



Crofton High School - Specialists in Maths and Computing

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108281
Local Authority Wakefield
Inspection number 288063
Inspection dates 15–16 January 2007
Reporting inspector Judith Tolley

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	High Street
School category	Community		Crofton, Wakefield
Age range of pupils	11–16		West Yorkshire WF4 1NF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01924 303940
Number on roll (school)	1077	Fax number	01924 303937
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs C Stevenson
		Headteacher	Mr Jeremy Horsley
Date of previous school inspection	11 March 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–16	15–16 January 2007	288063

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Crofton High School is larger than average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. The school was designated a specialist school in mathematics and computing in September 2005. It hosts the visual impairment unit for the Wakefield area, for secondary aged pupils.

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. It prepares its pupils well for the next stage in education and for the wider world. Standards are above average. Pupils achieve well. Over the last two years standards have improved significantly and the school now exceeds its targets. Standards in mathematics, the school's specialist field, are high and pupils' achievement in this area is outstanding. In English and science pupils achieve well.

Pupils' personal development is good. They have positive attitudes towards their learning, behave well and have very good relationships with each other and their teachers. This is an important factor in enabling them to achieve well. They enjoy the opportunities afforded them to take responsibility in shaping school life and take these responsibilities seriously. However, not all pupils are involved in planning and tracking their own progress in learning.

The school judges the care, guidance and support given to its pupils as outstanding. Inspectors judge these aspects to be good. The attention paid to pupils' individual well-being is impressive and is appreciated by both parents and pupils alike. The school goes to great lengths to ensure pupils' individual needs and difficulties in their personal lives do not affect their academic progress. It has an excellent record of success in this area. However, procedures for tracking pupils' academic progress and giving them guidance are in the very early stages of development and do not involve all pupils. As a result, pupils in Years 9 and 10 are not always sure of how well they are doing and how to improve their work.

The quality of teaching and learning is good and leads to good achievement. There are pockets of excellent practice within the school. The senior leadership team is working successfully to spread this good practice. There is a need, in particular, to ensure that assessment information is used consistently in lesson planning to meet the needs of groups of differing ability so that all can achieve their potential. Similarly, there is scope to increase opportunities for pupils to explore ideas for themselves and work independently in lessons.

The curriculum is good; it enables pupils to achieve well and, often, exceed their goals. The school makes very good use of its status as specialist school for mathematics and computing to ensure all pupils benefit from this expertise, both in lessons and in extra-curricular activities such as maths master classes and courses in information and communication technology (ICT), which support their learning throughout their time at school. Staff and pupils benefit from the links made through its specialist role with other schools and colleges; teachers are able to share good practice as a result of the links made with other schools and pupils are well informed about post-16 options as a result of the opportunities for Year 10 and 11 pupils to complete taster and other courses at local colleges. This leads to a large proportion of pupils choosing to stay on in education post-16. Expertise in ICT is used to good effect to enhance the quality of teaching and learning and facilitate the effective use of data. The specialist status has also boosted achievement in mathematics and is improving performance in ICT.

Extended links with partner primary schools, including ICT, support maths master classes. The school also provides adult education classes.

The school is well led and managed. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher, supported by a dedicated senior leadership team, has led to a strong sense of team spirit which permeates the whole school. A clear, shared vision and confident direction from the senior leadership team, based on rigorous monitoring of performance and clear lines of responsibility, has led to significant improvement in standards and achievement. Recent initiatives, such as the introduction of new systems to better monitor pupils' progress and to review the performance of subjects and year groups, are also proving successful in raising standards. The school has set itself some very challenging targets. It has a good track record of meeting these but is not complacent. On the contrary, it continually strives to improve in all areas of its work and takes advantage of the experience and expertise available in and beyond the school to do this. As a result, it has made good progress since the last inspection. It has a good capacity to improve further. It provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Implement fully the monitoring and tracking systems to involve all pupils in the review of their progress so that they can take responsibility for their own learning
- Improve the use of assessment information in lesson planning to better meet the needs of groups of differing ability in lessons.
- Increase opportunities for pupils to explore ideas for themselves and work independently in lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards in the 2005 GCSE results were above the national average and the unvalidated 2006 results appear to exceed these. This continuing level of improvement is a result of the progress the school is making to meet the challenging targets it sets itself in relation to the starting point of its pupils. The ethos of pupils aspiring to do well is evidenced by the fact that 98% of them achieved five or more GCSEs including English and mathematics in 2005 and 2006. The numbers achieving the higher GCSE grades, including and excluding English and mathematics, is also above the national average. Pupils achieve well in the majority of subjects, with the strongest progress shown in ICT, art and design, history, music and design technology. Performances in mathematics are excellent, with a high proportion of pupils achieving the very highest GCSE grades. In English and double award science, standards are above average but in the separate sciences they are below average.

Pupils achieve well. When pupils enter the school in Year 7, their standards are close to those expected nationally. The great majority of pupils make good progress by the time they leave school. As a result of the action taken by the school to improve the quality of teaching and learning and to use assessment information more effectively, standards have improved. Boys' overall achievement, for instance, has risen sharply

since the last inspection. Pupils who are higher achievers in mathematics, as well as those who have particular needs, especially the vulnerable pupils, make outstanding progress. The school is aware of the need to monitor further a small number of girls to ensure that they achieve their potential. Although the school did not meet its most recent pupil targets at age 14 in English, recently improved provision means that GCSE results exceeded those predicted and represent good progress in 2006. Similar good progress is evident in science because results have improved dramatically at age 14 and for the double science GCSE award. Although there is an improving picture in the separate science results at 16, they are still below average in comparison to national figures.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school. Attendance rates have improved year on year and are now above average. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good and relationships are very good. Pupils have responded with relish to an increase in the range of responsibilities open to them. School and year group councils give them a say in school life and pupils are active in decision making and in raising funds for various charities. This is indicative of good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It is no coincidence that many stay in education once they leave the school. The school is yet to involve all pupils as partners in their learning. Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning but are not always given enough scope to shape their learning in lessons. Achievement folders are used to good effect in some year groups. Year 11 pupils know how to make the jump to the next grade; however, this is not the case in all year groups so that pupils' knowledge of how to improve is patchy. Assemblies dovetail well with specific lessons on personal development, for example, in drugs education. As a result, pupils are knowledgeable about how to live safely and healthily.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The recent drive to raise standards has resulted in stronger teaching. The teaching and learning group worked with the senior leaders to initiate a range of strategies to further improve the quality of learning as well as teaching and the sharing of good practice. These include whole-school based training and collaborative partnerships with two other secondary schools. In the more effective lessons, the positive relationships between pupils and teachers enable the pupils to achieve well. These lessons are well planned, with appropriate resources, effective questioning and a high level of challenge. There are clear routines and pupils are actively involved and allowed to think for themselves. Where teaching is less effective, lessons are teacher directed and controlled, the level of challenge is lower and opportunities for independent learning are missed. The school's use of assessment

information to monitor how well pupils are progressing has improved, with support for underachieving pupils provided by year counsellors, learning mentors and tutors. However, assessment information is not used consistently in planning lessons effectively to meet the needs of differing abilities. Most pupils are aware of what level they are working at and the best marking informs pupils of what they need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets the needs and aspirations of pupils well. The introduction of 'Learning to learn' in Year 7 enables pupils to develop transferable skills. Alongside the traditional range of GCSE courses in Key Stage 4, pupils can choose a variety of vocational courses which enable them to achieve well. Links with local colleges and employers plus extended work placements enhance provision and provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to achieve their goals. The school's policy of open options results in some pupils following courses, such as separate sciences, which do not lead to the best achievement outcomes for them. The school recognises the need to further develop 14 to 19 pathways to better meet the needs of individuals. Work related skills are developed across curriculum areas, as part of the careers and work experience programmes and in addition enterprise activities. Personal, health and social education (PHSE) is a strength of the school, with timetabled lessons which are also supported by ICT and religious education (RE) programmes for all pupils.

The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities including many sporting activities, a variety of music opportunities and drama as well as open door subject support sessions, all of which are well supported by pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school judges this area to be outstanding; inspectors judge it to be good. Inspectors agree that the school provides outstanding care for its pupils, underpinned by proper procedures to ensure pupils' safety. However, the system for monitoring pupils' academic progress has been piloted with Years 7, 8 and 11 and is being rolled out over the whole school, but the impact of this has not yet been felt across the board. As a result, not all pupils know how they are doing and how to improve. Pastoral care systems are extremely well thought out. Year group tutors who move up the school with their tutor group build close relationships with pupils and with parents. Mentors are always on hand to offer counselling and take appropriate action to meet their individual needs. As pupils themselves point out, 'There is always someone to talk to.' Pupils leaving primary education are given excellent support and settle in quickly. Older pupils feel well informed about their future options; links with local colleges are thorough. A cohesive and sensitive approach to meeting the needs of vulnerable pupils results in these pupils making at least good progress and better than this in some instances. Pupils working in the Supported Learning Centre are given excellent support and make excellent progress as a result. In the same way, the work of the visually

impaired unit enables pupils to operate very successfully alongside their peers in lessons and make excellent progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. In the very short time he has been in post, the headteacher has established a strong, dedicated team who share his vision and who are committed to raising achievement and supporting all learners. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher has led to a very strong sense of commitment and teamwork not only amongst staff but also amongst pupils and parents and has led to a rapid rise in standards and achievement over the last two years. The senior leadership team sets very clear direction in all aspects of the school's work and works together very effectively to monitor performance and to bring about improvement. Some middle managers are still developing their role in this process. All staff and pupils are valued and given the necessary support and encouragement to develop their skills. At the same time, responsibilities are very clear and the systems in place to check and evaluate performance are well thought out. The school works very effectively with outside agencies and with parents and carers to remove any barriers to pupils' progress and enable all pupils to achieve well. Resources are used effectively and efficiently to ensure good value for money. Governors provide very good support for the school and challenge the school effectively.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

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

As you know, your school was recently inspected and this letter is to tell you about the results. First, I would like to thank you for making us so welcome and for helping us during our visit. We enjoyed meeting with and talking to many of you.

The inspection found that Crofton is a good school. Standards have improved a lot recently and are now above average. You make good progress and almost all pupils achieve five or more GCSE passes. Standards are really high in mathematics and you do exceptionally well in this subject. Your behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. You have very good relationships with staff and there is always someone you can talk to. You also make the most of the opportunities you have to help the school make decisions. We were particularly impressed by the way the school ensures you all feel safe and happy and how it helps pupils who have any sort of difficulty so they can still achieve well. We heard a lot of success stories and many parents wrote to tell us about how much they appreciated this.

We think the school could give you all more information about how you are doing and how to improve. You can help by asking your teachers regularly. We noticed that in some lessons work does not always provide all of you with the right level of challenge, so we have asked the school to put this right. You can tell teachers if work is too easy or too difficult. We also noticed that you make the best progress in lessons when you are given the opportunity to explore ideas for yourselves, so we have asked the school to make sure this happens more often. You can help by completing all the work set.

We are confident that, with your help, the school will continue to be successful and improve further. We wish you every success in the future.