

School inspection report

18 to 20 June 2024

Cumnor House Boys' School and Nurseries

166 to 170 Pampisford Road

South Croydon

Surrey

CR2 6DA

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 have a clear vision for the school which places pupils' wellbeing at its heart; this approach has a demonstrably positive impact on the pupils.
2. Proprietorial oversight of all aspects of school life is robust. They provide appropriate support and challenge through regular, focused reviews of school policies and their effective implementation.
3. Children in the nurseries receive a firm foundation of knowledge, skills and understanding which prepares them well for their next stage of education.
4. Staff in the early years do not always pose questions in a way that promotes thought and reflection from the children. Staff also do not always give children sufficient time to frame their responses.
5. Pupils achieve well throughout the school and are well prepared both academically and pastorally from their secondary schools.
6. Pupils' communication skills are of a high order. They speak clearly and demonstrate keen listening skills.
7. Pupils understand the importance of acknowledging and managing their own emotions. They are supported in this through careful and insightful planning in areas such as relationships and sex education (RSE) and personal, social and health (PSHE) education schemes of work.
8. Teachers generally plan their lessons well to meet the needs of pupils utilising a range of resources effectively. Occasionally planning is not sufficiently focused enough to ensure pupils of all abilities make good progress. Additionally, there are occasions when some teachers do not utilise effective behavioural strategies to ensure that pupils remain focused on the task in hand.
9. Leaders promote the importance of diversity, equality and inclusion, to which pupils respond positively. They openly celebrate individuality and difference as an integral part of societal functioning.
10. Safeguarding arrangements are secure. Staff understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and leaders ensure that staff are well trained to effectively carry out this key role.

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 teaching is carefully planned so that activities meet the needs of all pupils;
- teachers consistently use effective behavioural management strategies so that any low-level disruption is minimised;
- staff in the early years provide greater opportunities for children to develop their communication skills in response to questioning.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

11. Leaders throughout the school have developed a sense of identity for the school after a period of transition. Their process of self-evaluation is incisive and reflects the overall aims of the school. The drive from leaders to focus on the wellbeing and emotional development of the pupils is noteworthy. Pupils reflect this in their discussions around a variety of matters, including gender stereotyping and how to effectively deal with emotions. Appropriate focus is given to ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion with pupils speaking confidently and knowledgeably on a range of associated topics such as same sex relationships and respect for others whose background and culture may be different to their own.
12. Proprietorial oversight ensures that the standards are met through regular reviews of the school's arrangements. This includes the monitoring of effective implementation of school policies and procedures. This occurs through submission of documents, on-site visits and company-wide evaluative toolkits. Risk management is well integrated into school life. Its use has a positive impact, especially in areas such as health and safety and safeguarding where any identified actions are responded to promptly.
13. The school liaises effectively with any outside agencies, including local safeguarding partners. Positive working relationships are formed to support pupils' wellbeing.
14. There is a suitable complaints procedure in place which is supported by thorough and detailed records. This allows parents to voice any concerns at an informal level before escalating through a three-tiered process. The low number of recorded complaints shows the value that leaders place on positive informal interaction with parents and/or carers.
15. All required information is made available to parents through the school's informative website. Policies for complaints, safeguarding, anti-bullying and behaviour, amongst others are logged in open areas there. All required contact details for both the headteacher and proprietor are also made available. Finance arrangements for pupils who have an education health care plan are also appropriately shared with both parents and the local authority.

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

16. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

17. Throughout the school, there is a focus on the development of both linguistic and mathematical understanding. Leaders approach the curriculum with creativity and innovation, such as the specific programme in Years 7 and 8, offering a broad range of subjects so that pupils learn and make good progress. Pupils achieve well and continue on to a variety of selective and non-selective schools. The curriculum is further supported by a broad range of after school activities.
18. Staff in the early years know the children well. When planning the curriculum together they effectively provide for the needs and interests of each child. Specialist help is provided for those children who need additional support and strategies are provided for nursery staff to support the children so that they make good progress. Children who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are supported sensitively enabling them to take time to settle and grow in confidence. Younger children make good progress in the prime areas of learning as well as developing their mathematical skills. Generally, effective questioning is used such as when children were observed learning to count onwards. Occasionally, staff do not ask questions that require a more open-ended response and do not always give sufficient time for the children to reflect and respond.
19. Older children cover all the areas of learning effectively. They succeed in many areas and work in a variety of ways such as, in collaboration when building a stable bridge from construction materials, or independently when first predicting what might happen when different materials are used. Staff supplement the curriculum with a range of after school clubs such as story club, art club and British sign language club, so that children enjoy a wide range of learning opportunities.
20. Effective systems are in place to identify pupils who have SEND and leaders plan the curriculum and teaching to take account of their needs. Leaders assess pupils' progress against targets and then plan for their next areas of development.
21. Pupils who speak EAL are given appropriate support to enable them to fully access the curriculum through various successful methods, including the pre-teaching of texts and using dual language features on electronic devices.
22. Pupils demonstrate strong speaking and listening skills and are able to articulate their thoughts and beliefs clearly. Pupils are self-motivated to contribute positively to the discussions and have a clear understanding of the art of open discussion.
23. Teachers enable pupils to acquire new knowledge, increase their understanding and improve their work through providing helpful feedback. In the most effective lessons, teachers plan work that meets the needs of all pupils using effective teaching methods, resources and activities. However, this is not consistent across the school. In some lessons where the work is not matched to the needs of all pupils and where effective strategies are not used, pupils' behaviour can have a negative impact on the learning for everyone.

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

24. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

25. Children's physical and emotional well-being are given a high priority in the early years. Children enjoy the challenges provided in both the planned and free-choice activities. Specialist physical education (PE) teachers support their physical development by providing opportunities for all children to develop their fine and gross motor skills. Staff have carefully planned their own PSHE curriculum and make links to everyday situations with the children so that learning is relevant. Younger children are encouraged to share their emotions. Older children begin to identify more emotions and build a greater vocabulary around their feelings.
26. The high-quality provision and maintenance of the secure premises for the early years, contribute to an environment in which children can safely enjoy the learning opportunities, during both inside and outdoor play.
27. Across the school, the administration of medicines is overseen rigorously. Medication, kept in boxes detailing the child's name and pertinent information as well as necessary medications, is kept safely. Accidents are swiftly managed and recorded.
28. Food requirements and allergies known by all staff are rigorously catered for so that pupils are kept safe at mealtimes.
29. Throughout the school, the Cumnor Way pervades all aspects of school life and is understood and articulated by pupils. Nursery staff choose a child to be star of the week which is linked to the Cumnor Way values. This enables children to work towards simple achievements, understand the importance of values and feel a sense of pride. They also take responsibility as lunch and playtime leaders. Displays around the school support and enhance the five values, to which pupils generally respond positively. For example, pupils in Year 1 can identify and explain what the words mean. They know that endeavour means to do your best and work hard in everything. These values are purposefully explored during assembly times each week. Pupils appreciate the house points which are given when meeting the Cumnor Way values.
30. RSE is taught through PSHE lessons and is comprehensive and appropriate. Pupils understand the importance of these curriculum areas and understand why they are important in their development as young people who can make a positive contribution to society. This includes building positive friendships and understanding that everyone is different but should be treated as equals. Pupils are equipped with life skills, such as respect, empathy and a positive work ethic that prepare them well for the next stage of their education.
31. Pupils display high levels of self-esteem which is supported by staff who give pupils time to think before immediately seeking help. In this way, pupils understand that with reflection and added application they can be successful. Self-confidence is further enhanced, from an early age, through opportunities to perform to audiences through music and drama. Pupils display self-confidence. They communicate effectively and encourage their peers to share their views and ideas.
32. Effective procedures are in place to promote good behaviour with an appropriate policy that is understood by staff and pupils and is implemented fairly and consistently. The rewards and sanctions traffic light system is consistently displayed in classrooms during lessons. However,

teachers are not always consistent in ensuring that low-level behaviour is picked up promptly and acted upon effectively.

33. There is an effective anti-bullying strategy in place which actively prevents and minimises bullying at the school. Pupils state that bullying incidents are rare and when they do occur, they are dealt with promptly and effectively by school leaders.
34. Health and safety of premises and facilities arrangements are suitable, and a comprehensive record of all compliance testing is maintained. There is a suitable accessibility plan in place. First Aid provision is effective and enables pupils to be treated promptly as required. Staff are suitably trained including an appropriate number of paediatric first aid qualified staff in the early years. Games and PE staff are given additional and appropriate sports injury first aid training. The school has robust systems in place for the training of staff on induction which is further supported by regular update training.
35. Appropriate systems are used to register pupils and any unauthorised absences are followed up promptly. The register of admission is properly maintained including completing migration reports to the local authority when pupils arrive or leave at non-standard transition points.
36. Appropriate deployment of staff, including at break, lunchtimes, before and after school ensures that pupils are properly supervised at all times.

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

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

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

38. Early years staff provide excellent opportunities for children to learn about and make sense of their world through interesting topics, excellent resources and stimulating role play areas. For example, younger children confidently use their own experiences to develop their play when using a stethoscope to pretend they are a dentist and then a doctor. In each room, flags show the word "hello" in all the different languages in that class, reminding the children of their multicultural environment where everyone is included.
39. Children learn British values for example, when making choices about stories, sharing and taking turns. They learn about their community and celebrate multi-cultural week. Children develop an understanding of their local community through various activities including visiting a local care home to sing at Harvest and Christmas as well as litter picking in the area. Additionally, visitors who share their experiences on topics such as beekeeping and engineering strengthen children's understanding and awareness of the society in which they live.
40. Pupils understand the importance of supporting their local community and the impact it can have on others. For example, the school's pupil digital leaders decided to provide support in a local care home sharing their technological prowess. Additionally, the choir entertain the local community at the Purley Lights switch on and conservation leaders litter pick in and around the close vicinity of the school.
41. Pupils are prepared well for future life and positive citizenship by having a thorough knowledge of democracy and they understand how small changes can have a big impact on their wider community. House captains, that are voted into position, lead their house groups to their own choices of charity for the year where they plan and hold various fundraising events. Through supporting a school in Ghana, meeting with counsellors to talk about sustainability and planning future links with schools in Spain, pupils hear the voices of others in different situations to their own.
42. With a clear understanding of the school values, pupils exhibit tolerance and respect throughout the school. The empathy and care they show to one another is commendable and they find pleasure in supporting each other's strengths and areas of development in a respectful way.
43. Leaders ensure that pupils acquire appropriate knowledge and respect for public institutions and services in England by arranging trips to Westminster and the Houses of Parliament. The importance of the NHS, time to reflect at memorials and an understanding of how public services influence their lives are also given appropriate time in the curriculum. Pupils have a clear understanding of fundamental British values and protected characteristics because leaders ensure that the schemes of work for PSHE reflects the school's aims, encourages respect for others, promotes key values and gives pupils appropriate careers advice and thus preparing them well for next steps in their education.
44. Leaders and staff prepare pupils well for their future lives and careers by ensuring that the learning process equips them for life in modern Britain. Older pupils benefit from a range of stimuli including alumni visiting where they share their pathways to success. For example, when former pupils come into school to talk about establishing successful companies.

45. Pupils are provided with a broad and inclusive curriculum that promotes effective social and economic wellbeing. As a result, children have a strong sense of right and wrong and demonstrate caring attitudes to each other.

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

46. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

47. Leaders are clearly focused upon the importance of safeguarding. This ranges from ensuring that staff are suitably recruited, with all the required checks being carried out before the commencement of employment, to ensuring staff are appropriately trained in all areas of safeguarding. Aspects of safeguarding, such as individual risk assessments for pupils are thorough and show that staff consider a range of situations that could have a negative impact upon the safety and security of pupils if not managed effectively.
48. Staff understand the importance of their training, realising that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Much training is through the local authority, ensuring that there is a depth of understanding around locally agreed procedures. Safeguarding leads liaise effectively with safeguarding partners, seeking advice on matters when required. Any face-to-face training is supplemented by on-line modules in areas such as the Prevent duty. Detailed records are kept of all the training undertaken.
49. Robust systems are in place which ensure the safeguarding of pupils, such as prompt follow up when pupils are unaccounted for at registration and ensuring that the local authority is informed when pupils leave the school at non-standard transition points.
50. Staff understand their roles in safeguarding and have secure knowledge and understanding around whistleblowing and any low-level concerns made about other staff members. With the use of an electronic management system, staff have a robust system in place to ensure that all safeguarding matters are recorded in appropriate detail. Detailed record keeping underpins the school's secure safeguarding arrangements.
51. Safeguarding leads in school are well supported by systems set out by the proprietors, such as annual review documentation policy working groups. Leaders can call upon their services, advice, and toolkits to ensure 'best practice' is being carried out throughout the school. This is coupled with an annual audit of the school's arrangements, which is suitably focused and challenging.
52. Safeguarding is a team approach, where every person has an important part to play to ensure the needs and wellbeing of pupils are met. Pupils know that there are trusted adults to whom they can talk should they have any worries or concerns.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Cumnor House Boys' School and Nurseries
Department for Education number	306/6003
Address	Cumnor House Boys' School and Nurseries 166 to 170 Pampisford Road South Croydon Surrey CR2 6DA
Phone number	020 8660 3445
Email address	admissions@cumnorhouse.com
Website	www.cumnorhouse.com
Proprietor	Cognita Schools Limited
General Manager UK	Mr James Carroll
Headteacher	Miss Emma Jane Edwards
Age range	2 to 13
Number of pupils	413
Date of previous inspection	4 to 5 March 2020

Information about the school

54. Cumnor House Boys' School and Nurseries is a day school. It accepts male pupils between the ages of 2 and 13 years and female pupils between the ages of 2 and 4 years. It was founded in 1931 and became part of the Cognita Schools group in September 2010. The current head took up her position in January 2021. Cognita's general manager UK oversees governance of the school.
55. The school is divided into three departments: Early years; lower school which comprises Year 1 to Year 4; and upper school for Years 5 to 8. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision is situated on two separate sites: the Purley site offers term-time provision for female pupils aged 2 to 4 years and male pupils aged 2 to 5 years; the South Croydon site offers year-round provision for both male and female pupils aged 2 to 4 years.
56. The school has identified 34 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). One pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
57. English is an additional language for 44 pupils.
58. The school states its aims are to promote and achieve high standards of academic attainment, using a personalised approach to learning, enabling all children to reach their potential. It seeks to inspire, challenge and support each child in all aspects of their development and effectively prepare them for their destination senior school. It strives to provide a compassionate and caring learning environment which allows each child to 'be their best self' using the school's code of values, and to support them in becoming leaders.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

18 to 20 June 2024

59. A team of four inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

60. 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 general manager UK in relation to governance
- discussions with the head, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

61. 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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