

The Vine Christian School

Mitford Close, Basingstoke Road, Three Mile Cross, Reading, Berkshire RG7 1HF

Inspection date

26 July 2023

Overall outcome

The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change relating to the school provision is implemented

Main inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7(a)–7(b)

- The headteacher takes safeguarding very seriously and is tenacious in looking out for possible signs of abuse in children. She has ensured her own and staff's training is up to date with the latest guidance from the government and local authority. She firmly believes that safeguarding risks and concerns can happen anywhere, and trains staff to 'think the unthinkable'.
- Leaders promote an 'open door' policy and the headteacher is proactive in testing out the school's safeguarding culture by talking to pupils and staff. The headteacher states that 'we operate from a place of transparency.'
- Record keeping is in paper format. The headteacher keeps detailed notes, including any actions taken.

Paragraphs 11, 12, 14

- The proprietor body has a written health and safety policy, which is tailored to the school's premises. There is joined-up thinking with the church who occupy the same building. Policies comply with all relevant laws.
- There are robust monitoring procedures in place to ensure that all health and safety checks are completed regularly.
- Leaders carry out timely fire safety checks of the premises and these are suitably logged. Fire evacuation routes are clearly lit and signposted. The proprietor body ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

Paragraph 16, 16(a)–16(b)

- A written risk assessment policy is in place. Documents show how leaders take appropriate actions to reduce any identified risks to pupils.
- Risk assessments are completed consistently by staff and monitored by the headteacher. Risk assessments are well considered and cover many eventualities.

- The independent school standards (the standards) in this part listed above are likely to be met if the request for the material change is approved.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Paragraphs 18(2)–18(2)(e), 18(3), 19(2)–19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3), 20(6)–20(6)(c), 21(1)–21(7)(b)

- The single central record shows that all required checks have been completed for adults who come into contact with pupils and students.
- Leaders have completed safer recruitment training and are knowledgeable about vetting staff's reasons for wanting to work at the school.
- The school does not use supply teachers, and staff cover is internally organised.
- All of the standards in this part are likely to be met if the request for the material change is approved.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1)–23(1)(c), 24(1)–24(2), 25–27(b), 28(1)–29(1)(b)

- The existing school building can already cater for the proposed increase to 50 pupils. There is a ground floor and first floor used for classrooms. Therefore, no additional building work was needed.
- Classrooms are spacious with individual workstations for pupils and students. There is a whiteboard above each pupil's desk for adults to provide one-to-one instruction and feedback.
- A suitable outdoor area is in place for the early years foundation stage. Leaders have plans to improve this further with a new layout, equipment and resources.
- The church's auditorium is an excellent space and size for pupils to come together for assemblies and collective worship.
- Single-sex toilets and washing facilities are appropriate for the proposed increase in pupil numbers.
- There is a suitable and cordoned-off medical area to care for pupils and students.
- Outside, there is an outdoor area for pupils to play. There are green spaces nearby for staff to take pupils to.
- All of the standards in this part are likely to be met if the request for the material change is approved.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1)(c)

- Leaders have published the school's safeguarding policy on the school's website. Leaders ensure that this is updated at least annually to reflect the most recent statutory guidance.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1)–34(1)(c)

- The headteacher leads with a compelling vision to develop pupils academically and personally. The school is oversubscribed with a waiting list for parents wishing to send their children to the school.
- Meticulous planning at trustee level has happened to plan for an increase from 30 pupils to 50 pupils on roll. Furthermore, leaders have budgeted for their desired staff-to-pupil ratios so that class sizes remain small. There is a clear rationale for why the school wants to expand pupil numbers. The proprietor body has invested the right resources to achieve this and ensure that the standards are met.
- Leaders and trustees demonstrate an excellent understanding of the independent school standards. There are robust procedures in place to monitor compliance.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met if the request for the material change is approved.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The accessibility plan fully reflects the school's statutory responsibilities. The proprietor body has ensured that the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 are likely to be met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school is likely to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that are relevant to the material change.

School details

Unique reference number	134424
DfE registration number	872/6013
Inspection number	10293342

This inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards relevant to the material change that the school has applied to make.

Type of school	Other independent school
School status	Independent school
Proprietor	The trustees of The Vine Christian School
Chair	Bob Wheeler
Headteacher	René Esterhuizen
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4,950 to £5,850
Telephone number	01189 886 464
Website	www.vinechristianschool.org.uk
Email address	office@thevcs.org.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	5 to 7 October 2021

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	3 to 18	3 to 18	3 to 18
Number of pupils on the school roll	29	50	50

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Not applicable

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	29	50
Number of part-time pupils	0	Not applicable
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	1	Not applicable
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	0	Not applicable
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	0	Not applicable

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	5	7
Number of part-time teaching staff	1	2
Number of staff in the welfare provision	0	0

Information about this school

- The Vine Christian School is a standalone school offering a bible-based Christian education to pupils aged three to 18 years. The school opened in 2003 and is celebrating its twentieth anniversary.
- There are no pupils on roll in Nursery.
- The school is based in the building of the Three Mile Cross Church. The building is used exclusively by the school during the week. There is space outside where pupils can play safely.
- There were no pupils onsite during the inspection as it took place outside of the school's term dates.
- The school is not currently using any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education to determine if the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the proposed material change of increasing the number of pupils to 50 is implemented.
- This was the school's first material change inspection since the last standard inspection in October 2021.
- The inspection focused on some of the welfare, health and safety standards in part 3, including the supervision of pupils and appropriate deployment of staff; all of the standards in part 4 about the suitability of staff; all of the standards in part 5, premises and accommodation; the standards in part 8, quality of leadership and management of schools, and schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.
- The school's safeguarding procedures were explored by the lead inspector. He also reviewed checks on the safer recruitment of adults.
- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher and a trustee.
- The inspector visited all parts of the proposed school premises. He also looked at a wide range of documents and policies provided by the school or available via the website.

Inspection team

James Broadbridge, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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