



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports

St Christopher's School

September 2019



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School's Details

School	St Christopher's School			
DfE number	878/6050			
Address	St Christopher's School Mount Barton Staverton Totnes Devon TQ9 6PF			
Telephone number	01803 762202			
Email address	office@st-christophers.devon.sch.uk			
Headteacher	Mrs Alexandra Cottell			
Proprietor	Mrs Jane Kenyon			
Age range	2 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	79			
	EYFS	26	Prep	53
Inspection dates	24 to 26 September 2019			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 St. Christopher's School is an independent co-educational day school for pupils aged between 2 and 11 years. It has been owned and governed by the same family since the school's foundation in 1991. It moved to its present site at Staverton in 1993.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection a new head teacher has been appointed, the school has converted a science room into a permanent classroom and a suite of laptops has been introduced to enable further use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning across the curriculum.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school's aim is to provide a happy, secure and safe environment in which each child's individual physical, emotional, social and educational needs are recognised and met within a high quality, broad and well-balanced curriculum based on sound Christian principles of mutual respect and equality for all.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come from a range of professional backgrounds, mostly from white British families living within a 15-mile radius of the school. The school's own assessment procedures indicate the pupils' ability is broadly above average. The school has identified 13 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia, all of whom receive additional specialist help. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan and there are no pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL). Data used by the school has identified seven pupils as being the more able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them and for two other pupils because of their special talents in sport and music.

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, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. 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 FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY, the report of which appears later in this document. The 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 regulations and standards have been inspected in detail. These are the regulations on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety, arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information to parents; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management.

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 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 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 pupils

- 2.7 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.
- 2.8 **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

- 2.9 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.10 **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

- 2.11 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.
- 2.12 **The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.13 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.

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

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.15 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.

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

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.17 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.

2.18 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.

Since the school was last inspected, the framework for inspection has changed. The current inspection framework uses different criteria and arrangements for grading from those used in previous inspection frameworks. The judgements made on this inspection are, therefore, not directly comparable to judgements made on previous inspections.

All independent schools are required to meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards. However, different inspectorates apply different frameworks that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. The ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by the national inspectorate, Ofsted. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement about key outcomes for pupils and information on the quality of the school's work.

The headline judgements must include 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 demonstrate highly developed knowledge, skills and understanding for their age.
 - Pupils sustain very mature and entirely positive attitudes to learning.
 - Pupils are highly articulate and have a passion for reading and writing.
 - Pupils' achievement and use of ICT is excellent.
 - Pupils of all abilities make significant progress over time.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- Pupils display exemplary behaviour at all times.
 - Pupils are very resilient and self-aware.
 - Pupils exhibit strong social awareness reflecting the deeply embedded school ethos.
 - Pupils are highly respectful and supportive to all in the school community.

Recommendation

- 3.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes, the school might wish to consider the following improvement:
- Broaden pupils' opportunities to explore and discuss their understanding of different cultural traditions in philosophical and spiritual terms.

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 abilities make significant progress over time, as demonstrated through lesson observations, scrutiny of work and the school's own standardised assessment data which indicates that the attainment of the most able pupils is well above the expectation for their age, and for those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) at least in line with their ability and often above. Pupils make strong progress in the EYFS attaining well above the national average by the end of their reception year. Annually, nearly all pupils leaving the school at the end of Year 6 gain places to their first choice of school, of which many are academically selective. Pupils with SEND are also successful in gaining entry to their first choice of school because of the highly effective support and individualised approach to learning. Nearly all parents and pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaires agreed that the school enables pupils to make good progress, and meets their individual needs effectively. The school is very successful in its aim to recognise and meet each child's educational needs.
- 3.6 Across the curriculum, pupils demonstrate highly developed knowledge, skills and understanding for their age, supported by the broad and dynamically taught curriculum. Children in the EYFS use scientific vocabulary far above the expectation for their age. For example, a child was able explain that he needed a drink because he was dehydrated. Pupils throughout the school are able to respond with a high level of accuracy to questions in French, recognising a wide range of words, well above the expectations for their age. They develop excellent co-ordination skills, enabling carefully controlled movement across a range of physical activities and sports. Pupils, including those with SEND, complete projects in design technology (DT) and art with creative flair and vivid imagination to standards well above the expectations for their age.

- 3.7 Pupils of all ages display excellent communication skills across all areas of the curriculum. They listen intently and are able to follow instructions, prompts and guidance effectively and accurately. They speak articulately in lessons and are able to reflect on and evaluate their own work to find effective ways to improve. Their writing in English and subjects across the curriculum is accurate, engaging and very creative, demonstrating a broad vocabulary at all age groups. For example, when writing diary entries as William the Conqueror, younger pupils were able to write fluently and clearly, punctuate with accuracy and use a wide range of interesting and appropriate vocabulary. They were supported by teaching that recognised and made appropriate adjustments for their individual needs, thus ensuring that those with SEND achieved as well as their peers. Pupils acquire confident reading skills from an early age as a result of carefully planned teaching about the sounds letters make and regular practice within a positive culture of encouragement and praise from teachers, who make the learning environment challenging, dynamic and fun. There is a deeply embedded culture throughout the school of reading for pleasure. Pupils demonstrate confidence with learning modern languages where, in French, they achieve high standards in speaking and listening from an early age, progressing rapidly to writing accurately in short passages and successfully completing comprehension exercises.
- 3.8 Pupils of all ages demonstrate high levels of mathematical competence and apply this very effectively both in their numeracy work and across the curriculum. They have very strong calculational and mental arithmetic skills and are successful in taking responsibility for their learning by choosing the appropriate methods and resources needed to solve problems. For example, during a mathematics lesson, older pupils were able to explain with clarity and enthusiasm their choice of subtraction method and why it was the most appropriate to use in their calculations at that time. Younger pupils in a modelmaking activity were able to apply their measuring skills accurately to determine the height of towers constructed from plastic bricks. Older pupils are able to successfully apply and build-on their strong mathematical understanding as a consequence of well-devised investigations, such as determining the relationship between the diameter of a circle and its circumferences.
- 3.9 Pupils make confident use of ICT and demonstrate a wide range of skills in a range of applications to support their work across the curriculum. Children in the EYFS are able to programme small robots to navigate a course around the classroom floor, whilst older pupils are able to use computer coding applications to create exciting quiz games. Pupils in Year 4 successfully applied their understanding and showed great initiative by programming handheld devices to play a popular playground game, which they then used to run a mini-tournament for pupils of all ages during breaktimes, supplying and awarding prizes for the winners. Pupils make excellent use of ICT across the curriculum through a range of applications from data analysis, research and mathematical practice to creating presentations and marketing materials for school events. Pupils, including those with SEND, demonstrate a very high level of competence for their age, their learning much enhanced by leaders' provision of specialist equipment, such as laptops for classroom work.
- 3.10 Pupils demonstrate excellent critical thinking skills which they apply successfully across the curriculum. Their reasoning is strong and they are able to apply new knowledge effectively and quickly. For example, in a history lesson on Ancient Egypt, younger pupils demonstrated rapid understanding of the concept of hieroglyphics, which they were then able to apply successfully to translate their own names into hieroglyphics. Older pupils show well-developed inferential skills in comprehension exercises and are able to work both independently and in collaboration to solve problems. Pupils demonstrate creativity in their responses to independent learning tasks, particularly in DT and art, and a willingness to review their work to improve it. They have good organisation skills, coming to lessons ready to learn and full of enthusiasm.
- 3.11 Pupils achieve considerable success each year, a high proportion of the oldest succeeding in entrance examinations to academically selective state and independent schools. A proportion also gain scholarships to their next schools in, for example, academic achievement and music. Pupils' achievement outside of the formal curriculum is excellent. A significant proportion annually gain distinctions in speech and drama examinations. Pupils are highly successful in national sporting events,

representatives from the school reaching the finals in cross-country, athletics, and swimming, whilst the table tennis team achieved success in a county tournament. Pupils have been successful at an inter-schools' music festival winning a recorder class. They have also gained second place in a national art competition and were regional finalists in an inter-school general knowledge quiz competition. Pupils are very successful at organising team entries into the school's house music competition, taking full responsibility for the selection and preparation of pupils for the various ensembles and house choirs required, showing a high level of collaboration and teamwork.

- 3.12 Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning and older pupils state emphatically that they love school. They demonstrate a high level of resilience, are willing to try new things and are unafraid to make mistakes, recognising these as opportunities to learn and improve. They demonstrate strong initiative, often taking ideas and developing them into new projects. They work well in teams, collaborating successfully to solve problems, and demonstrating strong negotiation skills.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Assured and self-confident in their own abilities, pupils of all ages, including those with SEND, demonstrate high levels of self-understanding. They are self-disciplined in and out of the classroom and engage respectfully with one other and their teachers, who, by effectively modelling the school's values, offer excellent leadership. Pupils display notable levels of resilience in lessons, and when offered a choice will often deliberately choose the tasks that are more challenging, explaining that if they get stuck, they will work together to overcome the difficulties. Pupils can identify their own and others' strengths and weaknesses, giving and receiving both praise and support with considerable humility. They are not afraid to make mistakes. Whilst explaining their ideas in a DT lesson, pupils, when asked what would happen if their designs didn't work, responded by saying they would see where it went wrong and then try again. They know how to improve their learning and are exceptionally self-aware; for example, in a numeracy lesson, pupils chose to continue consolidating previous work on subtraction, despite already having achieved a substantial number of correct answers, to ensure a secure understanding of the concept.
- 3.15 Pupils of all ages are very effective decision makers, taking advantage of the frequent opportunities provided by the leadership through the curriculum and at other times to make sensible and mature choices. In the EYFS, children successfully make independent choices of both the materials and the method they want to use, for example, for dressing cardboard people. Older pupils in a broad range of practical activities in curriculum areas such as DT, science, art and maths, can successfully choose appropriate materials or methods to undertake investigations or projects. Pupils are very effective at making their collective voice heard by asking for, and gaining, changes to the school's provision through the innovative house meeting arrangements. Successful outcomes include the introduction of long trousers for male pupils in the winter, participation in hockey for both male and female pupils, and ice-cream on Fridays during the summer term. These changes are enabled by a culture of listening exemplified and promoted by leaders.
- 3.16 Pupils have a keen appreciation of the spiritual aspects of life and take part willingly in worship and singing during school assemblies. They have a good understanding of Christianity supported by the strong culture and ethos developed by the leadership. They find, however, expressing their ideas and thoughts about the non-material aspects of life and philosophical ideas more challenging, as a result of limited opportunities in lessons to explore open-ended questions.
- 3.17 Pupils display exemplary behaviour at all times, showing a highly developed sense of respect for everyone around them. They take responsibility for their actions and behave impeccably towards one another. Older pupils are successful role models and give very effective and caring support to younger pupils through their roles as prefects. This ethos of caring for one another is deeply embedded within the culture of the school as a result of a strong focus by governors on kindness and represents a highly

successful fulfilment of their aim to provide a happy and secure environment based on sound Christian principles of mutual respect and equality for all. All parents and pupils who responded to the questionnaires agreed that the school actively promotes good behaviour and expects pupils to behave well. Pupils have an age-appropriate knowledge and understanding of the judiciary and laws, supported by leaders' introduction of citizenship lessons.

- 3.18 Pupils exhibit excellent social awareness, working in harmony alongside others in lessons and around the school. Strong relationships and high levels of cooperation are underpinned by a deeply embedded culture of mutual respect. Pupils are able to work together very effectively in a range of situations to solve problems and achieve common goals, proudly describing their collaborations to organise teams for the house music competition, and to decorate their classrooms and solve puzzles at Christmas. Pupils work exceptionally well with others in sport, demonstrating excellent team spirit and a determination to do their best for each other.
- 3.19 Pupils make an enormous contribution to their school community. Older pupils engage with great care and sensitivity with younger pupils, successfully fulfilling their roles and positions of responsibility, whilst also offering great support to staff, for example, during guided reading where the oldest pupils work collaboratively and with great maturity to offer strong support to their younger peers. At breaktimes older pupils initiate play with younger ones setting an excellent example of how to play well in collaboration with one another. Pupils have also begun to develop effective relationships with older members of the local community through leaders' development of innovative partnerships with two local community organisations for the elderly. Pupils raise funds enthusiastically for their partner school in Uganda and are able to talk about the benefits their efforts bring.
- 3.20 Pupils believe strongly in showing respect, not just to each other but to all those around, supported by the school's exceptional ethos and culture of kindness, care and compassion. They show a willingness and interest in finding out about people from other cultures and different backgrounds, supported by the study of world religions in religious education, but their knowledge and experience is less well developed in practice. They understand the need to show sensitivity and tolerance to those who are different to themselves and feel deeply about the importance of including others, however different to themselves, both within activities in the classroom and outside at playtimes. They understand that others may, from time to time, need their support, and recognise that this can be offered without fuss. All parents and pupils who responded to the questionnaires agreed that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of other people.
- 3.21 Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and stay safe. They understand what makes a healthy diet and how this affects the choices of food provided for them by the school. They are also not afraid to give feedback and suggestions to the school about lunches. Pupils are physically fit, taking an active part in a wide range of sporting activities, and from an early age they understand the importance of dental hygiene. They have a very well-developed sense of personal safety, with an excellent understanding of the boundaries within school and what to do in an emergency, as a result of the deeply embedded culture of safety. They have a good understanding of how to stay safe near roads when away from the school site. Pupils have a detailed awareness of how to stay safe online, supported by the school's curriculum in ICT and leaders' provision of regular e-safety workshops, and are able to talk confidently about the steps they should take if they were to encounter problems. Pupils' willingness to be open when they experience problems, within a school culture that encourages honesty and frankness, helps to ensure that they maintain strong mental well-being.

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 and with the proprietor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings and assemblies. Inspectors visited 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 Matthew Lovett	Reporting inspector
Mr Sam Antrobus	Compliance team inspector (Executive chairman, ISA and IAPS schools' group)
Mrs Emma Haworth	Team inspector (Head, ISA school)