

The Crossley Heath School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107575
Local Authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	364565
Inspection dates	16–17 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Angela Headon HMI

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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1041
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	258
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Robertshaw
Headteacher	Miss Helen Gaunt
Date of previous school inspection	13 September 2006
School address	Savile Park Halifax West Yorkshire HX3 0HG
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Thirty three lessons and teachers were observed. Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, groups of students, teachers and governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, assessment information, improvement planning, records of lesson observations and safeguarding arrangements. Also, 324 questionnaires from parents and carers and all those returned from students and staff were analysed.

- The achievement of students in Key Stage 4, with a focus on English, humanities and girls.
- Progress in lessons; how well teaching is informed by assessment information and to what extent students contribute to their learning.
- The impact of care, guidance and support and the curriculum on securing improvements in students' outcomes.
- The quality and consistency of leadership, particularly middle leaders, and the effectiveness of quality assurance procedures on ensuring equality of opportunity.

Information about the school

The Crossley Heath School is a larger than average foundation grammar school. It holds both specialist language and leadership partner status and has achieved a number of awards including Healthy Schools, Cultural Diversity and the Inclusion Quality Mark. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average, as is the percentage of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The percentage of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average. Pupils from approximately 80 primary schools join the school in Year 7, following the completion of an entrance examination. The school has established collaborative sixth-form provision with other schools within Campus Calderdale.

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

Crossley Heath is an outstanding school. Achievement is excellent and students are provided with outstanding care, guidance and support which gives a very secure foundation for their academic and personal development. High levels of attendance reflect students' enjoyment of school life and the vast majority of parents and carers are very positive in their support of the school.

Students' attainment in all key stages has been consistently high and sustained over a number of years. Progress in Key Stage 3 is impressive and is good overall in Key Stage 4, with excellent achievement, particularly evident in mathematics. However, although attainment is at least above average in all subjects, school leaders are not complacent and are currently strengthening performance further, particularly in English and history.

The quality of teaching is good and continuing to improve further. Teachers work hard to ensure that lessons are effective and that students understand what they need to do to achieve their targets. Very positive relationships between staff and students are evident and students' excellent behaviour makes a strong contribution to their learning. Through regular monitoring and professional development, school leaders are continuing to improve provision to ensure that the best practice is wholly consistent across all subject areas.

The outstanding curriculum, reflecting the school's specialist language status, makes a significant contribution to students' attainment and their personal outcomes. The two-year Key Stage 3 programme, personalised provision in Key Stage 4 and well-considered guidance information are key elements which help to secure students' economic well-being.

The headteacher, supported by key senior leaders with complementary skills, provides strong leadership with a clear vision of continuous improvement. Development of leaders, enhanced further through the leadership specialism, has strengthened their effectiveness at all levels. Self-evaluation is rigorous, with an accurate understanding of where there is scope for further improvements. Since the previous inspection, the school's performance has improved in a number of key areas, notably achievement, the quality of the curriculum, care, guidance and support and the sixth form. As a result, the school's capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Maintain the focus on teaching to:
 - increase the proportion of outstanding lessons across all subject areas
 - raise the quality of learning and progress in Key Stage 4.

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Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

In the large majority of lessons, students make at least good progress, confirming the school's accurate analysis that learning and progress is good overall given students' well above average starting points. Those students with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from the close attention given to their needs and make excellent progress. High attainment across the school is evident and achievement, overall, for all groups is outstanding. Students' have very positive attitudes to school and to their work and their excellent behaviour is a key factor in their successful learning.

Students report that they feel very safe in school and understand the need to adopt a healthy lifestyle. They have significant opportunities to make their views known through their responsibilities within the house system, the student council and as representatives and leaders within the school and wider community, including international links. Examples include student voice initiatives, including student subject affiliates, special event days and extensive work with partner schools locally and further afield, including sporting development work with a school in Bangladesh.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding as a result of the importance and systematic attention that the school places on these aspects throughout and across the wider curriculum, and, notably, through the specialist language status. Students show initiative, accept responsibility and understand and respect each other's differences; their understanding of cultural diversity is evident across the work of the school. Students' high attainment and attendance, together with enterprise opportunities and accreditation, and comprehensive careers guidance prepares them extremely well for their future.

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

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	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
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	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

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

How effective is the provision?

The impact of the outstanding curriculum is evident in students' excellent outcomes, both academic and personal. Key features include the two-year Key Stage 3 curriculum, allowing the students to accelerate progress overall and a well-considered programme of personalised subject options at Key Stage 4, enabling students to maximise attainment with a consideration of post-16 aspirations. The school's specialisms underpin students' curriculum experiences; all students study one or more languages in Key Stage 4 and the school's collaborative work with local and international partner schools has supported further the extensive programme of planned enrichment activities, including provision in languages, sports, the arts and study support.

The school provides a very caring and supportive environment for all students. Induction procedures are thorough and help new students to integrate well. Students are known well as individuals and they have confidence that adults look after both their academic and personal needs very effectively. The newly-appointed house achievement leaders are working productively with school staff to ensure that all students are able, through monitoring and well-targeted guidance and support, to make the most of all the school has to offer. New tutor group arrangements are complementing this work, encouraging peer support, particularly for new students and those making option choices.

There is a well-established and positive climate for learning across the school. In lessons, teachers display excellent subject knowledge and make clear to the students precisely

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what they are expected to learn, with well-planned resources to support different activities and cater for different learning styles. In the best lessons, teachers engage and inspire students, effectively sustaining their interest throughout; skilful questioning is used to extend students' thinking and to challenge their understanding and a range of discussion opportunities is evident, strengthening students' ability to work independently and ensuring that they make excellent progress. The school recognises that this best practice is not yet wholly consistent across all subject areas. Students' written work is regularly assessed, with many good examples of informative feedback, which students report is helpful in improving their work.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
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 high expectations and clear strategic direction have had a significant impact on the school's development since the previous inspection. An outstanding ethos of inclusion, achievement and equality of opportunity has been successfully promoted. The agenda for continuous improvement is shared by senior leaders and all personnel who are fully committed to securing the very best outcomes for students.

Systems of self-evaluation are rigorous, well-established and subject to regular review. As a result, school leaders are fully aware of the school's strengths and areas where further improvement is needed. There is a strong commitment to continually develop and improve the quality of teaching and students' outcomes in all subject areas; the school sets challenging targets. Monitoring procedures and performance management arrangements are sharply-focused on students' performance with a regular cycle of lesson observations, planning and workbook scrutiny and meetings on subject and student performance. Through this process, middle leaders feel empowered, yet fully accountable in their leadership role. The development of focus groups has also ensured that all staff have the opportunity to contribute fully to the school's key priority areas.

Language and leadership specialisms, together with extensive partnership work, have contributed significantly to the school's success and are central to the school's extended community provision and excellent promotion of community cohesion. Examples include work with the local authority, a range of partner schools, businesses and higher education institutions. Safeguarding procedures are good with all requirements, including mandatory staff checks, in place. The governing body is well informed, supportive and through active involvement, monitors the school's work effectively. The school achieves outstanding value for money.

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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	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
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

The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is outstanding. Students speak very positively about the high quality of provision. They regard the excellent relationships with staff, the community ethos and the individual preparation for future employment or higher education as key strengths. They are fully involved in the life of the school and cite examples including working with younger students, improving teaching as student affiliates and organising house events. Teaching styles ensure that students are well-prepared for the demands and expectations of higher education. The curriculum provides a full range of academic courses with access to a variety of enrichment opportunities; collaborative work with local schools has enhanced and supported further curriculum developments. Leadership and management of the sixth form ensures subject and individual student achievement and provision, including that of other providers, is closely monitored. As a result, students are highly successful, with excellent performance evident in a significant number of subjects.

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

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

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Views of parents and carers

Approximately one third of parents and carers returned completed questionnaires.

Of these, almost all were happy with their children's experience at school. The overwhelmingly majority indicated that their children enjoyed school and were making enough progress; also teaching was good and the school kept their children safe. Most parents and carers agreed with all other aspects of the school's work. There was no particular pattern to the negative comments made by a few parents and carers, although a very small minority indicated that the school did not take into account their suggestions and concerns. Inspectors found that, overall, the school engages well with parents and carers, with a full range of communication arrangements evident.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Crossley Heath 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 324 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1041 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	147	45	165	51	10	3	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	157	48	161	50	5	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	124	38	174	54	21	6	3	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	152	47	155	48	10	3	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	131	40	179	55	9	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	78	24	184	57	41	13	5	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	62	19	211	65	38	12	1	0
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)	107	33	180	56	17	5	3	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	123	38	172	53	15	5	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	104	32	176	54	17	5	5	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	57	18	175	54	47	15	12	4
The school is led and managed effectively	103	32	180	56	27	8	8	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	156	48	157	48	8	2	1	0

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 all 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



18 February 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of The Crossley Heath School, Halifax, HX3 0HG

Thank you for the warm welcome which you gave to inspectors during our recent inspection of your school. We enjoyed talking to you in lessons, in meetings and at social times. Thank you also for completing your questionnaires which we reviewed, alongside those of your parents and carers; these were very helpful.

We are pleased to tell you that your school is outstanding. This is a summary of our findings, which we hope will be of interest to you.

- You achieve excellent examination results and make good progress overall between Year 7 and Year 11.
- You enjoy coming to school and the curriculum and care, guidance and support you receive are outstanding.
- The quality of teaching is good and continuing to improve further. Your attitudes to learning are excellent and you work hard.
- You have an excellent sixth form and your school is very well led and in a strong position to improve even further.

Although your school is outstanding, school leaders have worked with us to consider what the school should do next to raise your performance even higher. This included increasing the number of outstanding lessons in all subjects to improve learning and progress further in Key Stage 4.

Thank you again for your help during the inspection. We hope that you continue to enjoy your time at Crossley Heath and wish you all every future success.

Yours sincerely

Angela Headon

Her Majesty's Inspector

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