

# Cramlington Learning Village

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122357
<b>Local Authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	327707
<b>Inspection date</b>	11 February 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Bernard Campbell 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>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	2300
Sixth form	450
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Derek Nicholson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Derek Wise
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 May 2006
<b>School address</b>	Highburn Cramlington Northumberland NE23 6BN
<b>Telephone number</b>	01670 712311
<b>Fax number</b>	01670 730598

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<b>Age group</b>	11–18
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## Introduction

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

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: standards and achievement, teaching and learning, the curriculum, and aspects of leadership and management, personal development and well-being and of care, guidance and support. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation form, assessment data, parents' questionnaires, planning documents, observation of lessons, and interviews with staff, students and the chair of governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included in the report.

## Description of the school

Cramlington Learning Village is now one of the largest secondary schools in England. In September 2008 it changed from a 13 to 18 school to become an 11 to 18 school, as a result of the local reorganisation of schools. It now includes Years 7 and 8 and has an additional 700 students. The school is divided into junior, senior and advanced learning villages. It has specialist status for science. In 2006, as a high performing school, it gained an additional specialism for vocational education. The percentage of students eligible for a free school meal is average but overall levels of social deprivation are lower than average. The proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs is average but overall the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The great majority of students are White British. The school holds the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Healthy Schools Award, and awards for its use of information technology and its international links.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Cramlington Learning Village is an outstanding school. Students make excellent progress and achieve high standards at GCSE. The school successfully develops students' ability to think and learn independently. Students of all abilities achieve success because of the imaginative and well structured approach to students' personal development, teaching and the curriculum. The headteacher and his leadership team provide an exceptionally well communicated and coherent vision of education. The consistently high levels of achievement are the outcome of the leadership's systematic development of innovative practice over many years.

Students entered the school in Year 9 with levels of attainment a little above average. They made excellent progress at Key Stage 4 and left with standards at GCSE which were well above average. This demonstrates outstanding achievement. The progress made by those of average ability in gaining five or more good GCSEs including English and mathematics is exceptionally good. Virtually all groups of students and levels of ability, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, consistently make better than expected progress at GCSE. Students achieve especially well in the sciences and vocational subjects which are the school specialisms. They also achieve particularly well in mathematics, English, history and humanities. In the recent past, students have not made as much progress at GCSE in graphics and modern foreign languages but effective actions have been taken to remedy this and to improve take-up in modern foreign languages, which is below average. Standards achieved at the end of Key Stage 3 are above average. In 2007, the progress students made over the whole of Key Stage 3 was average. Inspection evidence confirms that students currently in Key Stage 3 are making good progress.

Students' personal development and well-being are outstanding. In September 2008, three year groups totalling 1,000 students joined the school. From discussion and interviews, students are very positive about their experience since their arrival. This was confirmed by parents' generally positive responses to the inspection questionnaire. Students of all ages clearly enjoy their education and appreciate the high quality of lessons, and the excellent and stimulating range of sporting, cultural and other activities that take place in class and after school. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are excellent due to the reflective nature of much of the learning which successfully enables students to develop their respect for others, their powers of reasoning and their skills in teamwork. Students adopt healthy lifestyles and are actively involved in monitoring and advising on healthy food in the canteen. Students adopt safe practices around the school and have good awareness of, for example, the risks of using the internet which all students use. Students confidently make the most of the excellent access to computers for work in school and at home. The attendance of learners is good and the behaviour of students is generally excellent. Students make a very positive contribution to the school community through their active participation in lessons, in extra-curricular activities and in school consultation procedures.

Teaching and learning are outstanding due to the exceptionally well developed culture of learning that permeates the whole school. This results in outstanding progress by all groups of learners at Key Stage 4. The quality of lesson planning is very high and is applied consistently across the school. Learning tasks are imaginative, engaging and practical. The school demonstrates an outstanding culture of professional development. The school's professional in-house magazine 'Muse' contains excellent articles by teachers about teaching and learning

in the classroom. This exemplifies the high quality collaboration and experimentation that takes place between staff.

The curriculum is outstanding. At Key Stage 4, the variety of pathways are well matched to students' needs and interests and provide a very good range of vocational options including an alternative curriculum for the small number of students who might otherwise disengage from learning. As a result the school has reduced the proportion of students not in education employment or training to below the area average. The new Key Stage 3 curriculum makes the most of the inspiring new building. The classroom spaces are used very effectively to enable students and staff to work in more flexible and varied ways than typically found in a secondary school, with more time to work at length and in depth on enquiry-based activities. The curriculum is highly practical and supported by high quality learning resources and computer technology which successfully enable students to develop their independence. 'Learn to Learn' lessons effectively develop students' skills and understanding of how to become successful learners. There are excellent opportunities for students to experience new areas of learning, such as cookery or Spanish; or to catch up on areas in which they are weaker; and for gifted and talented students to take on additional challenges.

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The system of regular individual student review meetings provides high quality monitoring and support for all students. Students and their parents value the good personal attention this provides. Target setting and tracking are used effectively to identify and support any student who appears to be falling behind. Procedures for safeguarding meet current government requirements.

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The headteacher provides a powerful and coherent vision of teaching and learning which is understood and shared by staff. Policies are put into practice with very clear expectations and a high degree of consistency. The school has deservedly gained a national and international reputation for the high quality of its innovation in teaching and learning. Leaders at all levels are highly reflective in their evaluation of current practice, and they carry out rigorous research of best practice from around the world. The leadership are careful in taking calculated risks, and the implementation of new developments is extremely well planned. For example, the development of the newly built Junior Learning Village has successfully created an inspiring learning environment and has been very well managed. The school is at the centre of the community and very effectively promotes community cohesion both in the school and the locality and through extensive links with schools around the world. It has very effective partnerships with industries in the region and with local schools and colleges. The governing body provides very effective support and critical questioning through its systematic engagement and thorough monitoring of the school. The school provides excellent value for money.

## **Effectiveness of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement is good in the sixth form. In 2008, GCE results were the best ever and matched the school's expectations, particularly in the proportion of the higher grades A and B achieved, which was above the 2007 national average. Results in the vocational subjects were above the national average. The evidence from the inspection indicates that standards are rising. The sixth form has grown in recent years and an increasing number of students join from other schools. There are high levels of take up in the school's science specialism where students achieve particularly well. However, the progress students make is not consistently good across all subjects.

Students' personal development and well-being are outstanding. A very high proportion of students complete the courses they begin. Students appreciate the help and guidance they receive from their teachers and the opportunity to express their views about the school. Teaching and learning are good because teachers inspire confidence through their expert subject knowledge and lesson planning is strong. Work is well matched to the capability and needs of individuals and classroom relationships are positive and productive. The curriculum is excellent. It provides ample opportunities for the majority who wish to follow academic courses and, increasing vocational opportunities provide good progression from Key Stage 4. The outstanding care, guidance and support enjoyed by pupils in the main school are continued in the sixth form. The school evaluates students' progress against challenging targets and where performance causes concern effective remedial action is taken. Most students receive valuable advice and guidance that enables them to make informed choices about the next phase of their education. Increasing numbers are graduating to higher education. Leadership and management of the sixth form are good and have a clear and successful focus on raising achievement.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the consistency of student progress across all subjects in the sixth form.

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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	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</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>	1	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1

**Achievement and standards**

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	1	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1	

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<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.



### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	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	
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1	
The attendance of learners	2	
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	1	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

### Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1	2
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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

12 February 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Cramlington Learning Village, Northumberland, NE23 6BN

Following our visit to your school, I would like to thank you all for your welcome. I particularly want to thank those of you who spoke to members of the inspection team in meetings, around the school and in lessons. You had many good things to say about your school. Inspectors agreed with much of what you said. This is what we found.

Cramlington Learning Village is an outstanding school. Students make excellent progress and achieve high standards at GCSE. The school successfully develops your ability to think and learn independently. Students of all abilities achieve success because of the well planned teaching and excellent range of courses that meet your needs and interests. You, and your parents, value the regular individual review meetings which provide you with a good level of personal attention and help you make good progress. You enjoy the excellent range of stimulating activities during and beyond the school day.

Achievement is good in the sixth form. In 2008, GCE A level results were the best ever and the proportion of the higher grades A and B achieved was above the 2007 national average. Results in the vocational subjects are above the national average. However, the progress students make is not consistently good across all subjects.

This is the improvement we have asked the headteacher and governors to make.

- Improve the consistency of student progress across all subjects in the sixth form.

We know that your headteacher, governors and all the staff at the school are working hard to further improve the school, and we wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Bernard Campbell, HMI