

Inspection of a good school: Cressex Community School

Holmers Lane, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP12 4QA

Inspection dates:

27 and 28 February 2024

Outcome

Cressex Community School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and families value this school highly. Pupils are keen to play an active role within the school community. This is because they appreciate the actions of staff to improve the life chances of every pupil. Pupils also consider themselves to be well represented by the pupil voice group. They recognise how their input has helped shape many of the areas the school has developed, such as classroom routines.

Pupils have a clear understanding of the school's expectations for conduct and behaviour. The school's values encourage pupils to be responsible and respectful. Pupils value how multicultural the school is. They enjoy having a diverse group of friends and are proud that everyone is welcome. If pupils have any concerns, about their learning or other aspects of their lives, they understand who to speak to. Pupils know that they will receive the help that they need.

Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning and are ambitious for their futures. The school helps them to understand the link between their learning today and future education, training or employment. Pupils also appreciate trips and opportunities outside of their academic learning that help them learn about the world around them.

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

Leaders at all levels are ambitious for pupils' futures. Across most subjects, staff have developed carefully organised curriculums that ensure pupils learn important knowledge over time. Within each subject, staff have identified important role models who are experts, such as important scientists and poets. Pupils keenly describe how these examples help to inspire them as they recognise themselves in the people they learn about. While the curriculum is well developed in many subjects, improvements to a small number have more recently been made. Leaders have rightly identified this work as a priority to ensure pupils learn well across the full curriculum.

Pupils can follow a range of courses at key stage 4. However, the number of pupils studying a GCSE in a modern foreign language has remained low. Leaders are taking steps to increase the proportion of pupils opting to learn a modern foreign language. This is to encourage more pupils to study a range of ambitious subjects as part of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc).

Lessons are calm and focused. Teachers use skilful, targeted questioning to check pupils understanding and ideas. Pupils have been taught how to use the structured feedback they receive. They willingly take part in recap and checking activities because they know these help to strengthen their knowledge of the subjects they study.

Activity choices are well planned in most lessons. They support pupils to know and remember more. This includes the most disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers have a deep knowledge of the pupils they teach. Additional guidance about the individual needs of pupils helps teachers know how to provide the very best support. As a result, the most disadvantaged pupils achieve well.

Reading and oracy are prioritised in all curriculum areas. Correct use of technical vocabulary is evident in all lessons. As a result, pupils are adept in precisely describing their thinking. Any pupils who still need help to become fluent readers receive extra help. However, leaders recognise that they can strengthen this further. As a result, development of support for weaker readers, including specific phonics provision for those at an earlier stage of learning to read, is ongoing.

The school's small sixth form provides a carefully targeted curriculum to students who may otherwise have left education. Through well-judged, supportive teaching their confidence and ambition are raised. Consequently, a high proportion go on to be successful in higher education and training, leading to greatly enhanced future options.

Behaviour around the school and in lessons is orderly. Pupils are polite and friendly and show respect to each other and staff. Pupils say that they support each other and consider being part of the school a privilege. They describe how they each play a part in helping everyone succeed.

Pupils' wider development is a priority. The school is highly effective in educating pupils to keep themselves safe and to develop skills and attitudes which will allow them to flourish in the future. Leaders are responsive to their pupils' changing needs and make sure programmes have the flexibility to adapt as required, such as additional online safety or careers lessons.

The school has been effective in improving attendance. The school rightly links attendance with both safeguarding and improving academic performance. As a result, they make sure that families understand its importance, and sensitively help where necessary.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The proportion of key stage 4 pupils who are entered for the full range of EBacc subjects has been lower than the national average over time. Too few pupils study a modern foreign language at GCSE. Leaders need to increase the number of pupils who study a modern foreign language at GCSE to make sure the EBacc is at the heart of the curriculum.
- In a few subjects the curriculum is still in an earlier stage of development. In these subjects, pupils do not always build their knowledge over time as securely as they could. The school should continue to implement its individual subject improvements to support the achievement of pupils across the full curriculum.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the third ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 2014.

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.

Further information

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	110500
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10321783
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	763
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	6
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Katy Simmons
Headteacher	Khiam Shabbir
Website	www.cressex.org
Date of previous inspection	8 January 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is a foundation school and part of the Cressex Co-operative Learning Partnership.
- The school currently uses three registered alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of provider access legislation which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- 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 and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, curriculum leaders, and other staff.
- The lead inspector met with representatives from the governing body, including the chair of governors. He also spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, art and design, and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including leaders' self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They also took into consideration the responses to the confidential staff and pupil surveys as well as speaking to staff and pupils throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Ed Mather, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Julia Mortimore

Ofsted Inspector

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