

Inspection of Cressey College

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

Inspection dates:

24 to 26 May 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Inadequate

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Sixth-form provision

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

No

What is it like to attend this school?

Staff provide suitable supervision of pupils throughout the day and during movement times between lessons. This means that adults keep pupils safe. Pupils understand personal safety, including how to stay safe online.

Pupils show a strong belief in themselves and what they can achieve. However, this high expectation is not shared by all members of staff. The curriculum lacks ambition and coherence. Leaders are unclear about how they build up pupils' knowledge and understanding in each subject. This means that pupils are not taught the knowledge they need to be well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training.

Pupils know that bullying is wrong. They say that staff intervene when bullying happens, and they know how to sort it out. Pupils' behaviour in lessons varies, though it is mostly calm. However, some of the behaviour of pupils outside of the class is poor. Staff do not consistently implement the behaviour policy.

Pupils value their friendships with each other. They say that this is because they 'have formed close bonds and understand each other'. Relationships between staff and pupils are generally positive. Pupils typically enjoy earning rewards. They demonstrate an understanding of different families, including those with protected characteristics.

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

The quality of education is inadequate. The curriculum is unsuitable for meeting the needs of pupils, who all have education, health and care plans (EHC plans). They do not follow a planned programme of learning that builds knowledge and understanding in a sequential and connected way. Pupils complete 'one-off' activities that do not link with previous learning. Leaders do not have systems in place to check that the curriculum is being delivered consistently or having an impact on what pupils learn. This is because the end points for each phase are not clear, including in the post-16 provision. Therefore, it is not possible to determine whether students have done as well as they could have by the time they leave. This was captured accurately by a leader who said, 'The curriculum isn't right. Therefore, the teaching isn't right.'

Staff have differing levels of subject knowledge. This includes the subject specialists in the secondary phase. There has been little or no staff development in subjects such as mathematics, English, personal, social and health education (PSHE) or relationships and sex education (RSE). Leaders have limited understanding and evaluation of the impact of the curriculum on pupils' education in these subjects. Teachers do not routinely check that pupils have secured sufficient knowledge to understand the key information and concepts that they are teaching. Leaders do not have a way of monitoring what pupils know and remember in most subjects. This is because the system for assessment is not effective given pupils' needs and contexts.

Teachers are not always provided with the necessary information about pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This means that they do not typically tailor their teaching methods to meet pupils' needs. There is no obvious connection between the objectives of pupils' EHC plans and lesson planning. As a result, their targets are rarely addressed.

Pupils in the primary phase enjoy reading with staff. Leaders have developed a plan that prioritises early reading. However, the teaching of the phonics programme is not well embedded. Staff do not routinely use the correct pronunciation of sounds when teaching phonics. They do not have a secure understanding of how to develop pupils' reading skills. Leaders have recently introduced intervention programmes in the primary phase. They have identified challenges in maintaining consistent staffing in delivering these programmes. This has a negative impact on routines and rigour in the quality of the support that staff provide. There is no systematic approach to developing pupils' reading accuracy and fluency in the secondary phase.

In mathematics, some aspects of the curriculum such as problem-solving and reasoning are absent from pupils' learning. There is no clear overview of what other aspects of the curriculum pupils have missed. Teachers provide few opportunities for pupils to work towards producing extended pieces of writing in English and other subjects. Work in books is often not attempted or incomplete. Learning in lessons is variable in quality and shows a lack of ambition from staff. As a result, there is an over-reliance on pupils completing functional skills exams in key stage 4. This is instead of providing a curriculum and options that prepare pupils to take a wider range of GCSEs.

Pupils' behaviour in class is mostly calm. There are examples of disengagement in lessons due to the curriculum lacking ambition or creativity. Poor behaviour in communal areas occurs. Pupils use inappropriate language and expletives towards each other and adults. Staff are not routinely consistent or successful in addressing this. Leaders recognise that there has been an over-reliance on the use of physical intervention and that staff were not skilled in using a range of de-escalation strategies. Analysis of records shows a decline in the number of incidents where staff have applied physical intervention due to recent training received.

Attendance levels of a significant number of pupils are low. Leaders have taken action to address absence. However, the procedures have not been robust enough to ensure sustained improvements.

The new PSHE programme covers all the requirements of the RSE and health education guidance. Staff are not always clear about the intended learning and outcomes of the lessons. Leaders have not carefully considered how staff should deliver the programmes and how they should adapt them for the different age ranges of the pupils.

Leaders have plans in place to develop a programme to support pupils' understanding of careers and future pathways. Teachers support some post-16

students well in their transition to the next stage of their education. This includes travel training and gradually diminishing help in attending college. However, leaders do not currently meet the statutory requirements for careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG). Post-16 students often follow programmes that are not related or tailored to their needs. As a result, they do not receive a wide, rich set of experiences for personal development.

The proprietor and newly appointed headteachers are honest about the shortcomings in the current school context. They have plans in place to address a variety of areas but many of these have not happened. The proprietor is moving towards a model where they intend to divide the school into four 'separate' schools. This means that leaders are not running the school as a 'whole organisation' but as fragmented entities. As a result of this, there is a lack of whole-school strategic oversight. The inconsistencies in most key areas of the school are further exacerbated by the leaders' lack of joined-up curriculum thinking.

There are differences of opinion among staff about the management of staff's workload and well-being. Staff surveys show that a significant number of staff have concerns about leaders' support for them in managing behaviour. They put this down to changes made over the last few months and that there are too many inconsistencies in the implementation of the behaviour policy. Staff are unaware of who is responsible for governance and do not know who to raise concerns with beyond the senior leaders. Inspectors found that there is a difference in the view that leaders hold regarding the changes taking place and the staff's understanding of the purpose of these actions. There is a clear disconnection between what leaders say is happening and what staff understand to be the case.

The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders act swiftly in making referrals to children's services or other external agencies. Leaders keep detailed notes on the actions they have taken to address concerns raised. Leaders keep secure safeguarding records. The safeguarding policy is available on the school's website. It includes the most recent government guidance.

The systems to ensure the safe recruitment of staff are suitable. Leaders use risk assessments for outdoor visits and educational activities. These are appropriate and identify potential hazards and control measures.

Staff speak of the regular briefings and debriefings in which they discuss aspects of safeguarding. This includes information in relation to specific pupils and contextualised situations.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- The curriculum is not coherent or sufficiently sequenced. It is not ambitious to meet the needs of all pupils on roll. This means that they do not learn or practise the knowledge or skills they need to prepare them for their future learning, employment or training. Leaders must put in place a programme that helps pupils to learn and understand ideas that develop with complexity over time. Leaders should ensure that staff are well trained to teach and assess pupils' understanding of the important knowledge that they need to learn.
- Leaders have not ensured that teachers cater well for pupils with SEND. As a result, pupils do not receive the necessary provision or support that they need to learn and make progress. Leaders must ensure that the objectives in pupils' EHC plans are carefully considered and aligned to the curriculum and lesson planning.
- Leaders do not have a clear system in place to monitor and evaluate the impact of the post-16 curriculum. End points are not well defined, and the staff's subject knowledge is inconsistent. As a result, students do not receive a rich set of experiences that are sufficiently tailored to their needs and personal development. Leaders must ensure that they fulfil all their statutory duties relating to CEIAG requirements. This will support the preparation of students for the next stage of education, employment and training.
- Staff are not consistent in implementing the management of the behaviour policy. Behaviour targets do not always align well with pupils' EHC plans or long-term aims. Leaders must ensure that there is a whole-school approach to developing the effective management of behaviour and robust systems in addressing poor attendance. Leaders must consider how pupils' behaviour or personal, social and emotional development targets are carefully tracked over time.
- Leaders, including the proprietor and those responsible for governance, have not provided a whole-school programme for staff's professional development. This means that staff are not well supported in developing their subject knowledge in subjects such as English, mathematics or RSE. They are unable to plan and deliver ambitious programmes of learning. They do not have the required knowledge to address misconceptions adequately and to teach pupils what they need to learn. Leaders must ensure staff have appropriate subject knowledge to support pupils' learning effectively in different subjects.
- The school is disjoined as it moves towards a model where the proprietor is dividing it into four schools. There is a lack of whole-school strategic oversight. This is resulting in inconsistencies in key areas, particularly in relation to the quality of education, the curriculum and the implementation of the behaviour policy. Leaders must ensure that clear plans are swiftly actioned to address the range of variations that exist. They must make sure that the process of change is well managed. They must also ensure that staff's workload and well-being are carefully considered and maintain clear lines of communication with all members of the school community.

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	133438
DfE registration number	306/6104
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	10210816
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	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 the sixth form	36
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	www.horizoncare.co.uk/schools/cressey-college
Email address	enquires@horizoncare.co.uk
Date of previous 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 are 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 and March 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 change 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 and 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.
- An additional emergency inspection took place in March 2022. 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. Not all the independent school standards that were checked were met.
- At the time of the inspection, the school's 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

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 has failed to meet the independent school standards. These are the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

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

- Inspectors met with the executive principal and the four newly appointed headteachers, one of whom was the acting headteacher (Sanderstead site).
- The lead inspector held a remote meeting with the chief executive officer and the quality and risk director of Horizon Care and Education Group, representing the proprietor.
- Inspectors visited six of the seven sites. During these visits, inspectors met with the headteachers, deputy headteachers and/or safeguarding leaders on each site.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding arrangements by scrutinising documentation, records and the single central record and talking to leaders and staff and through discussions with pupils.
- They scrutinised documentation and records relating to pupils' behaviour, physical interventions and risk assessments.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, English, mathematics, art and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of curriculum plans and documents, including action plans and self-evaluation of the work carried out on each site where available.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys, including 11 free-text responses to Ofsted Parent View, 62 responses from members of staff and 19 from pupils.
- Inspectors toured the school sites and looked at policies and documentation to check compliance with the independent school standards.
- The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with the local authority designated officer for safeguarding for the London Borough of Croydon.

Inspection team

Lascelles Haughton, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Gary Pocock

Ofsted Inspector

Nick Turvey

Her Majesty's Inspector

Gary Rawlings

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school failed to meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if-
 - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
 - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work-
 - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan.
- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are-
 - 2(2)(b) that pupils acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills;
 - 2(2)(e) for pupils receiving secondary education, access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that-
 - 2(2)(e)(i) is presented in an impartial manner;
 - 2(2)(e)(ii) enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options; and
 - 2(2)(e)(iii) helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential;
 - 2(2)(g) where the school has pupils above compulsory school age, a programme of activities which is appropriate to their needs.
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school-
 - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
 - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
 - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;

- 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;
 - 3(f) utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range;
 - 3(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress;
 - 3(h) utilises effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to act responsibly.
- 4 The standard in this paragraph is met where the proprietor ensures that a framework for pupil performance to be evaluated, by reference to the school's own aims as provided to parents or national norms, or to both, is in place.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 9 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor promotes good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that-
- 9(b) the policy is implemented effectively.

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; and
 - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022