

Inspection of Christ's College, Guildford

Larch Avenue, Guildford, Surrey GU1 1JY

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 October 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Christ's College is an inclusive school that has been transformed by its current senior leaders. Pupils and their parents typically enthuse about the many improvements. As one parent said, 'The school has made massive strides forward since the appointment of the current principal, and standards, expectations and behaviour have improved drastically.'

This is a school where pupils are known as individuals and staff work together to raise their aspirations and help them achieve their goals. Learning is enriched through a variety of clubs, trips and visiting speakers. Pupils enjoy the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities available, and are proud of the range of performing arts and sporting opportunities on offer.

Positive relationships and respect underpin the calmness and cooperation in classrooms. While there can be occasional boisterous behaviour by a few pupils at breaktimes, any form of deliberate unkindness or bullying is rare here. Pupils are well cared for and safe here. They know which adults they can turn to should they have any concerns.

Meeting individual needs and promoting pupils' well-being is at the heart of the school's Christian values. New Year 7 pupils told inspectors they found it easy to make friends quickly here. One parent spoke for the majority when they reported, 'Great school, love it and highly recommended! Nurturing and caring teachers, brilliant facilities!'

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

Senior leaders have worked with advisers from The Good Shepherd Trust and external consultants to improve the quality of education significantly. Leaders have a shared vision for the ambitious curriculum, and have introduced a common framework for teaching approaches across the school. Staff benefit from a wealth of training opportunities and middle leaders network with other secondary schools and apply relevant research to inform and underpin their plans. There is a culture of high aspiration evident in lessons across the subjects at Christ's College.

Effective teamwork has ensured leaders and teachers have enhanced planning across all subjects. English, history and physical education (PE) have gone from strength to strength and subjects such as science and languages have improved significantly. Subject leaders know what they want pupils to learn and in what sequence. Most teachers explain subject matter and check pupils' understanding well and so can meet the needs of different groups of pupils well. However, in a few classes this is not the case and pupils are not building their knowledge and understanding as well as they should.

The breadth of the curriculum offer in this small secondary school is impressive, and pupils achieve well. The proportion of pupils taking the suite of subjects known as the English Baccalaureate is high and supported by the high numbers of pupils studying languages. In addition, there is a suite of suitable vocational courses on offer in key stage 4.

The new special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has wasted no time in re-invigorating the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils' needs are carefully identified and useful information is shared with staff, who make sure they adapt their teaching accordingly. Pupils with SEND are now well supported, both academically and emotionally, and are achieving well.

All pupils have their reading assessed and take part in a tutor-led reading programme. Suitable support is offered for any pupils who are still finding reading challenging. Trained staff offer bespoke reading support to those who need it. Leaders are working to sharpen their monitoring of the impact of their various reading initiatives.

Pupils' personal development is promoted effectively and staff care deeply about their well-being. Impartial careers advice and guidance helps pupils plan and prepare for their next steps when they leave the school. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum is thoughtfully planned and supplemented well by visiting speakers and through assemblies. However, inconsistencies in some teachers' implementation of this curriculum mean that its impact is variable.

Leaders run various events and activities to involve parents. Most parents praise the warm and welcoming staff, and communication from the school. However, a small minority would like more frequent contact, or feel frustrated their views have not been heard. Aware of this, senior leaders and governors are seeking continued improvements to their communication systems to address this.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure safer recruitment practices are in place and staff are well informed through regular training and briefings about safeguarding. Leaders foster a culture of vigilance at Christ's College and adults are alert to any signs that a pupil may be at risk. Well-managed systems are in place to record and share any concerns that staff may have about pupils. Safeguarding leaders swiftly seek support from external agencies when necessary to make certain that pupils can access help they need. Pupils say they feel safe here and know who to turn to if they need help.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers follow the school's agreed pedagogical and assessment approaches. However, some teachers' approaches to checking what pupils already know and can do still require refinement. As a result, pupils are not always given the right tasks and opportunities to deepen their thinking and knowledge. Building on the best practice in the school, leaders need to ensure all staff have expertise in this area and so boost all pupils' reading, oracy and thinking skills.
- There is some inconsistency in teachers' implementation of the PSHE curriculum. Consequently, some pupils do not securely build upon their learning while others, including those with SEND, do not always retain their learning in some areas. Staff training and enhanced monitoring are needed to ensure more consistent teaching better meets the needs of all pupils in this area.
- The majority of parents value the communication from the school and recognise the many strengths that Christ's College offers their children. However, a small minority feel that their worries have not been heard. Leaders and governors need to continue to refine their communication systems. This will help all parents feel more fully involved and informed about the high quality of education and support on offer for their children.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	142490
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10241532
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	661
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Dianna Gwilliams
Principal	Sarah Hatch
Website	www.christscollege.surrey.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 May 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been several changes to the senior leadership team and to subject leadership since the previous inspection. The new SENCo started in April 2022.
- Christ's College closed its sixth form provision in 2020.
- The school currently makes use of four Ofsted registered alternative providers for a very small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical educational qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Deep dives were conducted in English, science, modern foreign languages, history and PE. As part of these, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited lessons, talked to pupils about their work and met with teaching staff to talk about their approach to designing and delivering the curriculum. In addition, meetings were held with leaders of PSHE to discuss curriculum planning and provision in this area.
- Meetings were held with the chief executive officer and a director of education from The Good Shepherd Trust, the chair of the local governors and also an external consultant who has been working with the trust to support the school for several years.
- Meetings were held with the principal and vice principal, senior leaders, subject leaders, the SENCo and other members of teaching and support staff.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils to discuss their views about many different aspects of their school and to talk about their work. Inspectors also held informal conversations with pupils at break and lunchtime.
- The views of pupils, parents and staff represented in meetings and the responses to Ofsted surveys were considered.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's policies and practices and met with safeguarding leaders to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding. Records of safeguarding incidents were scrutinised and discussed. Inspectors also reviewed the school's records of the recruitment checks made on adults working in the school.

Inspection team

Matthew Newberry, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Yvonne Garvey	Ofsted Inspector
Peter Fry	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Marande	Ofsted Inspector

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