



**St Crispin's School  
The City of Edinburgh  
Council  
25 August 2009**

This report tells you about the quality of education at the school. We describe how children benefit from learning there. We explain how well they are doing and how good the school is at helping them to learn. Then we look at the ways in which the school does this. We describe how well the school works with other groups in the community, including parents<sup>1</sup> and services which support children. We also comment on how well staff and children work together and how they go about improving the school.

Our report describes the 'ethos' of the school. By 'ethos' we mean the relationships in the school, how well children are cared for and treated and how much is expected of them in all aspects of school life. Finally, we comment on the school's aims. In particular, we focus on how well the aims help staff to deliver high quality learning, and the impact of leadership on the school's success in achieving these aims.

If you would like to learn more about our inspection of the school, please visit [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk). Here you can find analyses of questionnaire returns. Where applicable, you will also be able to find descriptions of good practice in the school.

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.

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## **1. The school**

St Crispin's School is a non-denominational school. It serves the city of Edinburgh, with a few pupils attending from surrounding education authorities. The school provides education for primary- and secondary-aged children and young people who have additional support needs arising from severe and complex learning difficulties including autism spectrum disorder. The roll was 55 when the inspection was carried out in May 2009. Pupils' attendance was above the national average in 2007/2008. The headteacher has overall responsibility for an outreach facility named the Sycamore Outreach Service, which was recently opened to support young people who have learning difficulties and associated challenging behaviour. Three members of St Crispin's staff, including the depute headteacher, provide support to the Sycamore Outreach Service. This service is based within a Capability Scotland facility.

## **2. Particular strengths of the school**

- Children and young people's positive and enjoyable experiences in expressive arts.
- Approaches which help every child to communicate.
- Supportive teamwork, including effective working with professionals from a number of agencies.

### **3. Example of good practice**

- The St Crispin's Samba Allstars Band.

### **4. How well do children learn and achieve?**

#### **Learning and achievement**

Children are motivated to learn, and respond positively to teachers and support staff. They enjoy aspects of their learning and feel safe and happy in school. Only a few activities develop children's confidence sufficiently and encourage them to play a full part in learning. These activities include the very successful school show 'Carnival', which is based on a Mardi Gras theme and the very good samba band where young people work very well as a team. A variety of out-of-class experiences help children to develop a sense of responsibility. They participate well in community events and fundraising for charity. Over a third attend the well-organised after-school club. However, they need further opportunities to develop independence and take more responsibility for their own learning.

Children and young people use the local woods and school garden well to develop their understanding of the natural environment. They enjoy growing vegetables which they harvest and cook. The school has achieved an Eco-Schools Scotland green flag award for its good work. Children and young people are learning how to stay healthy and the school has achieved a local authority award as a Health Promoting School. Young people in the senior classes gain important life skills through a good range of leisure and personal care activities. Although children are making progress in their personal and social development, the restricted layout of classrooms limits their opportunities to develop their independence skills.

Children are making good progress from their prior levels of attainment in language and communication and satisfactory progress in understanding and relating to the environment (URE). They could make better progress if their learning targets were more challenging. In recent years attainment levels have declined, particularly in URE. In the past young people were presented for National Qualifications (NQs) at Access level. NQ awards recognise young people's successes across the curriculum. This year, young people in the senior classes are working towards an Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) award instead of NQs. In language and communication, children listen well to staff and communicate effectively using their preferred communication method. A few have effective early reading skills. A few children and young people are developing their writing skills well and use information and communications technology (ICT) successfully. In URE, children at the early stages have learned about colours, number and shape. Learners play games and take part in a range of activities to develop their knowledge of number. Young people at the senior stages use their numeracy skills effectively to shop at local stores and order food at a café. Children and young people learn about the environment through a range of topics. They are making very good progress in music, art, physical education and drama.

## **Curriculum and meeting learning needs**

The curriculum includes a broad range of experiences. Timetabling arrangements make it difficult for staff to monitor the breadth and depth of experiences offered to children and young people. Staff are beginning to plan projects and topics that help children make links across different areas of the curriculum. Staff, including visiting specialists, provide valuable and enjoyable learning opportunities in the expressive arts. Most children receive two hours of quality physical education each week. ICT is used well to enhance children's learning. Overall, the curriculum does not ensure sufficient progression in the development of skills and understanding. Staff support children very well when they first come to school and when

they leave to move onto other provisions. A few young people have a short school week.

Staff know children well and plan the majority of tasks and activities to match their individual learning needs. A few activities take good account of their interests and talents. However, planning does not take full account of what children already know. Children are working well through the learning targets within their individualised educational programmes (IEPs). Some learning targets are too easy. Speech and language therapists work well with staff, parents and children to help children to communicate effectively. These approaches are used well across the school. Support staff are caring and thoughtful when helping children to learn. The accommodation restricts children's movements in class and around the school. The Sycamore Outreach Service rightly focuses on helping young people develop positive attitudes to managing their behaviour. Staff work very well with the young people in improving their behaviour.

## **5. How well do staff work with others to support children's learning?**

The school has improved its partnership with parents. The Parent Council works well with the school to raise money for events and charities. Parents are involved well in their children's learning and in school life. A few support the school well during outings and activities. The school keeps parents well informed through detailed progress reports, parent-teacher meetings and annual reviews. They welcome the informative and well-presented newsletters which celebrate children's successes. The school deals promptly and effectively with any complaints or concerns from parents. The quality of children's learning experiences is improved by the school's partnerships with social work, education and health support services.

## **6. Are staff and children actively involved in improving their school community?**

Staff enjoy working in the school and share their practice well with each other. They have formed a range of working groups to develop their practice and identified a number of priorities for improvement. However, arrangements for evaluating the quality of education and tracking and planning children's progress are not effective enough. Children would benefit from more opportunities to exercise responsibility, both in their learning and more widely across the school. More effective improvement planning is needed to ensure that attainment improves and children's learning needs are met more effectively. Senior managers need to monitor individual timetables and share with staff how they are going to take forward developments in the curriculum.

## **7. Does the school have high expectations of all children?**

Staff have very positive relationships with children. They provide a very caring environment where almost all children and young people respond and cooperate well. Intimate care procedures are well established and applied sensitively across the school. Staff are committed to the wellbeing and support of all children and most have an appropriate awareness of child protection procedures. The training of a few staff needs to be updated. Children's wider achievements are celebrated at assemblies and displayed effectively throughout the school. Teachers do not always set high enough expectations for children's learning. The school is aware of the need to listen more to children's views and to develop their understanding of equality and fairness. Children have good opportunities for religious observance at regular assemblies which are sometimes led by the school chaplain.

## **8. Does the school have a clear sense of direction?**

The headteacher is regarded highly by staff, partner agencies and parents. She has established effective teamwork across the school and is a supportive and approachable leader. The deputy headteacher works well with the headteacher and carries out her remit effectively, particularly the work of the Sycamore outreach service. The three principal teachers are developing their roles in ICT, drama and health education well. The headteacher and management team need a clear vision for improving the school. They need to focus on raising staff expectations of what children can do and involve them more in their learning.

## **9. What happens next?**

We will carry out a follow-through inspection visit within one year of publication of this report and will report to parents on the extent to which the school has improved. Following that visit, we may continue to check the improvements the school has made. We may also carry out a second follow-through inspection within two years of the original inspection report. If a second follow-through inspection visit is necessary then it will result in another report to parents on the extent of improvement that the school has made.

We have agreed the following areas for improvement with the school and education authority.

- Use the results of self-evaluation to develop a more ambitious vision and stronger direction.
- Involve children and young people in their learning and help them to become more independent.
- Improve attainment across the school and recognise young peoples' successes through appropriate accreditation.
- Develop the curriculum in line with the national initiative *Curriculum for Excellence* and provide clearer guidance for staff.

Quality indicators help schools and nursery classes, education authorities and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved in the work of a school and a nursery class. You can find these quality indicators in the HMIE publications *How good is our school?* and *The Child at the Centre*. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers evaluations of three important quality indicators to keep track of how well all Scottish schools and nursery classes are doing.

Here are the evaluations for St Crispin's School.

<b>Improvements in performance</b>	<b>weak</b>
<b>Learners' experiences</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>
<b>Meeting learning needs</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the school.

<b>The curriculum</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>
<b>Improvement through self-evaluation</b>	<b>weak</b>

**HM Inspector:** Jane Lopez  
25 August 2009

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This report uses the following word scale to make clear judgements made by inspectors.

excellent	outstanding, sector leading
very good	major strengths
good	important strengths with some areas for improvement
satisfactory	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	major weaknesses