

# Christ's Church of England Comprehensive Secondary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	102929
<b>Local Authority</b>	Richmond Upon Thames
<b>Inspection number</b>	308169
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Kennedy HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	584
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr M Brecknell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr R Burke
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 September 2003
<b>School address</b>	Queens Road Richmond TW10 6HW
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8940 6982
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8332 6085

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<b>Age group</b>	11-16
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Christ's Church of England is a smaller than average, mixed comprehensive school in the Diocese of Southwark. Students come from diverse cultural and social backgrounds. They are drawn increasingly from the local area of Richmond. The school welcomes students from a wide range of ethnic groups, the largest of whom are White British. A quarter of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds, and the largest proportions are of Black Caribbean and Asian heritages. There are an above average number of students for whom English is not their mother tongue, although there are very few with little or no fluency in it. The school provides for a higher than average proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs. The majority of these students in Years 9 to 11 have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, although in Years 7 and 8 the majority have specific learning difficulties. The school's roll has been increasing year on year following a significant dip in 2000, and for the first time in recent history the school will be full in each year group in September 2008.

The school holds the Financial Management Standard in Schools and the Sportsmark awards.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Christ's is a good school, and it has improved significantly since its last inspection. This judgement is endorsed by the majority of parents. One parent wrote, 'I feel that Christ's school has a superb ethos, has improved immensely over the past few years and deserves a well earned pat on the back.' The school has significant strengths, particularly in the quality of its teaching and learning and the very good care, guidance and support students receive. Typically, teaching and learning are good and in many lessons, they are of a very high quality. Students work hard and they contribute well to their own learning by cooperative working in lessons. As a result, most make good progress, achieve higher than average standards and develop into mature, confident and well-rounded young people. It is no surprise that they thoroughly enjoy their education. Good partnerships with schools, colleges and outside agencies contribute well to what Christ's can offer. Most parents are supportive of the school, though a small proportion indicated that some improvements could be made, particularly in developing a more effective website and other channels of communication.

A good curriculum, which meets the interests and abilities of students well, also contributes to their outstanding spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. The cross curricular skills-based approach to learning which has been introduced as a pilot for half of Year 7 has been very successful and this will be extended to the whole year group from September 2008. Opportunities for spiritual development have improved appreciably since the last inspection and are now a strong feature of the Christian ethos. High levels of care, guidance and support nurture the good personal and academic development of the students. They achieved above average standards in the end of Year 9 tests in 2007. A higher than average proportion gained five or more GCSEs. The school recognised that the rate of progress, particularly at Key Stage 4, was only satisfactory and has put rigorous systems in place since September to ensure that more regular and accurate individual tracking is undertaken. This is enabling targeted students to make the most of their potential. The school's data show that students are on track to make good and improved progress this year. The school rightly recognises the need to consolidate these relatively new systems of support in order to sustain and build on current achievement and standards in future years.

The headteacher, supported by a knowledgeable and committed governing body, has been willing to make difficult decisions to secure high-quality teaching and learning and improved achievement. Staffing changes have increased the school's capacity to provide good standards of education and care. Leaders, managers and staff at all levels know their strengths and weaknesses well and are quick to recognise and robustly respond to areas where performance is not as good as the best. For instance, they have identified the need to improve the quality of teaching and learning in subjects such as science, which have not been performing to the same high standard as the rest. This sharp focus and determination to succeed is at the heart of the sustained improvements since the last inspection and the foundation of good capacity to continue this trend.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the quality of teaching and learning so that is consistently good or better in all subject areas.
- Improve channels of communication with parents.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

From starting points, which for many are above average when they join the school, the students make good progress and achieve high standards. In 2007, standards at end of Year 9 and Year 11 were above average and this represented an improving trend. For example, the proportion of students achieving at least five higher GCSE grades was above average. Performance by students in Year 9 national tests in English, mathematics and science were also above average. The school has a secure understanding of current standards and available data and evidence from lesson observations indicate that it is on track to meet its challenging 2008 targets. There is, however, some variability in the standards reached in some subjects with, for example, relatively lower gains being made in science at Key Stage 4. The school has taken decisive steps to address this and ensure that standards in all departments will match those of the best.

In 2007, achievement was good in Key Stage 3, but only satisfactory in Key Stage 4. This inconsistency has now been rectified and achievement across the school is good. This exemplifies the effectiveness of the school in taking corrective and firm action. Good achievement is a direct result of strong teaching, coupled with the excellent individual student monitoring systems introduced since September. Achievement is also a tribute to the students' own positive attitudes to learning. There are no significant variations between the achievements of groups of students. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well and, in some instances, reach better than expected levels because of the very good individual support they receive in relation to their specific learning or behaviour needs. The staff quickly identify students who are not making expected progress and there is evidence that this timely support is proving to be effective for the majority.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pastoral care and positive relationships are at the heart of the Christian ethos that permeates all aspects of the school. Students are impressive in the way they talk about the school and their enjoyment of their learning is striking. A survey commissioned by the school indicates that 96% of students said they enjoy school. Despite the best efforts of the school, a small number of students, many of whom arrived at the school mid-year, continue to have poor attendance and this has affected overall attendance rates which remain broadly average. Students demonstrate a good understanding of how to live healthy lives, particularly through their participation in sports. Support for emotional needs is excellent. This is exemplified by one student, who said that the work of his mentor and anger management strategies have helped him to change his behaviour and attitudes to learning. Students adopt safe practices and feel secure in the school, knowing that they can turn to a member of staff if they have any concerns. The school has adopted a firm but clear behaviour policy and this results in good behaviour around the school and in lessons.

Students contribute well to the school and to the wider community. This is illustrated in their contribution to WaterAid and in the student interview panels. The work-related and flexible curriculum, good quality teaching and learning and effective care, guidance and support help prepare students well for the future. Combined comments from two Year 11 students capture how well the school nurtures good personal development: Christ's helps you 'grow so much as a person' and it 'gives you so much more confidence'.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Staff and students enjoy excellent relationships and these create an atmosphere which contributes powerfully to good teaching and learning. Students enjoy lessons as is shown by their attentive and enthusiastic attitudes. They work exceptionally well in pairs and groups, and collaborative learning is an outstanding feature of the school. There is a high level of consistency in the structure of lessons and as a result, the students have clear expectations of what and how they are expected to learn. Teachers plan well, using a wide variety of teaching styles and activities to challenge and support all ability levels. In many lessons, the pace is rapid and challenging, but it still allows sufficient time to develop the learning. In less successful lessons the pace is slower and the degree of challenge not as high, which leads to some students being less attentive and making less progress. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to question students effectively and are able to enliven lessons further by snippets of interesting information. The support provided by teachers and learning support assistants is effective, although it is not always clear from the lesson plan how this is being targeted. The quality and quantity of homework is variable. There is good support for teachers in their desire to provide interesting and challenging lessons. Regular observation and the sharing of good and outstanding practice assist them well in improving their teaching and enhancing the level of challenge in their lessons.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The school acted successfully on the concerns about the curriculum raised at its last inspection. It now meets statutory requirements and students benefit from a flexible and personal curriculum that meets their needs, abilities and interests well. The recently introduced creative and innovative skills-based PACE (Personalised Alternative Curriculum Experience) is an outstanding aspect of the curriculum in Year 7. It provides an exceptional and challenging experience for all the participants and is having a measurable impact on their achievement and aspirations. The remaining curriculum in Years 7, 8 and 9 is broad and balanced and provides many extension opportunities, such as after school Latin. The curriculum for Years 10 and 11 has become increasingly flexible and has a good balance of vocational and more academic courses. The school has developed effective partnership arrangements with local schools and colleges to broaden the range of options. For instance, some students are able to attend a local college to extend their learning by studying critical thinking. The curriculum is enhanced through many extra-curricular activities that provide rich opportunities for students. Students have been able, for example, to work with a neighbouring university to design a river site at Twickenham. There are very good participation rates in extra-curricular activities.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The staff know their students exceptionally well and because of exemplary pastoral care, students thrive and develop into mature and well-rounded individuals. Safeguarding requirements are fully met and students are confident that if they have a concern, it will be swiftly dealt with. Parents recognise these strengths and many wrote positively about how the school has boosted their child's confidence and self-esteem. Overall,

parents were positive about the contact they have with teachers. However, a small proportion raised concerns about the effectiveness of channels of communication, particularly the school's website. There is evidence of particularly effective support for vulnerable students, some of whom have very complex needs. As a result, some students who may not achieve well academically have made great strides in their personal development. Provision for gifted and talented students is developing well. There is good support for students to help them prepare for life after school. The achievement of the Investors in Careers mark is testament to the quality of this provision. Excellent academic guidance systems ensure that any underachievement is swiftly identified and support plans put in place. The school uses data effectively to set appropriate targets for students, but marking by some teachers does not always provide detailed enough feedback for students to improve their work.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The passionate and committed headteacher sets a clear vision and direction for the school. A talented and impressive senior leadership team ably supports him. Middle management is variable but improving. Clear divisions of responsibilities and lines of accountability underpin improved staff and departmental performance. The school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses is accurate. Monitoring and evaluation processes are well developed, although inconsistencies in the application of improvement strategies mean some subject areas perform better than others do. The leadership team are taking appropriate steps to tackle and challenge these areas of relative underperformance. Highly effective professional development, through newly created learning groups, has significantly improved teaching and learning. The school sets itself challenging but achievable targets and these are keeping up the momentum of improved standards. Governors are supportive while also providing constructive challenge to the school. They are knowledgeable about its work and ask appropriate questions about its performance. The school provides good value for money because governance and leadership are effective and this is reflected in positive outcomes for students.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

25 June 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Christ's Church of England Comprehensive Secondary School, Richmond, TW10 6HW

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. You, and your parents, told us that Christ's is a good school and we agree. You appreciate the hard work of your teachers and the many things you can do because of your good curriculum. We saw some very good teaching. This is not just down to your good teachers. You work very well together in lessons and we saw teamwork as good as the best we have seen anywhere. You told us that while most of your lessons are good, some could be a little better. A few of your parents felt that the school could develop better ways of keeping in touch with them, such as improving the website.

The staff are doing a very good job in caring for you. One of you gave an example of the excellent support his mentor has given him. The school has developed very good systems for keeping an eye on how well you are doing and staff know you very well. As a result, you know if you are keeping up with your targets. You get good extra help if you need it. This helps you make good progress. Exam results have been above average and you are well on your way to achieving the same high standards this year. You are not only doing well in your studies but the school has helped you develop into very mature and confident young people. We saw how well you behave and it is clear that you enjoy your time in school. You are a credit to it. Your school has improved a lot since its last inspection. This is down to the good work of your headteacher, governors and the other staff in the school. They have worked hard to improve it and, as a result, you now have a school that helps you get the best out of your education. One of you said to us that this is not an outstanding school because there are things that could be better. We agree, and have asked the school to:

- make sure that all the subjects are taught as well as the very best
- improve ways of communicating with your parents.

You can play your part by making sure that you continue to work hard in all your lessons. I wish you the very best for your futures.

Yours sincerely

John Kennedy

Her Majesty's Inspector