



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report**

**St Cedd's School**

**March 2022**

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### School's Details

<b>School</b>	St Cedd's School			
<b>DfE number</b>	881/6003			
<b>Address</b>	St Cedd's School 178a New London Road Chelmsford Essex CM2 0AR			
<b>Telephone number</b>	01245 392810			
<b>Email address</b>	admissions@stcedds.org.uk			
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Matthew Clarke			
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Frances Marshall			
<b>Age range</b>	3 to 11			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	363			
	<b>Pre-school</b>	41	<b>Lower school</b>	128
	<b>Upper school</b>	194		
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8 to 11 March 2022			

## 1. Background Information

### About the school

- 1.1 St Cedd's School is an independent co-educational day school situated in a residential area of Chelmsford. Founded in 1931, the school acquired another independent school in 2008 and moved to its present site in 2011. The school has purpose built sporting facilities on site, and also uses additional off-site playing fields. The pre-school occupies a separate building on the same site.
- 1.2 The school is a charitable trust, administered by a council of governors. It is organised in three sections: pre-school, for children aged 3 to 4 years, lower school, for pupils aged 4 to 7 years, and upper school, for pupils aged 7 to 11 years.
- 1.3 The inspection took into account the circumstances faced by schools during the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions imposed by government guidance at various points of the pandemic.

### What the school seeks to do

- 1.4 The school aims to provide a secure and happy environment in which its pupils are encouraged to work and play with enthusiasm and commitment. It seeks to promote a tradition of academic excellence while offering the fullest possible range of experiences for pupils that promote a strong sense of spiritual and moral awareness, based on Christian principles.

### About the pupils

- 1.5 Most pupils are drawn from a range of professional families living within 10 miles of the school. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average compared to those taking the same tests nationally. The school has identified 24 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia, all of whom receive additional specialist help. No pupil has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Six pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), whose needs are supported by their classroom teachers. The school identifies just over one in ten pupils as being the most able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them, including pupils who have special talents in art, music and sport.

## 2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

### Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Inspections of schools with early years settings not requiring registration also report whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, inspections report 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. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

ISI inspections are also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

**This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY. The FOCUSED COMPLIANCE inspection 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. In this focused compliance inspection, key standards have been inspected in detail. These are the standards on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety; arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

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 standards 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 meets the 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 no further action is required as a result of this inspection.**

### **PART 1 – Quality of education provided**

- 2.2 The school's own framework for assessment confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 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 Pupils receive relationships education. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.5 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

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

### **PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

- 2.8 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; 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.
- 2.9 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], 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.**

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

- 2.10 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.11 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**

## **PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools**

2.12 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.

**2.13 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**

## **PART 6 – Provision of information**

2.14 A range of information is published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes 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. It also includes 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.

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

## **PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled**

2.16 Parental complaints, if any, are 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). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.

**2.17 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.**

## **PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

2.18 The proprietor ensures 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.

**2.19 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.**

### 3. Educational Quality Inspection

#### Preface

The **EDUCATIONAL QUALITY** inspection reports on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

**The headline judgements apply one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.**

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school.

#### Key findings

3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.

- Pupils of all abilities make strong progress over time, attaining standards that are often above expectations for their ages.
- Pupils of all ages, including children in the EYFS, are very effective communicators.
- Pupils exhibit excellent attitudes to their learning and achievement.
- Pupils across the school develop excellent study skills from an early age.
- Pupils are extremely successful in their achievements beyond the classroom.

3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.

- Pupils are extremely polite and respectful. They develop positive relationships with each other and with the staff.
- Pupils' moral understanding is very well developed.
- Pupils are successful in taking on many positions of responsibility. They display a mature commitment to serving the wider community.
- Pupils show kindness and respect for each other overall, but occasionally they have limited appreciation of individual differences and characteristics.
- Pupils are not always confident to seek help from adults if they are feeling anxious.

#### Recommendations

3.3 The school should make the following improvements:

- Enable pupils to fully appreciate individual differences and characteristics of others.
- Enable pupils to feel more confident about when to seek support for their own well-being.

#### The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.

3.5 Pupils of all ages achieve high academic standards. Almost all children in the EYFS achieve expected levels of attainment, with a large majority attaining well above national age-related expectations by the end of their Reception year. By the time they leave at the end of Year 6, a large majority of pupils are successful in gaining places at senior schools with competitive entry requirements. They are well



prepared to meet the requirements, and several are awarded scholarships each year. The school's own assessment, through standardised data, indicates that the achievement of pupils of all abilities is excellent, with many exceeding national expectations. Pupils with SEND and EAL achieve very well as a result of effective and timely support and teaching that matches their needs. Across the school, pupils of all abilities, including the most able make rapid progress because teaching approaches challenge their thinking. The school meets its aim to promote a tradition of academic excellence.

- 3.6 Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are excellent. They are keen to acquire new knowledge and respond positively to their teachers' suggestions for making improvements to their work. They draw accurately upon previous learning and are successful in applying their knowledge. For example, in a science lesson older pupils were able to make good use of their newly acquired knowledge about genetics. In another lesson they were able to predict from just one fact the likelihood of someone having a certain eye colour. Lower school pupils were able to sing confidently Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes in French with excellent pronunciation and evident understanding. Pre-school children show curiosity, imagination and independence, encouraged by the effective support they receive from the adults. A scrutiny of pupils' work showed that, as they move through the school, they use their knowledge increasingly well to identify what they need to learn next. Most pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire felt their skills and knowledge improve in most lessons. Inspection evidence confirms this.
- 3.7 Pupils are highly articulate and confident communicators, with well-honed speaking and listening skills. For example, at home time, children in the EYFS were able to summarise accurately the knowledge they had acquired earlier that day about different sea creatures. In the final of a public speaking competition, Year 6 pupils were able to perform with confidence and aplomb when they spoke on such diverse topics as black history and superstore psychology. Pupils develop proficiency in writing as a result of highly effective teaching in this area. For example, older pupils were able to identify and use in their creative writing examples of sophisticated figures of speech such as metaphor, as in the ghost of devastation, and simile, as in like a parasite feasting on its last meal. Younger pupils write with a clear and cursive handwriting style which enables them to create vocabulary that is new to them. From the earliest stage, children develop a love of reading and rapidly become fluent. As pupils move through the school, they instinctively choose challenging texts to read for their own pleasure and to broaden their knowledge of different subjects. By engaging with a range of authors, they also develop their understanding of genre, structure and complex character relationships.
- 3.8 Pupils' significant progress in mathematics is underpinned by their outstanding levels of attainment in numeracy and enthusiastic engagement with mathematical concepts. They are confident users of number when dealing with calculations. For example, in a history class, older pupils thoroughly enjoyed undertaking a Victorian money challenge. Here, they converted between pounds, shillings and pence and were able to calculate accurately how many sovereigns were in five pounds. Children in the EYFS recognised and sequenced numbers zero to ten, with some able to identify numbers up to twenty and beyond. Pupils apply their knowledge of numeracy to add clarity to complex problems. For example, in science pupils made effective use of Venn diagrams to show how conductors and electrical insulators can be sorted.
- 3.9 Pupils develop study skills from the moment they start at the school and go on to achieve excellent standards. This was observed in a lower school English lesson where pupils created a successful story plan about birds, using their sequencing techniques and knowledge of vocabulary. They retrieved and analysed facts from previous exercises to hypothesise about fictional birds and made use of similes to support their writing. Pupils display well-developed thinking skills and increasing independence in their learning as they progress through the school. They choose and use resources extremely productively. This was seen in a Year 6 international studies lesson, where pupils used a wide range of interesting resources, including video footage, texts, and pictures to better inform their understanding of those who came to the UK from Jamaica aboard the *Windrush*. Here, pupils skilfully interrogated the resources, concentrated fully and were secure in asking penetrating and perceptive questions. In

a Year 5 English lesson, pupils showed great maturity in helping to set their own learning objectives for their creative writing and used a helpful aide-memoire about story-writing techniques to improve their work.

- 3.10 Pupils' extremely positive attitudes to learning can be seen in classrooms and beyond. In a Spanish lesson, older pupils confidently wrote and read aloud simple phrases, exploring dates and birthdays, with authentic accents. Their interest and motivation are facilitated well by knowledgeable and enthusiastic teaching and by the promotion of warm working relationships between adults and pupils. During a Year 6 history debate, there was excellent collaborative work and use of sophisticated reasoning. Pupils displayed the ability to take on different roles of responsibility, for example leadership and scribing. Younger pupils enjoyed working with scissors to produce textile collage work inspired by the designer and artist, Clare Youngs. They examined colour, pattern and texture before designing their own patterns to be used in further artwork. In a literacy lesson, pupils drew upon some highly imaginative and creative ideas when considering a possible future career in the space industry.
- 3.11 Pupils' achievement beyond the classroom is excellent. They do especially well in art, music and sport. Pupils' non-academic achievement results from the confidence and experience they gain in a very wide range of clubs provided by school leaders. Around 90 clubs take place each week, ranging from chess to fencing. Just over a half of all pupils take part in at least two extra-curricular clubs each week. Just under a third of all pupils receive an individual weekly music lesson. As a result, they gain a great deal of valuable confidence that enables them to succeed in external music examinations. Several pupils are choristers in the local Cathedral choir. In public examinations in drama, all candidates achieved merit or distinction levels. The experience of performing and speaking in public helps pupils to develop both confidence and self-control. The school has a strong sporting ethos with 50 fixtures this term. Several pupils have represented the school at national levels in sports, including gymnastics and hockey. In addition, pupils have competed successfully at county levels in athletics, cross-country running and tennis. The school meets its aims by providing a stimulating curriculum that gives all pupils the chance to fulfil their potential both academically and beyond the classroom. Those who have SEND and EAL are as keen to take advantage of the range of opportunities as their peers and their achievement is greatly enhanced as a result.
- 3.12 Pupils use their understanding of information and communication technology (ICT) proficiently in lessons and to support their home learning. The youngest pupils learn to use the interactive whiteboard to link symbols to the correct digits in their numeracy lessons, while older pupils use the internet to undertake independent research projects. Older pupils were adept at using the school's mobile phone in their science lesson to scan quick response (QR) codes to match labels to parts of the heart. Similarly, pupils use presentation software to create videos for their extended project work in Year 6. Pupils' skills and facility in using ICT have enabled them to maintain progress across the curriculum during the national pandemic. Their competent engagement in online learning was facilitated skilfully and conscientiously by many school staff.

### **The quality of the pupils' personal development**

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils show excellent self-understanding and deep self-knowledge for their ages. In discussions, they explained that they enjoy being challenged by difficult tasks because successful completion gives them a rewarding sense of achievement. Pupils are generally very resilient. They were disciplined when learning to play many different percussion instruments in one lesson, keeping in time with a backing track. Here, they demonstrated initiative and the resilience to persevere with the task, even when they made small slips. Younger pupils showed excellent self-discipline and a mature understanding of basic classroom safety when using scissors and glue in a numeracy lesson.
- 3.15 Pupils have a mature appreciation of the importance of making sensible decisions. Older ones stated that in assemblies they learn that making the right decisions now is likely to affect their futures. Pupils

have frequent opportunities to make decisions throughout the school day which helps to develop their self-confidence and independence. For example, in a personal, social, health and education (PSHE) lesson, older pupils learned about the positive and negative effects of using medicines and that laws are there to keep everyone safe. In making sensible decisions about using drugs, pupils discussed the negative effects of taking too much of any drug as being potentially unsafe and addictive. Some pupils were very knowledgeable about the dangers of mixing more than one prescribed medicine with another, and their effects on the body.

- 3.16 Throughout the school community, pupils have a strong sense of spiritual awareness. They express their appreciation of non-material aspects of life. They gain much enjoyment and fulfilment when they take part in performance, whether through drama or music. Pupils are able to explore and express their deeper emotions more fully in the performing arts when language and words become exhausted. In a religious studies lesson, older pupils reflected thoughtfully on the teachings of the Qur'an. Here they displayed a good understanding of and sensitivity to non-material aspects of life. They were able to reflect on and appreciate their own understanding of beliefs and those of others. Children in EYFS have regular quiet times where they are enabled to reflect on their feelings through the daily mood board.
- 3.17 Pupils' moral understanding and responsibility for their behaviour towards others are excellent. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong. For example, in a history debate, older pupils showed an excellent understanding when they considered the motion 'nothing good can come out of war' and made some pertinent reflections on current events. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school actively promotes good behaviour. Inspection evidence supports this view. Pupils show courtesy and respect towards staff and their peers. They display a good sense of responsibility for their own behaviour and understand how it is essential for them always to present themselves as good role models. For example, older pupils support younger ones well by running clubs and helping them at lunchtimes.
- 3.18 Pupils have outstanding levels of social development and work productively with others to solve problems that present themselves. They collaborate well and are very supportive of one another. This was observed in all the lessons seen and as pupils moved around the school site. For instance, in a science lesson, older pupils, worked together successfully, taking turns to listen to each other and to work out how fast ice will melt on different surfaces. In a house music competition, older pupils worked as a team to support younger pupils in a common purpose, fostering secure progress for both groups.
- 3.19 Pupils make a significant contribution to the lives of others in the school and the wider community and support the school's aims by working together for the general good. They embrace responsibility from an early age with infectious enthusiasm and understanding. They willingly and successfully take on leadership roles. These include those of school councillor, food forum leader, librarian, art monitor, senior chamber choir captain, string orchestra co-leader and monitor, and wind band monitor. These and other posts of responsibility enable them to make a positive contribution to the wider life of the school. Pupils take great pride in helping those less fortunate than themselves by raising money for several UK and overseas charities. This enables them to understand and appreciate that anyone may encounter difficulties in their lives and empathise with their plight. Pupils have developed strong partnership working with local institutions. For example, to celebrate its centenary, pupils designed a musical patchwork collage of painted squares of different colours, which was displayed in Chelmsford Cathedral.
- 3.20 In subjects across the curriculum, pupils learn about the diversity of societies and cultures other than their own. They also learn from the different cultures represented in the school population. For example, in response to the public speaking theme of Under the Surface, older pupils were observed considering the history of black women's hair as a symbol of identity and linked this to their own cultural and personal identity. Pupils develop a mature appreciation of British culture, by gaining knowledge about the historical development of literature, drama visual arts and music. Most pupils

are respectful of diversity within the community and are prepared to have open discussions about religion, ethnicity, gender and disability. In the questionnaire, a very small minority of pupils felt that they are not always treated with respect by their peers in the school. In addition, during some interviews with inspectors, pupils did not always show a wide enough appreciation, knowledge and understanding of diversity.

- 3.21 Overall, pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. They understand that participation in sport and physical pursuits can make a positive contribution to their physical, mental and emotional well-being. For example, in a physical education lesson, older pupils worked collaboratively to perform to high standards in circuit training, exploring aerobic and anaerobic aspects of fitness, such as sprints and step-ups. During lunchtimes, pupils try to eat a well-balanced diet by making their plates into a rainbow of healthy and nutritious choices. Pupils have a keen understanding of how to stay safe online. In discussion, pupils said that ICT pupil leaders from different year groups delivered a helpful assembly giving practical tips about safety online. In the questionnaire, most pupils said that they feel very secure in their knowledge that there is always an adult to help them should the need arise. In discussion with inspectors, however, some pupils said they did not always feel confident or comfortable about seeking support from adults when they were feeling anxious or had sensitive issues to discuss.

## 4. Inspection Evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff, the chair of governors, safeguarding governor and attended form meetings and assemblies. 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

Mr David Scott	Reporting inspector
Ms Rachel Pairman	Compliance team inspector (Deputy head, IAPS school)
Mr Robert Gullifer	Team inspector (Former head, IAPS school)
Mrs Sarah Marsh	Team inspector (Head of prep school, GSA school)