

Cressey College

C/O Coombe Cliff, Coome Road, Croydon, Surrey CR0 5SP

Inspection dates

27 February – 7 March 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Sixth form provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The impact of leaders' work transforms pupils' education and ultimately their life chances. They have made sure that all the independent school standards are met.
- Senior leaders work seamlessly across all five sites and the outreach provision to make sure that pupils overcome significant barriers to their learning.
- Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding, especially in key stages 3 and 4. Most groups of pupils make strong progress across the curriculum, including in English and mathematics.
- The school is outward-looking and works collaboratively with two local mainstream schools. It shares professional development opportunities, including observing best practice, with them. As a result, the quality of teaching continues to improve.
- Pupils benefit from intensive adult support. There is a careful balance of activities to make sure that each pupil experiences success and recognition for their work and effort.
- Pupils are nurtured and quickly gain confidence and trust with adults. They make huge strides in their social and emotional development. Pupils re-engage in their learning, develop positive attitudes to their work and are usually well behaved.
- The most able pupils in all key stages are not always given work which makes them think hard about their learning.
- Pupils' progress is checked regularly. Nonetheless, the recording of primary-aged pupils' achievement does not provide a comprehensive picture of pupils' strengths and weaknesses.
- Some primary-aged pupils do not have good phonic knowledge. This slows their progress down in reading and writing. There are insufficient opportunities for younger pupils to write for a purpose.
- Students in the post-16 provision make the same good progress as pupils in key stages 3 and 4. They too make outstanding progress in their personal development.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Secure outstanding progress in all key stages and for all ability groups by ensuring that:
 - younger pupils' work is assessed and recorded to capture fully the progress they make
 - primary-aged pupils are taught phonics regularly and systematically
 - there are more opportunities for younger pupils to write for a purpose, both in English lessons and in other subjects
 - the most able pupils are challenged in their learning in all key stages.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are highly effective leaders. They are exceptionally well supported by the senior administration and personnel leaders. Together they have made sure that all the independent school standards are met in full.
- Leaders deliver a wide range of professional development and training opportunities for aspiring leaders of the future. As a result, highly qualified new leaders have been appointed, including a deputy headteacher, heads of departments and senior teachers. Capacity to secure further improvements is exceptionally strong.
- Senior leaders support less experienced leaders extremely well. Leaders who are relatively new to post are promoting improvements in the quality of teaching, the curriculum, as well as in pupils' learning and personal development.
- Clear lines of responsibility across the five sites and outreach provision, as well as effective communication, secure a cohesive team approach. This means that there is continuity of good and sometimes outstanding provision. Leaders' high ambitions for pupils are shared by all. Everyone continually strives for even better outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders check the quality of teaching regularly, and use this information to target support and training for staff. They follow up observations to check that staff are acting upon their advice.
- Achievement information is benchmarked against national expectations to make sure that pupils make good progress from their different starting points. However, primary-aged assessments are not always checked and recorded in enough detail. As a consequence, leaders do not have a sharp enough picture of the progress younger pupils make.
- The curriculum is planned well to meet the needs, interests and aptitudes of pupils and older students. There are a host of visits and visitors to bring learning to life. Many promote fundamental British values and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Visits form part of pupils' studies, for example pupils studying GCSE in history visit Auschwitz. A planned trip to Paris has recently been agreed by leaders as a result of pupils having to justify the educational reasons for it to members of the steering group.
- Respect and tolerance, including cultural diversity, are celebrated through curriculum activities, including pupils' personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. Equality of opportunity is considered, raising pupils' awareness of the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010, including disability and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT).
- Leaders use all funding effectively to ensure that there is equality of opportunity for all. Pupils have access to a wide range of therapies, art, music and sporting activities. This promotes pupils' academic development, as well as their life skills, immensely.
- Leaders and staff develop excellent partnerships with all agencies and with parents and carers. The headteacher initiates first contact with parents through home visits prior to pupils attending the school. Effective communication and support for parents provide a united approach to stabilising pupils' emotional and social development when they first

start school.

- The school is a hub of information and support for parents. There are numerous workshops and meetings to help parents promote the mental health and well-being of their children. Parents who spoke to inspectors were highly appreciative of the school's work.

Governance

- The steering group is very well informed about the school's performance. Its members have a clear understanding of the barriers pupils face in their learning and personal development, and they also have high expectations for pupils. Although small in numbers, this is offset in terms of their significant and relevant expertise in education, accounting and psychology. As a consequence, they are able to provide senior leaders with highly effective support and challenge.
- Members monitor key aspects of the school's performance, including safeguarding arrangements. They regularly consult with parents and pupils to gather their views, particularly in how well staff promote pupils' welfare and safety. Together with senior leaders, they make sure that the school continues to grow and flourish successfully.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is an appropriate safeguarding policy on the school's website which takes into account current government guidelines.
- All members of staff implement the policy consistently across all five sites, and in the outreach provision. Safeguarding older pupils and students is given the highest priority.
- There are designated safeguarding leads for each site. These leaders make sure that all staff are trained to spot any potential safeguarding concerns. Staff refer any disclosures and/or worries that they may have about pupils swiftly to them.
- All information is used from a range of sources, including home visits and regular meetings with key agencies, to build a picture of potential risks individual pupils may face. These include domestic violence, female genital mutilation, child sexual exploitation, as well as the use of social media to perpetrate peer-on-peer bullying, knife and gang crime. Both the police and previous offenders regularly talk to pupils about the consequences of such crimes.
- Communication and liaison work with external agencies, including social services and the police, are good. It secures swift intervention, support and guidance for pupils and their families when required.
- Health and safety checks are rigorous and reviewed regularly by leaders. There are clear lines of responsibility to ensure that every site complies with the regulatory requirements. The same attention to detail regarding safeguarding procedures, including risk assessments, is applied to those pupils who are educated at home, in college and work placements, as well as in the local community.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Staff know individual pupils exceptionally well. They display great patience with pupils, including those who display challenging behaviours. Staff know when to allow pupils to have a cooling off period and use this time productively, engaging pupils in other learning activities outside the classroom.
- Adults support and guide pupils' understanding effectively, particularly those pupils who find learning hard. Staff work collaboratively to model key ideas and language, thereby encouraging pupils to ask their own questions to deepen their learning.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this, including their enthusiasm about topics, to capture pupils' attention. This was seen in a science lesson where pupils were totally focused on categorising accurately natural and man-made light. The teacher constantly encouraged pupils to use the correct scientific vocabulary to explain their decisions.
- Learning is secure when activities are broken down into small steps and where adults explain and check pupils' understanding regularly. This also promotes pupils' confidence and willingness to persevere with demanding tasks.
- Teachers question pupils to draw out what pupils know and can do. They encourage pupils to explain their thinking, while simultaneously promoting their language and communication skills. The pace of learning is strong when teachers target different questions to challenge all ability groups, including the most able pupils.
- The impact of a large number of primary-aged pupils starting school recently, as well as new staff, has resulted in some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in key stages 1 and 2. Inspection observations and evidence from work seen in pupils' books confirm, that while progress is strong in mathematics, some primary-aged pupils make less progress than older pupils in English.
- These pupils have gaps in their phonic knowledge, preventing them from reading and spelling unfamiliar words successfully. Work in pupils' books confirms that there are insufficient opportunities for younger pupils to write for a purpose or apply their basic literacy skills in English lessons and in other subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- All pupils have experienced significant trauma and negative educational experiences prior to starting this school. The high adult-to-pupil ratio enables staff to provide intensive support for pupils, while simultaneously building up strong and trusting relationships.
- Staff instantly begin to get to know each pupil, from baseline assessments and their own observations. As a consequence, they have an in-depth understanding of pupils' personal needs. Staff create a calm and nurturing learning environment, collecting pupils at the start of the school day, instantly putting pupils at ease and reducing any anxieties they may have.
- Pupils' social and emotional development is rigorously analysed and monitored to make sure that pupils begin to flourish. Strategies to promote pupils' well-being include a range

of therapies, including art and music. This boosts pupils' confidence enormously, which in turn motivates them to want to learn more.

- Pupils who are emotionally fragile begin to develop a sense of self-worth and positive self-esteem. This enables them to interact appropriately with other pupils and adults.
- A distinct feature of the school is the effectiveness with which it responds to pupils' complex needs. Careful consideration is given as to which site is best suited to meet each pupil's needs. Pupils may move between sites if they are struggling academically and personally. Alternatively, those pupils who, through one-to-one support, have developed the emotional resilience move to a site where they are able to work in small groups. As a result, pupils continue to engage productively in their learning.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils trust and respect adults who work with them. Pupils are keen to try their best and to meet adults' high expectations.
- Pupils usually settle quickly to their work and remain focused throughout lessons. This demonstrates a seismic leap forward in pupils' attitudes to learning.
- Staff manage pupils' behaviour well. Leaders have invested in training, enabling staff to defuse and de-escalate potential outbursts. This, together with a personalised learning pathway, ensures that for most of the time pupils behave appropriately. Increasingly, pupils are able to empathise with and respect others, and begin to regulate their own behaviour.
- School records demonstrate that behavioural incidents have reduced significantly, with a similar decline in the use of physical restraint and internal and external exclusions.
- Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their behaviour and to appreciate the impact it may have on others. Various activities promote pupils' self-control and confidence, such as the school council, raising funds for charities and working on business enterprise schemes.
- There are instances of bullying but these are dealt with promptly. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe and have a good understanding of all types of bullying.
- Key staff follow up any pupils who do not attend school regularly. A greater engagement with learning means that the majority of pupils attend school regularly. This is a major breakthrough, given that many pupils were either non-attenders or had low attendance rates previously.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Attainment is significantly below average when pupils start school. School achievement information confirms that the longer pupils attend school, the more progress they make. As a result, attainment gaps diminish considerably over several years. It is evident from work in pupils' books that key stages 3 and 4 pupils often make substantial and sustained progress, particularly in history and art.
- A greater focus on the progress pupils make flags up those who are at risk of not making enough progress. Additional and intensive support is quickly put in place. Previous gaps in

progress between boys and girls are diminishing. There is little variation between the progress other groups make, including minority ethnic groups, children looked after and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.

- Nonetheless, the most able pupils are not always given work which makes them think hard about their work. Too often, these pupils complete the same work as other pupils very quickly. They then wait patiently for those other pupils to catch up. This wastes valuable learning time and slows their progress down.
- There is a good focus on developing pupils' language and communication skills through regular speech and language sessions. Staff are supported by a speech and language therapist, as well as a 'communication champion' on each site, trained by the speech and language therapist. A similar arrangement operates for those pupils with physical difficulties.
- A wide range of qualifications are available for pupils and older students to study. Most pupils and students in key stages 4 and 5 are accredited for their hard work. Typically, pupils study for qualifications, including BTEC National Diploma awards, GCSEs, and functional skills and Open College Network awards.
- The small number of Year 11 pupils and Year 12 students who study off-site, either part or full time, spend some of their time studying in the community, including at local colleges, supported by members of staff. The remainder of the time focuses on developing learners' functional life skills and personal development.
- The small minority of pupils who are educated at home by school staff make similar progress to other older pupils. The arrangements for monitoring their progress, attendance and behaviour are very effective.
- Almost all older pupils have a secure pathway to move on to further education, training or employment. Pupils and students are well prepared for their next stage of learning and development in key stage 4 and post-16 provision.

Sixth form provision

Good

- Senior leaders share the leadership responsibility for students aged between 16 and 19 years. The impact of their work is equally as effective as with pupils in key stages 3 and 4.
- Students follow individualised curriculum pathways, including the small number who access their education through the part-time and full-time programmes in collaboration with local colleges and work-based settings. Some secondary-aged pupils also follow the same curriculum pathways. This prepares both pupils and students well for their next stage in their life.
- A similar wide range of subjects at different levels are offered as with the key stage 4 pupils. There are opportunities to study appropriate accredited courses, where students make good progress academically and outstanding progress in their personal development.
- In addition, provision includes, as with key stage 4 pupils, high-quality nurturing, work experience, careers education and programmes focused on independent living skills and personal development.

- Both pupils and students work towards a qualification in personal development, to develop independent living and vocational skills. Careers days raise an awareness of career options for pupils aged from Years 9 to Year 12. Pupils and students have the opportunity to find out about different work-experience options and to develop their interview skills, as well as options for vocational and core subject studies.
- Students are very well prepared for life after school. In 2017, almost all students went on successfully to further education, either mainstream or specialist colleges, or employment.

School details

Unique reference number	133438
DfE registration number	306/6104
Inspection number	10026291

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 category	Independent 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	120
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	14
Number of part-time pupils	7
Proprietor	Adrienne Cherrywood
Chair	Dr Jonathan Clark OBE
Headteacher	Adrienne Cherrywood
Annual fees (day pupils)	£38,000–£81,000
Telephone number	020 8686 5840
Website	www.cresseycollege.co.uk
Email address	a.cherrywood@cresseycollege.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 November 2013

Information about this school

- Cressey College is a multi-site special school for male and female pupils 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 difficulties and other additional special educational needs, including autistic spectrum disorder.

- All pupils have a history of disrupted education. Pupils are placed at the school from 12 local authorities, the majority in London. Almost all pupils have challenging behaviours and benefit from intensive adult support.
- The school is based on five separate sites within the London Borough of Croydon. Three sites are age-specific, one is for pupils unable to work alongside other pupils and the last is for the sole use of older girls.
- There are also two off-site provisions. One is a full-time programme providing tailored pathways to employment, and the second is a part-time programme for those pupils who are currently unable to access full-time education. These placements are partly taught by school staff in the community, including in local libraries and music, leisure and equestrian centres. Pupils study for the rest of the timetable at local colleges. These include Capel Manor, Croydon, Carshalton, Kingston, and South Thames colleges.
- The school has expanded significantly since the last full inspection. Recently, the school has admitted a large number of primary-aged pupils.
- The school works closely with two local special schools, including shared training and professional development for staff.
- In September 2017, the school took over the management of a therapeutic school in Merton local authority. This is subject to a separate inspection.
- The school opened in January 2010. It received its last full inspection in November 2013, when the overall effectiveness of the school was judged to be good.
- There were two subsequent progress monitoring inspections. The school moved premises at the time of the last inspection in October 2017. At the last progress monitoring inspection, all of the independent school standards were judged to be met.
- Since the last inspection, the leadership team has grown. New appointments include a deputy headteacher, three heads of departments, three additional senior teachers and a steering group.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning across all five sites and outreach provisions, in all key stages and in a range of subjects, including English, mathematics and science. All observations were undertaken jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Pupils' work was scrutinised during observations, and additional work sampling and case studies were scrutinised.
- Inspectors explored pupils' views through informal discussions with pupils and observing a school council meeting. Inspectors observed pupils reading in class.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, including the chair of the steering group, and a group of staff, both teaching and non-teaching.
- Questionnaires submitted by 82 members of staff were scrutinised, as well as the school's own surveys of staff views. Inspectors looked at 18 parental responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also held telephone conversations with five parents and met with one parent. A discussion was held with a local authority representative.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentary evidence. This included the school's self-evaluation, development plans, checks on the quality of teaching, safeguarding documentation including risk assessments, various records of pupils' attendance and behaviour, and the school's records and checks on the suitability of staff to work with children.

Inspection team

Mary Hinds, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Kanwaljit Singh

Ofsted Inspector

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