

Inspection of Croxley Danes School

Baldwins Lane, Croxley Green, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire WD3 3LR

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 January 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Croxley Danes school is a growing school community. The school is warm and welcoming. Pupils, particularly the oldest, are proud of being part of the school's journey since it opened for pupils in 2017.

Pupils attend school regularly. They get on well with each other and look out for their friends. Most pupils have not experienced bullying or hurtful language. They know that if it did happen, staff would sort it out. These negative experiences are not tolerated by anyone. They are dealt with effectively.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils generally live up to this standard. They value the clear rewards system for those that who behave well. Poor behaviour, if it occurs, is dealt with quickly and effectively. The school is a safe and calm environment for pupils to learn.

A range of experiences support pupils to be well-rounded individuals. Regular 'personal development' lessons teach pupils about respecting others and managing healthy relationships with their peers. Clubs, like the 'Crox band', are well attended across all year groups. An active student council gives pupils positions of responsibility. Their views are used by leaders to improve the school further.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Since 2017, leaders and trustees have worked determinedly to build and establish a brand new school for the local community. From moving between buildings to ensuring that the facilities are fit for purpose, staff and pupils have risen to the challenge. The work has paid off as Croxley Danes' pupils access a good-quality education and school experience.

Pupils study a range of different subjects that match the ambition of the national curriculum. Subject leaders, with support from the school and trust, have designed clear curriculum plans. Each plan identifies the important knowledge for pupils to learn. This knowledge is organised in a logical and helpful way so pupils build and develop their understanding. In English, for example, older pupils use their knowledge of the text 'Frankenstein' to make comparisons with how a person's appearance is viewed in society today.

A number of teachers are new to the school. Leaders have inducted and supported these staff through effective training. Teachers have good subject knowledge. Many choose appropriate activities that support pupils' learning. Regular checks on pupils' knowledge are clearly mapped into the curriculum plans. These 'assessment points' support teachers to identify what knowledge pupils have and where they may need extra help.

Leaders have ensured that the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are accurately identified. The education, health and care (EHC) plans for pupils with high needs show exactly what staff must do to help them. Teachers use this information to make helpful changes to make the curriculum accessible for all. There are exceptions, however. Some staff do not do this well. This means a small number of pupils with SEND, without EHC plans, do not always get the right help in the classroom. They do not achieve as well as their peers.

There is a growing love of reading across the school. Pupils are accessing a range of books through the school's library. The school's weakest readers are identified early when they join in Year 7. While many weak readers are supported well, a number still need support to catch up. Leaders have plans to improve the support for the weakest readers. The plans, however, are not fully in place.

Both the school's personal, social, health and education (PSHE) and careers curriculums are well planned. In PSHE, important topics such as the risks of gambling or taking drugs are taught in a relevant and age-appropriate way. Additionally, high-quality careers advice and guidance supports pupils to make considered choices about their next steps.

Behaviour in the school is well managed. Pupils behave with respect and courtesy towards each other. Leaders and the pastoral team ensure that pupils who find behaviour tricky get the help they need to get back on track.

Leaders want the school to be the best it can be. They regularly seek staff's, pupils' and parents' views about how to improve the school further. Leaders, governors and the trust have a clear vision. They know what to do next to continue to improve the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff, across the school, are well trained to identify if a pupil is vulnerable or at risk of being harmed. There are clear processes for reporting safeguarding concerns, which are known and used well by staff. Safeguarding records are detailed. Records show prompt and appropriate actions taken in response to concerns raised, including harmful sexual behaviours. The school works closely with other agencies to ensure that pupils get the support they need.

Pupils know who to report their worries to. They are well taught about the risks they could encounter both online and in the community.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not always make suitable adaptations to their lessons for pupils with SEND. This means a small number of pupils with SEND find work tricky and do not progress as well as they could. Leaders need to ensure that teachers have the right information and training to support all pupils with SEND to achieve well.
- Plans to support the weakest readers are new and not well established. As a result, some of the weakest readers do not get the help they need. Leaders need to fully implement their plans to support the weakest readers to access the school's curriculum.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	144402
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10212075
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	836
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Kath Unger
Headteacher	Stephen Thompson
Website	www.croxleydanes.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school opened to pupils for the first time in September 2017 and moved to its current location in September 2020. This is the school's first inspection since it opened.
- The school is part of the Danes Educational Trust.
- The headteacher has been in place since the school opened.
- The school's sixth form is due to open in September 2022.
- The school uses one alternative education provider.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, mathematics, science, history and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils about learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also considered curriculum plans in drama, physical education and business studies.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the school's single central record. Inspectors looked closely at safeguarding procedures and processes. They talked to governors, leaders, other staff and a range of pupils about safeguarding in the school.
- Throughout the inspection, inspectors met with a range of pupils from different year groups to talk about their experiences of the school.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's PSHE provision and visited a range of PSHE lessons.
- Inspectors met with school leaders, including the school's special educational needs coordinator.
- Inspectors considered the 149 responses made by parents to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 85 free-text responses. Inspectors also considered the 43 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff and 375 responses to Ofsted's pupils' questionnaire.

Inspection team

Damian Loneragan, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Brenda Watson	Ofsted Inspector
James Chester	Her Majesty's Inspector
Charlie Fordham	Her Majesty's Inspector

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