introducing more vocational courses, the school engages students of all abilities. Students in need of extra support, or who are vulnerable, are identified at an early stage and appropriate strategies are put in place with the support of outside agencies where necessary.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Parents, staff and students speak highly of the rapid and significant impact of the recently appointed headteacher. Improvements to the structure of school management and governing body practice have been achieved quickly through excellent professional relationships. The governing body now has a full range of active committees and the performance management targets for senior staff are clearly linked to the school's intended actions to raise standards. Senior staff are committed outstandingly to the success of the school; they present excellent role models to students and provide very good support to the headteacher and governors. The school has an accurate view of its strengths and the areas for improvement founded upon strong departmental monitoring procedures. Governance is satisfactory. A knowledgeable chair leads governors who are strongly supportive of the school; they are well informed by the

school leadership but make insufficient use of opportunities to find out answers for themselves.

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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?	2	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
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

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Following our visit to your school, we would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome and for talking to us about your experiences. We are pleased to report that yours is a good school and would like to tell you our main findings.

- Your school's specialist status as an Arts College is creating better choices for GCSE and other courses.
- Students achieve high standards.
- Teaching is good and you like the variety of different ways of learning.
- We think that your behaviour is excellent.
- The senior staff and the headteacher work very well to improve your school.
- Your school includes everyone in as many activities as possible.
- You told us you feel safe in school and that staff are approachable, caring and helpful. We agree.
- We think the marking of your work should be improved.
- In the lower school, students who gain the highest standards need a greater challenge.
- The governors should be able to question the school more about all of its work.

Thank you for helping us so much with the inspection of your school. We hope you will carry on enjoying learning and helping your teachers to make Crompton House C of E School an even better place to be.