

Inspection of Crookhey Hall School

Garstang Road, Cockerham, Lancaster LA2 0HA

Inspection dates: 18 to 20 January 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Outstanding**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school and attend on a regular basis. They have strong and trusting relationships with other pupils and staff. Pupils feel safe and are confident that staff will listen to them if they have any worries or concerns.

Pupils learn about racism, homophobic bullying and other forms of discrimination. This helps them to understand the harmful impact of such unacceptable behaviour on others. They feel protected from bullying. If it happens, they know that staff will deal with it immediately.

Leaders and staff expect pupils to behave well and achieve highly. Pupils live up to these high expectations. Most pupils achieve well across a range of subjects. They behave well and are polite and well mannered. Pupils' positive behaviour contributes to the calm and purposeful atmosphere in school.

Pupils' personal development is enhanced exceptionally well. They relish outdoor activities. They enjoy nature walks around the school grounds and looking after the school's allotments and gardens. They take their responsibilities seriously when tending to the school's reptiles, ornamental pheasants, hens and small mammals. Pupils enjoy making their views known during school council meetings.

An excellent range of opportunities is available for pupils to pursue their interests. These include swimming, photography, curling, go-karting, skiing, ice-skating, equine studies and gymnastics.

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

Senior leaders, the chair of the governing body and the proprietor body have high ambitions for pupils. They are united in their desire for pupils to succeed and determined to provide the best possible education for all pupils. Leaders and staff know pupils well and care about them deeply.

Leaders have developed a broad, interesting and well-ordered curriculum that helps most pupils know and remember more of their learning. Across subjects, most teachers are clear about the knowledge and skills that pupils should be taught and in what order. This enables pupils to build on their knowledge as they move through different units of learning and year groups. However, systems to assess how well pupils are achieving in some subjects are at an early stage of development. As a result, leaders do not have a secure understanding of how well pupils are learning in these subjects. In addition, in some subjects, teachers do not implement the curriculum in line with the schemes of work. This means that pupils do not always learn the intended curriculum, or develop their knowledge and skills as accurately and deeply as they should.

All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities and an education, health and care plan. Leaders ensure that teachers have the additional support and

resources they need to help pupils to meet their development targets. This includes pupils in the new Woodlands autism unit. These adaptations help to ensure that pupils can access every aspect of learning.

Reading is prioritised in the curriculum. Pupils read regularly and with increasing confidence. Pupils in key stage 3 enjoy reading extracts from books by popular authors such as Roald Dahl. Older pupils develop an appreciation of the work of different authors. They remember the plots and main characters from various texts, including 'Of mice and men'. All pupils are encouraged to read in class. Pupils who are at the early stages of reading, including those learning phonics, are well supported by trained staff.

The work of leaders and staff to enhance pupils' personal development and appreciation of British values is inspirational. For example, pupils work with local residents and a hospice to raise funds for good causes. Members of the school council actively contribute to decision-making within the school. Recently, they successfully lobbied leaders to rebrand the school uniform. Pupils have also worked with staff to create the school's new vision statement and school rules.

Leaders provide an extensive and exciting range of outdoor pursuits that help pupils develop their leadership skills. Pupils are highly conscientious and caring when maintaining the school's allotments, gardens and woodland areas. They develop their business and negotiation skills when buying, selling and breeding the school's rare-breed poultry. Such activities help to ensure that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their learning.

Teachers recognise and accredit pupils' functional skills in English and mathematics. Pupils also study small units of learning, such as on using tools and kitchen equipment safely. This helps them to acquire the skills, knowledge and confidence needed for independent living.

Pupils receive independent careers advice and guidance. Historically, pupils have attained GCSE qualifications in various subjects, including English, mathematics, biology and art. Pupils also study for BTEC qualifications in construction, horticulture, mechanics, hair and beauty, catering and childcare. In recent years, most pupils have gone on to further education and training after leaving the school.

Staff follow the school's behaviour policy closely. Most pupils listen well and work hard in lessons. Pupils who find it difficult to manage their own behaviour are exceptionally well supported by the behaviour support team and the school's therapists.

Staff enjoy working at the school. Their specialist training equips them well to meet the additional needs of pupils. Leaders are considerate of staff's well-being and workload.

Parents and carers are very positive about the school and say that their children are safe. Regular reports from the school keep parents informed about their children's academic progress and personal development.

The proprietor body has ensured that all of the independent school standards are met. All necessary policies are in place and leaders make these available to parents. The proprietor body has ensured that the school's accessibility plan complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The school has a safeguarding policy in place. This complies with the most up-to-date government guidance and is published on the school's website.

The proprietor body and governors know the school well and have a strong understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. They carry out their roles diligently in setting the strategy for the school and holding senior leaders to account. The proprietor body worked closely with the headteacher to create the new Woodlands teaching block. This includes three well-resourced classrooms for pupils with autism spectrum disorder.

A written risk assessment policy is in place. This clearly outlines the responsibilities of staff and leaders and provides a suitable framework to protect pupils from any risks.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Senior leaders and the proprietor body do all they can to minimise any risks or harm to pupils. Staff are trained well in all matters relating to safeguarding. They are familiar with the school's safeguarding policies and the government's latest guidelines on keeping pupils safe.

Staff have a deep insight into pupils' vulnerabilities and are skilled at spotting potential signs of neglect or abuse. They know precisely what to do if they are concerned about the safety or welfare of a pupil.

The school's designated safeguarding leads are highly experienced. They work with a wide range of agencies and regularly update staff on new developments relating to safeguarding.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In some subjects, the intended curriculum is not consistently delivered. This means that some pupils do not develop the knowledge and skills that leaders want them to learn. Leaders should monitor these curriculum subjects to ensure

that the content outlined in the schemes of work for each subject is being delivered. This will help pupils to know more and remember more.

- Systems to assess what pupils know and can do in some subjects are at an early stage of development. As a result, teachers do not have a secure understanding of how well pupils are achieving in these subjects. Leaders should ensure that assessment systems are developed and embedded across all subjects. Leaders should also ensure that staff are trained and become confident in using these assessment systems. This will give staff a greater understanding of what pupils know and can do and allow them to plan activities that build on pupils' prior learning.

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

School details

Unique reference number	119849
DfE registration number	888/6022
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10210327
Type of school	Independent school
School category	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	10 to 17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	76
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Acorn Education and Care
Chair	James Joyce
Headteacher	Samantha Lea
Annual fees (day pupils)	£38,313 to £74,941
Telephone number	01524 792618
Website	www.crookheyhall.com
Email address	reception@crookheyhallschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 to 25 January 2018

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a new chair of the governing body has been appointed.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- Pupils are admitted to the school as a result of their social, emotional and mental health needs.
- In October 2019, the Department for Education granted a material change to increase the number of pupils and create a new unit for pupils with autism spectrum disorder. The new unit, Woodlands, formed part of this inspection.

Information about this inspection

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

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The lead inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders, and has taken that into account in his evaluation.

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator. The lead inspector met with the school's chair of governors. He also met with the behaviour support team and educational psychologist.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into these subjects: English (including reading), mathematics, personal, social and health education, and hair and beauty. For each deep dive, inspectors looked at curriculum planning and spoke to leaders about their subjects. Inspectors visited lessons, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at a range of pupils' work. Inspectors also talked with class teachers and teaching assistants from the classes that they visited.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. They also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and the staff survey. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- Inspectors examined a range of policies, schemes of work and curriculum information. They also scrutinised safeguarding information, including the school's safeguarding policy. The lead inspector spoke to the safeguarding leader about the reporting and recording of any safeguarding incidents. He also talked with pupils about their safety, welfare and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Alyson Middlemass

Her Majesty's Inspector

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