

# Inspection of The Christian School (Takeley)

Dunmow Road, Brewers End, Takeley, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire CM22 6QH

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Inspection dates: 11–13 February 2020

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<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement
Does the school meet the independent school standards?	<b>Yes</b>

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

This is a small, caring school. Trustees and staff have high ambitions for what pupils can achieve. Pupils get the help and guidance that they need to become confident, responsible members of the community.

Pupils told us this is a supportive place to learn. They said that, '[staff]... notice if we are not ourselves or not thriving in our learning.' All parents who responded on Parent View agreed that their children are happy at school. One parent summed up the sentiments of many in saying that, '[The school is...] a community where pupils' needs and well-being are understood and valued.'

Pupils respect each other and the adults who work with them. Pupils mix together well in learning and play. They learn the importance of kind and considerate behaviour and they model it too. Pupils' personal development is well provided for. They make significant contributions to their school community through their work on the school council.

Pupils think that bullying is unacceptable. It is rare here. Pupils told us that if it did happen staff would resolve issues quickly. Pupils say that they feel safe and secure. All parents agree that their children are safe at school.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

All teachers take some responsibility for curriculum planning. They have developed well-thought-out sequences of learning. These reflect trustees' and leaders' high expectations for pupils' achievement and behaviour. Staff keep the curriculum under review. They make appropriate changes to take account of pupils' capabilities and prior learning.

Teachers deliver the curriculum effectively in many subjects. Pupils' work is often of a good quality. That said, occasionally, teachers are not as skilful at implementing the curriculum plans. Where this is the case, a few pupils work with less determination and their work can be untidy.

Teachers have a suitable level of knowledge of most subjects and of how to teach them. Where it is helpful, they give pupils the chance to recap on previous work. Pupils then either practise what they have learned, or use what they know to pick up new knowledge. Pupils remember a lot of what they have studied. We saw pupils making good use of their knowledge of several subjects. For example, key stage 2 pupils confidently drew on their previous work in geography, history, design and technology to explore the features of Anglo-Saxon settlements.

Leaders consider reading to be central to pupils' learning and personal development. In the early years, adults help children to learn to read from the start of their education. Adults provide just the right support for pupils who find reading tricky.

Pupils read books that build their confidence and improve their vocabulary. Younger pupils listen to, and contribute keenly during, story times. Older pupils enjoy reading. They are well equipped to tackle more demanding subject-specific texts as they progress through the school.

Parents praise the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff quickly get to know pupils' needs and capabilities. Without lowering their expectations, teachers adapt the curriculum so that pupils have equal opportunities in their studies. Pupils with SEND also benefit from adults' close attention to their emotional well-being.

Pupils, including those in the early years, get along well together. They are relaxed in each other's company. They support each other in their lessons. This means that pupils are often confident to ask and answer questions. They are not afraid to get things wrong. We saw pupils working with real determination when they found learning tough.

Leaders provide a good range of opportunities to support pupils' personal development. Pupils consider themselves part of the school family. The sense of togetherness that leaders foster is evident in much of the school's work. For example, pupils showed great self-confidence and camaraderie while rehearsing for their drama performance. Pupils recognise the importance of making a contribution to their community, for example through charity fundraising activities.

The range of additional clubs is limited. Pupils are encouraged to take part in activities outside of school. Pupils told us that their achievements, in or out of school, are celebrated in weekly family assemblies. This helps to develop pupils' self-esteem.

Since the previous inspection, trustees have taken effective steps to improve their effectiveness. They are better trained, informed and more confident to carry out their role. As a result, the independent school standards, and all other legal requirements, are now met consistently. Trustees hold leaders to account for the quality of education provided. Trustees are mindful of the pressures that working in a very small school can bring. They check on staff's views and well-being and take action where issues are raised.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils feel safe. Trustees and leaders take suitable steps to ensure that pupils are safe. Staff receive appropriate safeguarding training. They know the signs that indicate that a pupil may be at risk. Staff know who to report their concerns to. Where concerns are raised, leaders act to ensure that pupils receive the necessary support.

Trustees make sure that the required checks are carried out on staff who work or help out at the school.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and proprietor)**

- In a very small number of subjects, teachers do not implement leaders' curriculum plans consistently well. When this happens, pupils do not work with the same determination. Leaders need to make sure that teachers are equipped with the skills and knowledge that they need so that their delivery of curriculum matches leaders' high expectations and pupils achieve well.
- In a few classes, teachers do not consistently demand enough of how pupils should present their work. In these instances, untidy work goes unchallenged. Leaders need to reiterate their high expectations of how pupils should present their work, and make sure that teachers consistently apply these expectations across all subjects.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	115436
<b>DfE registration number</b>	881/6041
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10113573
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	52
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Christian School (Takeley) Trust
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs C Bowman
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr M E Humphries
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£3,168 to £8,544
<b>Telephone number</b>	01279 871 182
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.takeley-christian.essex.sch.uk">www.takeley-christian.essex.sch.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:head@tcst.org.uk">head@tcst.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	5–7 December 2017

## Information about this school

- The Christian School (Takeley) was registered with the DfE in 1989. The school was founded by a group of parents and friends who belonged to the same church.
- The school's aim is to provide an education based on Christian faith and values. School governance is conducted by the trust. The trust is the proprietor of the school.
- The majority of pupils attending the school are White British.

- The school admits some pupils with SEND, arising mainly because of social, emotional or mental health needs or medical conditions.
- The school does not use supply staff.

## **Information about this inspection**

We carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- This inspection was carried out with a day's notice.
- During this inspection, we held meetings with the headteacher, who is also the designated safeguarding lead. We met with other members of the school's leadership team. Meetings were held with a member of the school's special educational needs team and also with teachers and other staff.
- We undertook deep dives into reading, English, mathematics, history and science. We visited lessons, spoke with teachers, examined pupils' work and spoke with pupils. We also listened to some pupils read and spoke with them about their reading. We also examined work in several other subjects.
- We spoke with pupils and observed their behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- We scrutinised information on the school's website and school documents, including the school's own evaluation, improvement plans, curriculum plans, and records about attendance, behaviour, and the health and safety and safeguarding of pupils. The school's compliance with the regulations for independent schools was checked.
- We considered the 32 responses made by parents to Parent View.
- We took account of the school's surveys of parents', pupils' and staff's opinions. There were no responses to the staff's and pupils' surveys over the course of this inspection.

## **Inspection team**

John Lucas, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Fiona Webb

Her Majesty's Inspector

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