



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Regulatory Compliance Inspection Report

St Christopher's The Hall School

October 2019



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School's Details

School	St Christopher's The Hall School			
DfE number	305/6010			
Registered charity number	307917			
Address	St Christopher's The Hall School 49 Bromley Road Beckenham Kent BR3 5PA			
Telephone number	0208 650 2200			
Email address	secretary@stchristophersthehall.org.uk			
Headmaster	Mr Andrew Velasco			
Proprietor	St Christopher's The Hall School Ltd			
Age range	3 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	292			
	EYFS	40	Juniors	252
Inspection dates	16 to 17 October 2019			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 St Christopher's The Hall School is a co-educational independent preparatory day school for pupils aged 3 to 11 years. It is located in the residential area of Beckenham in Kent. The school is a charitable trust with a board of directors, who act as the governing body and oversee the work of the school.
- 1.2 There are two classes in each year group from Upper Kindergarten to Year 6.
- 1.3 This is the school's first inspection by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI).

What the school seeks to do

- 1.4 The school seeks to provide a happy, safe and hard-working environment where all pupils find the opportunity to develop their talents to the full within a wide and well-balanced curriculum. The school endeavours to ensure that each pupil is treated as an individual and encouraged to aim for the highest standards in whatever they seek to do.

About the pupils

- 1.5 Pupils come from a range of professional backgrounds, mainly from white British families living within a 15-mile radius of the school. The school's own assessment indicates that the ability of the pupils is above average. The school has identified 13 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) which include dyslexia and dyspraxia, all of whom receive additional specialist help. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan or requires support for English as an additional language (EAL). Data used by the school have identified 13 pupils as being the most able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them and for five other pupils because of their special talents in sport, music or drama.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. The inspection of schools that have early years settings not requiring registration similarly records whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework. Additionally, the inspection reports on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any un-met standards identified at their previous inspection.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a COMPLIANCE ONLY inspection and as such reports only on the school's compliance with the standards. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

Key findings

- 2.1 The school does not meet all of the required standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and relevant requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 The school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.4 **The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.5 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.
- 2.6 **The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupil

- 2.7 Good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.8 Arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils do not pay due regard to current statutory guidance. The safeguarding policy does not meet requirements. The school does not ensure that staff receive adequate and sufficient safeguarding training. The school does not always follow appropriate procedures should any safeguarding concerns arise. The school does not always ensure that, when applicable, it carries out prohibition management checks before staff take up management responsibilities at the school.
- 2.9 **The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 8–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met but those in paragraph 7(a) and (b) [safeguarding] are not met.**

Action point 1

- **the school must ensure that it maintains a suitable safeguarding policy [paragraph 7(a) and 7(b); EYFS 3.4 and 3.7].**

Action point 2

- **the school must ensure that all staff receive adequate and sufficient safeguarding training [paragraph 7(a) and 7(b); EYFS 3.6 and 3.20].**

Action point 3

- the school must ensure that it follows the procedures required under statutory guidance should a safeguarding concern arise [paragraph 7(a) and 7(b); EYFS 3.4 and 3.7].

Action point 4

- the school must ensure that, where appropriate, it carries out prohibition from management checks before staff take up management responsibilities in the school [paragraph 7(a) and 7(b); EYFS 3.9]

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.10 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff and proprietors. The school does not use supply staff.
- 2.11 A single central register of appointments is not kept as required. The school maintains more than one register of appointments, each of which contains different information. The dates of prohibition from teaching and from management checks are not recorded as required.
- 2.12 **The standards relating to paragraphs 18 and 20 are met but those in 21(1), 21(3)(a)(iii), and 21(3)(b) are not met.**

Action point 5

- the school must ensure that it maintains one single central register that includes all required information relating to recruitment checks [paragraph 21(1); EYFS 3.12].

Action point 6

- the school must ensure that the single central register records the dates of prohibition from teaching and prohibition from management checks [paragraphs 21(3)(a)(iii) and 21(3)(b); EYFS 3.12].

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.13 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.
- 2.14 **The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met**

PART 6 – Provision of information

- 2.15 A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. These include details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. They also include particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports

and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.

2.16 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.17 The school's complaints policy does not include a suitable three stage process for the handling of complaints. Parental complaints, if any, are not handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). The procedures are not followed for a written record to be kept of all complaints that are made and whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing, or action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld). A few parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire did not consider that the school responds promptly and effectively to my concerns or complaints.

2.18 The standards relating to the handling of complaints in sub-paragraphs 33(d), (e) and (f) [three-stage process], and 33 (j)(i and ii) [written record of complaints] are not met.

Action point 7

- the school must ensure that it implements a complaints policy which includes a suitable three stage process for the handling of complaints [paragraph 33 (d), (e) and (f); EYFS 3.74].

Action point 8

- ensure that the school follows procedures for a written record of all complaints to be made, whether they are resolved and action taken by the school as a result of those complaints, regardless of whether or not they are upheld [paragraph 33 (j)(i and ii); EYFS 3.74].

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.19 The proprietor does not ensure that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils. A small minority of parents who responded to the questionnaire disagreed that the school is governed, led and managed effectively.

2.20 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school in paragraph 34 is not met.

Action point 9

- the proprietor must ensure that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, to fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils [paragraph 34 (1)(a), (b) and (c)].

3. Inspection Evidence

- 3.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with a governor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period and visited form meetings. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Flora Bean

Reporting inspector

Mr Martin Watson

Compliance team inspector (Former headmaster, HMC school)