



ISI

Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Progress Monitoring Inspection Report

St Christopher School

April 2023

School's details

School	St Christopher School			
DfE number	919/6028			
Registered charity number	311062			
Address	St Christopher School Barrington Road Letchworth Garden City Hertfordshire SG6 3JZ			
Telephone number	01462 650850			
Email address	hello@stchris.co.uk			
Head	Mr Richard Jones			
Chair of governors	Mr Jakub Kozlowski			
Proprietor	St Christopher School Ltd			
Age Range	3 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	532			
	Day pupils	514	Boarders	18
	EYFS	28	Juniors	100
	Seniors	329	Sixth Form	75
Date of inspection	26 April 2023			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 St Christopher is a co-educational day and boarding school. It was founded in 1915 by members of the Theosophical Educational Trust. Since 1928, the school has welcomed pupils of all faiths and none. The school is a charity, overseen by a board of governors. It comprises the junior school, including the Early Year Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting, and the senior school, which includes the sixth form. Boarders live in a single, suitably segregated boarding house that is located centrally within the school grounds. The school has 129 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Three pupils have an education, health and care plan. Twenty pupils speak English as an additional language. The school's previous inspection was a focused compliance and educational quality inspection in October 2022.

Purpose of the inspection

- 1.2 This was an unannounced progress monitoring inspection at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to check that the school has fully implemented the action plan submitted following the focused compliance and educational quality inspection on 18 to 20 October 2022. The inspection focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs), the National Minimum Standards for Boarding 2022 and the requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework.

Regulations which are the focus of the inspection	Team judgements
Part 3, paragraphs 7 (safeguarding) and 8 (safeguarding of boarders); NMS 8	Met
Part 4, paragraphs 18–21 (suitability of staff, supply staff and the proprietor)	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management)	Met

2. Inspection findings

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding and safeguarding of boarders [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7 and 8]

Safeguarding policy

- 2.1 The school meets the requirements.
- 2.2 The school has an appropriate policy for safeguarding which provides suitable arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school.

Safeguarding implementation

- 2.3 The school meets the standards.
- 2.4 Arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils, including boarders, are implemented effectively, including those relating to the Prevent duty. The school ensures a culture of listening to all pupils, and of respect for others. Pupils, including boarders, confirm that they have a variety of people to whom they can turn for support if they have a concern. Pupils receive a response when they express concerns in school, and appropriate action is taken where necessary. This was confirmed during interviews with pupils and staff and by records of safeguarding. Pupils understand how to keep themselves and others safe, including when online.
- 2.5 All staff, including those in positions of responsibility for safeguarding, are suitably trained in line with locally agreed procedures. There is a designated safeguarding lead for the EYFS. Interviews with leaders and staff from all parts of the school confirmed that they fully understand their respective roles in safeguarding. In particular, all staff understand different types of abuse including child-on-child abuse and sexual harassment. They understand the particular vulnerability of those pupils with SEND. Staff are ready to identify, report and investigate potential abuse. Records show that staff report any safeguarding concerns to the appropriate person in a timely fashion. Senior leaders communicate concerns to relevant outside agencies effectively. They take prompt action where concerns are raised, or incidents occur.
- 2.6 As a result of recent case study reviews of safeguarding practice, current staff in leadership and management roles have improved safeguarding recordkeeping, to ensure accurate monitoring of practice. This is subject to ongoing review.
- 2.7 The safeguarding policy contains suitable guidance about reporting low-level concerns about adults working in the school. This guidance is understood by staff and concerns are shared with senior leaders appropriately if they arise. Safeguarding is effectively managed. There is an appropriate staff code of conduct and suitable arrangements for whistleblowing. Interviews with staff confirmed suitable understanding of these and willingness to act appropriately should the need arise. Suitable arrangements to handle allegations against adults working with pupils are in place.
- 2.8 Governors are suitably trained in safeguarding. They have ensured that a review of safer recruitment procedures and practices has taken place since the previous inspection. Lessons learnt from this have been fully implemented in practice, in line with the school's action plan. This ensures that the required recruitment checks, including those made against the list of those prohibited from management where relevant, are completed before appointment or before work begins and are suitably recorded. This includes those required for boarding staff. The governors maintain appropriate oversight of all other safeguarding procedures, completing sufficiently regular reviews of safeguarding policy and practice effectively and identifying any areas for improvement following any incidents reviewed.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors [ISSR Part 4, paragraphs 18–21; NMS 19]

- 2.9 The school meets the standards.
- 2.10 The school ensures that the dates on which checks of all staff and governors are completed are recorded on the single central register as required. This includes checks against lists of those prohibited from teaching in schools, and, where relevant, of staff and governors against the list of those prohibited from the management of schools.

Provision of information [ISSR Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c)]

- 2.11 The school meets the requirements for providing information relating to safeguarding to parents. Particulars of the arrangements for safeguarding are published on the school's website.

Quality of leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34; NMS 2]

- 2.12 The school meets the standards.
- 2.13 The proprietors ensure that senior leaders and managers, including those in boarding, demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that all the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the wellbeing of the pupils. The action plan required following the previous inspection has been implemented effectively.

3. Regulatory action points

- 3.1 For the regulations which were the focus of this inspection, the school meets all of the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2022 and requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

4. Summary of evidence

- 4.1 The inspector held discussions with the head, senior leaders and other members of staff and met with the chair of governors and safeguarding governor. She visited different areas of the school and talked with groups of pupils. She scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.

Inspectors

Mrs Vivien Sergeant

Reporting inspector