



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports

St Christopher's School

May 2019



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School's Details

School	St Christopher's School			
DfE number	304/6057			
Address	St Christopher's School 71 Wembley Park Drive Wembley Middlesex HA9 8HE			
Telephone number	0208 9025069			
Email address	admin@stchristophersschool.org.uk			
Headteacher	Mr Gian-Paolo Musetti			
Proprietor	Inspired Learning Group			
Age range	2 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	116			
	Boys	46	Girls	70
	EYFS	39	Juniors	77
Inspection dates	21 to 23 May 2019			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 St Christopher's School is an independent co-educational day school for pupils aged two to eleven years. It was founded in 1928 as a Christian foundation and now has a multi-cultural and multi-faith ethos. The school is administered by the Inspired Learning Group Ltd, led by the sole proprietor.
- 1.2 The school has one class in each year group and is accommodated in a converted house.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection the school has extended its provision to admit children from the age of two into a nursery class within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting included in the main school building.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.4 The school aims to realise the educational potential of pupils in full, academically, socially, artistically and physically. It seeks to encourage a sense of personal responsibility and individual worth.

About the pupils

- 1.5 Pupils represent the wide ethnic and cultural population of the local area from which they all come. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average. The school has identified nine pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include cognition and learning difficulties, eight of whom receive additional specialist help. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs. English is an additional language for two pupils, whose needs are supported by their classroom teachers. Data used by the school have identified 19 pupils as being the most able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them and for 32 other pupils because of their special talents in music and drama.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

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. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. The inspection of schools that have early years settings not requiring registration similarly records whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework. Additionally, the inspection reports on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

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 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.

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 a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY, the report of which appears later in this document. The COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key regulations and standards have been inspected in detail. These are the regulations on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety, arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information to parents; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

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.

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 published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and relevant requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 The school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.4 **The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.5 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.
- 2.6 **The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.7 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.8 **The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met.**

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.9 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors and a register is kept as required.
- 2.10 **The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

2.11 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.

2.12 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.13 A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. These include details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. They also include particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.

2.14 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.15 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.

2.16 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.17 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.

2.18 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.

3. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

The EDUCATIONAL QUALITY inspection reports 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.

All independent schools are required to meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards. 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'.

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school.

Key findings

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- Pupils' attainment is well above national age-related expectations. Pupils of all abilities across the school make rapid progress.
 - Pupils' work across the range of subjects is of a very high standard, demonstrating much depth of thought and understanding of the subject matter.
 - All pupils exhibit notably strong study skills.
 - Pupils demonstrate a delight in learning and a very strong desire to produce the best quality of work that they can.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- Pupils across the school demonstrate notably high levels of self-confidence and self-awareness.
 - Pupils exhibit deep spiritual awareness and demonstration of their appreciation of the non-material aspects of life.
 - Pupils' moral awareness and ability to recognise and consider ethical issues are notably strong.
 - Pupils demonstrate an outstanding appreciation of diversity and a keen awareness of the concept of different groups having rights.

Recommendation

- 3.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes, the school might wish to consider the following improvement:
- Consider how best to improve further pupils' achievements in competitive sports events with other schools.

The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 The school does not take part in National Curriculum tests, but the available evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and the school's own assessment data shows attainment to be well above national age-related expectations. Children in the EYFS make excellent progress from their starting points and typically leave the Reception year having fulfilled at least age-related expectations, with a minority of children exceeding these due to the effective teaching that they receive. In the current academic year the majority of children in EYFS have exceeded age-related expectations. Pupils of all abilities across the rest of the school make rapid progress and the oldest pupils attain well beyond age-related expectations. A minority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed dissatisfaction with teaching, but inspection evidence does not support this view. Pupils' books across the range of subjects contained work beyond the standard typical for their age, and leavers are highly successful in attaining places at their first choice of competitive senior and grammar schools. In enabling these achievements, the school fully meets its aim to realise the educational potential of pupils, academically, socially, and artistically. Pupils' progress is supported by effective use of assessment data by leaders and staff to ensure that any gaps in learning are addressed through teaching tailored to meet pupils' individual needs.

- 3.6 Pupils' work across the range of subjects is of a very high standard, exhibiting much depth of thought and understanding of the subject matter. For example, the history books of pupils in the school demonstrate their strong ability to identify critical questions to ask about sources of historical information. Similarly, older pupils' work on Tudor houses and pots demonstrates very careful observations of features of such houses, including from independent research using web-based resources. Pupils' reflections on their own clay Tudor pots contain sensible critiques of their own skills and techniques, while their model Tudor houses demonstrate much care and attention to detail. Younger pupils' design and technology work shows considerable care in planning, researching and designing and creating shadow puppets, while pupils' science books reveal thorough knowledge and understanding about themes ranging from electricity to differences between vertebrates and invertebrates. The depth and quality of pupils' work and learning is supported by teaching which consistently expects pupils to work with care and reflect in depth on the quality and methodology of their work. Pupils assess their work for themselves in response to prompts for them to do so which clearly identify key factors for pupils to consider and suggest key questions to answer.
- 3.7 Pupils demonstrate excellent communication skills. Children in the EYFS are able to recognise, pronounce, identify and form different letters correctly, and recognise more difficult words in sentences in response to clear modelling and guidance. Their writing is of very high quality for their age, as seen in examples of children's independent accounts of the story of the three little pigs. Older pupils' English books contain highly developed creative writing that features an effective structure, correct spelling and accurate grammar. Older pupils are able to clearly communicate thoughtful and very developed ideas about the subjects that they study. In an English lesson, older pupils discussed and explained the impact on the reader of sophisticated imagery used in a particular fictional text with great clarity. Pupils show that they are clearly used to engaging in thoughtful discussions in a supportive environment where all are encouraged to contribute as part of their lessons.
- 3.8 Pupils' standard of mathematics is very high across the whole school. The school's own assessment data indicate that pupils make rapid progress and attain well above age-related expectations. This is confirmed by pupils' books and lesson observations. For example, nursery children demonstrated very good knowledge and understanding of shape for their age during shape drawing and matching activity. They were able to form, match and name shapes accurately as a result of very clear guidance and use of vocabulary by staff. Younger pupils are able to solve challenging mathematical time, fraction and multiplication problems accurately and confidently. Pupils in the middle of the school applied their accurate knowledge of the 24-hour clock to solve complex timetable problems, while the oldest pupils applied their mathematical skills and knowledge to independent research about the effects of exercise very well. Teachers contribute to pupils' mathematical knowledge through their highly effective use of stimulating resources provided by school leaders and the proprietor.
- 3.9 Pupils demonstrate strong information and communication technology (ICT) skills. They produce much work of high quality using ICT across the entire range of subjects. For instance, pupils utilise word processing skills extremely well to produce a range of different types of well-presented documents, such as information booklets and posters. The oldest pupils successfully built and programmed a model robot, demonstrating their advanced and confident use of coding. This is because keyboard and mouse control is promoted from the EYFS upwards. Leaders and the proprietor have invested in specialist teaching, support and training for staff, and up to date ICT resources for the school, so that pupils have much opportunity to use tablets for research and other work.

- 3.10 Pupils across the school exhibit notably strong study skills. Children in the EYFS were very observant of the features of their letter formation and sentence writing, and able to identify what they were doing well and what they need to work on. Several children correctly identified that they needed to include 'speech marks' and used the term 'adjective' accurately and with understanding. Similarly, in a history lesson, older pupils engaged in creating battle plans to guard England at the time of King Harold were able to suggest thoughtful and very developed hypotheses and predictions of what might happen if troops and resources were to be applied in different ways. The oldest pupils' independent research about the effect of exercise shows pupils' confident ability to define and recognise fair tests and variables, make hypotheses and record and compare results, and draw very thoughtful, evidence-based conclusions. Books show that pupils' skills in prediction are promoted from the EYFS upwards, such as in Reception work challenging children to predict what could happen next in particular storylines.
- 3.11 Pupils achieve highly in external speech, drama and music examinations, with most entrants attaining distinctions. The choir has represented the school at St Paul's Cathedral and other notable venues. Individual pupils have attained success in sport, such as in European gymnastics. Half the parents who responded to the questionnaire did not think that the school provides a suitable range of extra-curricular activities. Inspection evidence disagrees, and the school's own survey of parental views gives a more positive viewpoint. However, pupils' achievement in sport is not as pronounced as their achievement in other areas, as it mainly consists of local success. Leaders and the proprietor have supported pupils' success by enabling pupils to receive much individual attention and guidance in speech, drama and music sessions and by giving pupils many opportunities to engage in annual musical productions, including at a local venue.
- 3.12 Pupils demonstrate a delight in learning and a very strong desire to produce the best quality work that they can. This was witnessed, for example, in rehearsals for a forthcoming musical production, when children in EYFS and pupils from across the school exhibited much joy in the experience and put much effort into sharpening and improving their performances. Books across all different year groups and subjects demonstrate that pupils take much care over the presentation and completion of their work. The very high quality of work typically seen indicates that pupils strive to produce the best work that they can. This is because leaders, the proprietor, and staff have successfully embedded a culture of high expectations across the school.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils across the school demonstrate notable self-confidence and self-awareness. Children in the EYFS part from their parents confidently and engage very happily with other children and the range of activities on offer, as a result of the warm and welcoming individual attention given to them by staff. Pupils' books, including those of pupils with SEND, exhibit considered and accurate reflection by pupils on their achievement, progress towards personal objectives and how well they have improved their skills over time. An 'achievement board' display conveys pupils' happy reflections on personal achievements that are significant to them. These range from art scholarships to swimming medals to performance in Southwark Cathedral in a choir for a national children's charity. The school fully meets its aim to encourage a sense of individual worth. Pupils' capacity for self-awareness is informed by the many opportunities they have for self-assessment. Staff enable pupils to self-assess the level of support that they need and the level of understanding that they have, from use of smiley faces in the EYFS to more sophisticated forms of self-assessment as they go through the school. Pupils use these opportunities well.

- 3.15 Pupils are capable of making sensible and well-informed decisions, as seen in their work in their independent learning books. Pupils are often able to choose the activity that is suited to them and choose the level of challenge at which to work. Pupils often pick the highest level of challenge. In gymnastics and dance, pupils are able to choreograph their routines and performances for themselves, self-assess and consequently improve their own filmed performances. Older pupils are very aware of secondary schools and understand that they need to put extra work in. Pupils revise for examinations systematically and, if applicable, want to know why they did not do as well as they wanted in their mock examinations. The oldest pupils are very aware of the likely demands of the next stages of their education and what they have to do to prepare for them.
- 3.16 Pupils exhibit strong spiritual awareness and appreciation of the non-material aspects of life. For example, nursery work on display shows good knowledge and appreciation of the Hindu celebration of Holi for the children's ages. Older pupils' religious education (RE) books include many thoughtful reflections, such as about what Diwali symbolises, and why certain dates are important to followers of different religions, such as Christianity and Islam. During rehearsals for a forthcoming production, younger pupils constructed their moves with a sense of how they could be responded to by an audience. The pupils conveyed much delight in the experience. Pupils' spiritual and aesthetic sensibilities are supported by written feedback on their work on such subject matter, which often contains stimulating prompts for further and deeper thought.
- 3.17 Pupils exhibit deep moral awareness and ability to recognise and consider ethical issues. For example, pupils' personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) books demonstrate a deep sense of moral responsibility towards others, such as 'My law is for half a year poor people should have free shelter and free food'. The oldest pupils' independent learning books include extremely thoughtful independent work which featured ethical arguments both for and against the existence of zoos, and equivalent ethical consideration of other themes. Younger pupils' PSHE books contained thoughtful reflections on friendship, with pupils designing 'friendship tokens' with care, while older pupils produced very empathic work of high quality about the Blitz. Throughout the inspection, pupils exhibited very good behaviour towards one another, both in and out of lessons. This is because leaders, staff and the proprietor have clearly embedded a culture of very high behaviour expectations. The school fully meets its aim to encourage a sense of personal responsibility.
- 3.18 Pupils are extremely supportive of each other during discussions which form a major element of teaching across the school. For example, EYFS children demonstrated much verbal appreciation of and interest in each other's writing, while older pupils engaged very confidently and constructively with each other during discussions on themes ranging from alliteration to Viking myths and aspects of geography. Pupils' excellent social skills result from staff who give pupils constant opportunities to work together and share ideas with each other. They also result from leaders' and the proprietor's effective embedding of a positive and supportive teaching and learning atmosphere across the school. In EYFS, Reception children act as 'buddies' to Nursery children, read with them, support them and help them in artistic and mathematical activities and show them how to do practical things such as put books up on the shelf. Pupils from different year groups support each other in paired reading, and older pupils come into Reception to help Reception children read. The older pupils are very enthusiastic about helping and supporting the younger ones, and the oldest run their own stalls at the school summer fete.
- 3.19 Pupils have a high awareness of their responsibilities towards others and are keen to contribute to the school and the wider community. For example, the school council has voted and chosen which charity to support from a given selection. Pupils were able to articulate why they voted to support a particular international charity relating to the supply and cleanliness of water aid over other possibilities. Individual pupils have initiated their own charity work, such as for a national cancer charity, citing reasons why these causes were important to them personally. Pupils said that they enjoyed singing at local homes for the elderly.

- 3.20 Pupils' demonstrate an outstanding appreciation of diversity and strong awareness of the concept of various rights. For instance, PSHE books contain pupils' own very thoughtful and empathetic reflections about individual rights identified in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, while personal reflections on a school assembly about Ramadan displayed in the hall showed a very sensitive awareness and appreciation of Islamic customs and beliefs. Older pupils' work on the Houses of Parliament demonstrates much factual knowledge about how these Houses work, but also good understanding of constitutional issues, such as the Queen's relationship with both Houses and current party leadership and predominant political issues. The 'what's in the news?' board that pupils contribute to demonstrates their good awareness of what is happening in the outside world, including relating to the Royal family and terrorist attacks. Pupils' comments about the latter demonstrate empathy with those affected. Pupils representing a wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds work together in an entirely accepting, respectful and inclusive manner. All pupils who responded to the questionnaire said that the school encourages them to respect and tolerate other people. Their understanding reflects the embedding, by the proprietor and school leaders, supported by staff, of a very strong and consistent ethos of respect and inclusivity across the school.
- 3.21 Pupils have a very developed understanding of how to stay safe and keeping healthy. For instance, PSHE books contain very thoughtful reflections about how to guard against disappointment and coping strategies that the pupils had used successfully. They also demonstrate pupils' very clear understanding of how to guard against the risk of bullying. Work displayed across the school by Reception children and older pupils about healthy eating and lifestyles demonstrated much understanding of the need for proper nutrition, sleep, exercise and hygiene. The older pupils' work included sensible and productive reflection on how to maintain good mental health and the importance of avoiding stress. All pupils who responded to the questionnaire said that they know how to stay safe when online. This is borne out by independent work on internet safety, including pupils' generation of an ICT code of conduct which clearly demonstrates substantial understanding of what to do and what not to do in order to keep safe when using the internet. The strength of pupils' understanding of staying safe and keeping healthy is supported by the design of the PHSE programme and other parts of the curriculum, which consistently invites thoughtful reflection on these matters.

4. Inspection Evidence

- 4.1 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 proprietor and another representative of the Inspired Learning Group, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings. Inspectors visited facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents, staff 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 Carrie Askew	Compliance team inspector (Head of administration and compliance, IAPS school)
Mr Andrew Rudkin	Team inspector (Headmaster, ISA school)