

Christ's School

Queens Road, Richmond upon Thames, Surrey, TW10 6HU

Inspection dates	12–13 December 2013		
Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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 school is inclusive. Very strong working relationships exist between staff and students, and they work harmoniously together.
- The proportion of students attaining five good grades at GCSE including English and mathematics is consistently above average.
- Students make consistently good progress in English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages and the humanities.
- There is a strong sense of community. Students respect staff and each other and as a result, behaviour is good and pupils feel very safe.
- Students in the enhanced provision for special needs make good progress because of effective support.
- Teachers have good subject and technical knowledge and use it well in promoting good learning among students, using questioning effectively.
- The school has created good links with parents and carers who are very supportive of the school's work.
- The school has successfully halved the number of students deemed to be persistently absent from school.
- The senior leaders, together with members of the governing body, have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are taking effective action to secure even better outcomes for students.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The achievement of students, supported through the pupil premium is improving considerably, but some variations in students' progress remain between subjects.
- Not enough teaching is outstanding and a small amount of teaching still requires improvement.
- The monitoring and actions of some leaders, particularly at middle leadership level, is not consistently rigorous enough in making swift improvements to the quality of teaching and to students' achievements.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team visited 29 lessons, observing 26 teachers. Five lessons were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors also conducted a series of further brief observations of learning and a scrutiny of students' work. The vast majority of these activities were conducted with members of the senior leadership team.
- Members of the inspection team discussed with students their views about the school.
- Meetings were held with groups of students, governors, the senior leadership team, staff from the school and a representative from the local authority. A telephone conversation was arranged with a representative from the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education.
- Inspectors took account of the 142 responses available on the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the 12 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at improvement plans, records and analyses of students' behaviour, the tracking of pupils' progress and examples of students' work. They scrutinised the school's attendance figures and information about other aspects of the school's work.

Inspection team

Raymond Lau, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Lesley Leak	Additional Inspector
Andrew Lyons	Additional Inspector
Marian Marks	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average secondary school. Approximately 60% all students are from a White British background and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is above the national average.
- The proportion of girls in the school is well below the national average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding provided to the school for students known to be eligible for free school meals), is average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus is above average. The proportion of students who have a statement of special educational need is average. Most of these students have moderate learning difficulties, and behaviour, emotional and social difficulties.
- The school receives additional funding for enhanced provision for up to six students with specific learning difficulties.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- Two students are currently educated off-site at Richmond College.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on the current progress of students eligible for the pupil premium, ensuring that the gap in their achievement levels in relation to their peers reduces.
- Ensure that leaders, particularly middle leaders, rigorously monitor and improve the quality of teaching in their areas to promote outstanding practice and, ensure that students' achievements accelerate using the following means:
 - utilising more effectively the current achievement data of all groups of learners monitoring and tracking their progress
 - making sure that teachers prepare and implement activities that stretch all learners
 - ensuring that teachers rigorously mark students' work, providing quality feedback and enabling students to respond to comments made
 - observing accurately the learning and progress levels of different groups of learners, utilising the information to make sure that improvements are made in the quality of learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The overall proportion of students making steady progress in both English and mathematics is consistently in line with the national averages. Mostly students are also making good progress in English and mathematics. Over time, students make consistently good progress in science, languages and the humanities. Boys make similar progress to that of girls. Students are now making better progress in many subjects across the school. In a Year 7 physical education lesson, students focused on developing the 'smash' shot in badminton. Students' commitment, dedication, enthusiasm and proactive behaviour in the lesson resulted in their making good progress. Slight variations in these patterns are sometimes evident, particularly with some middle and higher attainers. On occasions, these students are not always sufficiently challenged because the work set for them is too easy as in a Year 8 mathematics session.
- Students now enter the school with attainment levels broadly in line with the national averages. However, for the past two years, students entered at much higher starting points. Students consistently attain above the national average in gaining five GCSE A* to C grades, including in English and mathematics. Only the more able students have successfully entered GCSE mathematics examinations early and these students make good progress and achieve well, attaining grades A/A* at GCSE.
- The achievement of students across the subjects in the 2013 examinations was very positive. In almost all subjects, students performed at least in line with the national averages, attaining above the national averages in science, French, history and mathematics. English attainment has remained in line with the national average for the last two years. Mathematics attainment is consistently above average. However, attainment was below the national averages in drama and art. The proportion of students attaining the highest grades continues to increase over time.
- The achievement of students supported through the pupil premium is now improving considerably. In 2013, these students attained grades in GCSE English and mathematics which were approximately half of a grade below those of their classmates, reflecting slower progress than their peers. As a result of decisive leadership and more effective teaching, the gaps across the school have successfully reduced and students are making good progress in Years 7 to 9 and in Year 11. Nevertheless, some variations still exist, particularly in Year 10.
- A very small number of students are educated off site. They make good progress, similar to that of other groups, through attending Richmond College, where they follow a vocational course once a week.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs have generally made similar progress to their peers, as a result of skilled leadership and better targeted intervention work. The enhanced provision for these specific students with moderate learning difficulties is accelerating students' progress rapidly, through skilled intervention work and high quality teaching. Targeted individual support is accelerating students' progress across the school.
- The Year 7 catch-up funding is used well to provide a range of strategies, including one-to-one tuition and smaller class sizes, to help those falling behind in literacy and numeracy. These students are making good progress and enthusiastically enjoy reading.

The quality of teaching is good

- A key feature of the teaching involves the very strong working relationships that exist between teachers, support staff and students. This aids students' good learning and progress. Teachers generally plan well and deliver activities that meet the needs of most learners. Questioning challenges individuals to think and stimulates them to create solutions. The students interviewed enjoyed lessons where they were active in their learning. In a Year 10 religious education lesson, students discussed the differences between war and holy war. This led to students debating maturely with each other about moral and ethical issues, including extremist behaviour.

- During the inspection, an increasing amount of outstanding teaching was evident. In a Year 9 English lesson, students investigated different war poems and wrote in a narrative form. The teacher challenged the students by adopting different leadership responsibilities and encouraging students to write in a personal manner. Students initially wrote a paragraph collaboratively and subsequently made exceptional progress.
- In the few instances where teaching is judged to require improvement, planning does not cater well for the needs of different students, particularly the more able students. These students frequently do the same work as their peers, which often limit their progress. Often, in these lessons, students complete tasks and activities too superficially.
- The use of assessment is uneven. Although there are many examples of good practice, there is inconsistency within departments and across the school. Marking does not always help learners improve the quality of their work because the feedback provided by teachers is not sufficiently detailed. Students do not consistently respond to the comments made by their teachers.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students are proud to be part of the school. They are polite, courteous and well-mannered. They look smart in their uniforms and represent the school well. The behaviour and safety of students attending off site are carefully tracked. Students are respectful towards each other and this is evident in how they conduct themselves and behave in and around the school.
- Students' attitudes to learning are good. In most lessons, students take pride in their learning, as demonstrated by the presentation in their books. In most cases, active participation in their learning enables good levels of concentration, determination and commitment to making progress. A common feature in the outstanding behaviour in some lessons is that students respond exceptionally well to being challenged with complex tasks, activities and competition. In these lessons, students respect each other and the rapport with their teachers is exceptionally high. It is not outstanding, however, because some students have not developed a real sense of urgency about learning. Students actively take on responsibilities within the school. There are opportunities for raising money for many charities. For example, very recently, students took part in a non-uniform day at the school, raising £1300 for the 'Philippines Typhoon' appeal.
- Through staff dedication and galvanising external agencies, the school has successfully lowered the numbers of students deemed to be persistently absent. Attendance levels are broadly average and continue to rise. The school is inclusive and admits a higher than average proportion of disabled students and/or students with educational needs, and also ensures that pastoral systems are effective in supporting them.
- Students feel safe in the school. They report that bullying is rare. When bullying occurs, they have full confidence in the school's ability to deal with the situation. Students demonstrate good awareness of different types of bullying and how to keep themselves safe from harm.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has brought energy and zest to the task of improving the school. She is ably assisted by the deputy headteacher with other members of the senior leadership team. They have a good understanding of the school's effectiveness and already are tackling the variations in students' performance. Over time, the leadership team has improved the quality of teaching, students' behaviour and safety, and this has led to good achievement. Together, they are driving initiatives and managing change. Some of these actions, for example, like the new marking policy are at an early stage of development and there has not been time to measure the full impact of these initiatives.
- The middle leadership of the school varies in the effectiveness of the monitoring and tracking of students' achievement. Some leaders still focus on measuring the attainment of learners rather than students' achievement given their starting points.

- The quality of teaching is improving. Leaders at all levels, are on occasions, generous in measuring the quality because they focus more on the teaching and not learning of different groups of students. However, good opportunities for training are helping to raise aspirations and developing teachers' practice. The systems for monitoring staff performance are robust.
- The curriculum is good. The school has increased its vocational offer to the current Year 10 students, so that the diet they receive is more personalised. The provision for disabled students and those with special educational needs has improved with targeted support to accelerate their progress. The extra-curricular programme has a variety of activities that strongly promotes students' social and cultural development well. For example, the recent Christmas carol concert. Students are enthusiastic about the strong opportunities for sporting provision. Art work is proudly displayed across the school.
- The local authority has provided light touch level of support for the school. Together with the diocese, they have supported leadership and management, including monitoring the quality of teaching.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body support the school well and challenge the leadership, holding them to account for the performance of the different groups of learners. Through their committees, they know about the quality of teaching, measure how well teachers are performing. Performance management is closely linked to salaries. They ensure that financial control measures are in place. The governing body clearly recognise and take action where improvement is needed, including the performance of students eligible for the pupil premium funding. The members are aware of how well the school is performing against other schools nationally. At the time of inspection, all safeguarding requirements were met.

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	102929
Local authority	Richmond upon Thames
Inspection number	433163

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 – 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	617
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martin Brecknell
Headteacher	Helen Dixon
Date of previous school inspection	26-27 January 2011
Telephone number	020 8940 6982
Fax number	020 8332 6085
Email address	info@christs.richmond.sch.uk

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