

Christ's College, Guildford

Larch Avenue, Guildford, GU1 1JY

Inspection dates

5–6 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The Principal is ambitious for his students. He has effectively encouraged leaders at all levels to drive improvement in all areas of the school's work.
- Students make good progress from relatively low starting points. They achieve well and enjoy school and the opportunities it presents.
- The ethos of the school promotes learning. Students feel safe and relationships at all levels in the school are warm and supportive. Students conduct themselves well around the school.
- Governors are well informed and play an active part in setting targets and reviewing performance.
- The sixth form is improving as it grows in size and is now good. Students here make good progress in a supportive environment. They contribute strongly to the life of the school.
- The teachers are experts at helping students to think things through for themselves. They pose challenging questions. They are good at judging who to nudge along and who to challenge further.
- Students who have difficulties with their work are well supported and make excellent progress. Disadvantaged groups of students achieve better than others because staff provide strong support that is well matched to individual needs.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always take full advantage of their students' positive attitudes. They miss chances to give them responsibilities and opportunities to take an active role in directing their own learning.
- Marking is not consistently helpful in providing students with a clear understanding of how well they are doing against their targets and what they need to do to improve.
- Students are not making as much progress as they might in language and communication skills. These skills are not sufficiently reinforced in all lessons across the curriculum.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team was made up of five inspectors, three of whom inspected for a day each.
- Inspectors observed 31 lessons across the school. These included several joint observations with members of the school's senior leadership team.
- Inspectors also talked to many students about their learning and the school.
- They looked at students' work and observed them around the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with governors, members of the senior leadership team and middle managers and discussed the school with representatives both from the local authority and the Diocese of Guildford.
- They considered the school's performance and tracking information, their plans and faculty reviews.

Inspectors considered the responses made by parents to the online Parent View survey and those expressed by parents to the team by email and telephone at the time of the inspection. They also took account of the 41 questionnaire responses returned by staff.

Inspection team

Emma Ing, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Russell Bennett

Seconded inspector

Noureddin Khassal

Additional inspector

Clifford Walker

Additional inspector

John Worgan

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Christ's College is a Church of England school.
- Since the last inspection the designated resource centre for students with speech, language and communication difficulties has closed.
- The school is smaller than most and the sixth form is very small but growing.
- Most students are from a White British background, with 10% belonging to one of a wide range of other ethnic backgrounds. Relatively few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is just above average. The proportion of students who are supported by school action school action plus or who are in receipt of statements of special educational needs is also broadly in line with national proportions.
- An average proportion of students, slightly more than a quarter, are known to be eligible for the pupil premium. This is additional government funding for children in local authority care, students from service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- A very small number of students receive all or part of their education with alternative providers; these are Lift-off, Not-school, Brooklands College, and Hope Hospital. Six students are completing a diploma which is run by this school in conjunction with another local school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding and consistently good teaching by:
 - making sure that more lessons offer students opportunities to take responsibility and make choices about their learning, work independently and in groups
 - ensuring that all teachers give students clear written feedback about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve, and encourage them to discuss their learning.
- Support all learners in their speaking, listening, reading and writing, and raise attainment in English by ensuring that all subject teachers plan and deliver lessons that reinforce and develop students' skills in these areas.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Because teaching is good and students are challenged and supported well in a wide range of different subjects and courses, they make good progress and their achievement is good. Teaching has improved dramatically over time.
- Numbers have been small and progress rather average historically in the sixth form, but progress has picked up sharply and the teaching, pastoral care and achievement are now good.
- Students' performance in gaining five or more high-level GCSE passes, including English and mathematics, is in line with national averages. When these qualifications are added to the others that students gain, attainment is strikingly better than the national average.
- In the recent past, students were entered early for mathematics GCSE, but the school is now teaching mathematics over the full two years of Key Stage 4 and standards are rising as a consequence. Similarly, the school has now increased its provision of modern foreign languages teaching and the high expectations of students in these subjects are raising standards here too.
- Although slightly better than found nationally, there is still room for improvement in English as progress in this subject is very similar to that found across England. There is no difference, however, in the rate of progress in English between all students, those with special educational needs and those who are eligible for the pupil premium.
- The support for students at risk of underachieving is central to the ethos of the school and reflects the school's strong promotion of equality. Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make better-than-average progress. This is because of tailored one-to-one teaching and support.
- Students supported by the pupil premium make better-than-expected progress. This is as a result of careful targeting of this additional resource towards improving performance in literacy and numeracy. In Year 11, the gap for this group narrowed at a faster rate, particularly in mathematics, than that for their peers nationally. In 2012, the GCSE average point score for Year 11 students eligible for the pupil premium was well above the national average point score for all students.

The quality of teaching is good

- Most teaching, most of the time, is good. Students also say that it is good, and agreed with a summary offered by one of them that on the whole, teachers 'pose a problem... give you some information... and get you to figure it out'. Some of the best teaching is in the sixth form.
- Questioning techniques are used exceptionally well to challenge students and prompt them to think things through. Teachers are skilled at framing questions that are challenging for different individuals and encouraging students to develop their ideas. Because the relationships between students are positive, some of the best teaching successfully allows them to discuss each other's work and to learn from each other. Nevertheless, too often teachers remain firmly in control of their whole class's learning by 'teaching from the front'. They do not allow students to make choices and take responsibility for specific pieces of work.
- Students who find work easy are generally offered greater challenges, while teaching assistants are carefully deployed to support those who might flounder. Appropriate withdrawal of these students to give catch-up sessions allows them to keep up and enjoy their learning too. Reading has been a focus recently in the school and less confident readers are equipped with a helpful working knowledge of letters and sounds (phonics).
- Occasionally, teaching was seen where the teacher did not accurately gauge what the students had understood and either moved on too fast or too slowly for students.
- Despite the recent work of the Communications Faculty there is not enough focus on supporting all students to develop their literacy and communication skills in different subjects. Students

have opportunities to practise their stronger mathematics skills across the curriculum.

- Most teachers are very good at giving students oral feedback but the written marking of students' work is inconsistent across the school. Too many opportunities are missed to explain to students how well they are doing, what they are doing well and what they need to work on to achieve their next goal.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The relationships among students and between students and staff are one of the strengths of the school. The school is a warm and friendly place to spend time. Students say they feel safe and very well supported. They value the work of the chaplaincy and the ethos of the school. Staff and students alike recognise that everyone deserves respect and has something to offer. These factors contribute well to the spiritual, social and moral development of students.
- Since the last inspection students' attendance and behaviour have improved. Students say that they feel safer too, partly because of the new building which provides a welcoming and open environment. In fact, students' behaviour improves steadily as they rise up through the school. They are purposeful and punctual as they undertake their daily routines and they behave well. They expect to learn and as they progress through the school they settle down to work increasingly efficiently.
- Students talk with enthusiasm about their learning and the opportunities for career paths that this are opening up. Their attendance is slightly better than in most schools. Some students, however, continue to struggle to manage their behaviour and the school is still excluding students for fixed periods from time to time.
- Students gain a secure understanding about what is meant by bullying and they know about different forms it takes. They say that there is very little bullying and that it is dealt with well.
- Art, drama and physical education contribute strongly to the social and cultural development of students. Many students are engaged in and benefit from the performing arts curriculum and extra-curricular activities. Students explain that drama offers them opportunities to develop confidence and make friends; a drama lesson observed contributed strongly to students' social development. Students also speak highly of physical education and the opportunities for inter-school competition.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders at all levels share a strong sense of purpose and determination to serve their students well. Staff are very proud to work at this school.
- The Principal has put in place high-quality management systems to review the performance of faculties and individuals within them. Because of this he has a very sound knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Self-evaluation is both accurate and clear about what needs to be done next. Through the faculty structure the quality of teaching and its impact on learning are regularly reviewed and staff are always eager to improve. This, coupled with rigorous performance management arrangements, is at the heart of the significant improvement in the quality of teaching.
- Leaders at all levels have clear plans for improvement and can identify what they have already achieved and how. The school has improved considerably over the last seven years.
- The strong drive for improvement has led to leaders responding to research published both by Ofsted and other educational institutions. This, for example is reflected in the recent modifications to the curriculum in Key Stage 4. In response to *Moving English Forward*, an Ofsted publication, the Communications Faculty has sought to strengthen whole-school literacy work and promote reading for enjoyment.

- The sixth form is good and improving. Although there are currently few sixth formers, they are well taught and are making good progress. They are nurtured by the school and in turn play an important role in leading younger year groups, for example by leading prayers, school council and in the prefect system. On leaving school they generally go on to university.
- The support offered to students who need help to catch up is very good. The special needs department delivers highly effective one-to-one individual support for students at all levels of attainment that could be doing better. The progress, safety and well-being of students in alternative provision are regularly monitored and these students are making at least satisfactory progress.
- Parents are very positive about the school. They express confidence that their children are making good progress and are happy at the school.
- The local authority has provided significant support in the past, but has gradually reduced its support as confidence has been gained in the school's ability to continue to secure improvement without help. Nevertheless, some work has been undertaken to support the school in its lesson-observation judgements and discussions have been held about students' performance.
- Safeguarding procedures are thorough and staff are appropriately trained in this area.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body takes an informed and very active interest in the progress of the school. Governors have a clear long-term vision for the school. They have been relentless and determined in shaping this improving school and holding its leaders to account. The Christian ethos is of utmost importance to them and this is reflected in the decisions that they make. Governors are closely involved in the annual review of the standards of teaching offered by the different faculties. They have ensured that performance management of teachers is woven into a continuous performance-review structure which enables them to ensure that teachers are appropriately rewarded for their work. They analyse carefully the progress and achievement information of students and make sure that they are involved in decisions about changes to provision. Individual governors work with faculty leaders and department heads to support and challenge them when they develop plans for improvement. They take an active role in ensuring that subjects are well resourced within the school's budget. Faculties' progress against these plans is monitored carefully. Governors have ensured that pupil premium funding makes a difference to eligible students.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	134120
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	402596

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	649
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	37
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Colin Henry
Principal	Canon Stephen Green
Date of previous school inspection	8–19 May 2010
Telephone number	01883 537373
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