



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

Crosfields School

September 2019



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School's Details

School	Crosfields School		
DfE number	872/6008		
Registered charity number	309108		
Address	Crosfields School Shinfield Road Reading RG2 9BL		
Telephone number	01189871810		
Email address	pa@crosfields.com		
Headmaster	Mr Craig Watson		
Chair of governors	Mr Nick Habgood		
Age range	3 to 13		
Number of pupils on roll	572		
	EYFS	96	Juniors 381
	Seniors	95	
Inspection dates	17 to 19 September 2019		

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Crosfields School is an independent day school. The school was founded in 1957 as a school for male pupils and became co-educational in 2007. It is a charitable trust administered by a board of governors who are the school's trustees.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, a new all-weather surface has been opened and new members have been appointed to the senior leadership team.
- 1.3 The school is split into four departments; the pre-prep from Nursery to Year 2, the junior school for Years 3 and 4, the middle school for Years 5 and 6 and the senior school for Years 7 and 8.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.4 The school aims to provide an environment in which the pupils are happy and confident combined with exceptional pastoral care. It seeks to provide opportunities of considerable breadth and depth to help pupils discover their talents and to provide an atmosphere in which respect for other people and the world is cultivated. The school endeavours to encourage effort, resilience and rigour, for pupils to have critical enquiring minds so that when they leave they are prepared for life beyond the school gates.

About the pupils

- 1.5 The majority of pupils live locally and they represent many nationalities and minority ethnic backgrounds. Many children speak English alongside another language (EAL). Those at the early stages of English language acquisition receive additional support. The national standardized test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average. No children have education, health and care plans and 65 pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Of these, 54 pupils receive additional specialist help with the remainder supported in class. Pupils identified on the school's register of able and excelling learners are supported through curricular, co-curricular and pastoral activities.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. The inspection of schools that have early years settings not requiring registration similarly records whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework. Additionally, the inspection reports on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any un-met standards identified at their previous inspection.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY, the report of which appears later in this document. The COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key regulations and standards have been inspected in detail. These are the regulations on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety, arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information to parents; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and relevant requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 The school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.4 **The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.5 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.
- 2.6 **The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.7 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.8 **The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met.**

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.9 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.10 **The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.11 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.
- 2.12 **The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.13 A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. These include details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. They also include particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.

2.14 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.15 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the day to day management of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.

2.16 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.17 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.

2.18 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.

3. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

The EDUCATIONAL QUALITY inspection reports on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

Since the school was last inspected, the framework for inspection has changed. The current inspection framework uses different criteria and arrangements for grading from those used in previous inspection frameworks. The judgements made on this inspection are, therefore, not directly comparable to judgements made on previous inspections.

All independent schools are required to meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards. However, different inspectorates apply different frameworks that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. The ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by the national inspectorate, Ofsted. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement about key outcomes for pupils and information on the quality of the school's work.

The headline judgements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school.

Key findings

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- Pupils throughout the school make excellent progress over time, and levels of achievement are high.
 - Pupils' speaking, listening, reading and writing skills are highly developed.
 - Attitudes to learning are excellent throughout the school.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- Pupils' successfully respond to the school's stated aim to prepare them for the challenges which await them at their next schools and beyond.
 - Pupils throughout the school show excellent confidence and self-awareness.
 - The pupils display a genuine concern and respect for others, in this inclusive and caring community.

Recommendation

- 3.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes, the school is advised to make the following improvements:
- Ensure that the individual learning needs of the most able older pupils are met through more consistently challenging and ambitious teaching to enable fully sustained achievement.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 Pupils strive to achieve their very best. The school's aim to encourage effort, resilience and rigour in pupils is fully met within an atmosphere of support and calm. Throughout the school, pupils have excellent attitudes towards their learning, towards each other, and towards their teachers. They share views and ideas most effectively and collaborative learning is second nature to them, as seen in the way they work as a team to achieve the best results in their sporting endeavours. Pupils are mature and independent learners and are keen to take initiative in their learning.
- 3.6 Pupils' high standards of achievement are supported most effectively by the newly formed leadership team through robust systems and structures and the closer monitoring and staff development which have been introduced. The youngest children in the EYFS have enjoyed particular benefits to their physical development through a richer curriculum in a new, purpose-built outside play area. Both of these initiatives meet the recommendations from the previous inspection.
- 3.7 The school does not enter pupils for National Curriculum tests. Consequently, the pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests, but, on the evidence available, it is judged to be excellent in relation to age-related expectations. Inspection evidence from observation of lessons, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils supports this judgement. Throughout the school and in all subjects, academic attainment is in advance of that expected at the relevant levels of age and stage of development. Pupils' change in attainment over time is excellent. The newly developed assessment system, which includes 'attitude to learning' marks, tracks each pupil's progress so that pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Pupils then set targets for their future work which inform their rapid progress. Pupils have an excellent record of gaining entry to their first choice of senior school, whether at the end of Year 6 or Year 8. They gain places at senior schools with demanding entrance requirements, with some being awarded entrance scholarships. They wholeheartedly fulfil the school's aims and are ready for the challenges which await them at their next schools and beyond.

- 3.8 Pupils make excellent progress both in relation to their starting points and in comparison with pupils of similar ability. Scrutiny of pupils' written work shows marked progress and improvement over time. Less able pupils, and those with SEND or EAL, make excellent progress because they are extremely well supported both in class and also when receiving specialist help in the learning empowerment resource centre. More able pupils and those with particular talents are challenged in some teaching, by the establishment of scholarship classes as well as through enrichment and extension tasks, so enabling them to develop higher-order learning skills, but this is not consistently experienced by such pupils, hindering their progress at times. Leaders and governors ensure that pupils are challenged, and consequently develop high levels of skills and knowledge, by their participation in science, art and mathematics days, enrichment weeks, poetry, drama and debating programmes as well as in a wide range of competitions and visits. Pupils interviewed said they appreciate and benefit from the help teachers provide outside of lessons, and pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire all agreed that they are given the opportunity to learn and make progress. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire also agreed that teaching enables their children to make good progress and to develop skills for the future. A few were concerned about the information they received about their children's learning. Inspection evidence shows that there are regular meetings, reports and newsletters which cover all aspects of school life and pupils' individual learning on a daily if not weekly basis.
- 3.9 Pupils develop high levels of knowledge, understanding and skills in all areas of their learning, including in the EYFS in response to teaching which is both skilful and knowledgeable. This acquisition is particularly strong in literacy and mathematics. As they mature, pupils begin to understand their rights and responsibilities both to themselves and to each other due to a wide ranging and carefully graduated programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE). This was effectively demonstrated by the way pupils work as a team, in the outdoor learning environment where they are proficient at tying reef knots, lighting fires and camping skills. Pupils extend their ideas and offer their views and questions through the many opportunities provided. In humanities, all pupils, including even the youngest, demonstrate detailed knowledge of environmental issues. Early Years Foundation Stage children know that plastic can pollute the seas, and carry out investigations in their water play. Older pupils hold mature discussions about emissions of fuel polluting the environment and they discuss ways in which they can affect climate change. The school and pupil members of the eco-council ensure that these values permeate throughout the school.
- 3.10 Pupils are highly skilled in literacy as shown in discussions with both their peers and adults. They are notably articulate and apply their speaking skills confidently when performing to an audience. The youngest pupils gain distinctions in drama accreditation tests and the range and wealth of poetry they recited by heart is very high. As pupils move through the school, they read and write with increasing fluency and in a range of contexts. In a story-writing workshop, Year 2 pupils were inspired to write creatively and independently and to use a range of exciting adjectives to capture the reader's attention, in response to brainstorming discussions considering visual stimuli. Older pupils translated the story of Jason and the Argonauts into English from Latin with confidence and ease.
- 3.11 Throughout the school, pupils achieve high standards in mathematics. They manipulate numbers successfully both in algebraic equations and geometry. Older pupils apply logic and mathematical understanding confidently in a range of subjects. In science, pupils correctly analyse data and use graphs to record their results, such as when they investigated the reactivity of metals which was then linked to the everyday problem of conservation of energy.

- 3.12 Pupils' confidence and knowledge of computing is supported by the recent addition of technological hardware and software. Younger pupils learn touch typing and use basic coding to create games. This acumen is extended as they move through the school. Older pupils make presentations and use tablets successfully for photography and to publish the school's newsletter, which they do independently. Within the EYFS, there was excitement and enthusiasm as the children mixed colours using a light box, using technology confidently and safely as an integral part of their learning and development. Pupils' effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) flourishes when staff feel confident in the use of technology and the extensive applications and programs available to support learning. This is particularly the case for the SEND and EAL pupils, whose use of the latest digital support adds an additional dimension to their learning.
- 3.13 Children in the EYFS demonstrate excellent independent learning skills through the continuous provision, both inside and outdoors, of stimulating activities promoting all areas of development. Pupils throughout the school approach investigative challenges enthusiastically and they are confident to use a wide range of resources. Younger pupils choose reference books confidently and learn facts to share with their peers, so building up a bank of useful knowledge. In geography, middle school pupils created a mind map to assess their knowledge of the Vikings, sharing their findings expertly with their peers. Older pupils develop good analytical techniques in music where they determined the pitch of instruments and recognised and read music notation successfully. Pupils respond positively to the well-stocked library, and many are to be seen carrying around and dipping into their reading books which are often sophisticated and complex texts from a range of genres.
- 3.14 Sports teams achieve considerable success in football, cricket, hockey and swimming, where pupils swim in national competitions. Many pupils of all sporting abilities represent the school in sports such as judo, ballet and gymnastics. They enjoy the kudos of being on a winning team or learn how to lose gracefully. Most pupils play at least one musical instrument, many achieving creatively within the performing arts. Other pupils at all ages develop and enhance their skills through playing in the orchestra and many varied ensembles. Pupils regularly perform at high levels in productions and the excellent facilities for all of these activities add to the active encouragement they receive from the school. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, all pupils and almost all parents who responded said that there is a good range of suitable subjects and extra-curricular activities.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.15 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.16 As they move through the school, pupils mature and develop well emotionally as a result of being members of a close-knit community which is united by common characteristics and values of respect and tolerance. The school is a lively, purposeful place, where the pupils learn to live up to the school's stated aims of providing an atmosphere in which respect for other people and for the world is cultivated. The excellent outcomes throughout the school reflect the high priority placed by governance and leadership on the personal development of all pupils and the family ethos and values consistently promoted. When they leave, pupils are extremely well prepared for the responsibilities, opportunities and experiences of the next chapter of their lives. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire saw the school as being well governed, led and managed, with the premises well maintained.

- 3.17 Pupils co-exist harmoniously and they relish the cultural diversity in this inclusive caring school, where there are pupils from a wide range of cultural and religious backgrounds. Over 45 different languages are spoken and pupils say: 'It doesn't matter where we come from or what we look like.' They invite each other to share an understanding of their personal beliefs and traditions and so increase their knowledge of difference very effectively. The school leadership's recognition of different religions' festivals enhances pupils' enjoyment and comprehension. All pupils who responded to the questionnaire acknowledged that the school encourages them to respect other people and this was confirmed by those who were spoken to during the inspection visit. Almost all the parents who responded agreed that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- 3.18 Pupils take their responsibilities seriously and benefit from the many opportunities for leadership and service, whether it be younger pupils carrying messages around the school, or older pupils delivering speech day address. Pupils contribute to the wider community through charitable engagement and a respect for the environment, successfully fulfilling the school's aim in this regard. Pupils choose their charitable projects by vote, after a process of research that they undertake themselves. As a result, they engage in activities such as sitting or sleeping on the ground, to encourage their community to understand and to support a local charity for homeless people. These ventures awaken pupils to issues in the wider world and develop their understanding and compassion for people much less fortunate than themselves. Pupils come to understand well that decisions they make are important determinants of their own and others' well-being.
- 3.19 Pupils learn to co-operate and to work successfully as team members. For example, they share ideas about their work together and understand that they can learn from their mistakes. While they have their own personal aspirations, pupils generously celebrate the successes of their peers. They are welcoming to newcomers. When a pupil with EAL enters the school, he or she is well supported by being paired where possible with a pupil who has the same mother tongue. From an early age, pupils recognise the importance of fair play and obeying rules, and they develop a strong moral sense of right and wrong. They develop a strong sense of sportsmanship through supporting and working hard for their house teams. They come to understand and respect the system of laws, and this is reinforced by themes in the 'Collect' assemblies and PSHE, as well as representations from visitors. Pupils understand the graduation of sanctions which supports their excellent conduct and behaviour. They support each other in any difficulty and emphatically say: 'Tell other people'. In interviews pupils speak warmly of a happy and friendly community in which they show genuine concern for one another.
- 3.20 Pupils conduct themselves sensibly and courteously around the school and their classroom behaviour is exemplary, affording them every opportunity for productive study. They act responsibly and maturely when playing in the grounds at break time. Pupils are personable and self-assured in the company of adults, and excellent ambassadors for the school's ethos of respect for others. The vast majority of parents agree that the school actively promotes good behaviour, and inspection evidence supports this view.
- 3.21 The pupils' growth in confidence and self-worth is successfully nurtured by the school. Pupils gain confidence from the strong rapport which they enjoy with their teachers, who set a considerate, good-humoured example. The youngest of pupils jump confidently into the swimming pool and the newest and youngest EAL children have confidence to shake hands and say: 'How do you do.' It was noted during the inspection that pupils develop a mature capacity to use the vocabulary of reflection in response to mental health and well-being programmes which have been introduced; they are able to articulate thoughtfully how they feel about themselves. Pupils' self-esteem is strong because it is promoted by formal school systems, ranging from EYFS 'star of the week' to the appointment of prefects where older pupils care for the younger ones.

- 3.22 Pupils develop resilience and perseverance, encouraged and supported by teachers and coaches,. Their determination was observed in games' lessons and in pupils' responses to academic challenges, such as solving difficult problems in mathematics. Younger pupils discuss the characteristics of what makes an ideal Crosfield pupil which develops the pupils' independence and resilience by strengthening their resolve to take charge of their learning by taking pride in their work and doing their best. The ideas and ethos of middle school pupils are celebrated by the school by being used as covers for all the pupils' homework diaries. Pupils gain spiritual enrichment, reflecting on the beauty of nature, or discussing the complexities of 'Why God is important to some people and omnipotent', and other philosophical questions. Their experiences of life and death within the community led them to create a memorial garden of calm and for reflection.
- 3.23 Pupils feel safe at the school. Pupils acquire a clear understanding of safe practices, whether working on science investigations, EYFS children negotiating steep pathways in the surrounding forest, or encountering the hazards of the weather. All of the pupils who responded to the questionnaire stated that they understand how to keep safe on-line. In interviews, pupils confirmed that they have been regularly educated in e-safety. The pupils understand the importance of healthy eating and they benefit from taking exercise, in physical education lessons and games sessions as well as recreationally. Pupils understand about the need for a healthy, balanced diet and enjoy the salad and fresh fruit which are always on the menu.

4. Inspection Evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chair of governors and with the safeguarding governor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended house, form meetings and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils as well as the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Sandra Teacher	Reporting inspector
Mrs Vivien Sergeant	Compliance Team Inspector
Mrs Sara Povey	Team Inspector (Assistant Head, GSA school)
Mr David Edwards	Team inspector (Director of Studies, IAPS school)