



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Material Change Inspection Report

Cransley School

February 2023

School's details

School	Cransley School		
DfE number	896/6017		
Registered charity number	506907		
Address	Cransley School Belmont Hall Belmont Road Great Budworth Northwich Cheshire CW9 6HN		
Telephone number	01606 891747		
Email address	admin@cransleyschool.org.uk		
Headmaster	Mr Richard Pollock		
Chair of governors	Dr Darren Walter		
Proprietor	Cransley School Ltd		
Age range	4 to 16		
Number of pupils on roll	254		
	EYFS	11	Juniors 91
	Seniors	152	
Date of inspection	13 February 2023		

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Cransley School is a co-educational independent day school located near Northwich in Cheshire. It is a charitable trust, governed by a board of trustees. The school has identified 74 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), 25 of whom receive additional specialist help. Seven pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan. No pupils have English as an additional language. The school's previous inspection was a focused compliance and education quality inspection in April 2019, followed by a material change inspection in September 2020.

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 pupil numbers from 230 to 300. 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
Part 3, paragraph 7 (safeguarding)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 11 (health and safety)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 12 (fire safety)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision of pupils)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment)	Met
Part 4, paragraphs 18–21 (suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors)	Met
Part 5, paragraphs 23–29 (premises and accommodation)	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
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 Safeguarding arrangements are implemented effectively, including in the EYFS. There is timely and appropriate communication with external agencies when this is required. Senior leaders ensure appropriate support for pupils' needs, including pupils with SEND. Records confirm that staff listen to children and take appropriate and timely action when they raise concerns. Pupils expressed confidence that staff do this. Pupils are educated effectively on how to keep safe online and understand how to do so. Filtering and monitoring of technology is appropriate.
- 2.5 All staff, including governors, receive regular and appropriate training, including on their Prevent responsibilities, and have been trained on the recent changes in statutory guidance and online safety. When new staff are appointed, they complete a comprehensive induction process which ensures they understand their safeguarding responsibilities. Staff spoken with showed familiarity with *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSIE) Part 1 and Annex B. They understand the code of conduct for staff and whistleblowing procedures. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputies have sufficient time, status and authority to undertake their roles. They have the appropriate level of training, which is in line with local procedures. The DSL provides regular updates to all staff and opportunities to discuss any changes to safeguarding policies and their implementation.
- 2.6 Staff recognise the importance of 'early help' and intervention strategies, including for children in the EYFS. They are clear about the procedures for reporting any concerns about pupils and they implement these appropriately. Staff understand the types of child-on-child abuse that can occur and the need to react to and appropriately report such behaviours. Appropriate and detailed records of any safeguarding concerns are maintained, including of low-level concerns. Records of safeguarding incidents demonstrate a culture in which detailed analysis of any incidents takes place. This is supported by effective monitoring systems, overseen by the safeguarding governor. Senior leaders liaise appropriately and promptly both with parents and the local safeguarding partnerships.
- 2.7 There are appropriate measures in place to handle any allegations against adults working in the school. Staff understand these and are prepared to report any concerns they may have. The governing board undertakes an annual safeguarding review with due diligence. Safeguarding is a standing agenda item for all governing board meetings. Governors demonstrate suitable rigour in their oversight of arrangements, which includes undertaking a review of any safeguarding incidents that may occur. The current arrangements are likely to meet the needs of the increased number of pupils envisaged in the material change request.

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

- 2.8 The school meets the standard.

- 2.9 The school has a suitably structured health and safety organisation. The school health and safety committee members meet on a half termly basis with the governing board risk and compliance committee. Governors undertake regular auditing of policy and procedures. All staff have suitable health and safety induction training, with regular updates for both staff and governors on a termly basis, supplemented by online training as required. Appropriate health and safety checks are undertaken and recorded effectively. All injuries are recorded appropriately with those requiring medical attention being referred to suitably qualified first aiders in the welfare hub. There is clear and appropriate guidance for staff leading trips and excursions, including those for children in the EYFS. Security arrangements are appropriate. Access to the site is controlled in so far as is reasonably practical given the nature of the school site and its rural location. Site tours and discussions with school leaders confirmed that the current arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the increased number of pupils envisaged in the material change request.

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

- 2.10 The school meets the standard.
- 2.11 The school meets the compliance requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. The fire safety policy and all fire risk assessments are reviewed appropriately. Fire evacuation procedures are regularly rehearsed by staff and pupils, at least on a termly basis, with a report being made to the risk and compliance governing board committee. All school buildings are fitted with fire alarm systems and are serviced annually by external fire engineers, ensuring that the school has effective fire prevention arrangements. Scrutiny of records of fire risk assessments, fire evacuation procedures and logs of the maintenance of alarms, detectors and servicing arrangements confirm that fire safety is suitably promoted. During site tours and in discussions with the school leaders, there was no indication that an increase in pupil numbers would have an adverse impact on fire safety arrangements.

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

- 2.12 The school meets the standard.
- 2.13 Appropriate arrangements ensure that pupils of all age groups are suitably supervised and individual needs, such as those of pupils with SEND, are taken into account. In the junior school and EYFS, staff to pupil ratios are appropriate and extra staffing has already been put into place, in the junior and senior school sections to accommodate the proposed increase in pupil numbers. Guidance for staff involved in supervision duties is detailed and risk assessments are used to ensure that supervision levels are always appropriate. At all times pupils are supervised by qualified and experienced staff who know and understand their needs. Where senior pupils assist with younger pupils, the school ensures that they are directed and supervised in their duties. Satisfactory staff supervision is in place to ensure appropriate supervision of pupils during all break and lunch time periods, including when they are using the school's play and recreations areas. The current arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the increased number of pupils envisaged in the material change request.

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

- 2.14 The school meets the standard.
- 2.15 An efficient and effective approach is taken to managing risk to ensure the welfare of all pupils in the school. An appropriate risk assessment policy is in place, and staff have all received training in assessing risk for their respective areas and for organising school outings. Scrutiny of risk assessment

documents show that appropriate evaluations are undertaken across all age groups, which include consideration of the needs of any vulnerable pupils. These identify likely risks and provide suitable measures to mitigate these. All risk assessments are reviewed and signed off by senior leaders, and the headmaster has oversight of school trips both in the UK and overseas. Governance, through the risk and compliance committee, provides suitable oversight of the risk assessment process and its implementation. The current arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the increased number of pupils envisaged in the material change request.

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

- 2.16 The school meets the standards.
- 2.17 The school ensures that it carries out the appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff prior to a person beginning work in the school. These include checks of the person's identity, right to work in the UK and overseas checks, where applicable. In addition, appropriate checks of the lists of those prohibited from teaching and/or management are carried out if required. All staff complete a medical self-declaration form. Part-time staff, volunteers and governors are all subject to the appropriate checking procedures, and senior leaders and governors undertake routine spot checks of the single central register and associated staff files. A single central register (SCR) of checks is kept as required. All staff files contain a useful summary sheet of checks carried out, and these correspond to the details held on the SCR. The current arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the increased number of pupils envisaged in the material change request.

Premises and accommodation [ISSR Part 5, paragraphs 23–29]

- 2.18 The school meets the standards.
- 2.19 Tours of the school's accommodation confirmed that adequate toilet, washing and changing facilities are available to all pupils in the school. Separate and appropriately labelled toilet facilities are provided for pupils, and suitable changing and showering facilities are provided for all pupils aged 11 and above who take part in physical education. Separate facilities are available for staff and visitors to the school. All the above facilities are suitable to meet the needs of the projected increase in the pupil population.
- 2.20 A suitable welfare facility, called the hub, staffed by appropriately qualified welfare supervisors, is shared between the junior and senior schools. At least one qualified first aider is available, in the hub, at all times during the working day. Separate toilet and wash-handbasin facilities are located in the rest room facility for pupils' use in the main building and there is a bed available if required. Pupils' medical notes and reports are confidentially secured as are any medicines, which are kept in locked cupboards in the first aid room. All the above facilities are suitable to meet the needs of the projected increase in the pupil population.
- 2.21 Tours of the school site visiting teaching and recreation areas indicated that maintenance regimes are of an appropriate standard, suitably managed and documented. The school uses an online system for reporting maintenance requirements which prioritises responses in terms of the health and safety priority of the item logged. Governors provide suitable oversight, and management of maintenance and refurbishment. Additional input is provided by members of the school's health-and-safety committee. The above provision and facilities are suitable to meet the needs of the projected increase in the pupil population.
- 2.22 Tours of the school's accommodation confirmed that suitable acoustic and lighting arrangements and water supplies are in place and suitable throughout the school. Adequate sound insulation is provided where required. The recently acquired new classroom modules have all received suitable usage certification for educational purposes, by the contractors who installed them. Internal and external

lighting is adequate for the needs of the pupils and staff, including external lighting for security purposes and to allow evening functions to take place across the school site after dark. Suitable water supplies are available across all areas of the school with hot and cold water as required, including ready access to drinking water. The current facilities are suitable to meet the needs of the projected increase in the pupil population.

- 2.23 All age groups in the school site have direct access to suitable and appropriate spaces for physical education and recreation. Younger pupils in the Reception class have their own dedicated play and recreation areas. Pupils in the junior and senior schools have access to a sports hall, tennis courts and an extensive lawn area suitable for relaxation and games. Additionally, there is a large acreage of grass playing fields a short distance from the main school buildings. The size and variety of the current provision means that pupils can be divided up into age-appropriate specific groups as required. The current facilities are suitable to meet the needs of the projected increase in the pupil population.

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

- 2.24 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 and provided to parents on request.

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

- 2.25 The school meets the standard.
- 2.26 The school's leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards and requirements are met consistently, and they actively promote the wellbeing of the pupils. Members of the governing board regularly monitor the required standards and ensure that policies and procedures are appropriate and relevant to the school's needs. Senior leaders and the governing board have been managing a gradual increase in pupil numbers effectively across all sections of the school, ensuring that they maintain the school's distinctive ethos. A strategic development plan, covering the years 2020 to 2024 informs this process. Scrutiny of senior management and governing board minutes confirms that appropriate consideration has been made of the implications of increasing pupil numbers, which will be limited to a maximum pupil population of 300.

3. Recommendation with regard to material change inspection

Recommendation

- 3.1 Current growth, planned for and monitored appropriately is likely to see the school exceed its current maximum number of 230 pupils. Facilities and provision during the visit were found to be appropriate for a maximum number of 300 pupils. It is therefore recommended that approval be given to allow the number of pupils on roll to increase to the requested maximum number of 300 pupils.

4. Summary of evidence

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

Inspectors

Mr Tony Halliwell

Reporting inspector