

School inspection report

5 October 2023 to 6 October 2023

Crown House School

Bassetsbury Manor
Bassetsbury Lane
High Wycombe
Buckinghamshire
HP11 1QX

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

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Summary of inspection findings

1. The proprietor oversees the school effectively through the work of the governing body. Governors have suitable experience and provide both support and challenge to leaders. Knowledgeable leaders enable pupils to achieve well academically, while at the same time placing a high priority on their development as tolerant and fair-minded individuals.
2. Leaders are ambitious for the strategic development of the school. Their self-evaluation and development planning are accurate and wide-ranging. The school offers a broad curriculum, enriched by a suitable range of extra-curricular activities for pupils of all ages. In most subjects, teaching effectively promotes good progress. However, the curriculum and activities are not adapted sufficiently in history and geography teaching to match pupils' ages and abilities. As a result, the pupils do not progress as well in these subjects.
3. Leaders ensure that arrangements for health and safety are robust, so that pupils learn in a safe environment. The school's values, which support its aims, are reinforced throughout school life, so that pupils receive sensitive pastoral care, which is tailored to their individual needs. As a result, leaders ensure that pupils' welfare and wellbeing are well-supported. Records of behaviour provide a detailed record for individual pupils. However, leaders do not use this information effectively to provide an overview of patterns and trends to enable leaders to address any emerging themes, including through the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum or by providing additional staff training.
4. Children in the early years follow a well-planned curriculum, closely aligned to their interests. They progress well, engaging in a wide range of activities indoors and outside, which teachers ensure are well-matched to support their on-going development. Children settle quickly into the early year setting and are happy and secure due to warm relationships with staff and the sensitive care they provide.
5. The diverse school community is tolerant and accepting of difference. Pupils have a strong feeling of belonging and take their positions of responsibility seriously. They willingly support charitable causes, are keen to protect the environment and support one another successfully through buddying systems.
6. Governors regularly monitor safeguarding arrangements to ensure they are effective. Staff have a secure understanding of their training and the appropriate safeguarding policy, which enable them to be alert to potential risks to pupils' welfare. Good relationships between staff and pupils boost pupils' confidence that they can share any concerns with an adult in school.

The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are met
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met

Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- strengthen achievement in history and geography by ensuring that the curriculum and teaching are tailored more closely to the ages and abilities of pupils.
- fully utilise information from the school's pastoral monitoring system to enable leaders and governors to gain an overview of patterns in behaviour.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

7. The proprietor has made effective arrangements for a board of governors to exercise oversight of the school. Governors have a wide range of relevant expertise, particularly in educational matters, and they ensure they remain up to date with current guidance. Working in conjunction with the directors, who oversee areas such as health and safety, governors ensure that the school's arrangements comply with statutory guidance and are made available to parents along with other required information.
8. Governors are well-informed about the learning programmes and pupils' achievements, allowing them to provide informed support. They visit the school regularly to discuss progress with specific projects and to seek out the views of pupils and staff. They support the implementation of senior leaders' initiatives, such as the outdoor learning and creativity programmes. Leaders ensure that parents receive informative reports on their children's progress. Parental concerns are addressed efficiently in line with the school's complaints policy, and leaders draw on advice from governors when required. A suitable record is kept of all complaints.
9. Leaders are knowledgeable and seek to ensure that the school's virtues of confidence, perseverance, honesty, compassion and respect are reflected in pupils' personal development. As a result, pupils have a clear awareness of these qualities, which they use to guide their attitudes and behaviour. Leaders make themselves readily available to staff and parents and this supports them in gaining a well-informed understanding of the views of the whole school community. This has a positive impact on pupils' wellbeing since it generates confidence that pupils' experiences and opinions are of importance. Leaders evaluate the work of the school carefully to identify areas for improvement. Leaders have created a forum for parents to regularly discuss general issues concerning school life.
10. Leaders ensure that the school's accessibility plan is reviewed regularly to ensure improved access for all pupils. The curriculum and buildings are adapted when necessary to create a nurturing and inclusive environment, for example through the introduction of touch-typing lessons. Leaders ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified and supported. They provide an effective programme of support, which includes teachers adjusting resources in classrooms and the provision of additional group or individual support for pupils, working to specific targets. Leaders' attention to the wellbeing of pupils includes identification of potential mental health needs and the provision of effective support, including by working with appropriate external specialist services.
11. The early years setting is well led. Leaders have a comprehensive understanding of both the early years statutory framework and the developmental needs of young children. Leaders ensure that activities reflect children's interests and enable them to make good progress across all the areas of learning. Leaders of the early years support staff through regular supervision meetings. These enable discussions relating to professional development and result in pertinent training opportunities for staff.
12. The governors ensure that effective health and safety arrangements are in place. School leaders are committed to the management of risk. Leaders implement a rigorous system for the management and review of risk assessments. For example, having assessed circumstances which might pose risks to pupils' physical, mental and emotional wellbeing, leaders have established a trained team of staff who track the wellbeing of pupils, and provide pastoral support when necessary.

13. School leaders have high expectations for pupils' outcomes and use attainment data effectively as part of their monitoring of pupils' progress. The constant reinforcement of key learning skills in literacy and numeracy has been effective in boosting pupils' progress and confidence.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance

All the relevant standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

14. Leaders have created a learning environment that enables good progress in most subjects and is accessible to all pupils. In addition to focusing on the literacy, reasoning and mathematical competencies, pupils follow a broad and engaging curriculum, which includes French, drama, art and music. This curriculum ensures that pupils also develop aesthetic and creative, technological and scientific skills, ready for transition to senior schools.
15. Pupils throughout the school make good progress and many are successful in gaining a place at local selective schools when they leave. Pupils' learning skills are well-developed in most subjects. For example, older pupils are able to summarise and synthesise information, particularly in English lessons. Pupils are enthusiastic, confident and collaborative in their learning. Much teaching includes interesting activities which promote pupils' engagement. Teachers utilise their good subject knowledge to effectively question pupils to help them recall prior learning and deepen their knowledge and understanding. Pupils are confident in articulating their ideas and answers.
16. Where subjects are not taught by specialists, teachers generally make effective use of well-planned schemes of work. Leaders monitor the quality of teaching and pupils' progress through regular lesson observations. Each subject is given equal value in ambitious development plans. Both the curriculum and teaching promote British values, including in assemblies.
17. Most teaching, particularly in English and mathematics, enables pupils to challenge themselves and make good progress appropriate to their abilities. However, curriculum planning in History and Geography means that two consecutive year groups cover the same topics using the same plans and resources. As a result, resources are not well tailored to the learning needs of pupils, and tasks are not matched effectively to the age or ability of pupils. Progress in these subjects is less consistent.
18. The school has an effective framework to monitor pupils' progress and attainment using standardised tests and internal assessments. Staff use these to help to identify pupils who may have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and to provide effective support both within class and individually outside of lessons. As a result, pupils who have SEND make good progress from their starting points. The framework is helpful to teachers in planning appropriate future learning as well as promoting pupils' own understanding of their success. Pupils at an early stage in learning English as an additional language (EAL) receive the support they require so that they are able to make good progress. In some subjects, assessments before and after a unit of work help staff and pupils to understand how much progress has been made over the course of a series of lessons. This is helpful in identifying what needs to be revised and what learning is embedded.
19. The school's newly introduced marking policy helps pupils to understand how to make improvements. In this, they are aided by their use of learning journals to reflect on what they have learned and what kind of learner they are, developing a clear understanding of how to develop further.
20. Leaders have designed a curriculum that enables children in the early years to progress in line with their interests and needs. Children make good progress across all areas of learning. Staff in the early years plan together and establish clear targets for individual children to meet by the end of each year. This cohesive long-term planning results in an effective variety of adult-led and child-initiated

tasks in which children engage purposefully. Teaching is informed by baseline assessments undertaken in both the pre-school and Reception classes, as well as by children's interests. Through observations of children's responses, a planned topic may be changed to follow children's emerging interests. Staff are alert to children who may have SEND and, with assistance from the school's learning support staff, liaise with parents to identify possible causes and agree suitable action.

21. Leaders ensure that pupils, including children in the Reception class, are offered a wide variety of recreational activities. Pupils can participate at lunchtime and after school in a range of age-appropriate clubs, which include sports such as netball and interests such as photography and musical theatre. Pupils participate with enthusiasm and speak warmly of these opportunities, which are effective in enabling them to develop their skills and interests and discover new ones.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation

All the relevant standards are met.

Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

22. Leaders have designed and successfully implemented effective provision to develop and support pupils' physical and emotional wellbeing. From the early years onwards, pupils are given numerous opportunities to participate in physical activities through a well-planned curriculum, which encourages participation in sport by all pupils. Leaders have increased the number of competitive fixtures open to all pupils and they are enthusiastic about the opportunities to represent their school. Pupils understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle, including through personal, social and health education (PSHE) teaching as well as in physical education and the provision of a health diet.
23. The school's PSHE and relationships education programme enable pupils to learn effectively at an age-appropriate level about themselves and their relationships with others. Leaders have made comprehensive arrangements to promote pupils' mental and emotional health, which are highly effective in supporting the wellbeing of the pupils. A team of suitably qualified and experienced staff supports pupils by teaching them self-help strategies and making pupils aware they are available to listen to any concerns that pupils have. Leaders have created a dedicated and comfortable, calm space where, as well as sharing their feelings with an adult, they can access a range of resources to help them address any anxieties. Staff are aware that pupils taking secondary transfer exams may need additional support if they feel academic pressure. Leaders provide study groups which helpfully focus on relaxation and mindfulness activities alongside revision techniques. Pupils identified by staff as in need of additional wellbeing care engage in an effective programme tailored to their individual needs, which may include sessions with the emotional literacy support assistant.
24. Leaders give priority to developing pupils' self-awareness. This is constantly reinforced through reference to the school's learning values and virtues as well as through a positive partnership with parents. Pupils' self-esteem is reinforced through celebration assemblies, and the school actively tracks pupils' rewards to ensure no-one is overlooked when celebrating achievements. Pupils confidently explain how they learn to recognise and control their emotions through their use of 'zones of regulation'. These skills are used effectively throughout the school to enable even the youngest children to communicate how they are feeling and to learn strategies to help them manage their emotions.
25. Leaders develop pupils' spiritual and cultural understanding well within a multi-cultural school community. Pupils explore other religions, drawing on their classmates' experiences. As a result, they discuss different faiths with respect and develop their own ideas, drawing parallels between different faiths and cultures. The school is a tolerant and diverse community with few incidents involving unkindness or prejudiced behaviour.
26. Staff in the early years create a warm and nurturing atmosphere. Children are happy and secure due to supportive relationships. Staff model desired behaviour and sensitively help children to manage their emotions. The youngest children eagerly earn 'bonus bears' when they display positive behaviour. Children in the Reception class are self-confident and keen to initiate self-chosen activities supported by staff who have a keen understanding of their interests and are adept at providing interesting resources. Children eagerly develop their physical skills, including in the school's outdoor learning area. They explore the natural environment and investigate confidently and with growing independence. For example, pre-school children eagerly discovered a worm in a

windfall apple, explaining why they cannot eat it. Children in Reception class show proficient fine-motor skills as they manipulate clay to make a hedgehog.

27. Staff support children in the early years effectively in their social development. The youngest children help staff, including when taking equipment back from the outside learning area, learning to recognise that their contribution makes a difference. Children in the Reception class learn to share equipment peaceably. Staff gently raise their awareness of others' needs so that children are encouraged to show kindness to one another.
28. Leaders ensure that pupils are effectively supervised at all times. Pupils are generally well behaved, and they confidently explain how the traffic-light system is used to support their self-control. Bullying is rare and pupils understand that showing respect to one another is a key factor in solving any arguments. Teachers make themselves available to listen and help pupils to overcome any problems. When necessary, staff liaise with parents to achieve a consistent, co-operative approach. The school's log of behavioural incidents enables staff to identify individual pupils who are experiencing behavioural difficulties and to provide appropriate support for them. However, leaders do not fully utilise these records to identify overall patterns of behaviour.
29. Leaders ensure that health and safety and fire arrangements are implemented effectively. The school premises are maintained appropriately, and staff are trained to recognise and record health and safety concerns, which are suitably addressed. The school has a robust system for assessing risk, such as for those relating to the premises and school trips. First aid and medical needs are managed effectively by appropriately trained staff, and parents are informed as soon as practicable of any injuries or prior to the administration of medicines. Records are correctly maintained. In the early years, fully qualified paediatric first aiders attend to children's medical and first aid needs.
30. The admission and attendance registers are properly maintained, and staff follow the correct procedure by informing the local authority for pupils who leave the school at non-standard times.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

All the relevant standards are met.

Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

31. Leaders ensure pupils of all ages learn about the world beyond school and the need for them to contribute to it, through the curriculum and other aspects of school life. Pupils gain a clear understanding of the importance of respect for other people, including everyone's right to be heard. Pupils develop their understanding of democracy at an age-appropriate level, including when they give speeches and vote for their peers to the school council. Older pupils have a clear understanding of the role they play in setting the culture of the school through the example of their own behaviour. They use their opportunities as leaders in Years 5 and 6 to be positive role models to younger pupils.
32. Leaders ensure that British values are understood and promoted. The school's values place high priority on enabling each member of the community to be happy and confident through co-operation and consideration. Pupils understand that such values, as upheld by the law, are designed to enable everyone to lead a happy and safe life. This has a positive influence on pupils' attitudes, which are typically tolerant and respectful. Pupils have a clear sense of justice. Pupils of all ages work and play together co-operatively. Weekly sessions within the curriculum aimed at stimulating innovation and creativity help older pupils to develop skills to take into adult life, including financial aspects such as how to use money.
33. Older pupils successfully act as wellbeing ambassadors. They are keen to discuss such issues with their peers and write thoughtful articles for the parents' newsletter. Through collaborative opportunities, such as a buddy system, leaders foster a sense of responsibility in older pupils and sense of belonging in younger ones. The house system and school councils are used effectively to effect change within the school community and to support the wider community. For example, the eco council organised walks in the locality to focus pupils' attention on the importance of conserving nature. Pupils enthusiastically supported a local food bank in their recent Harvest Festival. Older pupils visit a local care home each week to spend time with residents. Pupils develop a keen sense of social responsibility, stating that their own lives are enriched by giving to others.
34. Leaders ensure pupils develop an age-appropriate knowledge of how the work of parliament and public services contributes to the health and wellbeing of communities. They contribute to the school community in a range of roles. They willingly take on responsibilities according to their age, starting as class monitors. By Year 6, all pupils hold a position of responsibility in the school. Pupils clearly have a voice and play an active role. Each class elects representatives to the school council, which meets weekly with a senior leader and enables them to discuss their ideas and steer projects in the school community. Others join the eco-council which fulfils a similar role. While pupils appreciate being able to gain awards for demonstrating the school's values, they told inspectors they value more how this makes them feel inside.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

All the relevant standards are met.

Safeguarding

35. Leaders and governors ensure that arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils are effective. There is a suitable safeguarding policy which is published on the school's website. This is comprehensive and closely aligned with current statutory guidance. The school's safeguarding arrangements enable effective working with external agencies when necessary, to protect pupils from harm.
36. Staff are trained at an appropriate level for their responsibilities, including in the prevention of extremism. They demonstrate an informed understanding of their training and are alert to signs that children may be at risk. They promptly record and report any concerns to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL). All the senior leaders are trained as safeguarding leads. Staff display a clear awareness that safeguarding issues can arise in any school. Senior leaders closely monitor records of all incidents to assess potential safeguarding concerns. These are promptly followed up. The DSL readily contacts the local authority when necessary to seek advice or to make a referral. All activity relating to a concern is clearly recorded, including liaison with external agencies. Staff are made aware, within bounds of confidentiality, of any safeguarding and welfare issues in order that they can provide appropriate support. Pupils feel safe at school and are confident they have an adult they trust at school with whom they can share any concerns.
37. Governors undertake safeguarding training each year to enable them to provide well-informed oversight. They conduct a thorough annual review of the safeguarding policy and procedures on behalf of the proprietor. The DSL provides them with a monthly safeguarding report, and governors organise regular meetings for DSLs within the wider group to discuss safeguarding updates and issues in depth. The school has effective monitoring and filtering arrangements in place, and all staff have completed cyber security training. Pupils receive regular online safety lessons and understand how to keep themselves as safe as possible online. Parents are provided with guidance on e-safety at home.
38. The specific safeguarding requirements for the early years are met, and annual checks ensure that no member of staff in the early years is disqualified from childcare. Across the school, mobile phones and personal devices are not used in front of children.
39. Staff recruitment checks are carried out rigorously for all staff and governors. They are recorded accurately on the single central record, which is regularly checked by the designated safeguarding governor.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

All the relevant Standards are met.

School details

School	Crown House School
Department for Education number	825/6016
Address	Crown House School Bassetsbury Manor Bassetsbury Lane High Wycombe Buckinghamshire HP11 1QX
Website	crownhouseschool.co.uk
Proprietor	Chatsworth Schools Ltd
Chair	Mrs Anita Gleave
Headteacher	Mrs Sarah Hobby
Age range	3 to 11
Number of pupils	124
Date of previous inspection	9 to 11 May 2018

How are association independent schools in England inspected?

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **www.isi.net**.

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