

Cruckton Hall School

Cruckton, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY5 8PR

Inspection dates

19 September 2018

Overall outcome

The school does not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraphs 2(1), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i)

- The Department for Education (DfE) commissioned Ofsted to review several aspects of the school's effectiveness including the quality of education provided.
- The impact that teaching is having on learning is variable across the school. There are some strengths in the teaching of mathematics and humanities. However, in some phases, teachers do not adequately consider the aptitudes and needs of pupils. As a result, the progress that some pupils make is weak. Teachers' expectations are not routinely high enough.
- The standards for these paragraphs are not met.

Paragraphs 3, 3(a), 3(c), 3(d) and 3(g)

- Teaching at the school is not ensuring that pupils make good progress.
- Some teachers' plans do not fully reflect the starting points of pupils. In some pupils' English and mathematics books, there is a lack of challenge and learning is not sequenced in a logical way.
- Assessment information is not being used effectively to inform teachers' plans. Leaders state that they are currently developing the assessment system. Staff have given much thought to the 'learning pathways' that pupils study over time. However, there is not a clear enough vision for how the curriculum and assessment system work together and thereby support pupils to make good progress.
- Areas for improvement from the previous inspection that relate to important aspects of teaching and learning have not improved enough. For example, pupils do not write at length in a range of subjects. In the pupils' books that were scrutinised during the inspection, the majority of work is scribed for pupils by adults. This remains the case for older pupils who demonstrate that they have the confidence and ability to write independently.
- The standards for these paragraphs are not met.

Paragraphs 3(b), 3(e), 3(f), 3(h), 3(i), 3(j), 9, 9(a), 9(b), 9(c), 10

- Given pupils' starting points when they join the school, many demonstrate self-motivation and an interest in their work. During the inspection, pupils were observed engaging in a range of different topics and studies. Teachers frequently present pupils with options of what aspects of the curriculum they would like to focus on and how they will present their learning. This strategy gives pupils a sense of ownership and independence. Some pupils are able to explain what they are learning and why this interests them.
- Teachers demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of the subject matter they teach. However, they are not applying their skills sufficiently to ensure that other standards are met. For example, teachers' plans do not take sufficient account of pupils' needs. As a result, pupils' progress is variable and weak in some phases of the school.
- Classroom resources are of a good quality. Teachers have the necessary resources to teach their subjects.
- Teaching at the school does not undermine fundamental British values or the Equality Act 2010. Evidence in displays around the school demonstrates that British values are promoted. The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum also supports pupils' learning. For example, pupils explore moral dilemmas and are encouraged to consider what is right and wrong.
- The DfE requested that the inspector evaluate the effectiveness with which staff manage pupils' behaviour. The school's behaviour policy encourages a positive approach to behaviour management. The policy states: 'Pupils placed at Cruckton Hall have severe and complex learning difficulties, compounded by challenging behaviour. It is essential for pupils to have a caring, consistent and supportive environment if they are to cope with or overcome their individual difficulties.' The policy sets out potential sanctions and records are kept of any incidents of misbehaviour.
- Staff have positive relationships with pupils. During the inspection, on the whole, pupils responded positively to any requests or instructions from staff. Any incidents of restrictive physical intervention are appropriately detailed and recorded. Leaders have devised new strategies for ensuring that there are clear opportunities for pupils and staff to reflect on incidents and consider any development points. Leaders analyse incidents of physical intervention in detail so that they can respond to any trends or patterns.
- Staff have devised 'learning intervention plans' to identify pupils' specific needs and establish any additional support. These plans are detailed and help staff monitor improvements in pupils' personal development. However, plans do not sufficiently focus on pupils' learning needs. Plans have not ensured that pupils make good progress in key basic skills such as writing.
- Incidents of misbehaviour are appropriately recorded. Leaders have introduced a new system to analyse incidents in even greater detail this academic year. However, leaders recognise that this work is quite new and is not yet fully embedded.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is appropriate and takes account of the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010. The school's records show that there

has only been one incident of bullying.

- The standards for these paragraphs are met.
- Not all part 1 standards are met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7(b), 14, 32(1) and 32(1)(c)

- The DfE requested that the inspector review the effectiveness of safeguarding. The inspector was asked to pay attention to the overall effectiveness of health and safety.
- Safeguarding arrangements have due regard to guidance issued by the secretary of state. The safeguarding policy is available on the school's website. Staff state that they know what action to take if they have a concern about a child.
- The DfE asked that the inspector consider the supervision of pupils and deployment of staff. Leaders presented timetables that demonstrate how they ensure that appropriate ratios and levels of supervision are maintained for different pupils. However, some staff state that they have concerns about how well these timetables and plans are adhered to. During the inspection, levels of supervision were appropriate.
- The standards for this paragraph are met.

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 11, 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- Though an appropriate policy is in place, arrangements to promote the welfare of pupils are not sufficiently robust. This is because risk assessments do not provide enough detail about the risks associated with some pupils' behaviour and the necessary control measures required to reduce these risks.
- Because of the shortcomings in relation to risk assessments, the school's health and safety policy is not being implemented effectively. Leaders accept that this aspect of provision is not good enough.
- The standards for these paragraphs are not met.
- Not all part 3 standards are met.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

Paragraph 18(2), 18(2)(a), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(i), 18(2)(c)(ii), 18(2)(c)(iii), 18(2)(c)(iv), 18(2)(d), 18(2)(e), 18(3), 19(2), 19(2)(a), 19(2)(a)(i), 19(2)(a)(i)(aa), 19(2)(a)(i)(bb), 19(2)(a)(i)(cc), 19(2)(a)(i)(dd), 19(2)(a)(ii), 19(2)(b), 19(2)(c), 19(2)(d), 19(2)(d)(i), 19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3), 20(6), 20(6)(a), 20(6)(a)(i), 20(6)(a)(ii), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(i), 20(6)(b)(ii), 20(6)(b)(iii), 20(6)(c), 21(1), 21(2), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(i), 21(3)(a)(ii), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(a)(iv), 21(3)(a)(v), 21(3)(a)(vi), 21(3)(a)(vii), 21(3)(a)(viii), 21(3)(b), 21(4), 21(5), 21(5)(a), 21(5)(a)(i), 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(b), 21(5)(c), 21(6), 21(7), 21(7)(a), 21(7)(b)

- Though not in the scope of the inspection, the inspector reviewed the school's single central record. The record is compliant and includes appropriate checks on staff's,

supply staff's and director's suitability to work with children and young people.

- The standards for these paragraphs are met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 25

- The DfE asked the inspector to consider the suitability of the school's premises and accommodation. The school premises, accommodation and facilities are maintained to a satisfactory standard.
- All the classrooms visited during the inspection were bright and clean. The grounds are very well maintained. Buildings are in a good state of repair and staff take pride in the overall quality of the school environment.
- The standards for these paragraphs are met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c)

- Leaders have not ensured that the independent school standards are consistently met at Cruckton Hall School.
- The curriculum, assessment system and day-to-day teaching are not monitored or evaluated effectively by leaders. As a result, the impact that teaching has on learning varies across the school.
- School development plans lack clarity about how pupils' learning will develop and progress over time. Leaders have not adapted plans adequately to take account of some of the school's key issues. Furthermore, some of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection remain poorly developed, and in some cases very weak. For example, pupils still have limited opportunities to write at length.
- Some staff do not express confidence in the leadership and management of the school, or in the overall quality of decision-making. Staff stated that they feel some questions 'go unanswered' and they require a greater level of support.
- As a result of shortcomings identified in the quality of risk assessments, leaders are not actively promoting the well-being of pupils.
- Senior leaders recognise that greater oversight and support are required. New appointments have been made at a senior level to ensure that work is undertaken urgently to address unmet standards.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection, as set out in the annex of this report. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

School details

Unique reference number	123619
DfE registration number	893/6017
Inspection number	10056158

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	Independent residential special school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	8 to 19
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	33
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	6
Proprietor	Kisimul Group Ltd
Chair	Margaret Hill
Headteacher	Mr Robert Arrowsmith
Annual fees (day pupils)	£90,143
Telephone number	01743 860 206
Website	www.cruckton.com
Email address	robert.arrowsmith@cruckton.com
Date of previous standard inspection	9–12 May 2017

Information about this school

- The school was judged to be good at its last standard inspection in May 2017.
- The school is owned by the Kisimul Group.
- A new headteacher was appointed in October 2017.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan. Almost all have a history of severely challenging behaviours and many have not attended school regularly for some time.
- All pupils have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder and associated conditions.

Pupils have diagnoses of Asperger syndrome, attachment disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, oppositional defiant disorder and pathological demand avoidance.

- The sixth form operates at a satellite site at Harlescott House, Harlescott Lane, Shrewsbury SY1 3BA. Six pupils attend this provision on a full-time basis.
- The school uses five alternative providers: Crowsmill, Project Farm, Fordhall Farm, Crossbow Training and Stable Relationships.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the DfE as a result of concerns raised relating to: the overall quality of education; the management of pupils' behaviour; the effectiveness of safeguarding and wider health and safety; levels of supervision and the deployment of staff; the standard of the premises; and the extent to which leaders and managers have the skills and knowledge required to ensure that the independent school standards are consistently met.
- The inspector undertook a range of activities to evaluate the school's effectiveness and ascertain the extent to which the independent school standards are being met. Inspection activities included: a learning walk with the headteacher visiting several classes; a scrutiny of pupils' books with the headteacher and director of education; a meeting with the behaviour leader; a review of the single central record; a meeting with the designated safeguarding lead and review of child protection records and related policies; a meeting with the chief executive officer and chief operating officer; and telephone discussions with the local authority designated officer and placing authorities.
- The inspection was conducted without notice.

Inspection team

Jonathan Keay, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if-
 - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work-
 - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan.
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school-
 - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
 - 3(c) involves well-planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
 - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
 - 3(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school.
- 11 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy.
- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 16(a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
 - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the

school-

- 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
- 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
- 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

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