

Crofton School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116498
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	312342
Inspection dates	12–13 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Angela Corbett

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	1080
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Colin Hardy
Headteacher	Mr Matthew Leeming
Date of previous school inspection	15 October 2001
School address	Marks Road Stubbington Fareham PO14 2AT
Telephone number	01329 664251
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Age group	11-16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector currently on secondment to Her Majesty's Inspectorate and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Crofton School is a larger than average school serving the village of Stubbington on the outskirts of Fareham, although a significant minority of students come from further afield. The number of boys and girls in each year group has varied significantly from year to year. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is very low. There are very few students from minority ethnic backgrounds or who are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including statements, has increased in recent years but it is still below the national average. The school was awarded specialist status in science in 2005. In addition it has Enhanced Healthy School status and the Investor in People award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Crofton is a satisfactory school. Standards are above average in Key Stages 3 and 4, although current results reflect a declining trend at Key Stage 4. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, leading to satisfactory achievement at the end of Key Stage 4. Students with learning difficulties make good progress. This is as a result of effective support and curriculum programmes which is matched to their needs. Students get on well together and both they and their parents speak positively about the school.

The newly appointed headteacher has already gained the respect of parents, students and staff. He is rapidly leading change, setting a clear vision for the school and is supported by a newly formed extended senior leadership team. This team provides the school with good capacity for improvement. They have a good understanding of the priorities for school improvement, a greater focus on teaching and learning and have accountability for their areas. At the most senior level the school has a sound view of its current position and the actions needed for improvement. However, the impact of the recent actions put in place has yet to take full effect. The quality and rigour of self-evaluation is too variable to support consistent improvement at subject and department level.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Although there is some good teaching and learning, the quality is inconsistent. There are significant variations in quality both within and between subject areas. Teaching often lacks the variety, pace and challenge required to fully engage all learners, impact on their learning and so raise achievement.

The curriculum and other activities are good. The mainly academic curriculum at Key Stage 4 effectively meets the needs of the more able, who form the majority, and there is appropriate provision for other groups of learners. The Key Stage 3 curriculum is good and learners particularly enjoy the enrichment programme in Years 8 and 9.

Students' personal development and well-being are good. They are willing to learn and there is a positive working atmosphere in the school, where students feel safe. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good, although some parents and students expressed concerns about the poor behaviour of a few students in some lessons. Care, guidance and support to meet pastoral needs are good. However, academic monitoring and support is satisfactory, where a more rigorous and consistent approach to using the newly strengthened systems is required to impact on achievement. There are close links with a range of external agencies that together with the school's own staff effectively provide support and guidance to meet student needs.

The school's specialist status is making a good impact in terms of raising the profile of science and in providing both curriculum and enrichment opportunities for students. Innovative community strategies included students assisting Key Stage 1 pupils in their science week and links with a local teacher-training provider to share good science teaching practice with trainee teachers. Students spoke positively about the opportunities to be involved in science-based projects and learning opportunities such as visits to a local college and a debate on nuclear power. However, there is less evidence of the impact of specialist status in mathematics and developing teaching strategies in other subjects.

Improvements since the last inspection include the impact of specialist science status in extending and enriching the curriculum and improved achievement in English and Modern Foreign Languages. The considerable provision of additional information and communication

technology (ICT) equipment across the school is effectively supporting teaching and learning and enabling students to develop their ICT skills.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement by focusing on student learning, using a wider variety of teaching strategies and sharing good practice across the school
- Ensure that staff at all levels are rigorous in monitoring student progress linked with effective targeted intervention strategies
- Develop the involvement of subject leaders in all aspects of school self-evaluation to support improvement in their own areas

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Students enter the school with standards that are well above the national average. These standards were maintained in the national tests at Key Stage 3 in 2007, especially in English and science. The percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C at GCSE was above the national average in 2007 but lower than in previous years. Standards were highest in English, modern foreign languages and science. The percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C including English and mathematics was well above the national average. The school's commitment to the inclusion of all students is clearly demonstrated by the high number of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades at GCSE which is well above the national average.

The achievement of students is satisfactory. Achievement is strongest in English, science and German. Specialist status in science and focused support in English, have contributed to this improved achievement. The school is aware of the slower progress made by students in design and technology and information and communication technology (ICT). The more able students make relatively less progress than their peers due to insufficient challenge in some areas including geography, religious education and statistics. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities make better than expected progress due to the good care and support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Most students enjoy school and are enthusiastic learners. Attendance is above average demonstrating their positive attitudes to school. Students' mature social and moral attitudes and amicable relationships make a significant contribution to the school's calm atmosphere. Students have full access to the school building during breaks and they respond by caring well for their environment with little evidence of graffiti or litter. Behaviour is usually good in lessons. However, in some lessons, a very small minority of students can be disruptive although this does not significantly affect the learning of others. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good with a particular strength in spiritual development. Students are able to reflect maturely on a wide range of issues and topics. For example, their books show that they respond imaginatively to religious education lessons dealing with the spiritual concepts of beauty, truth and goodness. Cultural exchanges with Germany and visits to France are annual events. Students feel safe in school and adopt safe work practices. They understand very well

the features of a healthy lifestyle and are very enthusiastic about the wide range of dance and other physical activities that are on offer. Three hundred students cycle to school. Over the last two years students raised £11,000 for a range of local and international charities ranging from an animal rescue centre in Stubbington to helping street children in Peru. The curriculum provides very good opportunities for students to develop their workplace skills and thereby contribute to their economic well-being. Effective teamwork skills are a feature of many of their activities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The school has successfully been working to ensure that teachers now provide clear learning and assessment focus for each lesson. The students appreciate knowing what they are going to learn and how they can reach each level. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and usually plan their lessons well. Relationships between staff and students are a strength of the school and in most instances these promote an atmosphere which is conducive to learning. Students are usually interested and engaged in their lessons. However, they often make satisfactory rather than good progress because they are insufficiently challenged and therefore do not fulfil their potential. Students' progress is monitored in lessons; teachers readily identify underachieving students and targets for improvement are set. Staff use assessment data to set targets for students with feedback on how to improve. Unfortunately, as a number of students admitted, they sometimes ignore the advice. In many lessons good, and sometimes excellent, use is made of ICT to enhance and promote learning. In some lessons, rapid pace, high expectations, varied activities and skilful questioning exemplify good teaching. Monitoring of teaching is regularly conducted in the school but new arrangements have not yet had the consistency and rigour to impact on learning. The current school focus on teaching and learning is addressing both this issue and the level of challenge.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is clearly driven by the needs and aspirations of its students. The curriculum for Years 10 and 11 offers mainly academic courses but caters for all learning abilities. In conjunction with local partners, vocational opportunities and young apprenticeships are available. Years 8 and 9 experience an exhilarating and stimulating enrichment course. This allows them the opportunity of studying a second language or introduces them to a variety of unusual activities that expand their horizons. There are regular reviews of the curriculum, and the introduction of new courses, such as GCSE dance and physical education are in response to students' views. Careers guidance is good and students benefit from work experience and enterprise activities. There is an extensive range of well-attended extra curricular activities. Specialist status has enabled the school to enrich the science curriculum to offer greater challenge for the more able students and exciting cross-curricular projects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support for the pastoral needs of all groups of learners are good. Extensive risk assessments ensure that students are taught in a safe and welcoming environment. Arrangements for ensuring students' health and safety are well considered and secure. The arrangements for child protection and for safeguarding students are secure. Provision for students with special educational needs is good. Vulnerable students are quickly identified and effectively supported. The school works closely with a wide range of outside agencies to evaluate students' needs and provide support and guidance to students and staff. The school has a trained Emotional Literacy Support Assistant, an attendance officer and a Student Support Worker who work effectively with students that need additional support in these areas. Monitoring of students' progress by teachers has been strengthened since September 2007 but assessment, academic guidance and target-setting are not yet consistently effective in raising achievement throughout the school. Year 7 students are very positive about how they were supported in making the transition from primary school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management in the school are satisfactory. The newly appointed headteacher is having an immediate and very positive impact on all aspects of school life. He is providing clear vision and has started to secure improvement. In particular, the rigorous approach to monitoring student progress and clarifying behaviour management. Staff commented that he has been inspirational and are impressed by what he has achieved in such a short space of time. The newly formed extended leadership team includes the recently appointed deputy headteacher together with faculty leaders and the established experienced senior staff. This new group clearly demonstrate a good capacity for improvement as seen in their understanding of the issues facing the school. Recent school improvement plans have focused in detail on improving learning and raising achievement. There is now clear accountability with managers monitoring student progress and taking responsibility for their areas. Systems are developing to provide more accurate monitoring of teaching and learning but any impact on improving consistency and quality is yet to be seen. Recent self-evaluation at senior leadership level is a strength but subject leaders are not consistently and rigorously evaluating performance in their own areas. Governance is satisfactory as governors are well-informed and supportive of the school. They have a good understanding of the schools strengths and areas for development but they do not always act as sufficiently critical friends in providing challenge, particularly in relation to student achievement.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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	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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

03 March 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Crofton School, Fareham, PO14 2AT

We enjoyed the time we spent in your school on our recent visit. We would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome and for sharing your views with us in meetings, lessons and around the school. We found that Crofton is a satisfactory school with some good features.

We hope that you will take the time to read the full report but I have highlighted the key points below:

- You respect your new headteacher who is already making changes to improve the school.
- The school's examination results are above the national average but could be even better.
- You enjoy school and think that Crofton is a friendly and supportive school.
- Some teaching is good but lessons could have more varied activities to help you with your learning.
- New systems are in place to track your progress and you are offered appropriate help if it is needed.
- Your attendance is good and above the national level.
- You show respect for the school environment and raise large amounts of money for charity.
- You benefit from the wide range of activities that staff provide both in and out of school time.

To improve things further, we have asked the school to:

- Raise your achievement by focusing more on your learning and making your lessons more interesting.
- Make sure that all teachers track your progress and provide you with effective support.
- Develop the way the staff reflect on all aspects of school life so that improvements can be made in all areas.

You can help and improve your progress by listening and acting on the advice and support to you offered by teachers.

With best wishes

Angela Corbett

Lead Inspector