

School inspection report

4 to 6 March 2025

St Christopher's The Hall School

49 Bromley Road

Beckenham

Kent

BR3 5PA

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

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Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders, governors and the proprietor work collaboratively and possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to fulfil their roles effectively. Together they ensure that the wellbeing of pupils is a priority. Leaders uphold the school's ethos, making sure that pupils are treated as individuals and encouraged to aim for the highest standards in all aspects of school life.
2. Leaders deliver rapid, significant and sustained improvements to the quality of education. They tenaciously look for ways in which they can widen and improve the curriculum on offer, including ensuring that they meet excellent academic standards. Their monitoring systems rigorously check on the quality of teachers' delivery of the curriculum. They act swiftly to bring improvement, for example, in the guidance and feedback that teachers provide to pupils or in using assessment to identify and precisely support pupils who need more help. Leaders' strategic focus and action to ensure continuous improvement in the quality of education is a significant strength. Through this approach, leaders strive for excellence in pupils' experience of their curriculum.
3. Teachers are knowledgeable about the subjects that they teach. Typically, teaching is of a high standard, using well-planned and well-resourced activities that help pupils to develop a rich understanding of the content that they are learning. Pupils in need of additional support are able to keep up with their peers, including pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, a small amount of teaching does not identify and support pupils to think and learn independently or apply their learning in more complex ways.
4. Adults in the Nursery and Reception classes are knowledgeable and skilled. They ensure that the setting provides a well-resourced, interactive learning environment. Through well-planned routines, children settle quickly, learn to listen and take turns, and develop early friendships. Staff prioritise the development of children's language and communication skills, as well as early phonics, reading and writing. They are adept at identifying children who need additional support, including those children who have SEND. The safety and wellbeing of children are prioritised.
5. Leaders have successfully embedded a broad physical education (PE) and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. These curriculum areas equip pupils with a thorough understanding of the importance of health, fitness and wellbeing. The curriculum and wider offer of assemblies, visiting speakers and counselling support also helps pupils to develop the emotional literacy and resilience needed to support their wellbeing. Pupils develop the skills to navigate challenges and manage their emotions effectively. Behaviour is exemplary and very well managed by leaders and staff.
6. Pupils develop a thorough understanding of the importance of mutual respect for those who have different values, beliefs, faiths and cultures. This is provided through the curriculum and reinforced through assemblies, visiting speakers, trips and visits. The school fosters an inclusive environment where all pupils feel valued. Older pupils act as good role models for younger pupils. They actively take on opportunities for responsibility, both in the school community and in the wider local community, such as charity work.
7. Leaders responsible for safeguarding have the necessary skills and experience to carry out their roles effectively. They have a secure understanding of local safeguarding procedures, and they know how

to make use of external agencies if the need arises. Governors are well informed of the impact of safeguarding procedures through regular checks on leaders' work.

The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- ensure that teachers identify and support pupils who are ready to think or learn with greater independence, so that they can apply their learning in more complex ways.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

8. Leaders prioritise the wellbeing of pupils and make decisions in their best interests. They regularly review where they can improve provision. They listen carefully to parents, pupils and staff, and use this information to help guide them. As a result, they are highly effective in ensuring that the school fulfils its aims to provide a happy and hard-working environment where pupils have the opportunity to develop their talents within a wide and well-balanced curriculum. In this environment, pupils thrive.
9. Governors and the proprietor provide effective oversight, support and challenge to school leaders. Through sub-committees, regular visits and procedural reviews, they evaluate the impact of leaders' decisions on pupils' outcomes. Leaders work closely with governors to develop the school's long-term strategic plan, ensuring a continuously improving learning environment. Leaders, governors and the proprietor provide effective oversight and ensure that the school consistently meets the requirements of the Standards.
10. Leaders have brought rapid and sustained improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They rigorously and routinely review the curriculum, ensuring it provides wide-ranging and relevant opportunities for pupils. They have supported teachers to access high-quality professional development. They have developed teachers' approaches to feedback and guidance for pupils, to ensure that it enables pupils to make meaningful improvements to their work, or to develop their understanding. Leaders monitor the work of teachers, providing helpful guidance about where they can better support pupils, including through their oversight of assessment information. Leaders identify precisely what pupils know and can do, and where they need additional help. They ensure additional support is timely and effective, including for pupils who have SEND.
11. Leaders within the early years provide effective leadership, ensuring that the well-structured and engaging curriculum supports children's development. Leaders provide carefully planned activities in a well-resourced setting and ensure that staff are well trained to deliver the curriculum. Leaders oversee an effective transition stage for children into Year 1 through regular collaboration between staff and the sharing of academic and pastoral data to prepare them for the next stages of their education.
12. Leaders and staff are readily available for parents, including at the beginning and end of each school day, allowing for any complaints and concerns to be resolved on an informal basis. On the few occasions when complaints are received, leaders address them promptly in accordance with the school's policy.
13. Leaders ensure that appropriate information, as required by the Standards, is made available, including to parents. The school maintains a close partnership with parents to keep them abreast of the required information. Leaders maintain an informative website. All policies are appropriate and accessible through the website. Parents are suitably informed of their child's progress through school reports, information evenings and informal meetings. Leaders provide the local authority with the required information relating to pupils who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan, including information related to funding.

14. The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. The school has a well-considered accessibility plan that fully considers how all pupils can access a broad and balanced education at the school. Leaders regularly review their approaches to equality, diversity and inclusion to ensure the promotion of protected characteristics.
15. Leaders actively promote the wellbeing of pupils through an effective process of risk management. Leaders are well trained and knowledgeable about how to ensure that risks are identified and well managed, including those risks related to on- and off-site activities, travel, and for individual pupils where needed.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance

- 16. All the relevant Standards are met.**

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

17. Leaders have reviewed and significantly improved the curriculum that pupils learn. The broad range of subjects taught ensures that pupils have ample opportunities to acquire new knowledge and develop skills. The curriculum is designed so that pupils develop their knowledge and understanding as they get older. This starts with the youngest children in the early years, where leaders provide a well-structured, age-appropriate curriculum that is closely linked to pupils' preparation for the transition to Year 1.
18. Leaders have prioritised reading within the curriculum. Pupils read extensively through a well-established reading programme and in a well-resourced library. Regular reading events, including author visits, foster a love of reading and help pupils to develop an extensive vocabulary. Pupils' writing skills and creativity is well developed, for example, through recent extended writing activities on the Holocaust, which show depth of thought and expression.
19. Pupils' creative skills are developed through a thorough and well-planned range of opportunities in music, art and drama lessons. These curriculum areas are enhanced by participation in choirs and musical ensembles, singing in assemblies, performing in local churches and concerts, visits from artists, opportunities to showcase artwork, and regular school productions.
20. Leaders ensure that the curriculum is well delivered by teachers. Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects that they teach. They use thought-provoking questions that deepen pupils' understanding. They use resources and plan activities that help to keep pupils engaged and interested in their learning. Teachers provide comprehensive feedback and guidance that helps pupils understand how to improve. However, some teaching does not identify where pupils are ready to apply learning in more independent or complex ways. When this happens, pupils find work less challenging.
21. Teachers provide carefully planned activities for children in the Nursery and Reception classes. They have embedded an appropriate phonics programme and structured reading scheme to develop early literacy skills. Children's language and communication are strengthened through planned activities and play-based learning. Adults develop children's co-ordination and control, including pencil grip and early letter formation, building strong foundations for children to move onto Year 1.
22. Leaders identify the specific needs of pupils who have SEND, including for the youngest children in the Nursery and Reception classes. They appropriately use external specialist support to identify and support pupils, where needed. They provide staff with clear guidance about pupils' needs and the best way to support them in class. Pupils who have SEND are supported by their teachers to learn effectively alongside their peers. On occasion, where needed, pupils who have SEND receive additional intervention or sessions. Pupils who have SEND learn and achieve well.
23. The needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are effectively met. Teachers provide structured vocabulary support and targeted assistance to help pupils who speak EAL to develop confidence in their language skills. As a result, pupils acquire language skills quickly and securely, access lessons successfully and make good progress across the curriculum.
24. Leaders and teachers use comprehensive assessment data to inform their understanding about which pupils may need extra help and support. Teachers use the information to inform their planning so that pupils are supported in lessons. Where pupils require additional support, this is

delivered in class and through targeted small-group interventions. Pupils, over time, learn well across the curriculum, including in reading, writing and mathematics. Many pupils achieve well in additional areas, such as external music examinations, with notable successes in securing external music scholarships. Pupils are well prepared to move onto secondary school by the end of Year 6.

25. Leaders have implemented an extensive extra-curricular programme. Leaders have also embedded a well-planned programme where older pupils work alongside younger members of the school in a range of activities, enhancing pupils' learning beyond the classroom. For example, older pupils work regularly with children from the early years in developing bridge-building skills and in creative design. This approach fosters collaboration between year groups and strengthens the sense of community within the school.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation

- 26. All the relevant Standards are met.**

Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

27. Leaders' commitment to equality is reflected in the PSHE curriculum, which proactively promotes the values of inclusion, trust and respect. This curriculum is well planned and well taught. Leaders have carefully interwoven relationships education to ensure that pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of a range of information, including on the topics of consent, healthy relationships and safety. Parents are consulted and informed about the content of the curriculum through information events, allowing them to support learning from home.
28. Pastoral leaders have implemented an effective strategy to develop emotional literacy, equipping pupils with the skills to articulate their feelings and manage emotions. The introduction of calm corners in classrooms provides designated spaces for self-regulation, while access to a school counsellor ensures additional support is available when needed. As a result, pupils are increasingly confident in expressing their emotions and seeking help when required.
29. Pupils develop self-esteem and self-confidence in a safe learning environment where they are encouraged to try new things in their learning. Pupils benefit from the many opportunities they have to perform in front of others. For example, the youngest children are encouraged to speak to the class about their experiences, while others listen intently. Older pupils enjoy the many opportunities to perform in front of audiences. Pupils develop their confidence in a supportive learning environment, encouraged by positive relationships with staff and other pupils.
30. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. The importance of respect and kindness in pupils' behaviour is promoted through the consistent reinforcement of high expectations from staff. Pupils respond well to rewards for positive behaviour, such as weekly celebration assemblies or letters they receive from the headteacher. Leaders have established appropriate systems to manage pupils' behaviour. As a result, on the few occasions when pupils display negative behaviour, staff address it promptly and effectively.
31. The school promotes and strengthens pupils' personal development by embedding their chosen core character values, including respect, resilience and kindness, across school life. These values are actively reinforced through assemblies, engaging displays and visual counters. Pupils are encouraged to exemplify these values, striving to become more self-reliant, make good choices for themselves and always do their best.
32. The school's approach to promoting respect provides a secure foundation for the anti-bullying procedures. Pupils learn about positive friendships and conflict resolution through PSHE, and these principles are reinforced during assemblies and form time. In the early years, children learn the qualities of good friendship through discussions with staff. When bullying does occur, pastoral leaders conduct thorough investigations, and appropriate support is given to all pupils involved.
33. There is a well-planned PE curriculum that supports pupils to enjoy sports, take part in competitive activities and engage in exercise. In the early years, children are well supported to develop their motor skills through planned activities and while they play. They engage in regular outdoor activities that promote physical development, including collaboration with older pupils in cross-age sports sessions. Older pupils understand the benefits of healthy living as a result of exercise and nutrition plans in PE and science lessons.

34. The school's premises are well maintained, providing a safe and supportive learning space for pupils. Leaders undertake appropriate checks on the health and safety and fire safety measures in the school. Pupils are taught about how to keep themselves safe on the site, and about emergency procedures such as fire drills. The school maintains adequate first aid arrangements, with well-trained staff, including those qualified in paediatric first aid. Suitable supervision of pupils is in place, including in the Nursery and Reception classes, where appropriate staff-to-child ratios are consistently maintained.
35. Attendance of pupils at the school is well managed. Leaders promote the importance of attendance in a range of ways, including through information events with parents. Leaders work closely with pupils and their families to support pupils' routine attendance. An appropriate admission register is maintained in line with statutory guidance. Leaders inform the local authority of any pupils who join or leave the school at non-standard transition points, or where they have any concerns.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

- 36. All the relevant Standards are met.**

Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

37. Leaders have implemented a curriculum that includes well-planned PSHE and religious education and helps pupils to appreciate those from different cultures, beliefs and faiths. This curriculum is enhanced by a well-considered assembly programme, exposure to diverse texts and an informative array of visiting speakers. For example, pupils engage positively with a visiting local professional football team, sharing their own varied backgrounds, experiences and faiths. Pupils are encouraged to celebrate their uniqueness through initiatives such as family-led talks. Pupils broaden their views of the world around them and engage articulately in stimulating discussions and debates.
38. Leaders ensure that there is well-planned and sufficient coverage to ensure that pupils develop their economic understanding from an early age. For example, the youngest children learn about money through role-playing shopping. They successfully apply their numbers up to ten when working out how many coins they have. As they get older, pupils learn about the impact of wealth. For example, in the literacy curriculum they learn about fictional characters and the role of finance and economic wellbeing in their experience. The oldest pupils apply their computing skills to financial literacy when creating budgets on spreadsheets for their enterprise projects.
39. Pupils develop a strong understanding of right and wrong and the importance of laws in society. Pupils develop this understanding through a range of lessons, assemblies and various educational experiences and interactions with British institutions. For example, the youngest children learn about the role of the police in protecting people. Older pupils visit the Houses of Parliament to understand how the government operates and how laws are passed. Visits from the police and the local member of parliament provide insights into the importance of laws and their enforcement.
40. Pupils learn about democracy in a range of ways, including through their PSHE lessons. They actively participate in democratic processes by voting their peers into positions of responsibility, such as the school council and heads of school. The school community engages in democratic decision-making by voting for the annual charity they support. Pupils see the positive impact that their voices can have on those around them through the actions of the school council. Pupils across the school feed their ideas to the form representatives for consideration. For example, pupils' ideas around healthy diets resulted in greener vegetable options, and pupils initiated a change to the school uniform.
41. Pupils care for each other and value helping others. Older pupils act as positive role models, and support younger children and pupils, including during play. The youngest children in Nursery and Reception are well supported to socialise and interact positively with their peers and the adults around them. As they get older, pupils engage in various community-focused activities. For example, they support local food banks, participate in park litter picks, and engage in partnerships with local care homes to read and sing with the residents. Pupils develop a strong understanding about the importance of mutual respect, effective collaboration and helping others.
42. Pupils are well prepared for the next stages in their education. Leaders oversee the smooth transition between different sections of the school, ensuring pupils' needs are met. Older pupils take part in interview practice and tours of senior schools and listen to talks from visiting headteachers to broaden their understanding of their next steps and equip them with the knowledge and confidence to be able to thrive.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

43. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

44. Safeguarding arrangements are effective. The safeguarding team have the necessary knowledge, skills and experience to carry out their roles. Effective measures are in place to manage potential safeguarding risks and protect pupils from harm. Leaders successfully oversee the implementation of policies and procedures that actively promote safeguarding and pupils' wellbeing throughout the school.
45. Leaders provide effective regular training, such as safeguarding workshops and refresher updates to staff. As a result, staff are highly vigilant to any signs of concern among pupils and report these concerns in a timely and effective way. The school has effective procedures in place for handling safeguarding concerns. Leaders ensure that pupils get timely support. Accurate safeguarding records are maintained.
46. Leaders work closely with external agencies to seek advice and to provide additional support for pupils, when needed. For example, they are members of the local safeguarding hub, where they utilise their shared expertise to enhance their understanding of safeguarding protocols within the area.
47. Governors maintain appropriate oversight and ensure that leaders prioritise pupils' safety and wellbeing. They are knowledgeable about their statutory responsibilities. They use a range of information to check on the quality and effectiveness of leaders' work. They work closely with leaders to ensure that they have sufficient resources to support pupils effectively. For example, they have introduced a computerised approach to record-keeping, to support more effective collaboration between safeguarding leaders.
48. Pupils are confident that there are a range of adults they can turn to if they have a problem, including the school's counsellor. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when online. For example, through PSHE and computing lessons, pupils know how to protect their personal information. The school has implemented an effective approach to filtering and monitoring the school's online systems and electronic devices. Leaders use this information in a timely way to take action to keep pupils safe.
49. Leaders oversee an effective process when recruiting adults to work with pupils, in line with relevant statutory guidance. Staff have the relevant knowledge and skills to carry out their roles. Leaders ensure that they maintain appropriate records of the checks that they make on adults, including through the school's single central record (SCR) of staffing appointments.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

50. All the relevant Standards are met.

School details

School	St Christopher's The Hall School
Department for Education number	305/6010
Registered charity number	307917
Address	49 Bromley Road Beckenham Kent BR3 5PA
Phone number	020 86502200
Email address	mail@stchristophersthehall.org.uk
Website	www.stchristophersthehall.org.uk
Proprietor	St Dunstan's Education Group
Chair	Mr Paul Durgan
Headteacher	Mr Thomas Carter
Age range	3 to 11
Number of pupils	223
Date of previous inspection	11 October 2022

Information about the school

51. St Christopher's The Hall School is a co-educational independent day school in Beckenham, Kent. The school comprises a pre-school for children in the Nursery classes, a pre-prep for pupils in Reception through to Year 2 and a prep school for pupils in Years 3 to 6. All classes are housed across two buildings on same site. Since the previous inspection, the school has merged with the St Dunstan's Education Group in January 2025. Leaders' work is overseen by a board of governors and an executive group, led by a chief operating executive.
52. There are 61 children in the early years comprising three Nursery and two Reception classes.
53. The school has identified 13 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Three pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
54. The school has identified English as an additional language for four pupils.
55. The school states its aims are to provide a happy and hard-working environment where all pupils can find the opportunity to develop their talents to the full within a wide and well-balanced curriculum. Each pupil is treated as an individual and encouraged to aim for the highest standards in whatever they do.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

4 to 6 March 2025

56. A team of three inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

57. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair and chief operating executive and governors
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

58. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

How are association independent schools in England inspected?

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **www.isi.net**.

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