

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Cranbury College

Cranbury Road, Reading, Berkshire RG30 2TS

Inspection dates:

7 and 8 January 2025

Outcome

Cranbury College has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Claire Willmott. This school is part of the Maiden Erlegh Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Jonathon Peck, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Nick Jones.

What is it like to attend this school?

Cranbury College is a place where kindness, inclusion and support pervade. This is an environment where pupils come first and adults make decisions in pupils' best interests. Staff have high expectations of pupils' achievement and behaviour. Pupils rise to these expectations in all aspects of their work, irrespective of the length of time they spend here. There are no limits to what the school believes its pupils can accomplish.

Staff skilfully foster pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem. They take time and care to get to know the pupils and help them re-engage with their learning. When a pupil needs help to manage how they are feeling, staff know exactly what to do. Pupils learn how to take care of their mental health and well-being. For example, they practise breathing exercises, visit the gym and take sensory breaks.

For most pupils, this is the first time in their school career that they have had the opportunity to develop their interests and hobbies. Pupils look forward to the gaming, gym and chess clubs. Prejudice and discrimination have no place here. One pupil said, 'The school teaches us to be ourselves and influences us to be happy with who you are.'

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

When pupils first join, they are highly anxious and apprehensive about education. The school ensures that any barriers to learning are addressed quickly. Consequently, pupils

and their families feel positive about their educational opportunities. Most pupils return successfully to other permanent educational settings. Older pupils leave with a range of qualifications, including BTEC National Diplomas and GCSEs in English, mathematics and science.

The school has thought carefully about the knowledge it wants pupils to gain and the order in which they should learn this content. It has also set out clear details about the skills and vocabulary pupils should learn in each subject. In the main, teachers skilfully adapt the curriculum to pupils' individual starting points. This ensures that pupils learn a thoughtfully considered curriculum during the time they attend the college.

Pupils look forward to their lessons and settle well into classroom routines. Overall, teachers prepare activities that help pupils to use and apply their learning across the different subjects they study. However, in a few subjects, teachers do not check well enough what pupils know and understand, and they introduce new work too quickly. They do not address the gaps and misconceptions in pupils' knowledge and understanding. When this happens, some pupils do not learn as well as they could.

Staff encourage pupils to read widely and often. The books that younger pupils read are matched closely to the sounds they learn. Any pupils who need to catch up receive prompt and effective support. Consequently, pupils become confident and fluent readers.

The school takes every opportunity to encourage pupils to attend regularly. This is a priority given that many pupils have been out of education for extended periods of time before joining the school. However, despite their efforts, there remains a significant minority of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, who do not attend as often as they should.

Pupils' personal development is enriched by a well-designed personal, social, health and economic curriculum. They are encouraged and supported to become well-rounded, confident, resilient and respectful citizens. Pupils learn about many important topics and issues that will help them lead healthy and safe lives. A range of trips, as well as workshops run by visitors, help to improve pupils' social skills. For example, pupils worked recently with local artists to create an art sculpture at the train station to raise awareness of mental health issues. Pupils receive impartial careers advice that helps them make important decisions about the future.

Trustees bring a wealth of knowledge and skills to their roles. They provide the school with effective challenge, as well as guidance and support. Staff work well together as a cohesive team. They appreciate the opportunity to share resources and collaborate with their colleagues in the trust to support pupils' learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, teachers do not check well enough what pupils know and understand before introducing new work. At times, they do not address important gaps or misconceptions in pupils' knowledge and understanding. When this happens, some pupils do not learn as well as they could. The school should ensure that teachers assess pupils' knowledge consistently and accurately so that pupils learn well in all subjects.
- A significant minority of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, do not attend school often enough and are persistently absent. This means that they miss out on important learning and vital school experiences. The school should ensure that its ongoing work leads to high levels of attendance for all pupils.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Cranbury College, to be good for overall effectiveness in February 2018.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked -after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	147719
Local authority	Reading
Inspection number	10341878
Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	57
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Nick Jones
CEO of the trust	Jonathon Peck
Headteacher	Claire Willmott
Website	www.cranburycollege.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	7 and 8 February 2018

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Maiden Erlegh Trust.
- Cranbury College provides a wide variety of education and support for some of the most vulnerable pupils in Reading and Bracknell. The college caters for pupils who have been permanently excluded from mainstream schools or who have emotional, behavioural or medical needs that prevent them from attending school. Most pupils are of secondary age, and some pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The college operates from three sites. The Cranbury Road site is mainly for key stage 3 and 4 pupils, while key stage 1 and 2 pupils attend the College Road site. The college also provides a teaching service at the Royal Berkshire Hospital.
- The college provides outreach support to other local schools, educational settings and provisions.
- The school currently uses six unregistered alternative provisions.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and other members of staff. They also met with senior staff from the trust.
- The lead inspector met with the CEO, the director of education, the vice-chair of trustees and one other trustee. She also spoke on the telephone with officers from Reading Borough Council and Bracknell Forest Council. The lead inspector also spoke on the telephone with staff from three of the unregistered alternative provisions.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspection team observed pupils' behaviour during visits to classrooms, during breaktimes and as pupils moved around the school. Inspectors also considered the responses to the online pupil survey.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They considered the responses to Ofsted's online staff survey.

Inspection team

Shazia Akram, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Mineza Maher

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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