

# The Christian School (Takeley)

Dunmow Road, Brewers End, Takeley, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire CM22 6QH

**Inspection dates**

1 February 2019

**Overall outcome**

**The school does not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection**

## Main inspection findings

### Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

*Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b), 14, 16*

- Although met at the previous inspection in December 2017, during this inspection the Department for Education (DfE) requested these paragraphs be checked in relation to complaints received.
- The previous inspection judged safeguarding arrangements to be effective. This continues to be the case. Leaders have carried out further reviews of their systems and processes. Actions have been taken to ensure that systematic record-keeping is in place, maintained and checked regularly. This is resulting in better oversight of safeguarding procedures to ensure that all pupils are kept safe and looked after.
- Leaders have a rigorous oversight of the systems and processes, including those regarding staff training, recruitment and supervision. This ensures pupils' safety at all times. Additionally, the recording of concerns for vulnerable pupils is thorough, effectively administered and monitored regularly.
- The safeguarding policy is reviewed regularly and reflects the latest legal guidance. Furthermore, leaders are sharing more detailed information with parents, staff and pupils about their safeguarding processes so everyone understands the systems in place and how they are followed to ensure the safeguarding of all pupils. For example, to help parents' knowledge and understanding, leaders issued a safeguarding leaflet to parents explaining the process of referrals and the leaders' legal responsibilities to adhere to these. Leaders also ensure that information regarding safeguarding is posted on the school's website along with all associated policies that detail what leaders do to protect pupils and secure their safety and well-being.
- A scrutiny of a range of risk assessments shows that leaders continue to consider effectively the risk to pupils during the visits and activities they undertake, including those regarding on-site provision. For example, there is rigour in the detail about the required ratios of adults to pupils and mitigating factors are considered, including transport and first aid arrangements.
- Records of visits, including residential trips, reflect close monitoring of any occurring accidents and incidents being carried out. For example, records of any behaviour

incidents and first aid needing to be administered are detailed and appropriate to ensure all pupils' safety and care. This includes informing parents of what actions have been taken, including the monitoring of situations or injuries.

- Leaders are engaging positively with the local authority for additional safeguarding guidance. This is further strengthening safeguarding systems and providing additional training opportunities for leaders so they keep up to date and can carefully check their own systems and processes.
- Leaders have ensured that these independent school standards remain met.

#### *Paragraph 12*

- At the previous inspection, the proprietor had not ensured full compliance with the Fire Safety Order (2005).
- Leaders have successfully carried out the proposed actions towards meeting this standard. Leaders instigated a full fire risk assessment, which was carried out in February 2018. The result of this was an overhaul of the entire fire alarm system and full rewiring work to bring it all in line with the British Standards specification. This work has been completed and the commissioning certificate issued, confirming it is appropriate and safe.
- Additional recommendations arising from the fire risk assessment have been acted upon. These have been checked by the headteacher and reported to the trustees. All are documented carefully and routine monitoring is taking place.
- School leaders ensure that the fire risk assessments are well managed and implemented effectively. Records now show that since the previous inspection all the checks, for example on fire extinguishers, alarms and electrical appliances, are carried out regularly. A tour of the school shows that fire signage is clear for pupils and staff and escape routes are fully accessible. Detailed logs show that fire drills happen regularly, different zones are tested, and they are well organised. Actions from these are noted and considered for the next check. Additionally, leaders have carried out an intruder shutdown drill.
- Leaders have ensured that this independent school standard is now met.

### Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

#### *Paragraph 25*

- During the previous inspection, inspectors determined that the school premises were not being maintained to a standard which promoted pupils' health, safety and welfare. This was because there were many areas that were untidy, disorganised and full of 'clutter'.
- The processes for carrying out health and safety checks have improved since the previous inspection. Leaders have expanded the team to include an administrator who makes sure all the legal checks are being made. This is working effectively to ensure that routine checks are completed. The deputy headteacher has oversight of this and reports to the headteacher and the trustees.
- In addition to daily and other regular monitoring, maintenance walks are completed by the headteacher and representative trustees to make sure all checks meet with the legal

requirements and, therefore, contribute towards this standard being met.

- While on a tour of the school, the inspector observed that previously reported 'clutter' had been cleared and appropriate alternative storage created. For example, during the previous inspection the wellington boot area was identified as a potential hazard. Leaders have now purchased cloakroom huts for wellington boot storage. Older pupils now have lockers for storage, which is helping to reduce pupils' personal belongings being left in corridors and walk ways. Leaders carry out regular site walks to ensure that all staff and pupils are maintaining the currently tidier and more organised state of the school site.
- Leaders have ensured that this independent school standard is now met.

## Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

### *Paragraph 34(1)(c)*

- This paragraph was not met at the previous inspection because school leaders did not actively promote pupils' well-being.
- Leaders take their responsibility and legal duty to safeguard all pupils seriously. This is reflected in their active and increasingly vigilant approach to all aspects to ensure pupils' health, safety and well-being. The promotion of a strong culture of safeguarding has further developed and improved since the previous inspection. Leaders continuously review their systems, taking on board advice and careful consideration of any complaints received. There is evidence to show that leaders know their families well and take appropriate actions and checks to ensure that all pupils are well looked after and cared for.
- Standards linked to the health, safety and well-being of pupils, for example those in Part 3 and Part 5 of the independent school standards are now all met. Leaders have worked hard to ensure that they follow the legal requirements and have been active in securing effective practice in these areas.
- Leaders have ensured that this paragraph of the independent school standard 34(1) is now met.

### *Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b)*

- This standard was not met at the previous inspection because leaders did not demonstrate a good understanding of the independent school standards and, consequently, did not implement them consistently.
- This inspection confirms that leaders have taken effective action since the previous full inspection in December 2017. Consequently, most of the independent school standards are now met. However, some aspects of leadership and management remain underdeveloped and these are contributing towards this standard remaining unmet. Over time, the independent school standards have not been consistently met.
- During the previous inspection, the headteacher did not have sufficient capacity to move forwards the strategic leadership of the school rapidly. In response to this, despite leaders' work reorganising staffing, the headteacher has not had enough substantive time to fully undertake this strategic work.
- Actions outlined in the school's action plan have been undertaken. However, scrutiny of

trustee and leadership paperwork, such as the school development plan and leaders' self-evaluation, shows there remains a lack of clarity and understanding about how to evaluate the effectiveness of the actions they have taken. So, while actions have been taken, leaders are not evaluating their actions precisely so they know what the impact is and what their next steps should be.

- This progress monitoring inspection indicated that school improvement planning is more focused than previously. Trustees receive regular and pertinent information as to how well pupils are progressing and how effective teaching and learning are. This has resulted in leaders and teachers being held more to account. Actions are now better linked to improving provision and outcomes for pupils. However, the processes in place are still in their infancy and have not had enough time to demonstrate that they are effective in improving the strategic work and effectiveness of leadership and management.
- Leaders are rightly seeking advice and professional development from outside the school. Although this is resulting in building leaders' confidence, and in the headteacher's view, helping trustees 'make the best sense of the information being presented', this is in its early stages of development.
- Since the previous inspection, trustees have chosen to increase the number of meetings they hold and have reviewed their reporting arrangements. For example, leaders now produce detailed behaviour and welfare reports to trustees and regular checks are made to measure the progress being made on the priorities in the school development plan. This is helping trustees to develop their strategic knowledge and understanding of how the school works and performs. While this is the case, the headteacher confirms that the work is in its infancy and, due to this short timescale, leaders have not evaluated and are not certain of what difference their actions are making to the effectiveness of leadership and management.
- Leaders have not ensured that this independent school standard is now met.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The school does not meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection, as set out in the annex of this report. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

## School details

Unique reference number	115436
DfE registration number	881/6041
Inspection number	10090744

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	51
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Christian School (Takeley) Trust
Chair	C Bowman
Headteacher	M E Humphries
Annual fees (day pupils)	£5,892–£8,268
Telephone number	01279 871182
Website	<a href="http://www.takeley-christian.essex.sch.uk">www.takeley-christian.essex.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@tcst.org.uk">head@tcst.org.uk</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	5–7 December 2017

### Information about this school

- The Christian School (Takeley) was registered with the Department for Education (DfE) in 1989. The school was founded by a group of parents and friends who belonged to the same church. The school's aim is to provide an education based on Christian faith and values. The school is governed by trustees and a board of governors.
- The trust is the proprietor of the school, the legal governing body. The lead trustee is the chair of the governing body.
- The majority of pupils attending the school are White British.
- There are currently 51 pupils on roll aged from three to 16 years, including three children

in Nursery and Reception.

- The school continues to admit a number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) arising mainly from social, emotional or mental health needs or medical conditions. There are pupils who have an education, care and health plan.
- The school does not use supply staff.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- Additionally, the DfE designated this as an emergency inspection due to complaints received regarding safeguarding.
- The inspection was conducted without notice.
- This was the first progress monitoring inspection following the school's previous standard inspection in December 2017, when the school's overall effectiveness was judged to require improvement.
- Following the previous standard inspection, in March 2018 a school action plan, containing actions that leaders identified they intended to take in order to meet the independent school standards, was submitted and deemed unacceptable. Following this, a second action plan was presented in August 2018. The DfE accepted this action plan as appropriate.
- The chair of the trustees met with the lead inspector and joined the headteacher for most of the meetings during this inspection.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, a trustee and the designated safeguarding leader. Additionally, the lead inspector undertook a tour of the school and met with staff and pupils.
- The DfE commissioned Ofsted to conduct this inspection, focusing particularly on the unmet standards in connection with: pupils' health, safety and welfare; premises and accommodation and the quality of leadership and management. In addition, inspectors were asked to check other aspects of pupils' health, safety and welfare linked to safeguarding, supervision and risk assessments.
- The inspector scrutinised: the review and progress of the school's action plan; a number of policies, including the safeguarding policy; additional associated policies such as the anti-bullying policy, the risk assessment policy, the health and safety policy; and complaints procedures. The procedures for safeguarding pupils were scrutinised. Information on assessment was also discussed and information about pupils' behaviour, admissions and attendance was also evaluated.

## Inspection team

Tracy Fielding, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

## **Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements**

### **The school does not meet the following independent school standards**

Standards that were not met at the previous inspection and remain unmet at this inspection

#### **Part 8 Quality of leadership and management of schools**

- The proprietor must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently; fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b)).

### **The school now meets the following independent school standards**

#### **Part 3 Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

- The proprietor must ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (paragraph 12).

#### **Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools**

- The proprietor must ensure that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured (paragraph 25).

#### **Part 8 Quality of leadership and management of schools**

- The proprietor must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities actively promote the well-being of pupils (paragraph 34(1)(c)).

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