

# Cressey College

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

**Inspection date**

29 March 2022

**Overall outcome**

**The school does not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection**

## Main inspection findings

### Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

*Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b) and 32(1)(c)*

- Staff and leaders are well trained and knowledgeable about safeguarding. Staff, both those that are classroom based and administrative, know about peer-on-peer abuse, including sexual abuse and online safety. They use the centrally agreed process to record concerns related to safeguarding. These systems are well understood and used by a range of staff.
- There is an unhelpful range of recording methods and different systems. Some records can only be accessed on particular school sites and not by leaders at the centre. Sometimes, leaders have to log out of one system and into another to give the whole picture of a pupil or an incident. However, despite these unnecessary difficulties, records are detailed and useful. Leaders know their pupils well. Timelines show that leaders use these records to act promptly and involve relevant outside agencies so that pupils can get the support that they need.
- Pupils feel safe. They trust the adults who work with them to support them if they need help. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. They can talk about how to stay safe online and about mutual respect in relationships.
- The safeguarding policy is up to date and available for parents and carers on the proprietor's website. There is a link to this from the current school website.
- These independent school standards are met.

*Paragraph 9, 9(a) and 9(b)*

- Leaders and staff set high expectations for pupils' behaviour. There is a calm atmosphere and positive relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff. The manner in which adults speak to pupils helps pupils to develop both self-esteem and the skills needed to recognise and manage their own behaviour.
- Staff are trained and skilled in managing pupils' behaviour. Adults de-escalate potentially challenging situations effectively. Staff have recently had training on recording incidents, and this has had a positive impact. The details of any physical

intervention are recorded effectively, with clear information about the type of holds used and how long these lasted. This enables leaders to monitor their use and follow up on any concerns. The behaviour policy is implemented effectively.

- Over time, behaviour records show that the number of incidents, including the use of physical intervention, is declining. The use of fixed-term exclusions is low. Records show that when leaders exclude pupils, they use the time to reset expectations and support pupils ready for their return to school. Behaviour records are in the process of being moved to new management information systems.
- The wider curriculum, including how to stay safe, has a positive impact on pupils' behaviour. For example, the school's work on anti-bullying promotes positive behaviour. Pupils say that behaviour is well managed and inspection evidence confirms this. Older pupils say that the environment helps them to learn and focus on their work.
- These independent school standards are met.

#### *Paragraph 14*

- Leaders ensure that the supervision of pupils is effective. Staff understand their responsibilities and work effectively in teams to ensure a consistent standard of supervision during class time, in social spaces and at lunchtime. This leads to a calm, purposeful atmosphere for pupils. Staff consider carefully when pupils need one-to-one or small-group support. Pupils that use the breakout rooms to manage and regulate their behaviour are accompanied and supervised by staff. There is an increasingly high level of consistency in practice across the different sites.
- This independent school standard is met.

#### *Paragraph 16, 16(a) and 16(b)*

- The risk assessment policy and suitable risk assessments are in place and used effectively. There is a system in place for making sure the premises are safe each day. There is a clear process for assessing risk for individual pupils. These are adapted and reviewed regularly.
- These independent school standards are met.

### Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

#### *All paragraphs*

- The complaints policy meets requirements and is available for parents on the proprietor's website. Leaders record complaints, including informal complaints, in a thorough and detailed manner. Information about the complaint, the follow up and the outcome at each stage is kept in one place and not spread across different systems. This enables leaders to talk about the issue, their response and outcomes with confidence and authority. Formal complaints follow the timescale as set out in the policy.
- These independent school standards are met.

### Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

#### *All paragraphs*

- The proprietor has a clear and ambitious vision for pupils and the future of the school.

It has been open and transparent with the school community. The plan is to split the school and register as four separate schools, each under its own headteacher. New arrangements for governance, including parent representatives, are planned. These plans have been widely shared and discussed with staff and parents.

- Some progress has been made. New headteachers and senior leaders have been appointed for what will become the four schools. At the time of the inspection, some leaders had only been in place for a few weeks. Nevertheless, they are starting to have a positive impact on their different sites. The executive principal is developing stronger strategic planning and communication systems between the leaders. Training is underway for staff. Leaders have plans to streamline the school management information systems.
- The proprietor's management of these changes is not running smoothly. Although the proprietor has undertaken a range of communication and consultation activities with staff, it has not always had a positive impact. Some staff across the different sites have not bought into the new vision. Staff and leaders gave contradictory accounts of the new direction of the school and the reasons for change. For example, some staff have found the new training on physical intervention interesting and useful. However, at the same time, they do not understand why they are being retrained in a different system and whether or not this affects other training opportunities they may want to pursue. This has a negative impact on their morale. The proprietor's activities have aroused suspicion. Staff lack confidence in the proprietor. Some older pupils also hold negative views about the proprietor's intentions.
- The weaknesses in the management of change and communication hinder leaders' ability to deliver the vision they want. If some staff are confused, discontent or not on board with changes, then it is not clear that the independent school standards can be met consistently. In addition, the school's many management information systems do not help leaders drive forward the changes they want to make. Overall, the school's systems and processes are fragile. It is for this reason that although all the other independent school standards that were checked on this inspection are met, some leadership and management standards are not met.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The school does not meet 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, as set out in the annex of this report. 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	10230722

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	190
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	12
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Horizon Care and Education Group Ltd
Chair	Amanda Cunningham
Headteacher	Krishna Purbhoo
Annual fees (day pupils)	£38,000 to £81,000
Telephone number	020 8686 5840
Website	<a href="http://www.horizoncare.co.uk/schools/cressey-college">www.horizoncare.co.uk/schools/cressey-college</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:enquires@horizoncare.co.uk">enquires@horizoncare.co.uk</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	27 February to 7 March 2018

## Information about this school

- Cressey College is a special school for boys and girls 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, such as autism spectrum disorder.

- Pupils are placed at the school by 13 local authorities, the majority of these in London. Many pupils have a history of disrupted education. Almost all pupils need intensive adult support to help them manage their behaviour.
- The new proprietor has been in place since December 2019. The executive principal has been in post since April 2021.
- The school is based at seven separate sites. The registered address is Coombe Cliff, Coombe Road, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 5SP. The other sites are at 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. In addition, some older pupils are taught off site by school staff.
- The school's previous standard inspection took place in February 2018, when the school was judged to be good.
- A material change inspection took place in August 2019. This was to increase the number of pupils on roll. All the independent school standards that were checked were found to be likely to be met if the change was implemented. This was agreed upon by the registration authority.
- An emergency inspection took place in September 2021. This was in response to serious concerns relating to safeguarding, the quality of education, pupils' personal development, their health, safety and welfare, the suitability of staff, the quality of the premises and leadership and management. All the independent school standards that were checked were met.
- At the time of the inspection, the school website was under construction. The information on the webpage directs browsers to the Cressey College pages of the proprietor's website.

## Information about this inspection

- This emergency inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education, the registration authority for independent schools. This was in response to serious concerns relating to safeguarding, pupils' behaviour, the supervision of pupils, their safety and the school's leadership and management.
- Inspectors were asked to focus on paragraphs 7, 9, 14 and 16 in part 3 and all the paragraphs in parts 7 and 8 of the independent school standards. These relate to pupils' welfare and safety, complaints and leadership and management.
- The inspection was conducted with no notice.
- On the day of the inspection, some staff were attending training. This was one of the required in-service training days. One of the seven sites was closed and there were reduced numbers of pupils and staff on one other site.
- The inspectors met with the executive principal and the headteacher of the Coombe Cliffe site.
- The inspectors visited five of the six sites open on the day of the inspection. During these visits, inspectors met with the headteachers and/or the safeguarding leaders on each site. They scrutinised documentation and records relating to safeguarding, pupils' behaviour and risk assessments. They visited classes and other activities to see the school in action. Inspectors talked with pupils and met with staff.
- The lead inspector held a remote meeting with the managing director of education of Horizon Care and Education Group, representing the proprietor.
- An inspector held a telephone conversation with the designated officer for safeguarding for Croydon.

## Inspection team

Janet Hallett, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Andrew Wright	Her Majesty's Inspector
Ian Rawstorne	Her Majesty's Inspector

## **Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements**

**The school does not meet the following independent school standards**

### **Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school-
  - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
  - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.



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