

St Crispin's School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110059
Local Authority	Wokingham
Inspection number	337430
Inspection dates	25–26 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Anthony Shield

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1083
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	155
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Steve Currow
Headteacher	Mr Alex Biddle
Date of previous school inspection	6 June 2007
School address	London Road Wokingham RG40 1SS
Telephone number	0118 9781144
Fax number	0118 979 5224
Email address	contact@st-crispins.wokingham.sch.uk

Age group	11–18
Inspection dates	25–26 May 2010
Inspection number	337430

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. They visited 33 lessons or parts of lessons, and 33 teachers were observed. Inspectors held meetings with governors, members of staff and students. No meeting between parents and the inspection team took place. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school documentation, including the self-evaluation form, safeguarding and other policy documents, the school improvement plan and records of students' progress. In reaching their judgements, they took into account the views of 123 parents and carers, in addition to those of students and staff, expressed in questionnaires. There were no classes in Year 11 or the sixth form during the inspection.

The inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work. They looked in detail at the following:

- whether the dip in GCSE performance in 2009 is the start of a trend and the extent of any variation in progress across different subjects and groups, particularly lower-ability boys
- the extent to which teaching and the curriculum challenge and meet the needs of all students, including lower-ability students
- the contribution of the school's specialisms and of leaders and managers at all levels to school improvement
- whether students are making good or outstanding progress in the sixth form.

Information about the school

St Crispin's School is a slightly larger-than-average secondary school serving the town of Wokingham. The school is a specialist mathematics and computing school and has recently taken on a second specialism in leadership. The number of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities in the school is broadly average. Most of these have moderate or specific learning difficulties, although there are also some students with behavioural, emotional and social problems and others on the autistic spectrum. Most students are of White British heritage. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is below average.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

St Crispin's is an outstanding school with a number of significant strengths. Students' positive attitudes and enjoyment of school contribute strongly to their achievement. The school's motto 'Excellence for all' is borne out in its determination to bring out the best in all students and develop their passion for learning. The school's ethos, high expectations and ambition generate a culture of support and care which encourages all students to thrive. Parents are enthusiastic in their support of the school. Typical of comments received by inspectors was: 'I cannot fault the school. My daughter has been given fantastic opportunities both academically and pastorally and is well set for her future.'

There are many significant strengths.

- Attainment is high and students achieve well throughout the school. GCSE examination results have been significantly above average and are improving further as the quality of teaching improves and inspires pupils to do their best.
- Most teaching is good, some is inspirational, and teachers' skilled and confident teaching inspires confidence in the students.
- Students make good progress, although this is uneven in a small number of subjects and classes. Some students lack confidence in their ability to take responsibility for their learning and in thinking for themselves.
- Relationships are excellent. As one student remarked, 'teachers respect us', and this leads to a climate of mutual respect and tolerance.
- The school's status as a mathematics, computing, and more recently leadership, school is helping to promote excellent partnerships locally, as well as an understanding of the application of these skills across the curriculum. This ensures that students are exceptionally well prepared for their futures.
- The excellent curriculum is increasingly tailored to individual needs and is enriched by an outstanding range of well-supported extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors which enliven learning.
- Students are developing leadership roles through the school council and have a well-developed sense of their responsibilities to the community, both within school and to the wider community.
- The school's links with parents are excellent, encouraging a shared partnership to pursue the best for all students.
- Students feel safe and the school's meticulous concern for their care and well-being is woven through every aspect of the school's work. Vulnerable students and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities do particularly well.
- Students do well in the sixth form and sixth formers are good role models and

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

ambassadors for the school.

The headteacher's vision is widely shared by staff and governors. Leadership capacity through the school is strong, and the headteacher is very well supported by his senior team and middle leaders. Accurate self-evaluation is steered by a comprehensive analysis of performance data and a well-considered improvement plan provides a structured framework for further improvement. The school continues to work successfully to maintain its high standards and refine its provision further. It has an outstanding capacity to sustain improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Bring rates of progress and learning for all students into line with the school's best practice by:
 - creating more opportunities for students to develop as managers of their own learning
 - developing students' skills and confidence as active and independent learners.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Students achieve well because they demonstrate a willingness to do their best, work hard in lessons and enjoy what they are doing. Work seen by inspectors confirms the picture of high attainment and of good, if occasionally uneven, progress. The school's response to some disappointing English GCSE results in 2009 was robust and students are making better progress this year. The gap between the achievement of students in the best subjects, particularly mathematics and information and communications technology (ICT), and in those such as geography and drama is narrowing all the time. Similarly, the underachievement of some lower-ability boys in 2009 has been tackled and all groups of students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are on track to achieve well this year.

Students learn well because most teachers have high expectations and explain ideas clearly. In a particularly effective Year 10 mathematics lesson, students worked purposefully and at pace to measure angles and tangents in circles. Students were kept on their toes by incisive teaching and the active learning approach adopted by the teacher. The teacher communicated her ideas confidently and the students at all times knew where they were going. When learning is active in this way, students usually make rapid progress.

Students' behaviour is consistently good and helps promote the calm climate for learning in lessons. They report that bullying is rare and dealt with effectively by adults. Around the school most students are kind and thoughtful. Students' views are taken seriously and opportunities to feed back on learning and to take a leadership role in pushing for change in such aspects as recycling initiatives, or improvements to the school canteen, are seized on enthusiastically. In this respect, and in their charitable work with the wider community, students make an outstanding contribution. Students have a good

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

awareness of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and many take part enthusiastically in the wide range of sporting activities. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The religious education curriculum plays an important part in this, and the school's values of respect, integrity and high ethical standards are successfully woven into the fabric of the school generally. Notwithstanding some well-planned curricular opportunities, there are aspects of students' understanding of cultural diversity which are underdeveloped.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

All students benefit from the school's outstanding procedures for care, guidance and support. They have trust in the adults who care for them. This confidence is underpinned by policies and robust procedures for ensuring students' safety and well-being. A number of parents of students in Year 7 commented warmly on the careful attention the school pays to transition from primary school, particularly for the most vulnerable students. Support for these students in general is a considerable strength. The proactive work of the Directors of Achievement and Wellbeing in supporting

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

individual student's academic and personal development is effective in ensuring students keep on track. As a result, all students receive well-targeted guidance and support.

The school's curriculum is under constant review to ensure that it meets the needs of all students. This is particularly marked at Key Stage 4, where a strong focus on a flexible and personal curriculum has encouraged the development of a wide spread of choices, including GCSE, Diplomas, BTEC, Young Apprentice and a range of Level 1 Pathway courses. Extensive partnership with local schools, colleges and employers enables this to happen effectively. At Key Stage 3 the school is focusing on ensuring students develop good learning skills. The curriculum is enriched by a programme of themed weeks and focus days, and of visits, visitors and clubs. There are impressive opportunities for students to develop teamwork and social skills with team-building weekends.

Improvements in teaching have been driven by a teaching and learning group, and a well-managed programme of professional development. This results in reflective teachers who are keen to share and develop their practice. At its best, teaching is inspiring and well planned, with learning activities made relevant and meaningful. ICT is very well used to support learning and teachers are skilled at knowing how to use new technologies to inspire and motivate their students. High-quality assessment, both oral and written, is used sharply to target work. All of this results in a positive atmosphere in which students work hard. However, in a few lessons learning is too passive and students are not encouraged to think for themselves.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's astute leadership has generated a strong sense of ambition both for students and the school. He is very well supported by leaders and managers at all levels. Policies and provision are under constant review to ensure they secure the best outcomes, and there is a good contribution from all leaders to school improvement. Refinements to the system for monitoring students' progress have led to a more sophisticated and focused use of performance data to raise expectations and offer interventions when needed. This careful monitoring of different groups of students underpins the school's work to promote equality and tackle discrimination. As a result, students feel valued and confident that they can achieve well. Governors are knowledgeable and dedicated, and bring a range of experience and expertise to the school's governance. They visit extensively and are meticulous in carrying out their

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

responsibilities.

Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are fully in place and the school ensures students have a strong awareness of how to keep themselves safe, including when on the internet. At the time of the inspection all safeguarding policies and vetting procedures for staff were in place. The school makes an outstanding contribution to community cohesion. The school understands its context well and actively engages with communities beyond the school, such as disabled groups and pensioners. Different nationalities represented in the school are encouraged to share their cultural heritage and there is a strong sense of community within the school. The school has made a particular success of its status as a specialist leadership, mathematics and computing school, has developed good partnerships with local schools and uses the additional resources wisely to support innovation across the school.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Sixth form

Although there were few students present in school at the time of the inspection because of preparation for examinations, it is evident from a scrutiny of performance data that students make outstanding progress. Although there has been some variation in performance in recent years, and girls tend to do better than boys, overall outcomes are outstanding. This is the result of excellent teaching. In the one sixth form lesson observed, the teacher's high level of subject knowledge and incisive questioning ensured students made excellent progress in understanding some difficult psychological concepts. Students say how much they value the tutorial style of teaching and the wide

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

range of curricular opportunities available. They feel they are well guided and supported and know that they will be challenged if they fall behind. All students take part in some form of community service, as reading and learning mentors to younger students, or in organising Christmas projects for senior citizens locally. Retention rates on courses are high and sixth formers are good role models for younger students. Students particularly appreciate the outstanding care and guidance which support them throughout their course and prompt thinking about their future choices. Progression rates to further and higher education are high. The sixth form is well led. High expectations and a drive for improvement are shared widely.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	1
The quality of provision in the sixth form	1
Leadership and management of the sixth form	1

Views of parents and carers

Responses were received from 123 parents and carers. Those responding are generally supportive of the school, and a very large majority are happy with their child's experience at St Crispin's. They are confident that students are safe and believe the school offers good opportunities for them to pursue their interests both academically and personally. While there were a small number of negative comments, especially regarding behaviour, these were more than outweighed by positive remarks from other parents and carers. Inspectors judge behaviour to be good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Crispin's School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 123 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1083 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	61	50	54	44	2	2	4	3
The school keeps my child safe	52	42	64	52	6	5	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	64	52	53	43	5	4	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	55	45	56	46	10	8	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	39	32	77	63	6	5	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	40	33	61	50	18	15	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	21	75	61	18	15	2	2
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	44	36	61	50	5	4	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	50	41	57	46	12	10	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	24	76	62	11	9	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	36	29	65	53	9	7	4	3
The school is led and managed effectively	67	54	50	41	4	3	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	72	59	43	35	4	3	3	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



27 May 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of St Crispin's School, Wokingham, RG40 1SS

Thank you for welcoming us to your school during our recent inspection. We especially enjoyed meeting and talking with you. We are very impressed by the mature way in which you contribute and take leadership roles both in the school and the wider community. St Crispin's is an outstanding school and you are rightly proud to attend it.

These are some of the main findings from our inspection.

- Most of you reach high standards because teachers work hard to ensure you reach your potential.
- All adults in the school take exceptional care to ensure you are well looked after. As a result you told us that you feel safe at school. Good relationships throughout the school make for a happy environment.
- Teaching which gets you to think for yourself and take responsibility for managing your own learning is the most successful. Some of the best teaching has these qualities and we have asked the school to make sure these are more widespread.
- The sixth form offers particularly good opportunities for you to work at a higher level.
- Many of you develop confident academic, personal and social skills which prepare you very well for your future beyond school.
- The curriculum is wide ranging and there is a good range of clubs and enrichment activities.
- The headteacher and leaders at all levels carry out their responsibilities exceptionally well.

Thank you once again for your help during our visit, and best wishes for the future!

Yours sincerely

Tony Shield

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.