



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION

CUMNOR HOUSE SCHOOL

FEBRUARY 2017



SCHOOL'S DETAILS

School	Cumnor House School			
DfE number	306/6003			
Address	Cumnor House School 166-170 Pampisford Road South Croydon Surrey CR2 6DA			
Telephone number	020 8660 3445			
Email address	admin@cumnorhouse.com			
Headmaster	Mr Floyd Steadman			
Proprietor	Cognita Schools Ltd			
Age range	2 to 13			
Number of pupils on roll	509			
	Boys	449	Girls	60
	EYFS	192	Juniors	258
	Seniors	59		
Inspection dates	8 to 9 February 2017			

PREFACE

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards following their inspection may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any un-met standards identified at their previous inspection.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is an EDUCATIONAL QUALITY inspection, reporting on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

Since the school was last inspected, the framework for inspection has changed. The current inspection framework uses different criteria and arrangements for grading from those used in previous inspection frameworks. The judgements made on this inspection are, therefore, not directly comparable to judgements made on previous inspections.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

All inspections of independent schools in England are conducted according to the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, different inspectorates apply different frameworks that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. The ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by the national inspectorate, Ofsted. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement about key outcomes for pupils and information on the quality of the school's work.

The headline judgements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the assistant director of education, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Steven Popper	Reporting inspector
Mrs Janet Pickering	Accompanying inspector
Mrs Helen Chalmers	Team inspector (Headmistress, ISA school)
Mrs Pauline Christodoulou	Team inspector (Assistant headmistress, IAPS school)
Mrs Paula Hobbs	Team inspector (Headteacher, ISA school)
Mr Christopher Wardle	Team inspector (Head of pre-prep, IAPS school)

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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

- 1.1 Cumnor House School is day school for boys aged between 2 and 13, and girls aged 2 to 4 years. It was founded in 1931 and became part of the Cognita Schools group in September 2010. The current headmaster took up his position in September 2016. A Cognita assistant director of education oversees the governance of the school.
- 1.2 The school is structured into 3 departments: Nursery; pre-prep which comprises Reception to Year 2; and prep for Years 3 to 8. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision is situated in 2 separate sites in Purley and South Croydon. The school admits boys and girls into its Nursery classes, and boys only into all other years.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to encourage pupils' love of learning, curiosity, perseverance, critical thinking and development of gentlemanliness. It seeks to provide a broad and balanced curriculum, and develop pupils' skills, knowledge, understanding, confidence and self-esteem. The school intends to ensure that pupils are well prepared for entrance requirements of senior schools and each stage of their lives, and develop respectful values, opinions and understanding of different beliefs and cultures.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come from mainly professional families representing a range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The school does not use nationally standardised tests, but standardised assessments and its own assessment indicate that the ability of pupils is above average. It has identified 21 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), all of whom receive specialist support. None have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. A total of 14 pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), all of whom receive support. Data used by the school has identified 25 pupils as the most able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them and for 8 other pupils due to their special talents in sport, music and art.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

Recommendations from previous inspections

- 1.6 The previous full inspection of the school by ISI was a standard inspection from November to December 2010. The recommendations from that inspection were:
 - Strengthen the effectiveness of monitoring so that all marking, teaching and pastoral care match the high levels of the best practice to be found in the school.
 - Ensure that all department plans mirror the whole school development plan and that both reflect the current year's educational priorities.
 - Further develop facilities for boys in the EYFS Reception classes.
- 1.7 The school has successfully met all the recommendations of the previous inspection.

2. KEY FINDINGS

2.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.

- Pupils demonstrate substantial success in achieving scholarships and places at senior schools of choice.
- Pupils achieve considerable success in sporting and music events.
- Pupils develop excellent communication and mathematical skills.
- Pupils exhibit a deep love of learning and are highly motivated.
- Pupils demonstrate a good ability to use information and communication technology (ICT) to extend and apply their knowledge well in some but not all subjects.

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

- Pupils' moral development is outstanding.
- Pupils demonstrate substantial self-confidence and self-awareness.
- Pupils display excellent awareness of and sensitivity towards the needs of others.
- Pupils develop and demonstrate extremely positive and inclusive values.
- Pupils feel extremely safe, well-known and cared for.

Recommendations

2.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes, the school might wish to consider:

- Enabling all pupils to develop a good ability to use ICT to extend and apply their knowledge across the whole curriculum.

3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils demonstrate a deep love of learning and are highly motivated as a result of leaders' and teachers' extremely high expectations of them, and due the school's ethical code, the 'Cumnor Way', encouraging pupils to be the best they can be. They demonstrate substantial aspirations for their future and are highly realistic about the work and effort that they will need to apply in order to meet these. Pupils are extremely willing to work collaboratively, as was seen across all lessons observed. For example, Year 8 pupils during a personal, social, health, citizenship, emotional and economic development (PSHCEE) lesson were able to identify the types of training and experience that were required for them to advance down certain career and sporting routes, and shared these with their peers with great mutual enjoyment and appreciation. In addition, all pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire said that they receive good advice about their choice of subject or career.
- 3.3 Pupils demonstrate substantial success in achieving scholarships and places at senior schools of choice including academically selective schools, in line with the school's aim to prepare pupils thoroughly for the entrance requirements of their senior schools. For example, pupils achieved 201 scholarship offers and 46 grammar school places between 2010 and 2016. The school does not take part in National Curriculum tests, but the available evidence from work scrutiny, lesson observations and the school's data shows attainment to be above national age-related expectations. Results in standardised tests of attainment in English and mathematics where data is available from 2015 to 2016 have been above the national average, as have results in reading and spelling standardised tests of attainment. In addition, the EYFS results in 2016 were above national age-related expectations, with most children attaining a good level of development. This success is due to leaders monitoring pupils' achievement systematically and ensuring that staff clearly identify any gaps in pupils' learning. Staff use this information to ensure that pupils, including those who have SEND, receive appropriate and highly effective provision. For example, the school uses its specialist 'Den' staff and resources to provide some pupils who have SEND with individual tuition that is very well matched to their needs. Similarly, staff provide the most able pupils with additional provision to prepare them for scholarship examinations.

- 3.4 All groups of pupils including the most able and those who have SEND or EAL make progress that is at least good and often rapid. They develop strong knowledge, skills and understanding across all areas of learning. This was observed in pupils' books, internal school data about pupils' achievements, and lessons observed. For example pupils in a Year 8 geography lesson demonstrated a good understanding of the concepts related to sustainability and used their historical knowledge to suggest how industry has changed. Pupils succeed in making at least good progress as a result of teachers' typically high expectations, well-planned and well-informed lessons, and effective questioning and dialogue. For example, a Year 7 biology lesson involved pupils in a highly effective practical activity which involved building a model of lungs, and featured timely prompts and careful questioning by the teacher. In their questionnaire responses, a small minority of pupils disagreed that most lessons are interesting but the overwhelming majority of pupils agreed that the school provides them the opportunity to learn and make good progress, and pupils demonstrated high levels of interest in most lessons observed. A very small minority of parents who responded to the questionnaire disagreed that teaching enables their children to make good progress and develop skills for the future, inspection evidence does not support this view and judges that teaching enables pupils to progress rapidly. Pupils' fast progress is also due to leaders' and staff's considerable and frequent celebration of pupils' success during assemblies and other occasions. For example, leaders during one assembly presented pupils with award certificates in recognition of outstanding independent project homework. Pupils also demonstrate excellent study skills. For example, pupils in a Year 6 English lesson were able to explain how they could research and analyse the text at hand. This is as a result of staff explicitly drawing attention to such processes and enabling pupils to practice them during their lessons.
- 3.5 Pupils demonstrate excellent achievement in sporting and music events at local and national levels. In sport, among many other achievements, the under-11s football team reached national finals in 2014 and 2015, while the cricket teams have frequently enjoyed local success with some pupils representing the school at county level. The school won the local authority's Primary Schools' Swimming Association Trophy every year from 2008 to 2015, and has achieved national swimming and rugby success. In music, the junior choir has also attained local and national success; they became the national junior choir champions in 2012 and have been winners in the local authority's music festival five times in six years. This sustained success is due to the substantial opportunities and support that pupils receive in these areas. For example, the school provides up to two hundred sports fixtures in any one term across the age groups including regular overseas cricket tours, and involves pupils in four different choirs and approximately fourteen ensembles.

- 3.6 Pupils develop excellent communication skills, and are extremely confident and competent speakers. This is due to staff consistently modelling and expecting precision in expression, and the use of appropriate vocabulary across all subjects. Pupils also acquire and apply outstanding mathematical skills as a result of the teachers' excellent use of practical resources and activities to engage pupils and make mathematics meaningful to them. For example, the teacher in a Reception mathematics lesson demonstrated accurate usage of terms such as 'coin' and 'pence', enabling children to use the appropriate language while engaged in an adding activity using real money. Similarly, a Year 6 science lesson enabled pupils to apply their mathematical knowledge of measurement and how to collect data during a practical investigation about the effect of distance on shadows. Pupils also develop excellent communication and mathematical skills due to the teachers matching work well to individual pupils' needs and as a result of leaders ensuring that pupils receive additional individual support when required. For example, pupils in a Year 5 mathematics lesson were grouped by their prior attainment, and additional individual support was provided to those who needed support in order to fully grasp the concept.
- 3.7 Pupils make at least good advances in their knowledge across the curriculum, but the school does not enable them to demonstrate a good ability to use ICT to extend and apply this knowledge well in all subjects. This is due to the school using computer technology effectively to support learning in some areas of the school, but not all.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils demonstrate substantial self-confidence and self-awareness, in line with the school aim to enable each pupil to develop self-esteem and a positive belief in their individual abilities. This is because pupils are provided many opportunities to reflect upon and express their feelings about their individual talents and achievements. For example, pre-prep pupils keep class books that contain their individual reflections about themselves, while older pupils maintain personal journals which demonstrate increasingly mature self-understanding. School newsletters contain many examples of confident and enthusiastic testimonies from individual pupils about their successes in non-academic fields such as rugby and swimming. These convey excellent self-confidence and self-esteem. Leaders ensure that staff actively develop pupils' self-awareness and self-esteem through the school's extremely effective PSHCEE programme. For example, the focus of this term's PSHCEE provision across the school is 'dreams and hopes'. Children and pupils demonstrate outstanding confidence and considerable resilience during lessons. For instance, children displayed high levels of self-esteem and confidence during a Reception literacy lesson. This was as a result of staff's extremely effective use of praise to reward achievement and effort. Similarly, Year 6 pupils demonstrated substantial perseverance during a design and technology lesson when their suggested designs were not as successful as they had hoped. The teacher's excellent encouragement and reference to the principles embedded in the 'Cumnor Way' enabled pupils to continue positively, and demonstrated belief in themselves when faced with this setback. Most parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school promotes an environment which successfully supports their children's personal development.
- 4.3 Pupils' moral development is outstanding and their behaviour is almost always exemplary, meeting the school's aim to encourage gentlemanliness. Across all age groups, pupils understand the difference between right and wrong and are able to reflect on and take responsibility for their own actions. For example, at the end of a Reception class activity, all the children eagerly helped to put away the resources and displayed a strong sense of responsibility towards tidying up after themselves. During a Year 8 PSHCEE lesson, the pupils' discussion about their possible futures conveyed their aspirations for helping famine and war to end, and for the world to live in fairness and peace. Pupils demonstrate a deep understanding and respect for school rules and expectations, and realise the consequences of non-adherence to these. Their personal reflection forms demonstrate that they accept responsibility for their own behaviour and the way they treat others. Leaders actively promote pupils' sense of moral responsibility through providing pupils with outstanding pastoral care and ensuring that the principles and values embodied in the 'Cumnor Way' are consistently applied and promoted by staff. In the pre-prep for instance, any playground incidents that occur are then followed up by staff through a class meeting held immediately afterwards which gently explores who did not have a good experience, and why and how pupils can ensure no recurrence of such an incident. Such processes enable pupils to develop an excellent understanding of how to look after each other and why such support is a good thing. Staff and pupils frequently refer to the 'Cumnor Way' during lessons, to the benefit of pupils' growth of moral awareness. For example, a pupil in a Year 3 English lesson identified and pointed out a characteristic of the 'Cumnor Way' in the behaviour of another pupil, the teacher then praised both pupils and led a discussion about the importance of regularly demonstrating sharing behaviour. All pupils who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school encourages them to respect others.

- 4.4 Pupils display excellent awareness of and sensitivity towards the needs of others, and eagerly engage in activities designed to help other people. They demonstrate advanced social skills and considerable empathy towards each other, and treat one another with substantial consideration and respect. Older pupils relish the opportunity to help and support younger pupils, such as during wet break times. Pupils who hold positions of responsibility such as prefects, house captains, class monitors and playground monitors are proud to contribute to the school and the wider community. Pupils develop a strong ability to contribute to others, as leaders and staff provide them with considerable opportunities to take on roles of responsibility within the school. For example, the EYFS staff appoint children at the beginning of their school experience roles such as pencil monitor, and older pupils take on duties such as school council representative, form captain, librarian and laptop monitor. Pupils engage with wider community and charity work, such as performing music for children with learning difficulties at a local school and fundraising for local charities. These experiences contribute strongly to pupils' appreciation of how fortunate they are compared to some others, as conveyed by several pupils in interview.
- 4.5 Pupils develop and demonstrate extremely positive and inclusive values, and exhibit genuine appreciation of different faiths and cultures, meeting the school's aim to develop values and opinions within the context of mutual respect and understanding of differing belief systems and cultures. For example, pupils during a Year 6 religious studies lesson demonstrated their excellent understanding of the similarities and differences between different religious views. Most pupils and almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school encourages pupils to be tolerant of those with different faiths or beliefs. Pupils who were interviewed recognised that the school has many different cultures, beliefs and religions represented, and said that, whatever other pupils' backgrounds are, they all get on together and respect one another for who they are. Pupils from different backgrounds mix freely and display an excellent rapport with each other at lunchtimes, break times and through collaboration in lessons. Pupils said that they felt their teachers teach them how to accept others, and cited the 'Cumnor Way' as highly instrumental in this. Leaders' extremely successful embedding of the 'Cumnor Way' ethos throughout the school, the highly effective PSHCEE and assembly programme, and the excellent relationships between pupils and teachers promotes pupils' exemplary caring and inclusive attitudes.
- 4.6 Pupils feel extremely safe, well-known and cared for. They know how to keep safe online and have an excellent understanding of the importance of internet safety. This is as a result of leaders and governors prioritising safety and pastoral care extremely effectively. Pupils also have a substantial understanding of why physical skills and exercise are important to stay healthy. This is due to many subjects, including PSHCEE, providing pupils excellent advice about how to stay healthy and keep safe.