

St Philip's School

6 Wetherby Place, London SW7 4NE

Inspection dates

6–8 March 2018

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- As a result of excellent guidance by the headteacher, senior leaders have established the highest aspirations for what pupils are able to achieve. Together, they have ensured that all the independent school standards are met and that the school continues to improve.
- Governors discharge their duties skilfully and make very effective use of the wide range of information that senior leaders regularly provide to them. This, together with frequent visits to the school, enables them to have a very accurate view of the school's performance.
- Arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff diligently ensure the safety and protection of pupils.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding. Teachers know their pupils very well and plan interesting activities that enable pupils of all abilities to make very strong progress across all subjects.
- Pupils grasp every learning opportunity that the rich curriculum presents. They engage exceptionally well with their teachers to further their own understanding of a topic. Pupils are strongly motivated to learn and improve.
- Excellent guidance and support prepares pupils extremely well for the next stage of their education.
- Support provided for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is exemplary.
- Pupils demonstrate high levels of respect and courtesy to staff and each other. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a high priority for the school.
- Parents and carers are highly supportive of the school's work. The vast majority would recommend the school to other parents.
- Leaders monitor the quality of teaching very effectively and provide high-quality support to enable teachers to improve. However, leaders' high expectations are not fully evident in the school's arrangements for staff development.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that leaders' high expectations for teaching and pupils' outcomes are fully reflected in the school's arrangements for staff development.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The inspiration and enthusiasm of the headteacher and deputy headteachers have an enormously positive impact on the school. Their relentless determination to provide the very best education for pupils is shared by staff, who are dedicated and committed to the values of the school.
- Members of the leadership team know the school, their staff and their pupils extremely well. Working relationships are highly productive. Leaders have a detailed understanding of the school's strengths and areas that can be further improved. Their self-evaluation of the school is accurate, sharp and incisive.
- Rigorous arrangements for monitoring all aspects of the school's work are in place. Leaders' observations of pupils' learning have been improved to pinpoint strengths and areas for development. For example, teachers listen carefully, and respond, to senior leaders' suggestions about how to improve their teaching. Teachers take more responsibility for the setting of high expectations for pupils' progress.
- The school's support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is highly effective. Leaders ensure that teachers and teaching assistants receive the guidance, information and training they need so that this group of pupils achieves extremely well.
- The structure of the curriculum is very well planned, highly effective and covers the required areas of learning. Leaders take pupils' learning needs and aspirations into account so that the curriculum is carefully matched to pupils' abilities, interests and enthusiasm. Leaders have very thoughtfully refined and reviewed the curriculum to ensure that it enables pupils to achieve highly. Pupils benefit from studying a broad range of subjects and taking part in a wealth of extra-curricular opportunities that widen their cultural experiences and raise their aspirations. This ensures that pupils make excellent progress academically and in their personal development.
- Pupils respond very positively to a high level of challenge in all aspects of their school life, believing that they can meet the goals set for them and with them. For example, pupils' attendance at Greek club supports those who hope to apply for a Greek scholarship when moving on to their next school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. For example, in geography pupils reflected deeply and openly by sharing their thoughts about the negative impact they might have as tourists when visiting other countries.
- Communications with parents are very effective. They value highly the detailed reports from the school regarding the progress their children are making. Leaders have responded adeptly to parents' needs by designing a web-based application that informs parents how to navigate through the system of applying for senior schools.
- Pupils benefit from a rich variety of extra-curricular activities which enables them to develop valuable practical and social skills. Perseverance and team work are actively encouraged through pupils' participation in sport, music and a wide range of after-school activities, including games, subject and homework clubs. During the inspection, inspectors noted a tremendous team effort by pupils and staff in energetic rehearsals for the

upcoming production of 'The lion king'.

- Pupils regularly sing in the school choir and skilfully play instruments, such as violin and piano, during assemblies. Pupils exude values such as respect and tolerance in all that they do, reflecting the Catholic ethos of the school. Leaders have successfully developed greater opportunities to deepen pupils' understanding of concepts such as democracy and the rule of law to prepare them even better for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders have successfully improved systems for checking pupils' progress, and for making sure that assessments are accurate. As a result of regular moderation meetings, teachers are getting more information to help them set aspirational targets for pupils' progress. However, leaders do not use these targets and high expectations well enough in individual teachers' development programmes to ensure that pupils achieve the best they can.

Governance

- Membership of the governing body is drawn from a wide field of professional expertise and experience. Governors provide excellent challenge to senior leaders and hold them to account because they know the school's strengths and weaknesses well. Minutes of governing body meetings show that governors rigorously interrogate the school's performance information.
- The governing body carries out its responsibilities effectively, including financial oversight. It ensures that leaders and managers fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the school fully meets all the independent school standards.
- Governors are particularly diligent at checking the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements. Since the previous inspection they have established a pastoral committee that meets regularly. As a result, leaders and governors have developed very effective partnerships with the local authority safeguarding team.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The suitable safeguarding policy reflects the Secretary of State's latest guidance and is published, along with all the other required policies, on the school's website. Safeguarding records are thorough, regularly checked and fit for purpose. Systems for ensuring that staff are suitable to work with children are robust.
- All staff training, including that for the designated and deputy safeguarding leads, is up to date. Staff are able to demonstrate the impact of their training and are clear about what they would do if they had any concerns. For example, a member of staff reported, reflecting the views of others: 'We are a family at St Philip's and the well-being of the children comes first; I would always report any concerns, however small.'
- Leaders are very knowledgeable about their safeguarding responsibilities and have established strong partnerships with external agencies. Records show that they follow up referrals assiduously.
- Staff are diligent in ensuring that pupils are safe and protected. Pupils feel safe in school and parents say that their children are safe. Pupils are confident that there is always an adult they can talk to if they have a worry or concern.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers nurture a collaborative, scholarly ethos and warm working relationships in lessons which motivate pupils to learn and achieve at their best. Pupils overwhelmingly praise their teachers for the care and support they provide.
- Teaching staff are highly committed and very determined. Their subject knowledge is secure. They know their pupils well and make effective use of assessment information to plan interesting and engaging activities to inspire pupils' learning.
- Senior leaders provide excellent advice and support so that teachers judge accurately the standards at which pupils are working. Teachers say they appreciate the opportunity to learn from visiting each other's classrooms and classrooms in other schools, which enables them to improve their teaching swiftly.
- Teachers are skilled in using questions so that the majority of pupils develop the confidence to extend and deepen their oral and written answers. Pupils respond well to increasing levels of challenge so that they think more deeply and engage in high-quality dialogue. Pupils show tremendous pride in their learning. Their work is neatly presented, enabling them to have comprehensive and helpful revision notes.
- Teachers often seize opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural experiences – for example, through discussion of news items and current affairs.
- Adults provide crucial support to pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities to enable them to succeed. They know the pupils and their learning needs well so that they can target their support effectively.
- Pupils make effective use of the school-designed online application to support their learning of Latin. They told inspectors they like improving their vocabulary when they are on their way to and from school, playing Latin grammar games.
- Teaching prepares pupils well for future independence in life by developing essential communication skills. Pupils in Year 5 relished the opportunity to share electronic presentations about castles they had devised for homework. They used technical vocabulary correctly, such as 'crenulation' as well as making links to their other historical studies.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding
- Leaders have established a welcoming ethos where pupils feel at ease with staff and each other. Staff share a common commitment to improving pupils' self-esteem and confidence as a means to becoming successful learners. Pupils exhibit strong moral awareness and understanding of the differences between right and wrong.
- Pupils and staff describe the school community as a 'family'. Pupils display impeccable manners both in the classroom and while moving around the school.
- The school provides a structured programme to teach pupils how to stay safe. In discussion with inspectors, pupils reported that they know how to stay safe online and

while travelling around London. Risk assessments are thorough for local visits, outward-bound activities and international school journeys, such as the annual ski trip to the Alps.

- Pupils are mature and self-assured young people. Their confident demeanour indicates that they feel safe in school. They are exceptionally polite and friendly, and exhibit a well-developed spiritual understanding and appreciation of music and art. Pupils demonstrate high levels of respect to staff and each other.
- The school council 'The Witan', actively supports democracy and is a force for change. For example, in response to pupils' requests, it has successfully helped to bring about a change in breaktime arrangements.
- Pupils are challenged to apply their learning to real-life contexts, such as through money-management workshops. They are fully involved in a range of charitable activities, such as fundraising through the yearly conker competition. This helps pupils appreciate the needs of those less fortunate than themselves.
- Parent responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, are overwhelmingly positive about the dedication of the staff. One parent's comment, typical of others' responses, was: 'Our boy's confidence has soared, thanks to the time and care taken by the school.'
- Assemblies provoke careful consideration about social and moral issues. Pupils throughout the school are encouraged to consider their personal responses to various moral dilemmas. Spiritual development is excellent, reflecting the strong Catholic ethos of the school. One pupil confidently shared his views about the Stations of the Cross.
- The school places a firm emphasis on the development of pupils' physical and emotional well-being. Pupils learn what it means to lead a healthy lifestyle and fully participate in competitive sporting events, encouraging each other through teamwork and good sportsmanship.
- Pupils know about the different forms of bullying and state that bullying is not a concern. School records endorse their view that bullying is extremely rare. One pupil summed up others' views, saying: 'No matter how different people are, they are always human.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour in and around school is excellent. The pupils who spoke to inspectors said that the school encourages them to behave well and they understand the sanctions for poor behaviour. The school deals well with the very rare incidents of poor behaviour. Parents and all staff agree that pupils are well behaved.
- Pupils display high levels of respect and cooperate extremely well with each other. Pupils get on really well together in class, and around the school at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They thoroughly enjoy school and display an infectious enthusiasm for learning.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Outcomes for pupils have been consistently strong for the past three years. Pupils' acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding is excellent, culminating in very successful common entrance examination outcomes. A significant majority of pupils make strong progress.
- Evidence from pupils' books and from the school's assessment information shows that current pupils of all abilities make excellent progress across all subject areas.
- Pupils read books with a high level of demanding text every day. Reading prefects in Years 7 and 8 actively help younger pupils with their reading. The prefects, along with a carefully structured and effectively taught reading curriculum, enable younger pupils to read complex vocabulary with great expression.
- The quality of learning and the tailored curriculum ensures that the pupils achieve the necessary outcomes to gain places at their first choice of senior school. The most able pupils achieve exceptionally well, as a result of the outstanding teaching they receive. The development of their skills in communication, numeracy, and information and communication technology is excellent. Pupils' attitudes to learning are exceptional so that they use very effective study skills to deepen their learning.
- Pupils' achievement in extra-curricular activities, especially sport, is excellent because of their ample opportunities to take part in a wide range of team and individual sports on a weekly basis. These include rugby, football, hockey, cricket and table tennis. In each of these cases the pupils' individual talents and interests are nurtured by the school. Opportunities are identified for the pupils to continue developing their special gifts and talents, such as playing for the youth academy, at a local professional football club.

School details

Unique reference number	100516
DfE registration number	207/6104
Inspection number	10012793

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	7 to 13
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	104
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	St Philip's School Trust Ltd
Chair	John Dean
Headteacher	Alexander Wulffen-Thomas
Annual fees (day pupils)	£15,450
Telephone number	020 7373 3944
Website	www.stphilipschool.co.uk
Email address	office@stpschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–16 May 2013

Information about this school

- St Philip's is a Catholic boys' preparatory school which was founded in 1934. It is located in a former residential property in the London Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. The school is registered for 110 pupils.
- Since the last inspection there has been a change in the senior leadership team. There is a new chair of the governing body, appointed in 2015, a new headteacher, appointed in 2016, and an additional deputy headteacher, appointed in 2017.
- Facilities for sports provision are away from the main school and are used by other schools and sports clubs. The facilities are not used by the general public.

- The aims of the school are to uphold the Catholic faith with joy and fidelity and to create a spirit of goodness and industry that does not fear failure. It also aims to offer an outstanding curriculum that combines a strong academic and religious education with a range of creative and sporting opportunities. This is to ensure that every pupil feels, and is, a valued member of the school community, having a sense of being personally nurtured.
- The school was last inspected in May 2013.

Information about this inspection

- This full standard inspection took place with one day's notice.
- The inspectors observed teaching and learning across all year groups and subjects, some jointly with senior staff. They spoke to pupils informally throughout the inspection.
- There were 45 responses to Parent View and 45 free-text comments. Inspectors considered the school's analysis of its own survey of the views of pupils and parents. Inspectors also considered the seven responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, including those who have responsibility for safeguarding, and two governors.
- The inspectors analysed school documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, reports from external providers, tracking information about pupils' achievement, reports to parents, and records relating to attendance, behaviour, exclusions and health and safety.
- Safeguarding documentation was scrutinised, as well as policies and procedures relating to how the school has responded to complaints.

Inspection team

Rebekah Iiyambo, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Denise James-Mason	Ofsted Inspector

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