



The Crossley Heath School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 107575
Local Authority Calderdale
Inspection number 287858
Inspection dates 13–14 September 2006
Reporting inspector Deborah Vaughan-Jenkins HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Savile Park
School category	Foundation		Halifax
Age range of pupils	11–18		West Yorkshire HX3 0HG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01422 360272
Number on roll (school)	1025	Fax number	01422 349099
Number on roll (6th form)	241	Chair	
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Headteacher	Miss Helen Gaunt
Date of previous school inspection	24 September 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–18	13–14 September 2006	287858

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

The Crossley Heath School is a medium sized mixed foundation grammar school for students aged 11-18. The number of students on roll in the sixth form has risen steadily over the last five years. Students are selected for admission based on their performance in tests administered by the school. Most arrive with very high levels of attainment. The majority of students are White British with the largest minority ethnic group being from an Asian background, at around 15%. Very few students are eligible for free school meals and a much smaller than average number has learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school enrolls from a wide geographical area.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The Crossley Heath School is a good school with aspects of outstanding provision. It places individual students' personal development and well-being at the heart of its planning. Students feel safe, valued and listened to. They enter the school with well above average levels of attainment. The academic standards reached by all students are outstanding. Most students make good or better progress during their time at school, particularly at Key Stage 3. Although still good, the rate of progress falls slightly in Years 10 and 11. This is a very successful specialist language college and students studying languages reach very high standards. Behaviour around the school and in lessons is exemplary and students display mature attitudes to their study. At the end of their study, students leave the school having developed excellent levels of confidence and responsibility. Most parents hold the school's work in high regard, although a few feel the curriculum could be broader to offer more choice.

Students are proud of and enjoy being at the school. Teaching and learning are good throughout the main school and outstanding in the sixth form. Teachers have good subject knowledge which is used to particular effect in the sixth form to challenge students' technical language and understanding. The very good practice demonstrated by many teachers is not consistently applied across all departments. In a significant minority of lessons, the most able students are not always challenged to achieve their potential.

The curriculum in both the school and sixth form is well suited to meet the needs of students. Issues in a few subjects posed by the school's 19th century building are managed well. Resources are effectively deployed and the school provides good value for money. The sixth form was judged to provide excellent value for money because of the strengths in both achievements and teaching. All students receive good or better support throughout their time at school.

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. Since the last inspection, she has worked closely with senior managers to bring about much improvement. Middle managers have been given greater levels of responsibility. Some departments have ensured a consistent approach to high quality teaching and assessment more effectively than others. A key challenge for the school is to establish greater consistency of practice across departments. Links with external agencies are good, particularly within the business community where these partnerships provide excellent opportunities for students' work experience.

The self-evaluation process is comprehensive, involving the views of governors, staff and students. Senior leaders know their school well and monitor its performance rigorously. Inspectors agreed with the majority of the school's evaluation, finding it to be an accurate reflection of the school's provision. As a result, the school shows good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school that the effectiveness of the sixth form is good. Leadership and management are effective, self-evaluation is good and there is a clear focus on improvement strategies. Recent changes have led to greater rigour in the monitoring of students. Retention rates have risen steadily and students are also recruited from other establishments. Sixth form students take responsibility for the many house activities and the student council. They speak highly of the school and a number return to help to run excursions and induction programmes. Links with other establishments are developing to increase the range of options available and to support provision in the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Establish greater consistency of practice, particularly in teaching and guidance for improving students' work and spreading the skills of the best teachers and managers.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

Students attain very high standards in national tests and examinations in Year 9, Year 11 and in the sixth form. Results are consistently in the top 5% nationally. The school evaluates the progress of students as being good up to the age of 16, and outstanding in the sixth form. Inspectors agree with these evaluations. Students' progress to Year 9 is outstanding. However, students make relatively slower progress during Years 10 and 11 based on their very high achievements in their Year 9 national tests. The school has thoroughly analysed the reasons for this and a robust regime has been put in place. In the sixth form, the pass rate, with high grades in A levels and AS levels is almost 100%, and most students go on to university. This is an exceptional achievement given that the school does not restrict entry into the sixth form and 25% of sixth form students join the school from other schools at this point in their education. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and other groups of students, achieve as well as their peers. This is because the school takes care to give all students an equal chance to succeed.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Students' personal development and well-being are outstanding as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Reflection and creativity are promoted particularly effectively in subjects such as music, art, drama and English. Students have

a very good sense of right and wrong and this is developed well in subjects such as history and business studies. Students have a wide range of opportunities to take responsibility; for example, in their valued charity fundraising, the active school council and within the house and prefect systems. Cultural development is very strong, with a wide range of enrichment activities, including a Chinese language course.

Students are very well motivated regarding adopting healthy lifestyles. There is a high uptake of extra-curricular sports and healthy food options are popular. Students make a strong contribution to the community, including teaching languages in local primary schools and supporting the Calderdale Theatre School. There are effective work experience arrangements and the provision of work-related learning and enterprise activities is expanding.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and outstanding in the sixth form. Good relationships between teachers and students result in lessons being conducted in a productive and purposeful working atmosphere. The majority of lessons are effectively planned and build on students' prior learning. Most learning is supported by formal assessment, enabling the tracking of progress and the setting of individual targets, although there is some inconsistency in the assessment of students' learning in all lessons. Homework is normally set to extend learning. Students' work is marked though, in a small number of cases, it is not always with clear guidance so that these students are often unaware of what precisely they need to do in order to improve. The use of information and communication technology as a learning tool in lessons is being developed and is particularly successful in modern foreign languages.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Inspectors agree with the school's evaluation that the curriculum is good overall for Years 7 to 11 and for the sixth form. Some aspects are outstanding. For example, the curriculum in modern foreign languages is exceptional. The addition of Chinese and Japanese to an array of European languages, and the residential possibilities which are pursued with the respective countries, ensures a rewarding and rich experience for all students. These form part of a very wide range of extra-curricular activities, clubs and trips in which a very high proportion of students participate. In Years 7 to 11, the curriculum meets statutory requirements. The school recognises, however, that the curriculum does not fully meet the requirements associated with personalised learning and has recently introduced a new curriculum which more effectively matches the needs and capabilities of the students. Its implementation is too recent to have

an impact. Students in Years 10 and 11 have a wide range of GCSE subjects to choose from. The provision for physical education for all students is restricted by the lack of an appropriate sports hall. The sixth form curriculum caters very well for those students for whom a GCE A level course is appropriate. However, the provision for careers education is underdeveloped. It does not provide students with a full knowledge and understanding of the wide range of options available to them for future careers.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Care, guidance and support for students are good, with some significant strengths. This is a very caring school. Proper attention is paid to ensuring the safety of students. This includes having clear child protection arrangements in place. The personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE) programme effectively promotes the PSHCE of the students.

There are good procedures to support students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and there are thorough arrangements to monitor the progress made by students. The systems in place help promote the good progress that is made overall. The best assessment and intervention practice is not consistently applied and therefore the potential to promote even higher standards of achievement is not realised. There is some variation in guidance for students on making option choices. The school has identified the need to strengthen its careers guidance in some areas.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Leadership and management are good. Leadership by the headteacher is exceptionally strong, providing clear direction and vision for the school. The role of management throughout the school has improved considerably with much more monitoring by subject departments and accountability for performance. The school's own evaluation accurately identified the need to develop more fully accountability at all levels to provide better consistency across the school. The use of data and evaluation at whole school level is very good. Rigorous systems are in place to monitor teaching and learning and there is effective support for new teachers. Governance is good. The governing body meet their statutory requirements and review their own performance as part of the evaluation process. Financial management is sound. The personal development and well-being of each student is a clear priority for the school and underpins their strategic planning and decision making.

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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?	2	2
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	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	1
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	1
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	1
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	1	
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	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
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

Thank you for so warmly welcoming the Ofsted team to your school last week. We very much appreciated the time you gave to talk with us both in and out of your lessons. Your views were helpful in enabling us to come to judgements about your school. This letter aims to provide you with a summary of what we found.

We found your school to be a good school with outstanding features. The standards reached by all of you are impressive. In fact, you all make good progress, particularly those of you in Years 7, 8 and 9 and in the sixth form. We were impressed with your behaviour, attendance and the mature way you approach your work.

Teaching in your school is good overall and sometimes outstanding. However, some of you could be challenged further in lessons to reach even higher standards. We found the school to be particularly successful at developing your levels of responsibility, confidence and awareness of a healthy and active lifestyle.

The main areas for the school to improve are to make sure that all of you receive a consistently high level of teaching and guidance, so you can all achieve your potential. Your school is very well led and managers know what they need to do to improve your experience further.

We hope you continue to work hard and achieve all of which you are capable. The team would like to wish you all the best in your study and for the future.

Thank you again for your help in this inspection.