

# Crofton School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	100747
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lewisham
<b>Inspection number</b>	307468
<b>Inspection dates</b>	28–29 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ann Berger HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	796
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Monica Duncan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 September 2006
<b>School address</b>	Manwood Road Brockley London SE4 1SA
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8690 1114
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8314 1859

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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

Crofton School is an average sized school specialising in the performing arts. Most students' attainment is below average when they start school. Over 50% of students are eligible for free school meals, which indicates a high proportion of students who are economically disadvantaged and about 30% overall have English as an additional language, which is comparatively high. There has been a recent increase in the number of students at the early stages of learning English. An average number of students have learning difficulties or disabilities. The school draws over half its students from black minority ethnic groups and about one third of students from other minority ethnic groups. The school is moving into a new building in January 2008.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school's overall effectiveness is now satisfactory overall and in many areas, the school is good. In just over a year the students have moved from making inadequate progress to achieving well in most subjects. This provision has made impressive changes since being made subject to a 'notice to improve' and this is a tribute to the commitment and strong team work evident in the school. In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

The senior team have demonstrated an outstanding capacity to continue to improve. They have concentrated their efforts on the things that matter most. The strengths and weaknesses of the school are well understood. The extensive external support for the school has been invaluable both in terms of recruiting high quality staff and improving practice. The local authority, London Challenge and partner schools have worked together creatively and with clear direction and very good coordination. Very good longer-term plans for the school are close to final agreement. These arrangements place the future of the community's children at the heart of developments and this has enhanced the confidence and loyalty of staff, students and parents. The school has made outstanding use of their specialist status to make improvements across the school. This work has particularly enhanced the reputation of the school in its community as well as raising standards in performing arts.

GCSE results have improved significantly this year and standards in mathematics have risen particularly fast across all age groups. A student confirmed our view when he told us, 'the mathematics department is exceptional'.

Younger students make good progress by the end of Key Stage 3 in most subjects although achievement is satisfactory in English, science and modern foreign languages. Nevertheless there is some evidence that, even in these subjects, progress is accelerating and many students are rapidly making up for lost ground. Progress in information and communication technology (ICT) is inadequate because there are too few opportunities to use ICT and to learn about the way computers work.

The improvements to learning are partly attributable to the exceptional monitoring and support programmes to improve the quality of teaching. Inadequate teaching has been eliminated and in about 60% of lessons the teaching is good. Booster classes and other interventions are effective but too little time is allocated to this work in Years 7 and 8 and the progress of these students in these years has sometimes been slower than it could be. A major curriculum review is planned for next term as the school has correctly identified the need to motivate and broaden the experience of their students and accelerate progress at Key Stage 3.

Improvements in the students' personal development are particularly notable. Students are respectful, friendly, courteous and well behaved. Social times are pleasant and enjoyable for all. One student captured this in her comment to an inspector, 'This school is our family and our home'. The students' attendance has improved considerably and is now good.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the opportunities to use ICT across the whole curriculum.
- Ensure the curriculum review takes full account of the needs, interests and aspirations of the learners, thus raising standards particularly in Key Stage 3.
- Continue to improve the quality of teaching.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Test and examination results are now improving more rapidly by the end of Year 11 though slower progress in the recent past leaves too much to do in Year 9. This picture is beginning to change. Inspection evidence demonstrates that pupils are on target to reach nationally expected levels in 2008/9. Better teaching has meant that less attention has to be given to making up for the legacy of inadequate provision in past years.

Attention has been sharply focused on the progress that students make in their learning. As a result of its regular six-weekly analysis of assessments, the school recognises what it needs to do further. Better use of test results and suitably challenging personal targets are raising expectations of what can be achieved by all students. Teaching and marking are consistently focused on providing clear feedback to students on their current levels of attainment. These targets do not always relate to specific aspects of the curriculum and this practice remains inconsistent across subjects.

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

### **Grade: 2**

The students make a very good contribution to the life of the school and community. Their views are sought and ideas are acted on. Special responsibilities such as membership of the school council are taken very seriously. The students develop good team and leadership qualities through making decisions and speaking in public. The school is rightly proud of the election of one of their students to the young Mayor post.

The students also learn right from wrong and good attention is paid to discussions of morality in religious education (RE) and personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons which the students enjoy. There are very good opportunities to explore values. Issues relating to race, gender, faith and disability are tackled openly and everyone's opinions are valued. They know how to stay safe and lead healthy lives.

The curriculum has been adapted to better meet the cultural needs of students though there is more work to do in this area. The students have a very good understanding of each other's languages, for example, through the language of the week project. The good focus on promoting equality of opportunities is suitably practical and meaningful. An example is the current analysis of the reward system to check that rewards are fair and given when they are deserved regardless of heritage, gender, age, background or disability.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning have improved rapidly from inadequate to satisfactory. The very good support programmes have enabled many teachers to improve their performance. Teachers have good subject knowledge, know their students, manage them well and forge positive relationships. Lessons have clear learning objectives with a range of activities to engage and interest them. A particular strength of the teaching is the marking of students' work using the 'SIT' procedure (strengths, improvement and targets). The students understand this and it helps them to focus on what they need to do to improve.

Teachers are good at encouraging students to work independently. This was seen in a music lesson where students worked unassisted on their improvisation of the Blues style of music. Learning assistants are usually used well in class and provide good support. Teaching and support staff for students where English is an additional language are particularly well focused on the students who will gain the greatest benefits. There is further to go to extend this system to all those working in support roles.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum at Key Stage 4 is better than for the younger students although satisfactory overall. A particular strength is the wide range of vocational pathways for students to pursue. There are strong links with neighbouring colleges which provide courses to meet the needs of a range of students. This is having a positive impact on students' achievement by preparing them for the future.

There is a wide range of enrichment activities on offer to include sports, drama, performing arts and booster sessions to improve students' achievement. All these extra curricular activities are valued by the students and well supported.

The school's specialism of performing arts is having a positive impact on many areas of the curriculum and has a high profile in the school. There has been a strong emphasis on promoting the school in the community, resulting in the school developing a higher profile and increasing the number of students naming the school as their first choice. Students comment favourably on this status saying that lessons are now more interesting and challenging.

Other limitations in the curriculum relate to the particular aspirations of some students. For example, provision for ICT is limited and yet there are many students interested in computing as a career. A large proportion of students speak more than one language and yet there are too few opportunities to gain accreditation in their first language. There are limited opportunities for free music tuition despite the school's performing arts status.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school has worked hard to improve relationships with parents. A good proportion returned questionnaires and the vast majority of those reported considerable change for the better within the school and improvements in communications. Nevertheless, a significant number feel that there is further to go to make sure telephone calls from parents are followed up swiftly and inspectors agree that this would be of benefit.

The school's race and disability equality schemes are suitable although more work is needed to promote the employment of disabled people in the school. Teaching staff represent the diversity in the community and provide good aspirational role models for students. The school has evaluated the reasons for the disproportionate number of Black Caribbean students who are excluded though this number is in line with the national average figure. A change to the curriculum for disaffected students is under consideration as a result of this review. Outreach workers who provide behaviour support from other schools are used effectively.

The provision for students with learning difficulties and disabilities is satisfactory and has improved since the criteria for identification have been clarified and provision has become more

coherent. Nevertheless there is more to do to match the good provision for students where English is an additional language.

Students undertake work experience which they value highly and receive good careers guidance and advice.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The senior leadership team has developed well. The headteacher, deputies and assistant headteachers have driven the rapid improvements. They have inspired the rest of the staff to lead the necessary changes. Everyone has played their part. The school self-evaluation is rigorous and the information is used to set challenging targets for improvement. The school has rightly identified the need to continue to fine tune these targets as staff become more confident in using the information they have. The senior team have a very accurate profile of the capacity of staff to continue to improve. This information is used to constantly push teachers towards ever-improving performance and they rise to this challenge. Heads of faculty and academic coordinators are focused and very effective. Governors are rigorous and work well with the partnership board to challenge and support in equal proportions. This good leadership has changed the fortunes of the school.

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**Annex A**

## Inspection judgements

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b>	<b>School Overall</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>	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	3

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

13 December 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Crofton School, London, SE4 1SA

Following our recent visit to inspect your school, we would like to thank you for your contribution. We enjoyed talking with you in lessons, around the school and in meetings. I am now writing to let you know about our findings. I am delighted to announce that the notice to improve given to your school last year can now be removed. We have judged your school to be a satisfactory school with many good elements.

The best features of the school are:

- the rapid improvements that have been made in nearly all subjects to help you do better in your exams
- the high standards of behaviour and very positive attitudes
- the support you receive to develop as individuals.

We know that while most of you and your parents are very happy with the improvements in the school there are still things that could be better and your headteacher and teachers understand this too. In order to improve further, more work needs to be done to:

- continue to improve the teaching
- find ways of providing a wider range of subjects, for the younger students particularly
- improve the ICT used across your subjects.

Wishing you all well in the future,

Ann Berger  
Her Majesty's Inspector