

Inspection of Cressex Lodge School

Cressex Lodge, Terrace Road South, Binfield, Reading, Berkshire, RG42 4DE

Inspection dates: 5–7 October 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

One pupil described Cressex Lodge as, 'The most inclusive place you will ever visit.' Staff, pupils, parents and carers agree. Pupils live up to staff's high expectations. Relationships are warm and respectful. The atmosphere around the school is harmonious. Pupils are extremely thoughtful and considerate of others and lessons are rarely disrupted. Pupils feel safe and happy. They talk knowledgeably about different faiths, cultures and religions. Pupils told inspectors that there is no place for bullying, harassment or discrimination.

Pupils love taking part in the number of activities on offer. They particularly look forward to the sports, gardening, guitar, keyboard and ukulele clubs. Trips to art galleries, museums, concerts, theatres and places of worship broaden pupils' horizons. Pupils organise litter picks in the community and volunteer in a local care home. Several pupils told inspectors that the school had simply transformed their lives.

Leaders make sure that all pupils learn that they have control over their futures. Staff want pupils to be independent, build trusting relationships and succeed. Pupils have a voice in making decisions about school life. They worked successfully with leaders to design and develop the forest school, meditation area and the popular 'Safari Lodge'.

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

Leaders, the proprietor and staff are determined that each pupil at Cressex Lodge will learn and gain from a high-quality education. Leaders have created a purposeful and effective culture for learning. They make sure that pupils study a broad range of subjects. The curriculum is well sequenced in all subjects. New work builds on previous knowledge to help pupils make links in their learning. Leaders make sure that teachers have clear guidance on the important knowledge that pupils should learn and remember well. Occasionally, teachers do not check how well pupils understand the information taught and introduce new ideas too quickly. This means that some pupils may have gaps in their knowledge or understanding.

Leaders are passionate for all pupils to read fluently and confidently. Often, pupils have fallen behind in their reading before joining the school. Teachers provide pupils with a diverse and interesting selection of books to reignite their love of reading. Staff identify gaps in pupils' phonics knowledge and help them to catch up quickly. Teachers are very well trained in teaching early reading. The books that pupils read help them to practise their phonics knowledge. Leaders have identified that some pupils do not read as widely or as often as they could.

Staff skilfully and sensitively help pupils develop trusting relationships and engage in learning activities. Staff identify pupils' additional needs and make curriculum adjustments accordingly. Pupils learn about the importance of looking after their emotional health. When pupils find it hard to maintain focus, they know to take

'time out' and talk to an adult. This means that classrooms are calm and happy hubs of learning. There is rarely any disruption in lessons.

The school's curriculum helps pupils learn about wider opportunities open to them in the future. Leaders go to great lengths to make sure that work experience opportunities are of a high quality. They make sure that pupils learn about different jobs and careers. Pupils work with professionals from different industries, for example, film producers, make-up artists, police officers and magistrates. Activities such as voting on decisions that affect school routines, supporting staff interviews and learning to cook in the forest school help to build pupils' self-confidence, self-esteem and self-worth. The school has appropriate plans in place to comply with Department of Education (DfE) statutory guidance on relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education.

Pupils are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyle habits, for example, they enjoy attending sports and physical education (PE) lessons at a specialist facility. They work with highly trained staff and sports coaches.

Pupils understanding of different religions, faiths and communities is exceptional. Pupils have a deep and at times, profound respect and appreciation of the views, choices and beliefs of others. One pupil said, 'No one would be treated differently whether they had a different skin colour, are gay or believe in a different God.' The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

The proprietor has a robust oversight of the school's work. The proprietor works effectively with leaders to make sure that all independent school standards are met. The proprietor knows well what needs to improve further in the quality of education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff take swift and appropriate action in relation to safeguarding concerns. Staff receive regular and comprehensive training and are highly vigilant. Staff are quick to recognise the signs and symptoms of a variety of concerns, for example, self-harm. They notice, record and act promptly on matters relating to pupils' well-being and safety. Leaders ensure that all staff are checked appropriately and are eligible to work with children and young people, this includes an additional rigorous interview on safeguarding.

Pupils have a strong understanding of how to keep safe when using online devices.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- Teachers do not always check what pupils know and understand before introducing new information. When this happens, pupils struggle to make links in

their learning. Leaders need to ensure that teachers consistently assess pupils' knowledge accurately in order to make good decisions about what to teach next. This will ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they should in the curriculum.

- Leaders should continue to prioritise reading, ensuring that pupils have maximum opportunity to read widely and often. This will support pupils' learning across the curriculum as well as helping pupils to find pleasure in reading.

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	110178
DfE registration number	867/6580
Local authority	Bracknell Forest
Inspection number	10202276
Type of school	Other Independent Special School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 17
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	18
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Les Glazier
Headteacher	Sarah Snape
Annual fees (day pupils)	£66,985
Telephone number	01344 862221
Website	www.swaay.co.uk
Email address	cressexlodge@swaay.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 to 6 July 2017

Information about this school

- Cressex Lodge (SWAAY) is an independent school for boys located in a village near Bracknell. It operates collaboratively as part of a therapeutic community provided by SWAAY Child and Adolescent Services Ltd.
- The school opened in 2006 and it is registered for up to 24 boys, aged between 11 and 16 years, who have specific behavioural, emotional, and social difficulties. Most pupils join the school with a history of interrupted schooling.
- There are currently 17 boys on roll aged between 11 and 16 years, some of whom have moderate, specific and complex learning difficulties. The vast majority of pupils have been placed by their local authority.
- Approximately three quarter of the school's population are in receipt of an education, health and care plan as they are pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The school does not use alternative providers.

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.

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

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

- The inspectors held a wide range of meetings during the inspection. These included meetings with the headteacher, the proprietor, school leaders, staff and pupils.
- The inspectors looked closely at the following subjects when considering the quality of education: reading, mathematics, history and art. They met with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and reviewed curriculum plans.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, during breaktimes, and as pupils moved around the school.
- The inspectors reviewed responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents, and accompanying free-text messages. They also considered the staff surveys.

- The lead inspector checked the single central record and talked with leaders responsible for safeguarding. She also considered safeguarding documents and records.
- The inspection team reviewed a range of documentation, including policies and documents associated with the independent school standards. The lead inspector reviewed the school's website.

Inspection team

Shazia Akram, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Liz Bowes

Ofsted Inspector

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