



Office for Standards  
in Education

## Collège St Pierre

### CONTENTS

---

#### [Introduction and summary](#)

[Purpose and scope of the inspection](#)

[Information about the school](#)

[Summary of main findings](#)

[What the school does well](#)

[What the school must do in order to comply with the regulations](#)

[What the school must do in order to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act \(DDA\):](#)

#### [Compliance with the regulations for registration](#)

[1. The quality of education provided by the school](#)

[The quality of the curriculum](#)

[The quality of the teaching and assessment](#)

[Does the school meet the requirements for registration?](#)

[What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?](#)

[2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils](#)

[Does the school meet the requirements for registration?](#)

[3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils](#)

[Does the school meet the requirements for registration?](#)

[What the school must do to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act?](#)

[4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff](#)

[Does the school meet the requirements for registration?](#)

[What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?](#)

[5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation](#)

[Does the school meet the requirements for registration?](#)

[What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?](#)

[6. The quality of information for parents and other partners](#)

[Does the school meet the requirements for registration?](#)

[What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?](#)

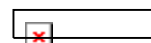
[7. The effectiveness of the school's procedures for handling complaints](#)

[Does the school meet the requirements for registration?](#)

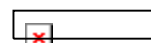
[What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?](#)

[School details](#)

## Introduction and summary

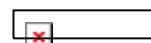


## Purpose and scope of the inspection



This inspection was carried out by the Office for Standards in Education under Section 163 of the Education Act 2002 in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

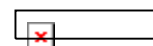
## Information about the school



The Collège St Pierre, situated in Leigh-on-Sea, is a small independent day school for boys and girls aged between two and a half and 11 years, with an early years section feeding into the main school. The school was founded in 1952 as an independent day and boarding school for boys aged from four to 18 years, and was reorganised as a preparatory school for boys aged four to 11 in 1972. Girls were first admitted to the school in 1985. At the time of the inspection there were 70

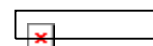
retired in September 2003 after more than 50 years' service. The new proprietors have sought to preserve the warm, family atmosphere of the school that was the previous owner's legacy, whilst instigating the significant changes needed for the school to adapt to the demands of a modern curriculum and the enhanced regulatory framework governing the work of the independent sector. The statements of the school's ethos and aims contained in the prospectus stress the school's intention to develop pupils' personal confidence and social skills alongside their academic potential. An inspection of the school's early years provision took place concurrently with the inspection of the rest of the school.

## Summary of main findings



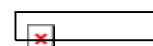
The Collège St Pierre is a successful school that provides well for its pupils. It is a warm and welcoming community that encourages pupils to make good progress, provides them with a safe and supportive learning environment, and is strongly supported by parents. The broad curriculum, which includes a substantial and well-supported extra-curricular programme, offers pupils a stimulating range of experiences. Although there are areas for development, the lessons observed were never less than satisfactory overall, and just under half of them were good. The school has made good progress under the vigorous leadership of the new proprietors and meets the majority of the regulations which apply to independent schools.

## What the school does well



- the standards that pupils achieve in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 are above the national averages;
- the quality of teaching in the early years and in Key Stage 1 are strengths of the school;
- there is a broad and rich curriculum, which is well supported by specialist teaching and enhanced by a good range of extra-curricular activities;
- the school develops pupils' speaking and reading skills very well;
- the school makes very good provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils;
- the behaviour of pupils is good overall;
- the school makes good provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development;
- the school communicates effectively with parents; and
- under the leadership and management of the new proprietors, the school has a clear sense of direction and purpose.

## What the school must do in order to comply with the regulations



- ensure that the curriculum policy is supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, and that these are consistently implemented;
- ensure that teaching maintains an appropriate pace throughout all lessons and that time is well managed;
- ensure that classroom resources for Key Stages 1 and 2 are adequate in quantity, quality and range, and that they are used effectively, ensuring in particular that

information and communication technology (ICT) is well used in a variety of subjects;

- implement a framework to assess pupils' work thoroughly and consistently throughout the school, and make greater use of assessment data to inform planning and track pupils' progress over time;
- ensure all appropriate checks are carried out on all staff, as noted in section 4 of this report;
- improve the quality of the ventilation in premises;
- extend the range of information provided to parents, as explained in section 6 of this report; and
- ensure that the complaints procedure contains the information detailed in section 7 of this report.

### **What the school must do in order to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA):**

☐

- the school must complete, agree and implement, after discussion with staff, governors and parents, the draft policy setting out the school's approach to improving access for all pupils, in line with the requirements of the DDA.

### **Compliance with the regulations for registration**

☐

### **1. The quality of education provided by the school**

☐

#### **The quality of the curriculum**

☐

The Collège Saint Pierre provides full-time education for pupils of compulsory school age. Overall, it provides a broad and rich curriculum that promotes successfully pupils' academic, physical and personal development.

The curriculum for children under five takes account of the nationally recommended guidance for this age group. The nursery is well resourced, and the rich curriculum provides children with a wide range of activities that strike an effective balance between adult-directed and child-initiated activities. This contributes to children becoming independent and well-motivated learners. There is an appropriate emphasis in the nursery and reception classes on the development of children's literacy and numeracy skills.

The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities for pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2, which include art, sports, performing arts and cookery. These, together with trips and educational visits, complement and enhance the curriculum. The cookery classes, run with considerable skill and enthusiasm by the school chef, with good support from another member of staff, exemplify well

the importance attached to the extended curriculum. Pupils learn about food from different countries and there are good cross-curricular links, for example with maths, when pupils estimate and check the weight of ingredients before use. These sessions also include an appropriate focus on health and food hygiene.

Overall, pupils achieve well in all subjects, with the exception of ICT. From the youngest classes onwards pupils acquire a good grounding in basic skills, and with it a keen desire to learn. The development of pupils' speaking skills is a strength. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils demonstrate sophisticated levels of vocabulary and are able to ask challenging questions and speak clearly and confidently to peers as well as adults. The overall standards of reading are also good and pupils quickly learn to read accurately and fluently. Older pupils can identify key features, themes and characters and make effective use of selected phrases and sentences to explain and justify their answers.

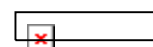
The school has recently developed a curriculum policy. However, this is not yet fully supported by sufficient schemes of work. Where schemes of work exist, their use has yet to be fully implemented in all year groups. As a result, there are elements within subjects that are not being taught sufficiently consistently to ensure continuity and progression as pupils move through the school. There are, for example, too few opportunities at Key Stage 2 for pupils to estimate in mathematics, and there is insufficient emphasis on the use of inverse operations for pupils to check their results. In Year 6, the quality of pupils' writing in English does not always reflect the high standards the school aims to achieve: the writing of a minority of able pupils, for example, is not sufficiently well structured and does not include complex sentences.

The school has recently invested heavily in upgrading the facilities for the teaching of ICT and this provision is now satisfactory. However, this investment has yet to make a sufficient impact on pupils' achievement in ICT. There is insufficient application of ICT across the curriculum. The school may wish to consider the benefits of providing additional training for staff in this area.

There is still a need to improve the level of specialist resourcing across the curriculum at Key Stages 1 and 2: this includes practical and visual resources as well as additional ICT hardware and software to support provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN).

Although the school does not have a programme of personal, social and health education, this area of learning is well covered in the teaching of religious education and science.

### **The quality of the teaching and assessment**



The quality of the teaching seen was never less than satisfactory and in half of the lessons it was good. The teaching in the early years and in Key Stage 1 was often dynamic and inspiring. It is a particular strength of the school. The lessons engaged pupils' interest and helped them to recall and build effectively on what they had previously learnt. The learning objectives for these lessons were clearly established at the outset, there was an appropriate emphasis on the teaching of key vocabulary, and pupils were encouraged to make use of phonics to decode unfamiliar words. Introductory activities related well to the main teaching activities and teachers demonstrated new skills and strategies before pupils began working. In a Key Stage 1 history lesson, for example, the teacher began with a brief introduction about holidays at the seaside and explained the key words. She discussed the meaning of new words and wrote them on the board. The pupils read the words in turn, making use of letter sounds to decode unfamiliar words, and practised explaining what the new words meant. They worked enthusiastically in groups, discussing what they could see on old seaside photographs. When answering questions the pupils made increasingly confident use of the new vocabulary. Pupils then wrote about what they had seen in their photographs. The teaching assistant provided them with good support throughout the lesson.

Specialist teaching in French, art, music, physical education, and speech and drama extends the range of teaching methodologies experienced by pupils. The speech and drama teacher helps pupils to learn to speak confidently in a wide range of contexts. The teaching in this area helps to prepare pupils to read prose and recite verse in public. For example, pupils perform in public and with considerable skill at the Leigh-on-Sea Music Festival.

Where teaching was satisfactory rather than good, the pace of the lessons was not brisk enough and they were too loosely structured. In these lessons, the teaching was insufficiently focused on the learning objectives and tended at times to go off at an inappropriate tangent, which confused some of the children. In these lessons, pupils were insufficiently challenged and they made slow progress as a consequence. In a very few lessons, the slow pace led to some pupils losing concentration and resulted in low-level disruption. The insufficient use of ICT during Key Stage 2 lessons results in pupils' ICT skills being underdeveloped. There are missed opportunities of using ICT to provide extension and enrichment activities for higher-attaining pupils or to provide additional support for the lowest attainers.

The daily plans produced by teachers vary in quality. The school is currently developing its long- and medium-term planning. The best planning identifies key vocabulary and cross-curricular links. Activities are differentiated and key skills are identified where appropriate.

Pupils take the Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils in Year 6 also take part in the 11+ test. By the end of Key Stage 2, the percentage of pupils gaining Level 4 and above for English, mathematics and science is above the national average.

Teachers have a good understanding of pupils' aptitudes and prior attainment; however, this is not always reflected in their planning and there is no formal assessment procedure in place. As a result, the quality of teachers' marking is variable and does not make sufficient reference to the learning objectives. At Key Stage 2, the pupils receive insufficient written guidance on what they need to do to continue to improve, and they do not always remember what they have been told orally. The achievement of all pupils is regularly evaluated and parents receive progress reports every term. However, the school makes insufficient use of data about pupils' performance and does not measure the progress of individuals or groups of pupils over time.

The school has regard for the SEN Code of Practice, and the SEN policy has recently been updated. Staff share a collective responsibility for providing challenging pupils with support. Individual Education Plans are detailed and thorough; however, there is insufficient monitoring of teaching and planning to ensure that they take sufficient account of pupils' individual targets and needs. Although pupils identified for support make progress, this is on occasion very slow. Staff would benefit from additional training in this area.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

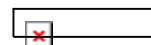
No.

***What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?***

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- ensure that the school's curriculum policy is supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work and that these are implemented consistently throughout the school (paragraph 1(2));
- ensure that teachers maintain a suitable pace during lessons and manage their time effectively (paragraph 1(3)(c));
- ensure that classroom resources at Key Stage 1 and 2 are adequate in quantity, quality and range and are used effectively (paragraph 1(3)(f)); and
- implement a framework to assess pupils' work thoroughly and consistently throughout the school and make greater use of assessment data to inform planning and track pupils' progress over time (paragraph 1(3) (g)).

## 2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils



The provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good, and it is satisfactory for their spiritual development.

The school does not have a structured programme for the teaching of PHSE, although many topics of this nature are covered in religious education. Elements of PSHE are taught explicitly in Years 5 and 6; for example, pupils learn conflict resolutions strategies, the importance of respecting the rights of others and how to be good citizens.

The pupils adhere to the school's rules and daily routines, which are not over-regimented. They are usually courteous and polite and are encouraged to become responsible and mature. They are aware of those less fortunate than themselves and help to raise money for charitable organisations. There are good opportunities for pupils to prepare for the next phase of their education and adult life. Their participation in local events and festivals helps them to develop their self-esteem and confidence. All pupils benefit from talks by the local constabulary about being safe and road safety, as well as from visits from other key figures in the local community. Assemblies contribute effectively to pupils' spiritual development.

Pupils have a good understanding of the law and can distinguish between right and wrong. They use their initiative to help others, and frequently help each other or support those pupils who are experiencing difficulties.

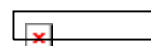
The friendly and supportive atmosphere of the school helps to nurture and support pupils' social skills. As a result, pupils learn to communicate confidently with adults and peers. Playtimes are productive occasions for all pupils when they work and play together and develop their social skills.

Pupils learn to respect different cultures and faiths and develop a good understanding and tolerance of them. The younger pupils visit local mosques, synagogues and churches. A prayer is offered in French at the end of lunchtime when pupils give thanks for their meal. The provision and use of multicultural resources are best in the early years.

### ***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

## 3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils



The school pays careful attention to ensuring that pupils can learn in a safe, secure and properly supervised environment. It receives advice and guidance on risk assessment from the Independent Safety Consultants' Association. Incidents of bullying or poor behaviour are extremely rare and, if one does occur, it is quickly dealt with and the details of any sanction imposed immediately recorded. There has only been one such incident in the recent past. Parents are confident that their children are well cared for. In the short time that the proprietors have been responsible for the school they have produced a comprehensive range of policies that draw on the relevant DfES publications and guidance and that cover the majority of the requirements of the regulations. The spirit of these policies underpins the school's ethos and contributes to the civilised atmosphere that

to ensure that the policies are consistently interpreted and applied by all members of staff.

All pupils were taken on a day visit as part of their curriculum enrichment during the inspection period. It was consequently possible to observe at first hand the care with which the risk assessment for this visit was carried out and the DfES guidance used to ensure that all reasonable precautions were taken to ensure the pupils' safety.

The school's chef, who contributes much to the general life of the school, takes justified pride in providing pupils with healthy and nutritious meals. The school has been regularly visited by the local fire authority and has taken prompt steps to make any improvements recommended in the authority's reports. Although constrained by the limitations of the accommodation, the proprietors have done what they can to ensure that proper provision is made for pupils who might fall ill. Training for the full certificate in First Aid has been booked for one member of staff and up-dating courses have been arranged for other members of staff already holding the basic certificate. Admissions and attendance registers are maintained in accordance with the regulations.

The school makes clear in its literature and public statements the importance that it attaches to the principle of equality of access for all pupils and is aware of its responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act. The proprietors are drafting a policy to meet the requirements of the legislation. The policy has still to be completed and agreed by the governors. It would be difficult in the premises as they are currently constituted for the school to accept and make adequate provision for mobility-impaired pupils. However, the needs of these pupils are being taken into account in the building programme that the proprietors envisage.

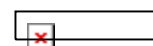
#### ***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

The school meet all the regulations but has further work to do to meet the requirements of the DDA.

#### ***What the school must do to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act?***

Complete and implement, after discussion with staff, governors and parents, the draft policy setting out the school's approach to improving access to all pupils, in line with the requirements of the DDA.

#### **4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff**



The proprietors provide strong, imaginative and effective leadership. They are in the process of re-organising the management structure of the school to ensure that management and leadership roles are clearly defined, responsibilities appropriately delegated, and long-, medium- and short-term development plans drawn up.

The school takes seriously its duty to check the suitability of all employees to work with children. Applications have been made by the school to check through the Criminal Records Bureau all adults who are employed in any capacity in the school, or who come into substantial contact with pupils. The school maintains full records of the progress of these applications. During the inspection week, a telephone check from the proprietors to the CRB confirmed that the clearance forms should be returned within the next few weeks. Any members of staff who have applied for, but not yet received confirmations of clearance are supervised by a colleague who already has approved status.

When the proprietors took over the school they inherited some members of staff with whom they were well acquainted. Whilst they are well informed about the professional experience and expertise of those whom they have since appointed, the proprietors do not have an appropriate policy in place to check the medical fitness, of staff prior to the confirmation of their appointment. However, all staff



are appropriately qualified and strongly committed to the welfare of the pupils. The proprietors need to establish the training needs of the staff and put in place a programme to ensure that they are all fully conversant with the developments that they have instigated.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

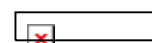
No.

***What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?***

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- prior to confirmation of appointment of staff, appropriate checks have been carried out to confirm their identity, medical fitness, previous employment history, character references and, where appropriate, qualifications and professional references (paragraph 4(d)).

**5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation**



The premises and accommodation possess considerable charm and a number of modifications have been made since the new proprietors took over in September 2003 to improve the provision for pupils: for example, the early years accommodation has been extended and improved, so that it now provides a particularly stimulating environment for the youngest pupils; a new ICT suite has been incorporated into the library, and improved accommodation has been provided for staff. The buildings and grounds are well cared for. The food preparation areas are well maintained and the school has been meticulous in following up recommendations made by the environmental health authority.

Space is at a premium in the school and there remains work to be done to make the classrooms for older pupils better adapted to practical and experimental work. The proprietors have also identified the need to provide more modern classroom furniture in the Key Stage 1 and 2 classrooms to make it possible to group pupils in more flexible ways. Whilst the proprietors have identified a number of areas where they wish to improve the quality of the accommodation, the classrooms offer generally satisfactory conditions for teaching. The one drawback is the current poor state of ventilation in some parts of the school. In hot weather conditions are difficult for staff and pupils and some of the windows, including those in the girls' toilets, have been painted over so that they cannot open.

There is a limited amount of specialist accommodation in the school, for example for art and ICT. The small hall is used for a range of purposes, including indoor physical education and drama. It is also used as the dining area for staff and pupils. This multiple use can, on occasion, lead to problems, if noise from one activity impinges on work being done in another area. There is a wealth of display in the school, illustrating the work done by the pupils and highlighting achievements in a range of academic, sporting, artistic and charitable activities. Part-time teachers of subjects outside the core curriculum, for example French and art, make good use of display to ensure that their subjects maintain a high profile in the school.

Good use is made of the outside space, which includes both hard and grassed surfaces, for play and academic work. The school also has access to a nearby public park, where pupils are able to take part in organised physical activities that demand more space. The proprietors have a clear view of the strengths and shortcomings of the premises and accommodation and an imaginative vision for their future development. A prime aim, for example, is to increase classroom provision so that they will be able to accommodate single-year classes rather than, as is currently the case, classes containing two age groups.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

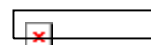
The school meets the requirements for registration with one exception.

***What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?***

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- ensure that the ventilation in the classrooms and other parts of the school is satisfactory and in accordance with The Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(p)).

**6. The quality of information for parents and other partners**



The new proprietors have produced a school prospectus that gives parents of current and prospective pupils a general overview of provision. It currently lacks sufficient detail. However, much of the information that might be expected to be contained in the prospectus is already available elsewhere: for example, the school has drawn up and implemented policies on and arrangements for admissions, discipline and exclusions, which are available to parents. The name of the headteacher, the names, addresses and telephone numbers of the proprietors and the name and address of the Chair of Governors are readily available on request to parents, but not all this information is currently sent to them as a matter of course. The proprietors are aware of the need to extend the range of information available to parents, to include references to the educational and welfare provision for pupils with statements and for pupils for whom English is an additional language.

The school has produced a handbook that is issued to all parents and which contains detailed information on the curriculum. Parents have access to a range of detailed policies relating to the health, welfare, safety and behaviour of pupils. Whilst these are already operative, the school will need to ensure that they are reviewed annually to ensure that they meet the school's developing needs.

The school provides parents with termly reports on pupils' progress. SATs results are provided at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, and 11+ results at the end of Key Stage 2. Figures are given to allow parents to compare these results with local and national figures. The questionnaire responses indicate that parents feel that they can easily approach the school and that communication between the home and school is good. A very small minority of parents who responded to the questionnaire would have welcomed more information on how homework builds on what is done in school and on the progress being made by pupils.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

The school meets the requirements for registration with the exception of the points listed below.

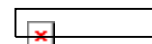
***What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?***

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- the name of the headteacher (paragraph 6 (2)(a));
- the full name, usual residential address and telephone number of the proprietors for parents, prospective parents and other interested parties (paragraph 6(2)(b));
- the name and address of the chair of the governing body (paragraph 6(2)(c)); and
- particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils with statements and for

pupils for whom English is an additional language (paragraph 6(2)(f)).

## 7. The effectiveness of the school's procedures for handling complaints



The school has produced a detailed complaints policy, although the parents' questionnaire indicates that a small number of parents are uncertain about the official procedures for making a complaint. This is not generally an issue for them, since they feel that they have good access to the teaching staff and the proprietors and that any concerns they have can be quickly and satisfactorily resolved. The means exist to record the substance and outcome of any complaints, although in practice no complaints have been made within recent memory. There are a small number of details required by the regulations that are not present in the existing policy.

### ***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

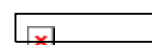
No.

### ***What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?***

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- there must be at least three people who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint on the complaints panel (paragraph 7(f));
- one person on the panel must be independent of the management and running of the school (paragraph 7(g));
- written records must be kept of all complaints, indicating whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage, or whether they proceeded to a panel hearing (paragraph 7(j)) and
- correspondence, statements and records of complaints are to be kept confidential (except in the cases outlined in the regulations) (paragraph 7(k)).

## School details



Name of school:	Collège St Pierre		
DfES ref number:	882-6007		
Type of school:	Primary day school with nursery		
Status:	Independent		
Age range of pupils:	4-10		
Gender of pupils:	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys 35,	Girls 24,	Total 59
Number on roll (part-time pupils):	Boys 7,	Girls 4,	Total 11
Number of boarders:	Boys 0,	Girls 0,	Total 0
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need:	Boys 0,	Girls 0,	Total 0
Annual fees (day pupils):	Early years, £4,020: Yrs 1 & 2, £4,515: Yrs 3-6, £4,860		
Annual fees (boarders):	N/A		
Address of school:	16 Leigh Road		

E-mail address:	Leigh on Sea
Telephone number:	Essex
Fax number:	SS9 1LE
Headteacher:	college@saintpierre.fsnet.co.uk
Proprietor:	01702 474164
Chair of the governing body:	01702 474164
Lead Inspector:	Mr M Sockolov
Dates of inspection:	Mr K Davies
	Mrs Elaine Neville-Jones
	Mr Chris Clark
	7 - 10 June 2004

---

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2004. This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated. Inspection reports are available on the Ofsted web site ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

Office for  
Standards  
in Education

