

Crosby High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104980
Local Authority	Sefton
Inspection number	308723
Inspection dates	5–6 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Arif Hussain

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	127
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr M Hanford
Headteacher	Mr S Dempsey
Date of previous school inspection	12 July 2004
School address	De Villiers Avenue Crosby Liverpool Merseyside L23 2TH
Telephone number	0151 924 3671
Fax number	0151 931 5083

Age group	11-16
Inspection dates	5–6 December 2007
Inspection number	308723

© 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 one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Crosby High School provides for students who in the main have moderate and often complicated learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These include autism, limited spoken language and sensory, physical and medical. All have statements of special educational need. Around one fifth of students has behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and one tenth has severe learning difficulties. A high proportion of students are from socially and economically disadvantaged areas, with nearly half eligible for free school meals. All students come from White British backgrounds. The school has a Quality Mark for careers guidance and work experience, and has a Sportsmark. The school is approved by a national body to provide professional development schemes for schools' staff in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning. The school also has Investors in People status, the National Healthy Schools Award and was recently designated as a specialist humanities college.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. Representative views from parents include, 'I am overwhelmed by the school. The teachers, assistants and everyone are excellent. I know I have made the right choice of school for my child.' Standards are low owing to students' learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but their achievement is outstanding because students overcome their substantial difficulties to become successful learners. The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding and this enables students to make exceptional progress as they move through the school. Teachers are especially patient and considerate, and this helps to develop confidence and independence in learning. Staff expertise in supporting complicated learning difficulties, especially in communication and autism, has been a key factor in students' outstanding progress. The school has developed an imaginative and exciting curriculum that enables all students to flourish and achieve as well as they can. Many students study a wide range of entry level and GCSE subjects. Some gain distinctions at entry level. A significant number gain full GCSE passes in subjects including English, mathematics, science and ICT. Other accreditation includes healthy eating, drugs education, home management, home safety, expressive arts and the environment. This equips students well for their next stages of education. All students left school with a good number of qualifications last year and moved on to further education.

The impact of humanities college status is reflected in the tremendous sense of community, which is evident across the school and in students' personal development. Students show a great awareness of the inspirational nature of human achievement and feel passionately about truth, justice, discrimination and equality. Personal development is outstanding because students receive exceptional care, guidance and support. Students are treated with great sensitivity, understanding and kindness and so they flourish as young learners. Students say that there is never a harsh word spoken to them and adults are excellent role models. Attitudes to learning are outstanding. Students are hungry for knowledge and ask a great many questions in lessons. Behaviour is exemplary. Students love school and this is reflected in excellent rates of attendance. Students adopt healthy lifestyles extremely well. For instance, there is a very high level of participation in sports and students are very successful in regional competitions, including swimming and athletics. Students feel safe and say that bullying is not a problem. Students' contribution to the community is outstanding. For instance, the school council and prefects do marvellous work in school. Students enjoy taking part in several community festivals each year and supporting many charities and good causes.

Leadership and management are outstanding at all levels. The headteacher is an inspirational figure and has been instrumental in developing an outstanding learning ethos. There is a common sense of purpose throughout the school with further improvements accurately identified and action taken. Students' progress is monitored rigorously. Any underperformance is identified quickly and addressed effectively. The governing body is very supportive and holds the school to account very well. The school was judged as good with very good and outstanding elements at the last inspection. In addressing the weaknesses and improving provision, the school demonstrates outstanding capacity for improvement. In view of the exceptional outcomes, value for money is excellent.

What the school should do to improve further

- The school knows itself very well and is taking effective steps to address minor improvement points. As a result, no issues for improvement are raised.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Parental comments include, 'My son is coming on in leaps and bounds because teachers value him and give him confidence.' All students make equally impressive progress, regardless of their learning difficulties. Those with the most complicated difficulties, for instance, move forward in very small steps. Their achievements are just as outstanding as those with moderate learning difficulties who might make quicker progress. Communication and language development is often a strong focus in learning and so students make very good progress in this area. Where necessary, the spoken word is accompanied by signing or the use of symbols and aids that enable students to understand and be understood. Every opportunity is taken to encourage students to learn independently through using computers. This has led to students developing very good research and ICT skills. Accreditation includes Duke of Edinburgh Awards in areas such as community service, independence, media and film skills. Outstanding links with colleges and training providers enable many students to pursue their vocational interests. For instance, many students frequently attend courses in construction, horticulture, catering and car mechanics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Remarkable personal development makes an excellent contribution to learning. Students are courteous, polite and very well mannered. Parents confirm that their children are managed especially well and that behaviour is excellent. The school council is an outstanding vehicle for personal development. Students spoke glowingly about their recent visit to the Houses of Parliament and how their experiences helped them to understand democracy and decision making. The school council has been highly influential regarding school improvements and enjoys a regular audience with the pastoral committee of the governing body. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Students respect difference and value the rich diversity of cultures in the world. For instance, regarding the wearing of veils by women in Islam, students said that this should remain a matter of choice so long as it does not disadvantage other people. Students are very thoughtful when they speak about diversity. They think carefully before using terms which they think have the potential to offend others, and if they think it does not sound right, they use neutral terms.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Excellent features of teaching include the emphasis on developing self-confidence, speaking, listening, effective use of sensory learning resources, presentation that captures students' interest and lessons that move along quickly. Consequently, students are engaged very well in learning and achieve especially well. Teachers have an excellent understanding of the wide variety of learning difficulties students experience in their classes and match work very well to individual needs. Teaching and support assistants are always very active, making an excellent contribution to the success of lessons. All these typical characteristics of teaching were seen in an ICT lesson where younger students were creating a 'talking book' on personal computers. There was a buzz of excitement in the air as students developed their communication, equipment

control and ICT skills. Progress was outstanding in every case as students, through skilful support, selected computer-generated characters to tell the stories they had planned. Assessment and marking of work are exceptional. The information collected is very well used to monitor progress and set challenging learning targets.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Excellent provision for literacy, numeracy and ICT helps all students to gain basic skills and to prepare especially well for the future. The vocational curriculum includes special events to develop enterprise skills and carefully organised work experience placements for students in the community. The atmosphere in school is electric as students take part in curriculum enrichment afternoons. Activities include music, drama, dance, skating and meditation. In a food technology session, students were on the edge of their seats, bursting to answer questions on the effect of ingredients they had used to make delicious scones. The whole curriculum is rich in chances to learn through practical experiences. Visits out of school include trips to theatres and museums and make a strong contribution to students' cultural development. Residential trips to France and Scotland help students to develop their independence very well. Visitors also make a significant contribution to learning. For instance, many sports clubs contribute to physical education and the development of skills in judo, football and table tennis to name but a few.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Every child matters at this school. Representative views from students include, 'I know that everyone here cares about me, the teachers have a great sense of humour and always help me when I get stuck with my work.' Students are treasured as individuals and they thrive because of the exceptional commitment of staff to students' welfare. Arrangements to ensure child protection, health and safety are in place and regularly reviewed. The learning mentor makes a significant contribution to the school's work by helping students overcome personal barriers to learning. Links with outside agencies, including therapists and the school nurse, are very effective. Students respond especially well to incentives and rewards for good behaviour and achievement. Celebration assemblies are frequently held and are very effective in raising students' self-confidence and aspirations. Academic guidance is outstanding. Consequently, students know how well they are doing and how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The leadership of the school is successfully focused on achievement and promoting the personal development and well-being of all students. Teaching is much improved since the last inspection because of very good monitoring, excellent professional development and the spreading of good practice. Target-setting systems for students are very rigorous and ensure that students reach challenging targets. Self-evaluation is penetrating and insightful, matching inspection findings exactly. Any necessary improvements are quickly identified and appropriate actions taken. Inclusion is at the heart of the school's work. For instance, in lessons all students receive the support they need to achieve as well as possible. Resources such as interactive whiteboards and communication aids are used very effectively to support learning. The school makes very

good use of its hydrotherapy pool to improve physical development and also to generate income through community usage. The business manager, office staff and site manager ensure that the school runs very smoothly on a day-to-day basis. The school deservedly has an excellent reputation in the community and parents are very appreciative of the school's work.

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?	1
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	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?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Inspection of Crosby High School, Liverpool, L23 2TH

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I really enjoyed meeting you and you were all very helpful. This letter is to tell you some of the things I found out about Crosby High.

You told me how happy you are at school. This is because the teachers and other adults make sure you are safe and provide lots of exciting things for you to do. I especially liked watching your curriculum enrichment afternoon. You know what you need to do in order to be healthy and safe. Your behaviour is excellent and you are extremely good young citizens. I was very impressed with the work of the school council and the way they help everyone. Well done! I am also delighted with the prefects!

You have excellent teachers and this is why you all learn such a lot. This helps to make sure you are ready to leave school when the time comes. The oldest students gain lots of certificates for their work.

The headteacher, staff and governors all work very hard indeed to make sure you all keep learning so quickly and the school keeps getting better. I have not had to tell them what to improve because they have already worked out what to do next. Your parents and carers think Crosby High is a brilliant school and I agree with them. It is outstanding! Congratulations to everyone.

Thank you for making my visit so enjoyable. It was wonderful to see your super achievements. May I wish you all a happy new year!