

Chiltern College School

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](#)

[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?](#)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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?

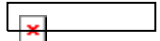
7. The effectiveness of the school's procedures for handling complaints

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

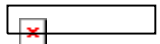
What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

School details

Introduction and summary

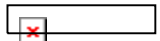


Purpose and scope of the inspection



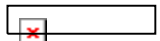
This inspection was carried out by the Office for Standards in Education under Section 163 of the Education Act 2002 in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school



Chiltern College School is an independent primary school providing education for pupils aged 4 -11. It is located in Caversham but pupils travel from a wide area. The school is part of a larger organisation, Chiltern College, a training college for nursery nurses with a nursery for approximately two hundred children. The three parts of the College form a charitable trust run by a Board of Governors. There are 72 pupils on roll, for 16 of whom English is an additional language (EAL). Another nine pupils have individual educational plans (IEPs) designed to overcome minor learning difficulties.

Summary of main findings



The school provides a good education for its pupils. The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant

and safety. The school has clear educational goals and a deep concern for the well being and all round development of each pupil. Its ethos is based on tolerance and empathy towards others.

What the school does well

- Its curricular planning is a particular strength;
- most lesson planning is meticulous;
- it enables EAL pupils and those with special educational needs (SEN) achieve very well;
- provision for social development is very good;
- respect for other cultures is very well established; and
- the school nurtures pupils' well-being carefully.

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

- provide pupils with a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in England;
- update its policy to prevent bullying by paying due regard to the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) publication "Bullying: don't suffer in silence";
- improve the quality of information for parents and other partners as detailed in section 6 of this report; and
- improve the complaints procedure set out in section 7.

Compliance with the regulations for registration

1. The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is of good quality. It is broad, balanced and relevant to pupils' needs. It provides pupils with a worthwhile education and gives them opportunities to develop their knowledge in all the subjects of the National Curriculum and French.

Curriculum planning is a particular strength. Long-term plans provide a clear overview of what is to be studied throughout the school. Medium-term planning is thorough and ensures that teachers

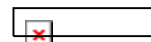
know what work is to be covered each term. This detailed planning helps to ensure continuity and progression in the development of pupils' knowledge and skills in each subject. The school goes to great lengths to ensure that pupils, especially in Key Stage 2, benefit from individual teachers' subject expertise by introducing some specialist teaching, for example in music and French.

The school uses the Foundation Stage curriculum successfully for the younger pupils. This enables staff to plan challenging and interesting lessons in the different areas of learning. The school is at present working hard to develop a smooth transition between the Foundation Stage curriculum and that for Key Stage 1. National Curriculum guidelines, subject guidance provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and the local religious education (RE) curriculum are being used effectively to plan work throughout the rest of the school. Although computer programs are used effectively to support some lessons, provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is in its early stages of development. Physical education (PE) lessons take place in the college hall and at a nearby swimming pool.

The school gives strong emphasis to pupils' personal development through its good provision for their personal, social and health education (PSHE). Pupils' social and cultural development is further enriched through special curriculum days such as a science day, a poetry day and the art, craft and design day during the inspection week. The curriculum is enhanced through a wide range of visits to places of local and national interest and visitors such as the 'Viking Man' and 'Professor Bonkers', the latter leading a science day for Key Stage 2 pupils. It is further supported through a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities including a chess club, a judo club and football.

The school carefully monitors the progress of EAL pupils and provides additional support appropriate to their needs. For example, they are taught the nuances of spoken English. The provision for SEN pupils is very good. Pupils' progress is carefully monitored and they are given support appropriate to their individual needs. The progress of those who have IEPs is reviewed regularly by the school, the pupils' parents and the pupils themselves.

The quality of the teaching and assessment



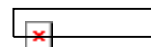
The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Two in five of the lessons seen were good or better. In all but two of the rest, the strengths of the teaching outweighed weaknesses. Most planning is meticulous and ensures that teaching meets the needs of pupils with different abilities. Teachers regularly indicate to pupils what they will learn in lessons. At times, teachers do not explain sufficiently clearly what they intend pupils to learn. As a result, pupils are sometimes uncertain about what is expected of them and what they are to learn. At best, teachers show by example what they want pupils to do, without being over-directive. They ask well-judged questions to challenge pupils' thinking. They promote interest by encouraging pupils to share personal experiences with the rest of the class and to work collaboratively, in pairs or small groups.

In general, teachers' marking of pupils' work is detailed but comments on their written work tend to praise effort rather than indicate specific features that are good or points for improvement. When targets are in front of pupils as they work, the targets assist pupils to improve effectively. Teachers are well informed about how individual pupils are attaining, through their observations of pupils' progress. Small class sizes assist the focus on individual assessment. Pupils make good progress commensurate with their abilities. EAL and SEN pupils achieve particularly well. The school is establishing a system to monitor pupils' performance throughout the school and to identify under-achievement.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

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



Provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good overall.

Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Appreciation of different religions is taught in RE and religious diversity is celebrated in thematic assemblies. For example, during the inspection week effective links were made between Hanukkah and Diwali. Teachers plan plenary sessions at the ends of lessons in which pupils sometimes reflect on the learning that has taken place. They encourage pupils to reflect on misdemeanours in terms of classroom agreements as a precursor to offering apologies. Other opportunities to reflect are less well developed, for example in connection with literature and the arts and where pupils fit in the wider world beyond the school.

Provision for pupils' moral development is good. The school supports pupils who display challenging behaviour. In PSHE, pupils are encouraged to learn strategies to manage anger and low self-esteem. Incidents of bullying, racism and aggression are challenged and recorded.

Provision for pupils' social development is very good. Pupils have many opportunities to take responsibility. They collect dinner numbers, set tables and serve lunch. Year 5 and Year 6 "buddy" reception pupils in September. Older pupils guide younger pupils in shared reading. Within the classroom, pupils are assigned roles as monitors. The school council has high status. Its members take proposals to fortnightly meetings with the PSHE co-ordinator. They report back to the year group that they represent. At the initiative of Year 1 pupils, a proposal under current consideration is a "chop-stick" lunch to celebrate Japanese culture. Provision for general knowledge of public institutions and services in England is less well developed. Little was seen during the inspection week other than, in one lesson, an explanation of how letters to Father Christmas would be sorted and sent by airmail to Lapland.

Provision for developing pupils' appreciation of their own cultural traditions is good. Respect for other cultures is a particular strength. Appreciation and respect are developed through visitors to school, curriculum events, displays and classroom practice. For example, during the inspection week, a mother demonstrated Thai dancing to Year 1 pupils, her son offering traditional thanks to her at the end of the lesson. Pupils in all years spent a day on art, craft and design activities from around the world. This included making Maori poi, Venetian masks, South American gods' eyes and Welsh dragons. Multicultural display permeates the school. For example, developing links with a primary school in Japan are celebrated through a display of haiku and Japanese calligraphy. Teachers capitalise on the significant number of pupils for whom English is not their first language. For example, in registration, one teacher greeted pupils in various languages with which she was familiar. The pupils took delight in responding in one of the 18 languages spoken in the school.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

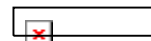
The school meets all the requirements except one.

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:

- provide pupils with a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in England (paragraph 2 (d)).

3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils



The school makes good provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety and nurtures them carefully. There are clearly written policies to encourage good behaviour by the pupils. Whilst there is an effective policy to prevent bullying, it does not take full account of the DfES guidance. Pupils report that any minor incidences of unacceptable behaviour are dealt with quickly either by the older pupils, who take on this responsibility naturally, or by their teachers. All adults are alert to issues such as child abuse. One of the Chiltern College staff has overall responsibility for child protection and ensures that members of the school staff are kept up-to-date. Health and safety on school visits has high priority. Detailed risk assessments, which take account of national guidelines, are carried out on all visits before they take place.

The school maintains detailed accident and incident books. There are three members of staff who are qualified First Aiders and one who has undertaken paediatric First Aid training. Regular fire drills are held and recorded, but do not include the time it takes to evacuate the building. The most recent fire risk assessment took place in 2003. The school has implemented most of its recommendations but has not yet notified the DfES of the findings or of the work carried out to meet these recommendations.

Pupils are supervised closely while on the school premises. Attendance is generally good although some pupils miss too much school through absence that appears to be condoned by some parents. The admission and attendance registers are kept according to regulations. The school has prepared a detailed accessibility plan to show how it is fulfilling its responsibilities with regard to the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

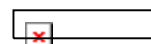
The school meets almost all the requirements for registration.

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:

- update its policy to prevent bullying by paying due regard to the DfES guidance in "Bullying: don't suffer in silence" (paragraph 3(2)(a)).

4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff



All governors, teaching, support and administrative staff and parent helpers are checked with the Criminal Records Bureau to confirm their suitability to work with children. Governors are currently awaiting clearance for three teachers and six parents who regularly help in school. There are thorough procedures to confirm prospective employees' identity, medical fitness, previous employment history, character references and, where appropriate, qualifications and professional references.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation



The premises and accommodation are suitable for their purpose. The school is situated in two large residential properties on the outskirts of Caversham.

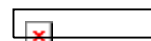
The classrooms are adequate in size for the present number of pupils. They are well maintained and are kept clean and tidy and in good decorative condition. They are enhanced by attractive displays of a wide range of pupils' work. Some of the stock in the three small libraries which serve the different key stages is outdated. Lunches are prepared on site and are served in the nearby college dining room. The school has the use of a local swimming pool.

There is sufficient outdoor play space, comprising hard play and grassed areas. The school is in the process of improving the outdoor equipment and has recently installed a slide and sprung benches. There is also an adequate outdoor play area for pupils in the Foundation Stage. They have use of the college nursery outside play area and sensory room.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

6. The quality of information for parents and other partners



The school provides good information to parents, prospective parents and other partners through a variety of means. These include a prospectus, parents' handbook and school website. Each class teacher produces a helpful booklet of information for parents in advance of the new session. However, the school does not provide particulars of provision for EAL pupils. It only partially provides particulars of academic performance during the preceding school year. It does not detail the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year. Nor is there a summary of staff qualifications.

There are very full reports on pupils' achievements at the end of each academic year, which include specific targets for improvement. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire sent prior to the inspection considered that they were well informed about their children's progress.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

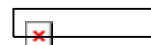
No.

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:

- particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils with statements and for pupils for whom English is an additional language (paragraph 6(2)(f));
- particulars of academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of any public examinations (paragraph 6(2)(i));
- make it clear to parents that they may request:
- details of the complaints procedure adopted by the school, together with details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year (paragraph 6(2)(j)); and
- the number of staff employed at the school, including temporary staff, and a summary of their qualifications (paragraph 6(2)(k)).

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



The school has a new complaints procedure, recently ratified by the governors but not yet issued to parents. It does not provide for one person on the panel hearing a complaint to be independent of the management and running of the school. Nor does it stipulate that all concerned should receive a copy of any findings and recommendations. There is no reference to the confidentiality of correspondence, statements and records relating to complaints.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

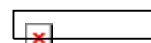
No.

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:

- where there is a panel hearing of a complaint, ensure that one person on the panel is independent of the management and running of the school (paragraph 7(g));
- provide for the panel to make findings and recommendations, and stipulate that the complainant, proprietors and headteacher, and, where relevant, the person complained about, are given a copy of any findings and recommendations (paragraph 7(i)); and
- ensure that correspondence, statements and records of complaints are kept confidential (paragraph 7(k)).

School details



Name of school:	Chiltern College School		
DfES ref number:	870/6009		
Type of school:	Primary		
Status:	Independent		
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11 years		
Gender of pupils:	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys 41,	Girls 31,	Total 72
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need:	Boys 0,	Girls 0,	Total 0
Annual fees (day pupils):	£4,518		
Address of school:	16 Peppard Road Caversham Reading RG4 8JZ		
E-mail address:	ChilternHeadteacher@chilterncollege.com		
Telephone number:	01189 471847		
Fax number:	01189 463218		
Headteacher:	Judy Halliday		
Proprietor:	The Trustees of Chiltern College		
Chair of the governing body:	Howard Davies		
Lead Inspector:	Stewart Robertson HMI		

Dates of inspection:

29 November - 2 December 2004

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