



Material Change Inspection Report

Croydon High School

March 2024

School's details

School	Croydon High School GDST			
DfE number	306/6081			
Registered charity number	306983			
Address	Croydon High School GDST Old Farleigh Road Selsdon, South Croydon CR2 8YB			
Telephone number	020 8260 7500			
Email address	seniors@cry.gdst.net			
Head	Ms Annabel Davies			
Proprietor	Girls' Day School Trust			
Age range	3 to 19			
Number of pupils on roll	797			
	EYFS	48	Juniors	230
	Seniors	435	Sixth Form	84
Date of inspection	26 March 2024			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Croydon High School is an independent day school registered for female pupils. It was founded in the centre of Croydon in 1874 and moved to its present site in 1966. The school consists of a junior school, which includes the early years setting, and a senior school. It is a member of the Girls' Day School Trust (GDST), whose council provides governance and retains legal responsibility. A local governing body supplies advice and support. The school has 155 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities. No pupil has an education, health and care plan. There are 34 pupils who speak English as an additional language. The school's previous inspection was a focused compliance and educational quality inspection in October 2022.

Purpose of the inspection

- 1.2 This was an announced material change inspection at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to assess the school's proposal to increase the registered total capacity of pupils from 797 to 850. The inspection focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs) and the requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework.

Regulations which were the focus of the inspection	Team judgements
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 7 (safeguarding)	Met
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 11 (health and safety)	Met
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 12 (fire)	Met
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision of pupils)	Met
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment)	Met
ISSR Part 4, paragraphs 18 – 21 (suitability of staff, supply staff and the proprietor)	Met
ISSR Part 5, paragraphs 22 – 29 (premises and accommodation)	Met
ISSR Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
ISSR Part 8 paragraph 34 (leadership and management)	Met

2. Inspection findings

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 7]

Safeguarding policy

- 2.1 The school meets the requirements.
- 2.2 The school has an appropriate policy for safeguarding which provides suitable arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school.

Safeguarding implementation

- 2.3 The school meets the standard.
- 2.4 Arrangements for safeguarding are implemented effectively, including for children in the early years. There is an appropriate team of deputy safeguarding leads, including a lead practitioner for safeguarding in the early years, to support the principal safeguarding lead. This team has been expanded in recent years in anticipation of higher pupil numbers. All members of the safeguarding team undertake regular training at the appropriate level and have appropriate seniority and independence to carry out their roles effectively. Members of the proprietary body are also suitably trained. Safeguarding guidance specific to the early years, for example regarding the use of mobile phones in the setting, is appropriately followed.
- 2.5 All staff receive suitable, regular safeguarding training which pays due regard to the latest statutory guidance, for example *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSIE). This training also forms part of the induction process for new staff to inform them of their responsibilities from the outset. The safeguarding team monitors and checks that staff understand their training. Staff know about types of abuse and how to be vigilant to spot signs of potential abuse, including child-on-child abuse. They understand how to report and record any concerns and their responsibilities under the 'Prevent' strategy. Staff also demonstrate appropriate knowledge of the staff code of conduct, about whistleblowing and the importance of sharing low level concerns. Pupils are taught about staying safe, including online safety, as part of the curriculum and senior leaders monitor the use of technology effectively.
- 2.6 Staff act quickly to respond to safeguarding concerns. Senior leaders liaise effectively with external agencies, from whom advice is sought as appropriate. This ensures that pupils and their families receive effective help when it is needed. Pupils are confident that they will be listened to if they bring a concern to the attention of a member of staff, and that they would receive a response. Records of safeguarding confirm this to be the case, and that action is taken where needed. Pupils confirmed that they would also share with an adult if they were concerned about the welfare of one of their peers.
- 2.7 All safeguarding concerns are recorded methodically and thoroughly using an electronic system. This helps the safeguarding team to monitor and follow up ongoing concerns. The proprietor monitors the effectiveness of the safeguarding provision at the school and commissions independent audits to complement its own expertise.
- 2.8 It is likely that the standard will continue to be met with the proposed increase in the total number of pupils at the school.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – health and safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 11]

- 2.9 The school meets the standard.

- 2.10 The proprietor ensures that appropriate policies and procedures are implemented effectively. These cover the relevant areas of health and safety legislation and practice. Staff and pupils are confident that their learning environment is a safe one because of the measures put in place. Those with roles which involve potential hazards receive appropriate training. Electrical and gas safety checks are carried out at regular intervals, and laboratory areas have appropriate cut-off switches. Pedestrian areas and crossings at the front of the school are clearly marked; vehicular movements, particularly at the start of the school day, are carefully controlled and monitored. Lockdown drills are practised to ensure that pupils, including those in the early years, understand what to do were such a procedure ever necessary. School meals are prepared and served from a suitable facility by external contractors.
- 2.11 It is likely that the standard will continue to be met with the proposed increase in the total number of pupils at the school.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – fire safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 12]

- 2.12 The school meets the standard.
- 2.13 The school has an appropriate fire risk policy, which complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and implements it effectively. All staff receive regular training in how to use apparatus in case of fire and those with specific responsibilities have further training to carry out their role. Drills are carried out regularly so that pupils know how to evacuate safely wherever they are and whatever activity they are undertaking. Fire systems are maintained appropriately and audited by an external agency, who also check that all firefighting equipment is in working order.
- 2.14 All fire exits are clearly marked and free from obstruction. Fire doors are also marked and are kept closed or have automatic closing devices fitted to them. The school is situated in ample grounds, and there are numerous exits from the buildings. The proposed increase in the total number of pupils at the school is unlikely to delay the effective evacuation of pupils in case of emergency, and so it is likely that the standard will continue to be met.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – supervision of pupils [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 14]

- 2.15 The school meets the standard.
- 2.16 Pupils are appropriately supervised, as appropriate to their age, at all times of the school day. The front of the school is supervised during the morning drop-off time to ensure pupil safety. Younger pupils, including those in the early years, are directly supervised during their playtime. Older pupils are less closely, but adequately supervised. They are confident that they can find a member of staff quickly should the need arise. There is an appropriate rota of duties to ensure that staff circulate throughout the buildings and outside during recreational periods.
- 2.17 Pupils eat lunch at various set times to ensure that the dining facilities can manage serving of meals appropriately, and this area is supervised effectively by members of staff. The school has considered how the timings and staffing levels required to supervise mealtimes effectively for older pupils may be altered, as well as ensuring that the catering team have sufficient staff to serve meals promptly.
- 2.18 It is likely that the standard will continue to be met with the proposed increase in the total number of pupils at the school.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – risk assessment [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 16]

- 2.19 The school meets the standard.

- 2.20 The school has an appropriate risk assessment policy and takes effective action to identify and mitigate risk. Risk assessments for various areas of the school and its activities are carried out suitably. Training has been given to ensure that staff leading offsite visits consider and mitigate the contextual risks of each visit effectively to minimise the risk of harm.
- 2.21 The school has prepared a suitably thorough risk assessment with regard to the proposed increase in the total number of pupils at the school, considering a range of possibilities. It is likely that the standard will continue to be met.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors [ISSR Part 4, paragraphs 18–21]

- 2.22 The school meets the standards.
- 2.23 The school has an appropriate staff recruitment policy, in line with the expectations of KCSIE, which it implements effectively. Suitable recruitment practices are followed at the interview stage, and any gaps in employment history are investigated. Online searches are undertaken by a member of staff not directly involved in the interview process. All the required pre-employment checks are carried out before a new member of staff starts work at the school, and these are logged appropriately and systematically on a single central register of appointments. This register is checked periodically by both senior leaders and the proprietor.
- 2.24 The proposed increase in the total number of pupils at the school will lead to only a small number of additional staff members being employed. This will not impact negatively upon the capacity of the administrative team undertaking these checks. As a result, it is likely that the standards will continue to be met.

Premises and accommodation – toilet and washing facilities, medical facilities, maintenance, acoustics, lighting, water, outdoor space [ISSR Part 5, paragraphs 22–29]

- 2.25 The school meets the standards.
- 2.26 The school has sufficient toilet and washing facilities, including for pupils in the early years, and has undertaken an audit which demonstrates that these will continue to be sufficient for the proposed number of pupils. The medical room has suitable accommodation for those who are unwell, as well as toilet and washing facilities. The buildings are well maintained and any faults are promptly addressed. Classrooms and gathering spaces have suitable acoustic properties and lighting to support learning. External lighting provides additional security and safety for those using pathways during the hours of darkness. Hot and cold water, and suitably labelled drinking water, is provided as appropriate.
- 2.27 The school is situated on a spacious site with suitable facilities for physical education as well as recreational play for pupils of all ages, including those in the early years. It is likely that the standards will continue to be met with the proposed increase in the total number of pupils at the school.

Provision of information [ISSR Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c)]

- 2.28 The school meets the requirements for providing information relating to safeguarding to parents. Particulars of the arrangements for safeguarding are published on the school's website.

Quality of leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34]

- 2.29 The school meets the standard.

2.30 Leaders demonstrate that they have the skills and knowledge to fulfil their responsibilities effectively and to actively promote the wellbeing of pupils, including those in the early years. They ensure that the independent school standards are met and that the early years statutory guidance is followed. Leaders have prepared effectively for the proposed increase in pupil numbers. For example, they have augmented the pastoral leadership team and planned to ensure that all pupils of all abilities can continue to participate in competitive sport. They have considered the possible impact of the increase on the life of the school, for example by ensuring that all pupils will still be able to gather together for assembly. The proprietor has exercised appropriate oversight in supporting the proposed increase in pupil numbers. It is likely therefore that the standard will continue to be met.

3. Recommendation with regard to material change inspection

- 3.1 It is recommended that the request to increase the registered capacity of pupils from 797 to 850 is approved.

4. Summary of evidence

- 4.1 The inspector held discussions with the head, senior leaders and other members of staff and met with a representative of the proprietor. He visited different areas of the school and talked with groups of pupils. He scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.