

St Christopher's School

48 New Dover Road, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 3DT

Inspection dates

14–16 October 2014

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

4

Leadership and management	Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Early years provision	Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings

This is an inadequate school because

- Leaders and managers have failed to ensure that pupils' welfare, health and safety are adequately promoted. This applies to both the Early Years Foundation Stage and to the main school.
- Leaders and managers do not carry out regular checks to make sure that the school's policies and procedures remain up to date and that they are fully carried out.
- Policies to keep pupils safe in school are not fully put into practice. Staff are not trained in child protection and concerns about pupils' safety are not suitably addressed and recorded.
- A substantial number of the independent school standards are not met.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils achieve well and make good progress, including in English and mathematics. This is because of good teaching and the school's suitably broad and balanced curriculum.
- Pupils throughout the school behave well and this helps them to achieve and to make good progress.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress in their learning. This is an improvement since the last inspection. They are taught well. Their good behaviour and warm relationships with staff members and with each other help them to learn.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with a day's notice. The inspectors observed 13 lessons.
- The inspectors looked at the work of pupils and spoke to them about it. They held meetings with the proprietor, who is also the headteacher, staff members and pupils.
- Inspectors looked at documentation, including procedures to ensure pupils are safe, policy statements, schemes of work, teachers' planning and records of pupils' progress and of staff training.
- The inspectors considered the response of 32 parents and carers who had completed Ofsted's Parent View on-line questionnaire. Thirteen questionnaire responses from staff were taken into account.

Inspection team

John Gush, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Fatiha Maitland	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Christopher's School was founded in 1923 and provides non-selective education for up to 125 pupils aged from three to 11 years of age.
- The school is located close to the centre of Canterbury in a large Victorian semi-detached house.
- There are currently 107 boys and girls on roll, 13 of whom are in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- No pupils have a statement of special educational needs, and none are in the care of the local authority. A small number of pupils regularly speak a language other than English at home.
- In their final year, most pupils take external tests and, if they are successful, this would enable them to transfer to local grammar schools.
- The school makes use of a range of local facilities to deliver its sports and physical education (PE) curriculum.
- The school was last inspected in November 2010.
- The school's aims are 'to give the pupils a broad, balanced and liberal education in order that they develop enquiring minds and confidence in themselves, so that they appreciate the importance of language, number, the aesthetic and physical areas of learning and develop competence in them'.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality and impact of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that arrangements are made to promote and maintain pupils' safety at all times
 - developing effective checking systems so that pupils' safety and well-being are assured and pupils have the best possible opportunities to achieve well
 - ensuring that teachers' performance is checked effectively so that they receive appropriate support to help them improve pupils' rates of progress and attainment
 - improving the use of the outdoor space for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to provide better opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills in all the required areas of learning
 - improving the way children are taught about the dangers of cyber-bullying
 - implementing effective governance arrangements so that the school's leaders are held to account for the safety of pupils and staff members and the quality of pupils' learning.
- Improve the quality of teaching in order to further raise pupils' achievement by:
 - ensuring teachers' questioning is more probing in checking pupils' understanding, especially with the most able
 - ensuring less able pupils always receive good support in order to help them make even better progress than they do.

An external review of governance is highly recommended to be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

■ The school must meet the following independent school standards.

- Ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school and that such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraphs 7(a) and 7(b)).
- Ensure that an effective anti-bullying strategy is drawn up and implemented (paragraph 10).
- Ensure that a written policy on compliance with relevant health and safety laws is drawn up and effectively implemented (paragraph 11).
- Ensure that the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 is complied with (paragraph 13).
- Ensure that an admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 17).
- Ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to confirm the medical fitness of each person

engaged in regulated activity at the school (paragraph 19(2)(b) and 19(2)(b)(ii)).

- Ensure that all the required checks are carried out before a person's appointment at the school (paragraph 19(3)).
- Ensure that a single register is kept that clearly shows all the required checks have been undertaken to establish that each member of staff at the school is suitable to work with children (paragraphs 22(1) to 22(4) inclusive).
- Ensure that the proprietor's full name, address for correspondence during both term-time and holidays and a telephone number or numbers on which the proprietor may be contacted at all times is provided to parents of pupils and parents of prospective pupils and, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State (paragraph 24(1)(a)).
- Ensure that the following information is made available to parents of pupils and parents of prospective pupils and, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State: particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils with statements and pupils for whom English is an additional language; particulars of the school's curriculum policy and; a summary of the qualifications of the staff at the school (paragraph 24(1)(b)).
- Ensure that particulars of the arrangements for meeting the standard contained in paragraph 7 related to the school's arrangements to promote the welfare of pupils at the school are published on the school's website (paragraph 24(1)(c)).

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are inadequate

- The leadership and management of the school are inadequate because the school's proprietor, who is also the headteacher, has failed to ensure that pupils are consistently protected from harm. This is because the school does not follow all the required procedures to promote pupils' welfare, health and safety. This applies to children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and to pupils in the main school.
- Some of the school's policies and procedures are not adequately checked and reviewed to make sure they are up to date, and a substantial number are not fully carried out.
- Some, but not all, of the information that the school is required to provide for parents, carers and others is available on the website and in the detailed school brochure, which is updated each year. However, three of the independent school standards related to information are not met. Neither the website nor the school brochure contains the name of the school's proprietor. There is no reference to the school's arrangements to support pupils with special educational needs or those for whom English is an additional language. In addition, the school's policy about the way that the school safeguards children is not published on the website, as is required.
- The school leaders use a very limited range of formal arrangements to ensure that teachers have the best opportunities to help pupils to achieve. They do not know the school's strengths and weaknesses well, because checking systems are not robust and there are no plans to bring about improvements.
- The school has limited arrangements for middle leaders to support teachers. Teachers are not regularly observed and their performance is not reviewed. This means that opportunities to move teaching from good to outstanding are missed.
- Informal arrangements to encourage and support teachers include visits to classrooms by the deputy headteacher. These visits, together with a strong ethos of mutual support among the teaching staff, help teachers to identify some areas for improvement which results in the good progress that pupils make.
- Apart from the issue of children's welfare, health and safety, the leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is effective. This has led to improvements in teaching and children's achievement since the last inspection.
- Pupils benefit from a broad and well-balanced curriculum that takes good account of their interests and learning needs. It is based on a series of topics suitable for each year group and these make sure that all the required areas of learning are covered. Throughout the school, the curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils to prepare for life in modern Britain and for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Policies and procedures to support good behaviour among the pupils are suitable and are implemented effectively, as are those relating to first aid and the health and safety of pupils on educational trips and visits.
- Suitable facilities are provided for pupils' learning and recreation. Attractive displays of pupils' work, especially their artwork, provide pupils with an inspiring learning environment.
- **The governance of the school:**

The governance provided by the headteacher, who is also the proprietor, is inadequate. The systems that the school uses to make sure that pupils are safe and are making good progress are not checked as well or as regularly as they need to be. Senior staff members are not sufficiently challenged in relation to pupils' safety, or the effectiveness of the work of the teachers and other staff.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are inadequate

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good and this helps them to learn and to make good progress.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is a strength of the school. In lessons pupils show a strong interest in the subject matter being taught and a clear desire to improve their knowledge and skills. They take an active part in the smooth running of the school day, for example by taking on duties as monitors and prefects.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare, that they know how to avoid it and what to do if it occurs. Almost all say that if they feel bullied, the school will help. However, the way the school promotes an anti-bullying culture requires improvement because there is insufficient emphasis on the dangers of cyber bullying including the inappropriate use of social media and text messaging.

- Pupils are aware of the school's system for rewards and sanctions, and they respond well to the school's high expectations for behaviour. Respectful and good-humoured relations between staff and pupils promote an effective learning environment. Pupils enjoy each other's company and support one another irrespective of age, class group or gender.
- The school promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils well. Pupils make good use of the opportunities to develop their self-knowledge and self-confidence. Assemblies and lessons in religious education and personal, social and health education (PSHE) provide a good range of information about their own and other cultures, and promote tolerance and understanding between different sections of the community.
- Pupils are active fundraisers, supporting local and international causes. The way the school council operates, as well as the content of PSHE and history lessons, promotes pupils' knowledge and understanding of British values including, democracy and the rule of law.
- The school has a clearly stated policy that requires all staff members to ensure partisan political views are never promoted, and that whenever political views are brought to the attention of pupils they are presented in a balanced manner.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is inadequate.
- The designated safeguarding lead person has received the required advanced level training, but does not implement the school's child protection policy as required. The policy is inadequate and does not cover some key areas of child protection.
- Staff members have not all received the required refresher training to keep their knowledge of child protection matters up to date. Concerns about child protection are not shared with the Local Safeguarding Children Board and record keeping about concerns raised in the school is inconsistent and too often incomplete. This means that the school does not do enough to make sure that pupils do not come to any harm, for example through any child abuse.
- Most of the required checks to make sure that staff members are suitable to work with children have been carried out. This includes those for visiting teachers and volunteers and the staff at the sports centres used by the school. However, these checks are not recorded on a single register, as required, so they cannot be properly checked.
- The employment history of staff members before they start at the school is not checked to ensure that any gaps in the evidence can be explained. The school is not able to confirm that all staff members are medically fit for work. No senior staff member has undertaken training in safe recruitment. Because of this, the school cannot be sure that all staff are suitable to work with children.
- The school has appropriate policies to promote pupils' health and safety, and to protect pupils in the event of fire. However, these are not always fully carried out and are not rigorously checked. For example, the fire risk assessment is not complete and portable electrical equipment has not been tested to make sure that it is safe to use.
- The registers of admissions and attendance are not correctly maintained. These deficiencies also mean that the school cannot be sure that the pupils are always safe in the school.
- Nonetheless, pupils report that they feel safe and well cared for in school, and parents and carers agree. The supervision of pupils outside lessons is thorough and consistent. School staff make sure that pupils are safe and behave well during the sports and physical education lessons which take place away from the school.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good and enables pupils to make good progress. Pupils respond well to teachers' high expectations for behaviour and learning. They understand what is expected of them because learning objectives are clearly stated and discussed. Stretching targets are set and for many subjects they are written in pupils' books so that pupils remain aware of them.
- Almost all teachers plan their lessons carefully so that pupils of all abilities are able to make progress. Teachers use their subject expertise, as well as the good-humoured relationships that are a hallmark of the school, to enthuse and motivate pupils.
- Pupils' learning is supported well, for example by regular opportunities to solve problems and to discuss their ideas with each other and with the teacher. In most lessons, teachers' questions help pupils to think deeply and to develop their confidence as learners. However, in a small minority of lessons, teachers' questions do not probe pupils' understanding well enough and pupils, especially the more able, are not sufficiently challenged and so do not achieve as well as they could. Occasionally, less able pupils do not

get the support they need and so make less progress than they could.

- In most lessons teachers use teaching assistants well to make sure that individual pupils have the support they need to make the most of their abilities.
- The special educational needs coordinator analyses the outcomes of regular class tests to identify any pupils who may be falling behind, as well as those who for whom additional support is required. In partnership with parents and carers, the school arranges additional support from, for example, a speech and language therapist and a specialist in specific learning difficulties (dyslexia). This extra help leads to individual pupils improving their achievements.
- Pupils work hard and their work is presented well in their books. Worksheets are not commonly used and when they are they are carefully integrated into pupils' work. Books are regularly and consistently marked and the school's marking policy is effectively followed. Because of this, pupils know what to do to improve their work, which regularly includes correcting spellings and punctuation. .

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils' achievements are good and most pupils are successful in gaining places in local grammar schools of their choice. The small proportion of pupils who are identified as being unlikely to meet this goal are prepared well for entry into secondary education.
- Pupils' progress is measured throughout their time in the school by regular testing, in particular of their abilities in reading, speaking and mathematics. Pupils show steady and consistent improvement against targets substantially above those usually expected for their age.
- The school's high expectations, especially in reading, where every pupil is heard reading every day, lead to a substantial proportion of pupils making progress that exceeds that of their peers nationally in English. This is matched by the progress they make in mathematics. More able pupils and those who require additional support, such as those with special educational needs, do well in both test results and in gaining places in the school of their choice.
- Although the school does not regularly analyse its achievement data to show progress of groups of learners, analysis during the inspection identified that in English and mathematics both boys and girls made more than expected progress, with girls achieving better than boys in all but one of the year groups. Most of those who speak English as an additional language make greater than expected progress and those with additional needs make good progress from their starting points.
- A good range of modern foreign languages, including French, Spanish and Mandarin Chinese, is taught by native speakers, which extends pupils' opportunities well, as do the expertly-led art and music lessons. An effective sports and physical education programme enables all pupils to enjoy physical exercise and to develop their health. A wide range of educational trips and visits, including regular trips to France for most year groups, enriches pupils' experiences and motivates pupils well to extend their learning.

The early years provision

is inadequate

- The early years provision is inadequate because the school's leaders have failed to ensure the welfare, health and safety of children in the school, including those in the early years setting. Nonetheless, since the last inspection, substantial improvements have taken place and children in the early years now make good progress.
- Leaders of the early years setting are clear about its strengths and areas for improvement. They ensure that staff training extends their understanding of the use and impact of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework to enhance the children's learning and progress.
- Children enter the early years classes with the expected level of knowledge and skills in reading, writing and mathematical development, but lower than expected knowledge and skills in personal and social development and understanding of the world. They make good progress in the setting, so that when they enter the main school a good proportion of them make or exceed expectations for their age. The best achievements are made in communication and language, mathematical and personal, social and emotional development. Least progress is made in the area of understanding the world.
- Good relationships exist between staff members and children, and this enables children to settle well into the life of the school. Children behave well, listen attentively and respond appropriately to questions and requests. They come from a range of different cultural backgrounds and they mix well and play together in harmony.
- Staff visit the settings that children attend before they come into the early years classes and they liaise

well with parents and carers. This means that staff know about the children before they join the school. The staff work well together to provide a good learning experience to develop the children's knowledge and skills. This also enables children to develop their speaking and listening skills and to develop the confidence to speak in a group.

- Phonics (the sounds that letters make) is well established in the early years setting. This is valuable in helping children to develop early literacy skills.
- The setting's outdoor arrangements provide ample space to help the children develop movement skills and to promote physical health. However, the outside area is not used well enough to improve children's knowledge and skills in all areas of learning.
- Children are well looked after by the staff members. They are well supervised at all times. Staff take appropriate steps to make sure children are secure in school. They carry out regular checks on the premises and resources to ensure children's health and safety.
- Staff members work well with parents and carers and keep them regularly informed about their children's progress in school and about their personal development and well-being.

What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140053.

School details

Unique reference number	118997
Inspection number	452710
DfE registration number	886/6049

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as inserted by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Primary School
School status	Independent School
Age range of pupils	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	107
Number of part time pupils	7
Proprietor	David Evans
Chair	N/A
Headteacher	David Evans
Date of previous school inspection	18–19 November 2010
Annual fees (day pupils)	£8,595
Telephone number	01227 462960
Email address	enquiries@stchrostopherscanterbury.org.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

