

Inspection of Christ's College

Pennywell Road, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear SR4 8PG

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 October 2023

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

The principal of this school is Julie Normanton. This school is part of Emmanuel Schools Foundation, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Mark Pike, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Stuart McKinlay.

What is it like to attend this school?

There have been significant improvements at Christ's College of late. Pupils benefit from a caring and nurturing environment. Staff know pupils well. Relationships between staff and pupils are caring, warm and courteous. From the early years, children are welcomed into the school and get off to a flying start with their education, particularly in early reading.

There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere in both the primary and secondary provision. In the vast majority of lessons, pupils behave well. However, in some secondary lessons, there are instances of low-level disruption. These instances are dealt with swiftly. The school is focusing on ensuring that all staff manage behaviour in a consistent way.

The school has developed a curriculum based on high aspirations for all pupils. Many more pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium now study the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects.

Pupils can access various clubs and activities including debate club, coding and sporting activities. Pupils can also hold leadership positions including head boy and head girl, house captains and anti-bullying ambassadors. The house captains help to organise house matches, such as tug of war, which many pupils enjoy.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school has designed a curriculum that is ambitious for all pupils, including for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Starting from the early years, the curriculum identifies what pupils need to know by the end of each key stage. Learning is sequenced to ensure that it builds on what pupils have covered before. At the end of Year 6, pupils are well prepared to transition to their secondary education. There are consistent strategies used across both phases of the school. 'Do now' tasks at the beginning of lessons ensure that pupils can revisit prior learning. This is helping pupils to remember more.

In the main, teachers use curriculum planning well to deliver quality learning for pupils. However, there are some inconsistencies in the delivery of the curriculum. This is variable between classrooms and affects secondary lessons more than primary. Many teachers check precisely what pupils know and remember. Teachers use questioning well to check that pupils understand what they have learned. At the start of lessons, all teachers use activities to help pupils recap what they have learned. However, there are times when staff do not use what this tells them swiftly enough to move pupils on with their learning.

The school quickly identifies pupils with SEND. Staff are provided with the right information to support pupils with SEND. Teachers use 'Teacher files' in classrooms to ensure that they use supportive strategies. These are used consistently and enable pupils with SEND to access the curriculum with success.

Provision for children in the early years is effective. Formal learning is supported well by other activities. There is a sharp focus on stories and number. This fosters an enjoyment of books and mathematics. As a result, children learn well and are prepared for Year 1.

Reading is a high priority across the school. Phonics teaching begins in Reception. Teachers deliver phonics well and have a secure understanding of how pupils learn to read. The school promotes a love of reading, for example through events on World Book Day. Pupils in primary school have a love of reading. This is not fully sustained into the secondary phase, where there are more variable attitudes to reading. However, many pupils make use of the secondary school library and are proud to be pupil librarians. Books are well matched to how well pupils can read. Pupils in all phases who struggle to read receive support through effective interventions. This helps pupils to become confident and fluent readers.

Pupils are clear on what the behaviour policy is. In the primary phase, pupils behave very well. In the secondary phase, the vast majority of pupils behave well and are focused in their lessons. The school monitors behavioural incidents; however, there is not enough focus on what this tells leaders. This means that patterns and trends are not analysed well enough. Attendance of pupils is currently not high enough. Too many pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged, miss school too often.

The school has thought carefully about the wider development of pupils. There is a detailed and well-considered curriculum for the development of personal, social and health education. Pupils learn to be tolerant and respectful. All pupils receive information about potential next steps after school, as well as high-quality careers guidance. This prepares pupils well for the next stages of their lives.

School leaders, governors and trustees know the school well. They have acted with determination to improve the school. Leaders are accurate in their evaluation of strengths and areas for development. The trust has supported school staff with curriculum development. There is a well-thought-out professional development programme for staff. The vast majority of staff feel happy and well supported.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils, particularly some disadvantaged pupils, do not attend school as often as they should. This means that they miss out on essential learning and do not achieve as highly. Leaders should accelerate their plans to improve the attendance of these pupils, improving rates of attendance for all pupil groups.

- In some lessons, teachers do not always use their knowledge of what pupils know to move the learning swiftly on. This limits pupils' knowledge and understanding. The school should ensure that checks on pupils' knowledge are used purposefully so that pupils can move on to new content.
- There is not enough analysis of behavioural patterns and trends. This means that leaders are not fully aware of which groups of pupils are involved in different types of incidents. Leaders should ensure that they have robust, analytical systems in place to support further improvements in behaviour, ensuring that all pupils behave well in school.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	138567
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	10290212
Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	740
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Stuart McKinlay
Principal	Julie Normanton
Website	www.christscollege.org.uk/
Date of previous inspection	11 November 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Emmanuel Schools Foundation, a multi-academy trust.
- The school uses one alternative provider. This is a registered provider which means it is subject to inspection by Ofsted.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspection team completed deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, religious studies and geography. To do this, inspectors met with subject leaders, had discussions with staff and pupils, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school, priorities for improvement and minutes of governors' meetings
- The lead inspector met with representatives from the local governing board, the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the trust.
- An inspector spoke to the registered alternative provision that the school uses via telephone.
- The views of pupils, parents and staff were considered through discussions and a review of Ofsted's surveys. The inspection team also considered correspondence that was given to inspectors during the inspection.

Inspection team

Jessica McKay, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Shelley Heseltine	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Crane	Ofsted Inspector
Zoe Westley	Ofsted Inspector
Jenny Parker	Ofsted Inspector

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