

Christ's College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134120
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	341432
Inspection dates	18–19 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Joanna Beckford-Hall HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	520
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Colin Henry
Principal	Stephen Green
Date of previous school inspection	14 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 32 lessons and held meetings with senior and middle leaders and students. Inspectors also jointly observed lessons with members of the senior leadership team. The lead inspector met with the School Improvement Partner and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors observed the college's work and looked in detail at the college's self-evaluation and development plan, faculty reviews, policies, minutes of governing body meetings and students' work. They also reviewed student questionnaires and 210 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the college's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the impact of the college's work in raising attainment and closing the gap in attainment of boys and girls
- the quality of teaching across the college and the extent to which this supports good learning and progress
- the effectiveness of the curriculum in meeting students' needs and interests
- the effectiveness of senior and middle leaders in raising achievement across the college in the context of financial constraints.

Information about the school

Christ's College is smaller than most comprehensive schools, with a very small sixth form. Most students are of White British heritage and the proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is well below average. The percentage of students eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The proportion of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is rising and is above the national average. The college has a designated resource centre for students with speech, language and communication difficulties.

Since the last inspection, the college has moved into its new building and achieved specialist status in performing arts in September 2009.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Christ's College provides a satisfactory standard of education. There is clear evidence of many improvements since the last inspection. The impact of improvements and the positive upward trajectory of the college over three years demonstrate that the college has good capacity to make further improvement. The passion, commitment and clear vision of the principal and his senior college team has been the catalyst to improvements which place raising achievement of all students firmly at the heart of every decision taken. Senior leaders have worked diligently with middle leaders to establish a faculty structure which empowers leaders and teaching staff to lead changes and tackle underachievement. Governors are rigorous in supporting the resilience needed to move the college forward. They have fully supported leaders in their determination to achieve the ambitious vision for the college. On several occasions, students described the college as a 'family' and this has established a good community within the college. Good care, guidance and support for students, coupled with strong Christian values, permeate the college, capturing the mission statement of 'learning to serve'. Senior leaders recognise that the family values and the new ethos within the internal community of the college now need to quickly extend to the local and national community. Students in Key Stage 3 and 4 sometimes lack opportunities to work with communities which are more diverse than their own.

The tightly structured system for tracking students' attainment and progress is effectively disseminated across the college and is used well by most teachers for planning lessons. Although attainment is low compared with national figures, it is rapidly improving. Learning and progress of all students, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, is good because teaching is now good and staff set high expectations of students. The college is steadily closing the gap in attainment between boys and girls.

Students say they enjoy their time at college. Students comment very favourably about improvements in teaching and behaviour, which they partly attribute to the impact of the new college building: 'We respect our college and there is now much greater respect for learning and for each other.' Students are passionate about the new classrooms, performance spaces and the information and communication technology (ICT) resources, which they say have really enhanced learning. Inspectors agree and saw good use of ICT in teaching to effectively help students with problem solving, literacy and numeracy work. Improved attitudes to learning of the large majority of students helps them to make good progress.

The quality of teaching at the college has improved and the majority of teaching is now good. Inspectors saw some features of outstanding practice. College leaders have rightly

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identified that eradicating pockets of merely satisfactory teaching is vital to continually driving up standards and making sure that every student is sufficiently challenged. The college sets challenging targets for students and most of the time these are used to plan learning appropriately matched to the needs of students. Marking has steadily improved and many lessons now include opportunities for students to assess their own work and that of their peers, which, as one student said, 'helps me know how well I am doing and gives me ideas to help others as well as myself'. However, effective high-quality feedback is not yet embedded in all marking across the college. A small minority of parents and carers rightly expressed the need for much greater guidance and support in helping them to know how best to support their sons' or daughters' learning, and requested more regular updates about progress in addition to target-setting days.

The curriculum has been redesigned and is now good because it gives choices appropriate to the needs and interests of students. College leaders have made judicious decisions about what courses to offer at Key Stage 4. Students have the opportunity to study a greater range of vocational courses as well as more traditional GCSE subjects, offered through the partnership with the local college and four other secondary schools. Attendance has improved and the proportion of students who are persistently absent is reducing. This is a direct result of greater engagement in the curriculum and good support to help students resolve issues which adversely affect their personal development as young people and as learners.

The overall effectiveness of the small sixth form is good. Improvements made in teaching and in the curriculum in Key Stage 3 and 4 are mirrored by success in the sixth form. Students make good progress and achieve well through highly personalised support and good teaching. Sixth form students possess ambassadorial qualities which successfully support work with younger students and, for some, their work in the local community.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build upon the very best practice in the college so that 85% of teaching is good or better by December 2010, leading to standards of attainment by the end of Key Stage 4 which are closely aligned to the national average by July 2011.
- Embed good marking practice in every faculty across the college so that all teachers provide detailed high-quality written feedback to ensure that students know precisely what they need to do to meet their challenging targets.
- Develop the college's work to promote cohesion by:
 - expanding opportunities for students in Key Stage 3 and 4 to engage with the local community
 - expanding the school's links nationally and internationally to provide students with more experiences of communities other than their own
 - establishing greater links with the parental community to help them know how to support their child's learning.

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- About 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

The large majority of students have good attitudes to learning because they enjoy lessons and say they learn a lot. They work well together and support each other in group activities. When lessons are stimulating, students are motivated to do well because tasks are challenging and interesting, and they make good progress. In most lessons, students settle quickly to focus on their work, as a result of firm expectations reinforced by teachers at the beginning of lessons.

Attainment on entry to the college is low and often very low, but from these starting points students make good progress. Although attainment remains low at Key Stage 4, it is improving strongly and the percentage of students achieving five A* to C GCSE grades has risen by 24% over three years. Current data shows the college is firmly on track for results to rise further at Key Stage 4 in 2010. The very small minority of students who are at the early stages of learning to speak English are provided with good support and now make good progress. A combination of low, but strongly improving attainment with good learning and progress, leads to students' overall achievement and enjoyment being satisfactory.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Good teaching at the college is generally characterised by:

- teachers' good subject knowledge, which helps students quickly acquire new knowledge each lesson
- effective deployment and work with teaching assistants, whose impact is particularly visible with students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- skilful use of questioning to challenge students' thinking
- lesson planning tightly linked to prior learning and use of assessment information so that lessons include tasks at different levels
- good use of praise to encourage students
- brisk pace which keeps students focused on learning.

In some satisfactory lessons, these features are more variable, and a more limited use of assessment data to plan learning for individuals as well as groups inhibits progress.

One-to-one literacy and numeracy support work is a major strength of the college, particularly in driving up standards at Key Stage 3. Social and emotional aspects of learning are clearly linked to the college's ethos about how students learn in a Christian context. The growth of personal learning and thinking skills are increasingly developing students' independence as learners.

Students relish the chance to take part in drama and dance performances and college productions, which establish good rapport between students of different year groups to stage productions. The impact of the performing arts specialism is starting to be felt in a deepening appreciation of culture.

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The diploma in creative and media and BTEC courses business, horticulture, sport, leisure and tourism and performing arts alongside more traditional GCSE courses, are popular and are steadily raising attainment. Students receive good quality information and guidance about options for future education or employment and those who choose to remain at the college for post-16 courses feel they are well prepared for the transition from Key Stage 4 to 5.

The college provides good care and support for pastoral needs of students and treats each student as a unique individual. Staff know students extremely well in this small cohesive college, and can point to many striking examples where the wraparound care from the youth worker, year learning managers and college chaplain have helped students to feel looked after and achieve well. Vulnerable students are highly appreciative of the emotional support they receive. Whilst students in the centre for speech, language and communication also receive good care, there is more work to be done in tightly monitoring their progress.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Improvements at the college are testament to the very effective leadership of the principal and senior leadership team. The vision for continual rapid improvement is clear and the senior team strive to ensure that the leaders at all levels of the faculty structure are held to account for monitoring, evaluation and action planning. Recent faculty reviews, with a penetrating focus upon the quality of teaching and curriculum planning, are increasingly leading to sharing of best practice across the college. More robust feedback provided to teachers is helping them examine how every lesson can drive up achievement. The principal has raised the bar and staff have risen to this challenge, setting high expectations of themselves and their students. Working relationships between senior and middle leaders are strong and new middle leaders are nurtured well by experienced senior colleagues.

Governors are fastidious in setting expectations of leaders and are steadfast in their support and challenge for the college. Governors receive regular reports from faculty leaders and ask challenging questions about the progress of year groups and vulnerable students as well as those who are gifted and talented. Governors appropriately review college policies to uphold statutory regulations. All safeguarding regulations are met and procedures, such as risk assessments for educational visits, are secure and are robustly

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maintained.

The recent audit to assess how to expand community cohesion both locally and nationally is embryonic because the college has invested its effort primarily in ensuring a better, more harmonious community within the college for all students. For this reason, the college has yet to develop more fully students' experience of links with people from different ethnic and socio-economic contexts. Governors recognise there is more work to do in evaluating the impact of community cohesion both locally and nationally.

The college makes effective use of various partnerships to support the well-being and pastoral outcomes for students, and the impact of partnership work is starting to bear fruit in raising attainment, particularly in the vocational programmes.

The college rightly judges that transition arrangements for Year 6 students are strong. Parents and students are effectively welcomed to the college through meetings with staff, and the Friends of Christ's College engage parents in fundraising and college activities linked to the Christian faith and enrichment activities.

The college has worked hard to reduce the deficit budget whilst still ensuring that resources are put to good effect in supporting learning. Value for money is, however, satisfactory because overall outcomes are still not more than satisfactory. The college promotes equal opportunity and tackles discrimination satisfactorily.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers who returned the questionnaire are happy with their child's education and are overwhelmingly positive about how the college is led and managed.

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Some views were quite polarised about the quality of behaviour but inspectors were satisfied that this has radically improved and is now good. A small minority of parents indicated they would like to know more about the progress their child is making and a few parents wish for more account to be taken of their views and suggestions through increased communication with parents. Inspectors agree that engagement with parents and carers can be strengthened further as part of the college's drive to raise achievement and extend community links.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Christ's College to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 210 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 520 students registered at the college.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	60	29	126	60	18	9	3	1
The school keeps my child safe	81	39	123	59	4	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	73	35	110	52	24	11	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	69	33	114	54	21	10	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	64	30	124	59	12	6	2	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	52	25	119	57	27	13	3	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	45	22	135	65	22	11	1	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	65	31	118	56	6	3	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	66	32	122	58	15	7	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	62	30	121	58	16	8	3	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	58	28	115	55	20	10	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	82	39	116	56	4	2	1	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	89	43	101	48	12	6	1	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



20 May 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Christ's College, Guildford GU1 1JY

Thank you for being so welcoming when my team and I came to inspect your college. We enjoyed discussions with you about your work and the different kinds of college activities which you enjoy. We were pleased to hear your positive views about the college, particularly how much you value the new college building and all that it has to offer you.

We have judged that the college is providing you with a satisfactory standard of education and is rapidly improving because the principal has led changes to secure good teaching and help you make good progress in lessons. The college has worked very hard to help you improve your achievement, and results at Key Stage 4 are rising. The college has several areas of good work as follows:

- a good curriculum with a wide range of courses, reflecting your interests and needs, and helping you to enjoy your time at college
- good care, guidance and support so that you feel well cared for by the staff, which helps you to know you can talk freely to teachers about any issues affecting your work or your personal well-being
- good quality teaching which now helps you make good progress in lessons
- a sound Christian ethos which creates a family community in the college.

To make your college even better and to continue the trend of improvement, we have asked the principal to ensure that over 85% of teaching is good or better by December 2010 and that all marking provides you with high quality comments about how to improve your work. We have also asked leaders to review how best to give you the opportunity to engage more with your local community and learn about different communities in the United Kingdom and internationally.

On behalf of all the inspectors, I wish you the very best for happiness and success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Joanna Beckford-Hall

Her Majesty's Inspector

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