

Cressey College

Coombe Cliff, Coombe Road, Croydon, Surrey CR0 5SP

Inspection date

23 September 2021

Overall outcome

The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

All paragraphs

- Some pupils join the school part-way through the academic year. Most have experienced disruption to their education. In response, leaders have developed a carefully planned induction programme to identify gaps in pupils' learning and pinpoint the support they need.
- Staff focus, first and foremost, on developing pupils' social and emotional skills to help them get ready to learn. As a result, the attitudes to learning of most pupils improve during their time in school and they learn and make progress.
- Pupils settle in quickly, largely owing to an appropriately interwoven programme of therapy, care and education. Older pupils take accredited courses and achieve useful qualifications at various levels. This includes functional skills qualifications in English, mathematics and science, and a suitable range of GCSEs in academic and practical subjects.
- Leaders have carried out an initial review of all the subjects taught in the primary and secondary phases of the school. Curriculum plans have been revised to make clear the order in which subject-specific knowledge and skills are taught. As a result, these plans support teachers' work to identify the next steps in pupils' learning. This means that there are strong links between the content that is taught in different key stages in the same subject. In some subjects, the work to improve the quality of the curriculum is not complete.
- Teachers combine their knowledge of the subject with the needs of individual pupils to deliver the planned curriculum. They are skilful at stimulating pupils' thinking. Most pupils are confident to speak and take part in a discussion.
- Teachers make regular checks on what pupils already know and what else they need to learn. Teachers use this information, alongside information shared by therapists, to plan individual and more demanding programmes of learning.

- Leaders have ensured that a suitable assessment framework is in place across subjects. Regular checks on pupils' learning ensure that the information recorded is up to date. Reports are provided to parents and carers about pupils' progress as required.
- The independent school standards in this part are met.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

All paragraphs

- Leaders have created suitable resources to teach about the protected characteristics, including disability and sexual orientation, in the context of discrimination in society. Teachers use these to provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on the importance of good physical and mental health in the school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. A suitable programme for relationships and sex education is also in place, informed by consultation with parents. It encourages older pupils to think in depth about the importance of consent in the context of intimate relationships. Pupils talk knowledgeably about the negative impacts of harmful sexual behaviour.
- Staff implement suitable plans to actively promote fundamental British values. For instance, citizenship lessons help pupils learn and remember more about democracy and the rule of law. Pupils learn about the belief systems of the main religions represented in Great Britain. This aspect of the curriculum is taught in the context of respect for and tolerance towards those of other faiths and those of no faith.
- The behaviour policy helps pupils to distinguish between right and wrong. Leaders have placed a clear emphasis on establishing routines through positive talk and constant encouragement. This is part of the school's philosophy of teaching important life skills to pupils, so they gradually become confident to do things on their own.
- The independent school standards in this part are met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b), 9(a), 9(b), 10, 11, 12, 14, 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- The school has a safeguarding policy that is made available to parents on request. It is due to be published on the school's website after review by the proprietor body. The policy pays due regard to the guidance issued by the Secretary of State. Leaders have a strong understanding of the current guidance and update their safeguarding policy regularly to reflect it.
- A strong culture of safeguarding prevails throughout the school. Staff are vigilant and quick to spot if pupils may be suffering harm. They report any concerns to leaders quickly and leaders follow up the concerns swiftly. All concerns are documented appropriately so that any emerging patterns or issues for individual pupils can be identified and responded to. Leaders work closely with external agencies, such as social care, to ensure that the right help is provided to keep pupils safe.
- The school has suitable behaviour and anti-bullying policies in place. Staff apply behaviour rewards and sanctions consistently. The school places a strong focus on de-

escalating challenging situations with pupils. This approach has resulted in reducing the need for physical intervention. Staff have the appropriate training for restraining pupils should the need arise. All incidents are appropriately logged. Overall, leaders' focus on promoting positive behaviours has been successful. Staff report that the school is calmer, and pupils are more settled.

- Leaders regularly review the school's health and safety policy and ensure that it is implemented effectively. For example, leaders ensure that fire safety measures are followed, including in holding regular fire drills. Fire safety audits are carried out and safety equipment, such as emergency lighting and fire extinguishers, is checked regularly. In addition, leaders have implemented a suitable action plan to mitigate the risks identified in the most recent external fire risk assessment.
- Throughout the day, pupils are safely supervised. Staffing ratios are appropriate and meet pupils' specific needs. In some cases, staff supervise pupils on a one-to-one basis.
- Leaders assess risks posed by activities such as horse-riding and swimming. When any risks are identified, leaders take action to mitigate the risks and reduce any potential harm to staff and pupils. Leaders have suitable risk assessments in place for pupils. They ensure that the right support is in place to keep pupils as safe as possible, both in and outside school.
- The independent school standards listed above are met.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

All paragraphs

- Leaders pay attention to detail when recruiting and inducting new staff. They closely follow the guidance and procedures provided by the central Horizon Care Education team. For example, careful checks are carried out on an applicant's employment history, including appropriate police checks if they have previously worked abroad. The school's single central record is compliant and meets statutory requirements.
- Leaders have developed efficient systems to check the suitability of agency staff. Leaders are equally knowledgeable about the checks required for other adults who may need to access the school's sites, for instance volunteers and contractors. Leaders work with the central safeguarding team to make sure that the system is implemented as intended.
- The standards in this part are met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

All paragraphs

- Leaders prioritise health and safety by paying attention to detail with regard to maintenance of the multiple sites. The premises are clean and well maintained. Signage is clear throughout the buildings and all classrooms have sufficient space for the number of pupils taught.

- All the spaces available are used well, for instance for the provision of therapy sessions and the teaching of specialist subjects such as art, science and design technology. A suitable outside space is available for play and recreation.
- The toilets are sufficient and suitable for use by pupils. A separate toilet is used by staff. The supply of hot and cold running water is maintained at an appropriate temperature.
- The medical room is located close to a toilet and includes washing facilities. First-aid equipment is stored in a lockable cupboard.
- The acoustic features, sound insulation and internal and external lighting are all suitable. Pupils have access to adequate drinking water from the kitchen on each site.
- The school's multiple sites have no changing and showering facilities. The school makes use of several different sports centres and other leisure facilities for physical education that provide pupils with access to changing and showering facilities.
- The independent school standards in this part are met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

All paragraphs

- The Department for Education (DfE) commissioned this inspection to check whether the school continues to meet all the standards in relation to parts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 8 of the independent school standards.
- Leaders demonstrate a strong understanding of the independent school standards. They have developed comprehensive policies and procedures that are implemented effectively across all sites. The proprietorial body has an effective monitoring system in place for checking the quality of implementation on a monthly basis. The managing director for education provides suitable scrutiny and challenge, supported by regular evaluation provided by an external reviewer.
- The relationship between leaders and staff is based on trust and mutual respect. Staff report that senior leaders are very approachable and treat them as professionals. Staff said that leaders care about them as individuals and value their efforts, for instance through the 'employee of the month' scheme. Leaders provide regular opportunities for staff training and professional development.
- Leaders are committed to actively promoting pupils' mental health and well-being. This commitment is shared by all staff.
- The independent school standards in this part are met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

School details

Unique reference number	133438
DfE registration number	306/6104
Inspection number	10202374

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School status	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	5 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	188
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	12
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Horizon Care and Education Group Ltd
Chair	Paula Keys
Headteacher	Krishna Purbhoo
Annual fees (day pupils)	£38,000 to £81,000
Telephone number	020 8686 5840
Website	www.horizoncare.co.uk
Email address	m.white@cresseycollege.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	27 February to 7 March 2018

Information about this school

- Cressey College is a multi-site special school for male and female pupils between the ages of five and 19 years who have social, emotional and mental health difficulties.
- All pupils have education, health and care plans for their social, emotional and mental health needs and other additional special educational needs, including autism spectrum disorder.

- All pupils have a history of disrupted education. Pupils are placed at the school from 13 local authorities, the majority of these in London. Almost all pupils need intensive adult support to help them manage their behaviour.
- The school is based at seven separate sites. The addresses of the school's sites are: Denmark Hall, Denmark Road SE25 5RE; Moorings, 92 Park Lane CR0 1JF; Adeline, 162 Selsdon Road CR2 6PJ; Birdhurst, 106–108 Park Lane CR0 1JB; Chapples, 61 Kingston Road SW19 1JN and Sanderstead, 112 Orchard Road CR2 9LQ.
- The school received its last full inspection in February 2018, when the overall effectiveness of the school was judged to be good.
- In August 2019, the school had a material change inspection as a result of which it was allowed to increase the number on roll from 135 to 175 (with up to 50 further pupils taught off site).
- The current headteacher joined the school in April 2021.

Information about this inspection

- This emergency inspection was commissioned by the DfE, the registration authority for independent schools. This was in response to serious concerns relating to safeguarding, quality of education, pupils' personal development, their health, safety and welfare, the suitability of staff, the quality of the premises, and leadership and management.
- The inspector was asked to focus on paragraphs 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14 and 16 in part 3 and all the paragraphs in parts 1, 2, 4, 5 and 8 of the independent school standards. These relate to the quality of education, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, suitability of the premises, the associated safeguarding, health and safety arrangements, suitability of staff, and leadership and management.
- The inspection was conducted without notice.
- The inspector held discussions with the executive headteacher and the managing director of education of Horizon Care Education, the proprietorial body. The inspector also met with a range of leaders, teachers, support staff and pupils on five different sites of this multi-site provision.
- The inspector toured the school's sites with the executive headteacher to check compliance with part 5 of the independent school standards.
- The inspector reviewed schemes of work and visited some lessons on three of the sites.
- The inspector reviewed key documents and policies related to safeguarding and the school's risk assessment procedures.

Inspection team

Nasim Butt, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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