



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

Cranford House School Trust Limited

November 2022

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School's Details

School	Cranford House School Trust Limited			
DfE number	931/6083			
Registered charity number	280883			
Address	Cranford House School Trust Limited Moulsford Wallingford Oxfordshire OX10 9HT			
Telephone number	01491 651218			
Email address	office@cranfordhouse.net			
Headteacher	Dr James Raymond			
Chair of governors	Mr Stuart Wallis			
Age range	2 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	542			
	EYFS	28	Juniors	181
	Seniors	291	Sixth Form	42
Inspection dates	29 November to 1 December 2022			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Cranford House School Trust Limited is a co-educational independent day school situated in South Oxfordshire. It was founded in 1931 and moved to its present site in 1954. The school consists of a nursery, junior school, senior school and sixth form. The school is a charitable trust administered by a board of governors.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection the school has become co-educational and has introduced a sixth form. A building programme has been undertaken, which includes a nursery school and garden, a sixth form centre and a design and technology building. The current chair of governors took up his position in November 2018.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to provide a dynamic education with plentiful opportunities for pupils to fulfil their natural potential. It seeks to ensure pupils are happy, confident and motivated with a self-belief characterised by curiosity, resilience and a spirit of collaboration.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come from a range of cultural and economic backgrounds and mostly live within 20 miles of the school. The school's own assessment data indicate that the ability of the pupils is broadly average compared to those taking the same tests nationally. The school has identified 74 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and dyspraxia, of whom 20 receive additional specialist help. Three pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for six pupils, one of whom receives additional support for their English. The school identifies those pupils who are more able and provides appropriately challenging educational and enrichment opportunities for this group, as it does for all pupils.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Inspections of schools with early years settings not requiring registration also report whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, inspections report 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. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

ISI inspections are 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 FOCUSED 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 standards have been inspected in detail. These are the standards on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety; arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information; 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 standards 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 In the junior school, the school's own framework for assessment confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 At GCSE in the years 2020 to 2022, performance has confirmed that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.4 In the sixth form, A-level results in the year 2022 have confirmed that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.5 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.
- 2.6 Pupils receive relationships education in the junior school and relationships and sex education in the senior school, except in so far as they are lawfully excused. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.7 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

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

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.10 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.
- 2.11 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

- 2.12 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff and proprietors. The school does not use supply staff. A register is kept as required.
- 2.13 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

2.14 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.

2.15 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.16 A range of information is published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes 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. It also includes 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.

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

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.18 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 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.

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

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.20 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.

2.21 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.

The headline judgements apply 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 make excellent progress and achieve well academically.
- Pupils are articulate communicators who listen well and express themselves clearly, both orally and in writing.
- Pupils are highly motivated, have extremely positive attitudes to learning and are determined to make the most of all the opportunities available to them at the school.
- Pupils develop excellent skills in the broader curriculum through a wide-ranging programme of extra-curricular activities.

3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.

- The pupils' generosity of spirit is notable; they are supportive of each other, have a decidedly strong sense of community, and are proud of their school.
- Pupils of all ages, including children in the EYFS, make rapid progress in developing their self-awareness and self-confidence.
- Pupils are naturally inclusive and demonstrate particularly strong acceptance of those who have different backgrounds or beliefs to their own.
- Pupils embrace the many opportunities to improve the lives of others and make an outstanding contribution to the community within and beyond school.

Recommendation

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

- Strengthen pupils' ability to apply information and communications technology (ICT) skills more strongly to all areas of their learning.

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, including those with SEND, make excellent progress, as evidenced by comprehensive tracking data. Their progress in lessons is facilitated by focused teaching, alongside a culture where pupils are determined to make the best use of their time. EYFS profiles show that, over time, a very large majority of children reach a good level of development. In the junior school, a large majority of pupils score in

the top 10% nationally in standardised tests in English and mathematics compared to those taking the same tests nationally. This progress is confirmed by the standard of mathematics and reading in lessons, the scrutiny of pupils' work and assessment data provided by the school. Pupils' attainment at GCSE in 2022 was strong, with over two-fifths of the results being achieved at the highest two grades. In 2020 and 2021, in centre-assessed and teacher-assessed assessments, pupils' results were equally strong. In 2022, over two-thirds of A-level results were graded at the highest three grades. In discussions, pupils of all ages were keen to point to the quality of teaching and the individual support they receive from both teachers and pastoral staff as key contributory factors to their academic success.

- 3.6 Pupils develop communication skills of the highest quality. Pupils are articulate, expressing themselves clearly and with purpose, in response to the many opportunities for discussion and debate in the classroom and beyond. This was evident in drama when Year 8 pupils engaged in clear and purposeful discussion as they considered how emotions can be conveyed to an audience. In a school council meeting, pupils spoke with confidence and expressed their ideas articulately when expressing opinions about proposed changes to the central courtyard. Pupils' listening skills are excellent. For example, Year 2 pupils listened carefully to a story, responding with enthusiasm and excitement at the relevant moments. Pupils' writing skills are very well-developed. In English in Year 3, pupils' written work shows a strong understanding of the function of different parts of speech and the knowledge of how to apply that understanding in imaginative ways. In discussions, pupils, including those with SEND, said that they are confident communicators because there is an atmosphere of mutual respect. In all of these areas, a strong contributory factor is the commitment of the school's leadership team and the staff to provide pupils with opportunities to develop communication skills. Pupils are enabled to read widely, engage in discussions, form their own ideas, write creatively and speak in public.
- 3.7 Pupils make rapid progress in developing knowledge, skills and understanding. This is as a result of the school's supportive and collaborative learning environment and their own determination. Pupils explore ideas and make excellent use of concepts acquired in previous lessons. For example, Year 8 pupils used their musical skills with confidence to produce a high-quality piece of African drum music. Year 6 pupils' work displays a secure understanding of the origins of scientific classification and the role that natural selection plays in the survival of species. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a few pupils did not agree that lessons are interesting. Inspectors found that pupils demonstrated high levels of engagement in response to the teaching they receive. For example, Year 7 pupils responded with curiosity when shown images of brain-eating amoeba. Pupils make particularly strong progress when they are involved actively in lessons. Pupils in the junior school responded with excitement when given the opportunity to create their own science films using tablet computers.
- 3.8 Pupils achieve excellent standards in a large range of co-curricular activities and pursuits. Leaders encourage and support pupils to pursue activities which are of particular interest to them. Some pupils excel at local, regional and national level in a variety of sports including hockey, football, netball, tennis and horse riding. Large numbers embark on The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) scheme, with many achieving bronze and silver awards; pupils in the sixth form are now working towards their gold award. Pupils excel in the UK Maths Challenge, Crest Awards and the National Biology Challenge. Pupils of all ages achieve strong success in public speaking competitions and music examinations and outstanding artistic achievement is evident in the quality of the artwork on display throughout the school. Pupils achieve highly in these areas because the timetable is carefully designed to enable them to participate in a wide range of activities. They also achieve highly as a result of the support and encouragement of governors, school leaders and staff.
- 3.9 Pupils display well-developed thinking skills. From the youngest years, pupils use these skills with confidence because they are encouraged to extend their understanding through open questions and appropriate tasks. In mathematics the most able Year 6 pupils displayed excellent reasoning skills when describing methods to perform challenging calculations involving fractions. In food technology,

Year 11 pupils displayed good study skills when using a new technique to answer questions on the benefits and problems of a typical British diet. In the scrutiny of work, pupils in Year 13 showed strong analytical skills when interpreting and manipulating data about the trade relations between the USA and Mexico within NAFTA in 2016. Pupils display an excellent ability to research effectively by using a wide range of sources. This was seen in extended project work on topics ranging from the ethicality of UK zoos to the legitimacy of the American decision to use nuclear bombs in 1945. Pupils' ability to research results from the effective promotion by leadership and governance of an environment of academic endeavour and curiosity. It is also supported by a curriculum and co-curricular programme that provides many opportunities to develop and apply such skills.

- 3.10 Pupils are competent in using ICT to support their learning. For example, pupils use online learning platforms very successfully to access assignments and material that has previously been covered in lessons. Pupils with EAL make excellent use of specific software to enhance their learning. This enables them to make progress in line with their peers. In some lessons observed by inspectors, pupils' progress was enhanced through effective teaching using ICT. For example, in art in Year 12, pupils made expert use of digital platforms to support the presentation of their sketchbook work, curate libraries of digital imagery and carry out research. In discussions with inspectors, however, pupils said that in the majority of subjects they do not use or apply ICT creatively to enhance their learning. Lessons observed during the inspection confirm this view.
- 3.11 Children acquire and develop excellent numeracy skills in the EYFS and throughout the junior school. This is due to well-pitched learning activities and the focus on number skills to support pupils' learning. In mathematics, Year 5 pupils displayed an excellent understanding of complex multiplication problems as they responded on their mini whiteboards to feedback from the teacher. As pupils progress through the school, they apply their numerical and mathematical skills to a range of problems with varying degrees of confidence. Younger pupils in the senior school displayed good numerical skills when finding factors, but for some pupils their progress was limited by a lack of challenge. In the scrutiny of work, pupils in Year 12 grappled with new statistical methods in geography and pupils in Year 13 showed strong numerical skills when balancing chemical equations. In discussions, pupils stated that they make excellent progress with the mathematics needed for their sixth-form studies as a result of the individual help available to them from teachers to support their learning.
- 3.12 Pupils' attitudes towards learning are consistently excellent. They take a high level of responsibility for their studies, demonstrating both the motivation and determination to do well. Pupils embrace the wide range of opportunities to discover new interests and skills that the school provides. In response to the questionnaire, almost all parents agreed that the school equips their children with the teamworking, collaborative and research skills they need in later life. Pupils are naturally collaborative and help and care for each other in lessons and beyond. In discussions pupils spoke highly of the support and encouragement that they receive from their peers and their teachers. In physics, Year 11 pupils collaborated extremely well as they set up the equipment needed to produce a rainbow using a glass prism. Inspection evidence shows that pupils are keen and active learners who engage readily in independent work. In the EYFS, children display excellent independence as they actively seek out and engage in a range of different tasks. In geography, Year 9 pupils took responsibility for their own learning through a self-marking task on the different types of rocks that cause erosion. Pupils in GCSE and at A level take notably strong leadership in their learning. This is evident in art and design portfolios which show much originality, and in extended projects on a diverse range of topics.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 From the moment they join the school, pupils make rapid progress in developing their self-confidence, resilience, self-discipline and other personal skills. Within the school, pupils show notable self-confidence without any hint of arrogance. For example, children in the EYFS displayed decidedly strong

self-confidence as they sang a song in French. Pupils are comfortable within themselves and inquisitive, as they are trying to be the best they can be rather than comparing themselves to others. This amply meets the school's aim to ensure pupils are confident with a self-belief characterised by curiosity. Pupils show particularly high levels of self-understanding for their age. In biology in Year 7, pupils showed excellent self-awareness as they selected worksheets that offered a suitable degree of challenge to investigate types of cells. Clear feedback and opportunities to discuss their work with teachers mean that pupils are self-reflective and have an objective awareness of their strengths and weaknesses. Pupils with SEND are extremely positive about the help they receive, saying that it supports their self-confidence and self-esteem. Pupils' outstanding self-awareness is developed through the strong pastoral support which is tailored to their individual needs. In their questionnaire responses, an overwhelming majority of parents said that the school helps their children to be confident and independent. Inspection evidence confirms this view.

- 3.15 Pupils demonstrate an outstanding sense of community and identity. They display an excellent level of respect for one another, regardless of any perceived difference. Pupils show great sensitivity and respect for those from different backgrounds and with different learning needs than themselves. In discussions, pupils who had joined the school in the sixth form spoke very highly of the atmosphere of inclusivity they encountered amongst the pupils. In the questionnaire responses, an overwhelming majority of parents said that the school actively promotes the values of democracy, respect, and tolerance of other people. Pupils relish the opportunity to gain a better understanding of different cultures. In history, Year 10 pupils engaged in lively discussion as they reflected on the impact of Cecil Rhodes on culture, politics and education. Younger pupils take pleasure in sharing their cultural traditions and celebrations with each other. The pupils' commitment to inclusivity is as a result of belonging to a harmonious school and the dedication of the leadership to ensuring that everyone is treated equally and fairly.
- 3.16 Pupils have a strong appreciation of the non-material aspects of life. This is supported by a culture of generosity of spirit that leaders have embedded throughout the school. In discussions with pupils, it was clear that they value being part of a school where kindness and empathy are an integral part of school life. Throughout their time at the school, pupils develop a strong awareness of the beauty of life. This is apparent in the obvious pleasure they get from art, music and drama. For example, in a GCSE textiles lesson there was a real sense of peace within the room as the pupils enjoyed the tactile experience of felting. Pupils possess a strong spiritual awareness and an ability to reflect upon ideas with maturity. For example, Year 3 pupils expressed their feelings eloquently, as they explored the true meaning of a religious festival. In sociology, Year 13 pupils demonstrated a particularly high level of philosophical understanding of the social distribution of crime.
- 3.17 Pupils have an excellent understanding of the importance of staying safe, both in terms of their digital lives as well as with regards to their physical and mental health and well-being. Pupils have a well-embedded understanding of the need to establish a balance in all they do. In Spanish, Year 10 pupils discussed with conviction the benefits of being happy and mentally well. Pupils of all ages are keen to participate in the many sporting activities available, as they are highly conscious that an active lifestyle is good for their well-being. In discussions, pupils in the junior school showed a strong awareness of the importance of eating a varied and healthy diet and drinking water to stay hydrated. Pupils maintain a positive approach to relationships and life because the school recognises the importance of good mental health and promotes pupils' wellbeing through the curriculum.
- 3.18 Pupils are extremely good at supporting others in the school community and collaborating with their peers. In discussions with inspectors, they spoke warmly of a culture of mutual support where pupils and staff will go out of their way to help each other. Children in the EYFS were keen to take turns and share resources because they are encouraged by their teachers to negotiate, build upon each other's ideas and work collaboratively in social situations. Through the assumption of leadership roles, pupils contribute to the school community in many different ways. They act as heads of school, heads of house, prefects, form captains and playtime buddies. Pupils relish the opportunity to put forward their

views through activities such as the school council. They understand that their ideas will be considered and acted upon, such as recent improvements to lunchtime arrangements. This amply fulfils the school's aim for the pupils to develop a spirit of collaboration. Pupils' excellent social awareness is evident in the ease with which they talk to and interact with adults. They demonstrate positive engagement with each other both in and outside lessons. Pupils who spoke with inspectors passionately voiced the belief that their school is a community built on kindness, consideration and respect.

- 3.19 Pupils make a very positive contribution to the local community and to wider society through charity and outreach work. They demonstrate considerable sensitivity towards those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils are instrumental in choosing the charities they want to support and of thinking of ways in which to really help others. For example, pupils organised a cake sale to raise funds for Stonewall and support LGBTQ+ people who are homeless. During lockdowns as a result of the Covid pandemic, pupils in Year 7 wrote letters to residents of a local care home. There is a strong understanding amongst pupils that community service is important, for example by setting up a volunteering link at a local hospital and by helping with 'stretch and challenge' days for local primary school children.
- 3.20 Pupils display an excellent ability to make well-considered moral decisions and take responsibility for their choices. They have an excellent understanding of rules and laws and can discuss issues of morality with confidence. In English, Year 7 pupils reflected thoughtfully on the connections between passages in the text *Illegal* and modern world refugees making channel crossings to the UK. In discussions pupils displayed a very clear understanding of what is right and what is wrong, shown in their expression of no tolerance of any bullying. During the inspection it was seen that pupils are kind to each other, show respect to visitors and are extremely well-mannered.
- 3.21 Pupils have a decidedly strong understanding of how the decisions that they make now will have an impact on their future success. In the EYFS, children make suitable choices of activities which support their development. Pupils of all ages think very carefully when selecting which subjects they will study and the co-curricular activities that they will pursue. Older pupils recognise the importance of their decisions when selecting pathways to their future careers. In discussions, pupils confirmed that they have a very clear understanding of how to improve their own learning. They respond actively to feedback from teachers and persevere to improve their work. In discussions, pupils spoke of how they make the decision to attend homework club and additional sessions with teachers when they have identified work they do not fully comprehend. Pupils were firm in their acknowledgement of their teachers' roles in treating them as individuals and raising their self-belief, recognising that personalised critical feedback and support is at the heart of their success as learners.

4. Inspection Evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, had discussions with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with a group of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with educational resource areas. Inspectors considered the responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires. The inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Sue Clarke	Reporting inspector
Mr Jonathan Andrews	Compliance team inspector (Academic director, HMC school)
Miss Julie Chatkiewicz	Team inspector (Vice principal, GSA school)
Mr Timothy Smith	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)