

# St Crispin's School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110059
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wokingham District Council
<b>Inspection number</b>	288575
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6-7 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Emma Ing 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>	Comprehensive
<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	1034
6th form	174
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr M Brooke
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr A Biddle
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 March 2003
<b>School address</b>	London Road Wokingham RG40 1SS
<b>Telephone number</b>	0118 9781144
<b>Fax number</b>	0118 9795224

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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

St Crispin's is an average sized secondary school set in a prosperous area close to Reading. Most students are from a White British background and relatively few speak English as an additional language. In comparison with students at other schools across the country many, but not all, are materially advantaged and more than is usual have parents who have attained higher educational qualifications.

Although across the school the proportion with learning difficulties and disabilities is average, in some year groups, such as the current Year 10, as many as one quarter of students have such difficulties.

The school achieved specialist status in mathematics and computing in September 2004. It is both a CISCO and Microsoft Academy and is linked with a construction company as part of a building awareness programme.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

St Crispin's is a good school. Parents are extremely positive about the education that it offers their children and students tell us that they enjoy their learning and the opportunities that the school provides. They feel well cared for and have developed a good understanding of how to live healthily and safely.

Most teaching in the school is good. Lessons are well planned to ensure progression in learning and students are given opportunities to find out for themselves and encouraged to work in teams and take responsibilities. However, teachers use data inconsistently. They do not ensure that all teaching matches the needs of individuals in every lesson or identify for students what their next steps need to be in learning. The school uses a tracking system to ensure that the progress made by students is monitored and recently has begun to intervene and explicitly share with students what exactly they need to do to achieve their target grade. Students appreciate this and it has helped them to make good progress.

Students are on track to achieve well and a high proportion attain five good grades at GCSE including English and mathematics, which prepares them well for subsequent courses both in the school and further afield. Although there are a few students whose behaviour disrupts learning, the attitudes and behaviour of most are exemplary. The students are courteous, responsible and diligent. They contribute fully to their community through a prefect system, mentoring programmes, drama and sport and also to the wider community through community service and many charitable activities.

The curriculum that the school offers is satisfactory. It is good in the sixth form and there are good elements throughout such as vocational options in information and communication technology (ICT) and the option that students have to study two languages at Key Stage 4. However, there is an insufficient range of courses so that students are missing out on opportunities to study applied or vocational subjects at a high level and some students are not offered easily accessible courses appropriate to their interests, aspirations and abilities. As some senior leaders suggest, in a few cases this may have led to poor attendance and underperformance.

Leaders of the school work hard to achieve these positive outcomes. They are very wide ranging in their evaluation of their performance at all levels, but their judgements in some areas are rather generous and they are not consistently good at producing sharp targets and monitoring their progress against these. Nevertheless, where departments are underperforming senior leaders are robust in their leadership and management of this.

## Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

### Grade: 2

Sixth formers lead the school very well. They are involved in the life of the school and set good role models for younger students. Some guide younger students with very helpful academic mentoring taking place in both Business Studies and mathematics. They take an important lead role in the school's charity work and are very well prepared for life at university.

They do well academically at the school making good progress in their studies. This is a result of good teaching and careful tracking of their progress coupled with very good encouragement and guidance from tutors. Systems are being developed to ensure that this is thoroughly efficient.

Although the curriculum in the sixth form lacks a breadth of vocational options it effectively meets the needs of those that stay on after the age of sixteen. The CISCO course, which is highly valued by industry, offers students practical high level learning to the extent that, with guidance, students have hard-wired parts of the school.

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

- Refine the schools' systems for self-evaluation to enable realistic monitoring of its progress against sharply defined performance objectives across the school as a whole.
- Develop the onsite curriculum offered to students to ensure breadth at different levels.
- Develop the quality of assessment of students' work across the school to ensure that students know what they have to do next to make progress and improve their work and that teachers plan lessons to meet individual students' needs.

## **Achievement and standards**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Students enter the school with just above average attainment. As a result of the good teaching and careful intervention if they under-perform, they make good progress. The standards they reach both at Key Stage 4 and at the end of their sixth form studies are above the national average and the school's data shows that they are on track to do even better this year. The school's specialism of mathematics and computing lead the way and progress and attainment in these two subjects is exceptionally good. Until recently the progress students made in English has been average rather than good. Leaders at the school have been working on this and a number of new initiatives introduced into this subject are leading to significant improvements.

The good quality support and challenging targets set for students with learning difficulties and disabilities is reflected in the fact that they make better progress than their peers. No single group, however, performs less well than the cohort as a whole.

## **Personal development and well-being**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

Behaviour of students is generally very good and the atmosphere around the school is purposeful and calm. However some parents and students told us that in a few lessons the behaviour of students interferes with learning. Students enjoy school and are emphatic in their appreciation of it and of the work of teachers and support staff. They have a strong sense of responsibility, both towards their own learning and towards other people. The prefect system works well to support the smooth running of the school and many students are involved in peer mentoring and also in fundraising for different charities.

Students tell us that they feel safe in school, especially as a result of recently introduced security measures. Although they acknowledge that there is some bullying they are confident that it is well dealt with by staff and they tell us that racism is not a problem. They act safely and are very well informed about healthy lifestyles. They participate well in sporting and cultural activities such as drama and music. The social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of students is therefore good overall but students have little awareness of the different cultural heritages of their peers or of much of our country's population.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Lessons are well planned and clearly focussed on learning objectives which are generally shared with students. They are structured well to ensure progression but not always planned to ensure that individuals are all working at a challenging level. Explanations are clear and the subject knowledge of teachers is good. Students are often given the opportunity to take responsibility for their learning which is extended by careful questioning from the teacher or learning support assistant. They have also been taught to lead others and work well in groups to share and extend thinking as demonstrated in both a physical education lesson and in a science lesson. Although there are some opportunities for using technology to support learning in the school, the use of new and emerging technologies such as interactive whiteboards is relatively under-developed.

In some subjects teachers make students sharply aware of what level they are working at and what precisely they need to do to improve on a regular basis through their marking of books. This practice, which students recognise to be very helpful, is not consistent throughout the school and across all year groups.

### Curriculum and other activities

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The schools' specialism in mathematics and computing has enriched the curriculum offered to students. The school collaborates well with local primaries offering experiences in ICT to their pupils and also offers training to teachers, parents and others. These initiatives contribute well to raising standards. There are other strengths in the curriculum too. The school prepares students well for working life and gives them good opportunities to develop business and enterprise skills. The links with a construction company, enterprise days and the use of visiting speakers are some of the ways in which school introduces students to industry. Students value hugely and benefit from the trips offered and speak convincingly of their learning from these as well as the fun that they had on them. They also appreciate the range of sporting and cultural activities on offer to them and are proud of their school productions and teams. However only limited reference is made to different cultures through the lessons. The curriculum overall is satisfactory rather than good because opportunities are missed to give all students the chance to study vocational subjects. There are also too few courses easily accessible to students for whom GCSEs are not ideal.

### Care, guidance and support

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Nearly all learners' needs are provided for well. Students are taught about healthy lifestyles and about staying safe. They are very carefully inducted into the school and given good guidance for the next stage of education. The school monitors their attendance carefully and works well with parents and other agencies to support students' learning. The legal requirements for

safeguarding are met and appropriate measures are in place to ensure the health and safety of students.

The support for students with learning difficulties is good. The school makes satisfactory provision to meet the needs of learners who are new to this country but the advice given to teachers on how to support these students lacks appropriate suggestions for meeting their needs.

The school has good systems in place for tracking the progress students make and these are increasingly effectively used to ensure appropriate intervention although, as the school is aware, this is not yet fully embedded across the school and some departments do not use it efficiently.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The headteacher has developed a senior team that works together well. As a result of their leadership the school site is orderly and a positive ethos prevails. Over the last year they have introduced measures to improve the progress made by students with good effect. Together with middle leaders they evaluate the work of the school systematically. In some aspects this is very impressive, for example, middle leaders have been encouraged to undertake a rigorous review of student progress based on examination results and the strengths and weaknesses of departments are fully reviewed on a rolling programme. However opportunities to learn from the 'big picture' are missed. For example, the quality of teaching and learning is reviewed across the school but there is not yet a centralised way of analysing the outcomes in order to determine whole school priorities for improvement. Equally, some judgements are too generous and departments and leaders do not generate sharp performance targets and monitor progress towards these. The school can demonstrate that, particularly where there is underperformance, senior leaders are dogged in supporting departments and have a good track record in improvement. Consequently, capacity for further improvement is good.

The governing body is well managed to ensure that the business of the school can be effectively performed and supports the school well. In particular, the 'Governors-in-School' Day enables nearly all the governing body to join the school for a working day to find out about its work. Governors monitor the progress of the school and are not afraid to challenge senior leaders but in some areas do not demand sharp appraisals of the school's performance based on rigorous data. The resources that the school has are used well.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<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>	2	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
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	2	

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	2

<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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	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	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
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	

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

19 June 2007

Dear Students

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

It was a delight to meet and speak with many of you on our inspection visit recently. We very much enjoyed watching you at work. We were impressed by your courtesy, your sense of responsibility and your enthusiasm for school. Thank you for welcoming us and for sharing your views.

We agreed with you and your parents that it is a good school. We can see why you appreciate the staff and the help that they give you. You are making good progress with your work. Many of you explained to us, that this is because the school has begun to intervene to support you when you fall behind and also when teachers tell you exactly what you need to do to improve. As not all teachers routinely do this yet, we have asked that they do. Those of you with learning difficulties are well supported in your learning.

The teaching throughout the school is good and you respond well to it. We were pleased to see you working independently and thinking things out for yourselves in many lessons. Sometimes, however, teachers are not very good at ensuring that the learning matches the needs of every individual in the class and we were disappointed to hear from a few of you and your parents that behaviour in a few classes is interrupting your learning. You all need to work together on this and make sure that every student knows that this is not acceptable.

We agree with you that there are lots of exciting opportunities for you to learn out of school on trips and also from visiting speakers and were impressed about the extent to which you participate in such events and also contribute to the community by acting as prefects, mentoring and fundraising. We were a little concerned though that you do not know much about each other's cultural backgrounds. Your curriculum is satisfactory but we have asked the school to develop the onsite curriculum offered to students to ensure breadth at different levels.

Your school is well led and staff work hard. They have good systems in place to ensure that everything is working as it should but we have asked them to refine them in order to be able to monitor the progress the school makes more effectively.

Yours faithfully

Emma Ing

Her Majesty's Inspector