

School inspection report

4 to 6 November 2025

Cranleigh School

Horseshoe Lane

Cranleigh

Surrey

GU6 8QQ

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. Leaders and governors actively promote and prioritise the wellbeing of all pupils, which lies at the heart of their planning and decision-making. Governors quality assure the work of leaders and managers effectively. They provide support, challenge and a strong strategic vision for the school's development. Collectively, leaders and governors ensure that the requirements of the Standards are met consistently.
2. Leaders provide a curriculum that prioritises pupils' learning of important foundational knowledge and skills, in an age-appropriate way. The curriculum is effectively implemented by teachers who employ appropriate teaching strategies and have good subject knowledge. Teachers deliver well-planned lessons which engage and challenge pupils to apply their learning in more complex ways. Leaders monitor pupils' progress across all subjects through a detailed online tracking system, ensuring that appropriate support is provided where any under-performance is identified. However, in some instances, teachers do not consistently provide pupils with sufficient guidance or feedback to enable them to further improve the quality of their work or develop their understanding.
3. The curriculum is complemented by an innovative and well-resourced co-curricular programme that benefits pupils of all ages and abilities. The programme is wide ranging and well-co-ordinated across the school, supporting pupils' progression. The co-curricular programme fosters pupils' interests while developing their knowledge, skills and understanding.
4. Leaders foster an environment in which the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of all pupils is well understood by staff, and pupils are effectively supported. Premises are maintained to a high standard. The effective personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programme is well planned and enhanced by well-chosen visiting speakers. Leaders uphold high standards of behaviour. Pupils socialise well with one another in the classroom, in their boarding houses and in the many activities in which they engage. Older pupils act as positive role models who actively promote the school's values and ethos.
5. Boarders are well looked after at the school. They benefit from high-quality provision, including in terms of accommodation, support for their independent studies, and a wide range of weekend and evening activities that promote and sustain their wellbeing.
6. Through the curriculum, school policies and school activities, pupils are taught about important values such as respect, kindness, democracy, equality and tolerance. Leaders and staff encourage and support a culture of mutual respect where pupils appreciate their individuality and that of others. Pupils are kind and tolerant, and active contributors to the school and local community.
7. Leaders have established and embedded a well-developed safeguarding culture. Leaders ensure that safeguarding training is current and relevant. Staff are vigilant and report concerns swiftly. Governors maintain close and effective oversight of the school's safeguarding arrangements through regular discussions with safeguarding leaders. Leaders liaise effectively with external agencies for advice and when concerns arise.

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:

- ensure that all teachers provide guidance and feedback with greater consistency, so that pupils understand how to improve their work and develop their understanding.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

8. Leaders provide a positive learning environment where academic achievement and pupils' wellbeing are equally valued and where pupils flourish, in keeping with the aims and values of the school. Leaders create an inclusive environment that celebrates diversity and equality for all, which enables pupils to value their individuality and uniqueness. Pupils are very well supported to be respectful, empathetic and compassionate in their interactions with one another, and in taking responsibilities to support one another.
9. Governors bring a wide range of suitable experience to their role. They monitor the impact of leaders' work on the ongoing development of the school, with care. They ensure the school's leaders have the skills and training to carry out their roles appropriately and promote pupils' wellbeing, learning and personal development. Governors undertake their checks in a range of ways, including through visits to the school and boarding houses, scrutiny of paperwork, policies and documentation, and by talking to pupils and staff and inviting them to attend governors' meetings. As a result, governors ensure that the Standards are met consistently.
10. Leadership across the school is effective and many positive aspects of the school, including the aim to educate each pupil to be the best they can be, are firmly rooted. Leaders know the pupils and staff well and maintain warm and friendly relationships with them. Leaders are supportive and work closely with staff to ensure that teaching, pastoral care and training are delivered to a high standard, enabling them to promote pupils' wellbeing effectively.
11. Leaders and governors demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement. They evaluate all aspects of the school's provision regularly. They use a range of information, including the views of staff, pupils and parents, to identify the school's strengths and areas of development accurately. A detailed and ambitious development plan provides a well-considered range of actions, roles and responsibilities, and timescales to bring sustained improvements to the school's provision.
12. Boarding leaders recognise and provide for the needs of boarders of all ages. Boarding staff create a welcoming environment so that pupils settle quickly into the boarding community. Communication between academic and boarding staff about pupils' needs and progress is effective. This is achieved through the frequent exchange of information and leaders setting clear expectations for all staff. Leaders provide systematic training for boarding staff so that they have the necessary skills and knowledge to undertake their roles confidently.
13. Leaders adopt a rigorous approach to risk assessment throughout the school. The school has a comprehensive risk register which considers current and potential risks. Staff have an appropriate understanding of risk and how risks are managed. They are skilled in the completion of risk assessments and risk management related to the school site, health and safety measures, the curriculum and all off-site activities. Leaders are thorough and careful in implementing and reviewing their risk-management strategies.
14. Leaders make all required information available to parents. The school website includes an appropriate range of policies and provides suitable information. Reports are sent to parents through a range of meetings and portals. Leaders provide external agencies with appropriate and relevant information. For example, they inform the local authority when pupils arrive or leave the school at non-standard transition points. They also provide the local authority with the required information

related to pupils with education, health and care plans (EHC plans), including in relation to the use of additional funding and finance.

15. The school has a suitable complaints policy which is implemented consistently. Leaders respond promptly and sensitively to concerns raised by parents and pupils. Where formal complaints are received, they are managed effectively through a three-stage process with clear timescales. The number of complaints received is published annually on the school's website. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken and the outcomes of the complaint.
16. The school implements an appropriate accessibility plan and fulfils its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. Leaders ensure that pupils access the school site and the curriculum effectively.

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

- 17. All the relevant Standards are met.**

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

18. Leaders provide pupils with a broad curriculum where schemes of work are carefully planned to help pupils develop the essential knowledge and skills required. Additional curriculum initiatives, such as the foundation diploma in the prep school and the sixth-form diploma, are designed to further develop pupils' communication, independent learning, social awareness, intellectual curiosity and leadership skills. The oldest pupils choose from a range of qualifications and accreditations, including GCSE, A Levels, BTECs and the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ).
19. Teachers are experienced and well trained in the subjects that they teach. Teachers plan lessons effectively, employ appropriate teaching strategies and use digital technology successfully to support learning. Teachers use assessment information to identify what pupils know and can do. They adapt their lessons and resources to provide additional support to pupils, where needed. Teachers typically give regular and helpful guidance and feedback to pupils and provide them with opportunities to improve their work. However, some teaching does not provide pupils with precise and effective guidance and feedback. Where this occurs, pupils are not always clear about how to further improve their work and develop their understanding.
20. Over time, pupils apply and articulate their learning in increasingly complex ways. For example, in geography, pupils use a simulation of a natural disaster and make decisions in the role of the United Nations. In modern foreign languages (MFL), pupils apply their language skills to complex role plays using a range of vocabulary and grammatical skills. Pupils create and perform high-quality musical, theatre and dance productions. Pupils develop high-quality technological skills, including through the well-developed programme for robotics, where the oldest pupils regularly attend and perform very well in international robotics championships.
21. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported to learn and achieve well. Leaders make use of a variety of approaches to identify pupils' needs in a timely and accurate way. Leaders provide staff with detailed and precise guidance through pupils' individual support plans. Pupils receive a range of precise support in lessons and are supported by well-trained staff so that they learn the curriculum alongside their peers. Where needed, pupils receive specific interventions to help them catch up in specific areas of their learning and/or development. Leaders routinely review the needs and progress of pupils to check that they are faring well and to identify where pupils need more support.
22. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are assessed and supported so that their needs are met. Those in the early stages of learning English develop their linguistic skills effectively through in-class support and with the help of additional specialist teaching. Pupils quickly develop the linguistic skills so that they can access the curriculum and achieve well.
23. Leaders have established an appropriate framework to assess, track and monitor pupils' academic progress through the school. Leaders provide pupils with specific support when needed, including during boarding time, to help pupils catch up. Over time, pupils learn and achieve well. Many achieve well in a range of qualifications, particularly in academic and vocational qualifications in the sixth form.
24. Teachers build positive relationships with pupils in a supportive classroom environment and have high expectations for pupils. Pupils are well motivated, and they persevere when faced with

challenging tasks. There is a calm and reflective atmosphere in classrooms. Discussions are conducted with good manners and pupils show mutual respect for each other's ideas and points of view.

25. The school provides a notably rich and varied co-curricular and enrichment programme. It enables pupils of all abilities to broaden their interests and develop new skills. Many activities are instigated and led by pupils, such as a close harmony singing group. The performing arts are celebrated through ambitious concerts and productions, including an upcoming performance of *The Sound of Music* featuring pupils of all ages.
26. The co-curricular programme continues into the evenings and weekends, providing boarders with stimulating and engaging recreational opportunities. These are supplemented by weekend visits which range from a visit to the Harry Potter Studio Tours to a lively 'colour run'. The variety offered ensures that pupils have an opportunity to explore their own interests and develop new skills.

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

- 27. All the relevant Standards are met.**

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

28. Leaders prioritise the care and wellbeing of pupils. Well-trained staff are skilled in supporting individual pupils. Pupil-led groups, including a pupil wellbeing team and diversity alliance groups, provide well-considered peer support. Prefects and peer mentors fulfil a range of responsibilities, such as running activities and mentoring younger pupils. Leaders provide a range of opportunities to develop the school's community spirit, such as worship in the chapel, where services are often led by pupil leaders and enthusiastic community singing is the norm. Parents are provided with guidance about how to help their children through pastoral carousels and webinars.
29. The school has a well-resourced medical centre staffed by nurses. This offers a wide range of specialist support for pupils' physical and mental welfare, as well as first aid. Staff are well trained. The nursing team liaises closely with pastoral leaders to ensure that pupils' individual needs are understood and met. Pupils' and boarders' medical, emotional and mental health needs are well met.
30. Boarding accommodation is well designed, managed and maintained. Leaders provide boarders with well-planned social and recreational spaces, in addition to well-equipped personal spaces, bedrooms and washing facilities. Boarders receive a well-balanced range of nutritious meals and a range of healthy food options to choose from. New boarders access a well-planned induction programme that helps them to settle into the boarding community quickly. Older boarders act as responsible role models for the younger boarders that they mentor. Boarders are well supervised, including during recreational activities in the evenings and weekends.
31. The site and school premises, including boarding houses, are well maintained to a high standard. All relevant health and safety requirements, including those related to fire safety, are clearly understood and procedures are implemented effectively. For example, staff conduct regular fire evacuation drills, including in boarding time so that all boarders learn fire safety routines. Pupils and boarders are well supervised. Leaders make thoughtful and strategic use of the school's extensive facilities, effectively promoting pupils' wellbeing through a safe and stimulating environment.
32. Leaders have established and implemented appropriate policies and processes related to behaviour and anti-bullying. Staff and pupils are taught to be vigilant and to report any concerns, including to well-trained older pupil mentors. Leaders deal with the few incidents that occur effectively and in a timely way. As a result, relationships between pupils of all ages are highly respectful and pupils uphold the standards expected by leaders.
33. There is an effectively planned and taught PSHE curriculum which includes age-appropriate statutory coverage of relationships and sex education (RSE), including for the oldest pupils in Years 12 and 13. The curriculum covers a wide range of topics such as identity, healthy relationships, consent, sexual health citizenship, mental health, marginalisation and privilege. The curriculum is enhanced by talks from visiting speakers who provide specialist guidance and information on sensitive topics. Consequently, pupils are well supported to discuss important topics in a safe environment and develop a thorough age-appropriate understanding of how to keep themselves safe.
34. There is a comprehensive programme of physical education (PE) that provides pupils with a range of opportunities to study sport, exercise and fitness. This programme is delivered by professional

coaches and well-trained teachers. There is a wide range of co-curricular sporting activities, developing pupils' physical and emotional fitness and wellbeing. Pupils of all ages and abilities represent the school in a wide variety of competitive fixtures as well as popular inter-house events. In response to pupils' feedback, leaders have expanded the programme to include a range of non-team-based activities, such as yoga and Pilates, delivered through the school's sports programme.

35. Leaders maintain appropriate admission and attendance registers that are in line with statutory guidance. Leaders review pupils' and boarders' attendance and work effectively with pupils and their families when there are any concerns. Leaders ensure that they work effectively with external agencies, when needed, informing the local authority when pupils join or leave the school at non-standard transition points.

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

- 36. All the relevant Standards are met.**

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

37. Leaders actively promote important values such as mutual respect, diversity and equality through the curriculum. Pupils learn in an age-appropriate way about those who have different cultures, beliefs, religions and lifestyles. They learn about the importance of the protections for people under the Equality Act 2010. The curriculum is enhanced through events such as the school's 'cultural diversity day' and Pride events. Diversity champions in each department actively review schemes of work and celebrate and promote diverse perspectives and contributions relevant to their subject areas. As a result, pupils have a mature understanding of the importance of tolerance and respect towards others.
38. The school's curriculum ensures that pupils develop a thorough understanding of important British values such as democracy, rule of law, right and wrong, and different political viewpoints. Teachers provide pupils with a range of opportunities that actively promote discussion of moral principles, including lively pupil debates and topical news quizzes in tutor time. From a young age, pupils are taught about the roles of important public services, such as the police and law courts. This curriculum is enhanced by trips, visits and visiting speakers.
39. Many pupils actively take on roles and responsibilities and contribute positively to the school, local and wider world communities. The school's various councils provide leadership opportunities for pupils of different ages, an effective forum for discussion and a vehicle for service to others. Many pupils actively take part in activities such as The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DofE) and the Combined Cadet Force (CCF). Some pupils play an active role in leading assemblies and chapel services, including leading talks on their own experiences and backgrounds. Many pupils actively engage in charitable activities during their free time. For example, some older pupils participate in a volunteer project in Zambia where they contribute to the work of a local school. Many pupils are effective role models for others.
40. Leaders have developed a comprehensive careers programme which enables pupils to consider a wide variety of future options available to them. Leaders measure the quality of their provision against high-quality nationally recognised benchmarks. This curriculum starts with younger pupils who take part in the school's skills, passions, arts, readiness and knowledge ('SPARK') entrepreneurship project, which encourages leadership, creativity and social responsibility.
41. As pupils get older, they engage in relevant work experience and work-related learning. They benefit from visiting speakers, such as through the school's 'croissant and careers' morning, led by visiting professionals from the world of work. Individual advice and guidance, including independent advice from appropriately trained adults, provides pupils with precise information about a wide range of education, training, apprenticeships and employment opportunities that suit pupils' abilities, aspirations and interests.
42. Leaders provide pupils with a well-planned and well-taught curriculum that enables them to develop their economic awareness. Through the PSHE curriculum and other subjects, such as business and economics, the youngest pupils learn basic skills of handling money and budgeting, and the different forms of currency, such as digital ways of paying for goods. As they get older, pupils learn about more complex economic learning, such as the role of insurance, tax, mortgages and savings. Many

pupils take part in a course on investment which offers them the opportunity to work with a visiting hedge fund manager.

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

43. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

44. Leaders and governors have established an effective and proactive safeguarding culture, including for safeguarding pupils in boarding provision. Leaders and governors are well trained and knowledgeable about their responsibilities and relevant statutory guidance. They have implemented appropriate policies and protocols which are readily available and well understood by staff, pupils and parents.
45. Governors ensure that leaders have the sufficient expertise, training and systems to safeguard pupils effectively. A governor with specific responsibility for safeguarding undertakes routine quality assurance of leaders' work, including visiting the site, reviewing record-keeping, regular audits and annual reviews, to identify what is working well and where leaders' work could improve. Governors ensure that safeguarding policies and processes are implemented effectively, including those related to internet filtering and monitoring systems and additional safeguarding arrangements for boarders.
46. Leaders ensure that staff are well trained in their statutory responsibilities, including those related to boarding. Staff receive regular safeguarding training, including monthly video updates which are adapted to reflect any local contextual risks and school needs. Staff know pupils and boarders well and are vigilant to any signs of concern, including those related to abuse, neglect, mental health issues and radicalisation. They report any concerns in a timely and appropriate way, including low-level concerns and those relating to adults working with pupils.
47. Leaders ensure that safeguarding records are detailed and maintained appropriately. They act quickly and effectively when concerns are raised. When needed, leaders work effectively with external agencies, such as the local authority children's services team, to seek guidance or to ensure that pupils receive specialist support. Leaders routinely review and assess their effectiveness, looking for any wider patterns or trends in pupils' and boarders' experiences that they need to address, or where they could improve their work.
48. Leaders provide several age-appropriate ways for pupils and boarders to raise concerns or disclose issues about their welfare. These include anonymous boxes for younger pupils and an online platform for all pupils that offers a degree of anonymity should this be preferred. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including online, through the curriculum. Appropriate internet filtering and monitoring systems are in place and leaders act quickly when any concerns arise. Appropriate additional safeguarding systems are in place for pupils who board. For example, leaders provide and promote the role and contact details of an independent person. This person visits boarders regularly to meet with them to actively promote their role.
49. Leaders ensure that all required pre-employment checks are completed for all those working with pupils and boarders. A suitable single central record (SCR) of appointments is in place that records the checks that have been undertaken. Staff files include appropriate evidence to confirm that the required safeguarding checks have been made.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

- 50. All the relevant Standards are met.**

School details

School	Cranleigh School
Department for Education number	936/6017
Registered charity number	1070856
Address	Cranleigh School Horseshoe Lane Cranleigh Surrey GU6 8QQ
Phone number	01483 273666
Email address	reception@cranleigh.org
Website	www.cranleigh.org
Proprietor	Trustees of Cranleigh School
Chair	Mr Adrian Lajtha
Headteacher	Mrs Samantha Price
Age range	5 to 19
Number of pupils	951
Number of boarding pupils	504
Date of previous inspection	15 to 17 November 2022

Information about the school

51. Cranleigh School is an independent day and boarding school for male and female pupils, located in Cranleigh. The school consists of a prep school for pupils aged 5 to 13 years old and a senior school for pupils aged 13 to 19 years old. Both are located on the same school site with a road crossing. The school is a charitable trust whose trustees take roles on a board of governors. There has been a change of headteacher since the previous inspection.
52. Previously, pupils joined the school at seven years old. The school applied to the DfE to make a material change to the school's registration to extend the age of pupils joining the school roll to five years old. Inspectors conducted an inspection at the request of the DfE in March 2025 and recommended that the material change be approved
53. Boarders are accommodated across nine boarding houses. Pupils can begin to board from Year 5. Younger boarders are accommodated in one boarding house, located at the prep school. Boarders from Year 9 are accommodated across eight boarding houses, four for female boarders and four for male boarders, located at the senior school.
54. The school has identified 418 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A small number of pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
55. The school has identified English as an additional language (EAL) for 26 pupils.
56. The school states its aims are to be academically ambitious for all pupils and to educate young people to be the best they can be so that they thrive in all aspects of their lives, professionally and personally. The school's motto 'ex cultu robur – from our culture comes strength' underpins the school's efforts to help pupils find the strength to aspire boldly, be themselves and care for others.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

4 to 6 November 2025

57. A team of ten inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

58. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair and other governors
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- visits to boarding houses accompanied by pupils and staff
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

59. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

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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For more information, please visit isi.net