

Inspection of St Philip's School

6 Wetherby Place, London SW7 4NE

Inspection dates: 8 to 10 March 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Outstanding**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Outstanding

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a small school where pupils flourish both academically and personally. Leaders offer an exceptionally broad, rich and ambitious curriculum. Pupils excel in their studies and have a zest for learning. They take advantage of the many opportunities to pursue new interests.

Pupils help to keep the school orderly and calm. For example, they keep classrooms tidy and help to deliver school lunches to classrooms. Whole-school assemblies encourage pupils to reflect on and aspire to the school's virtues of discipline, respect and enjoyment. Leaders expect the best from their pupils. Sometimes, staff do not reinforce the same high expectations of pupils' behaviour in lessons.

Pupils are very happy here and get along well with each other. Pupils are safe. Staff are quick to put a stop to any incidents of bullying or unkind behaviour. Pupils and their parents and carers spoke highly of the school. They appreciate the small class sizes and the strong sense of family community.

Pupils have a wide range of clubs they can attend, from a club for history of art to one for artificial intelligence. Music and sport are an integral part of the school's wider curriculum. Many pupils are keen musicians and take part in musical recitals. Some join a local leading boys' choir. The weekly sports fixtures with other schools, including in football and hockey, are hotly anticipated by pupils and staff.

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

Leaders review the curriculum on a regular basis so that it suits the needs of individual pupils. For example, in French, bilingual pupils follow an appropriate programme tailored to enhance their language skills. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive bespoke support based on an in-depth analysis of their needs. All pupils achieve exceptionally well and their work is consistently of a high standard. Leaders are successful in their aim to give pupils a well-rounded education.

Staff give considerable thought to what pupils learn and when. This has led to a coherent and sequenced curriculum. Pupils build up substantial knowledge and skills over time. For example, in science, pupils in Year 6 refer to their learning about electricity in Year 4 to understand series and parallel circuits.

Teachers are experts in their subjects. They check pupils' understanding carefully and are swift to address any gaps in pupils' knowledge. Teachers select resources to help pupils get the most from their lessons. For example, in Latin, pupils in Year 8 worked through 'The Aeneid' with the help of a translation programme. Pupils in Year 5 were fascinated by the newly hatched chicks in the science classroom. They could apply with confidence their learning about different life cycles.

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Leaders prioritise time for pupils to read each day. Each classroom has its small library of high-quality books for pupils to choose from. Pupils write book reviews for other pupils to read, sharing their recommendations. In Year 3, pupils enjoy weekly visits to a local library. Younger pupils and those who struggle with reading receive intensive daily support. This helps them to improve their reading accuracy and fluency quickly.

Pupils learn about what it means to be a responsible citizen. They have a keen awareness of current global issues. Staff urge pupils to reflect on the lives and experiences of those less fortunate than them, such as refugees. Pupils organise events such as book sales to raise money for different charities. Staff encourage debates and discussions on issues such as morality and challenging stereotypes. Educational visits regularly take place to enhance pupils' learning. For example, pupils in Year 7 recently went to the Globe Theatre as part of their Shakespeare studies.

In personal, social, health, citizenship and economic education, pupils learn about relationships and different types of families. They are taught about permission and consent in an age-appropriate manner. Pupils learn how to maintain a healthy body and a healthy mind. Leaders have introduced meditation and are keen to help the pupils express their emotions. Stress management is particularly helpful for older pupils as they prepare for entry examinations for their chosen secondary schools. Staff have helped pupils to think about their future goals and careers.

Pupils are keen to learn and do well. House points and 'gold stars' are much sought after as rewards for positive behaviour. In lessons, sometimes the delivery of the curriculum is hampered when staff do not address some pupils' chattiness or off-task behaviour.

A number of staff raised workload concerns. This stems from a lack of communication between leaders and staff. There are clearly some staff who feel frustrated at being unheard or uninformed about changes to school systems.

The proprietor body shares the ambitious vision of school leaders. Governors are proud of the school and the holistic education provided to pupils. Governors have not had recent training in some aspects of their role. They do not have a comprehensive oversight of the school.

Leaders and the proprietor body have ensured that all the independent school standards are met.

Leaders have ensured that the school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all staff receive regular and up-to-date safeguarding training. Staff know their pupils well and are mindful to report any changes in pupils' demeanour. Leaders take appropriate action to ensure that pupils get the right support, involving external agencies when necessary.

Pupils are safe in all areas of the school and feel comfortable talking to staff about any worries. Visitors to the school, such as the community police officer, reinforce important messages about safety. This includes online safety. For example, pupils learned about the risks associated with relationships formed online and the law around sharing images online.

The safeguarding policy on the school's website is in line with statutory requirements.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- Behaviour management, as outlined in the school's policy, is not consistently applied. At times, pupils' chattiness in class and off-task behaviour are not effectively addressed and get in the way of the delivery of the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that all staff share the same high expectations of pupils' behaviour and apply the school's policy consistently.
- Governors have not had recent training to update their skills. This limits their strategic oversight of the school. They do not have a full understanding of their responsibilities. Governors should update their training to enhance the support and challenge they may give to school leaders.
- Some staff raised issues around communication with the school's leaders. They felt that staff concerns relating to workload and decision-making are sometimes not listened to. Leaders should strengthen lines of communication with staff.

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.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	100516
DfE registration number	207/6104
Local authority	Kensington and Chelsea
Inspection number	10210752
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	7 to 13
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	83
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	St Philip's School Trust Ltd
Chair	John Dean
Headteacher	Alexander Thomas
Annual fees (day pupils)	£18,150
Telephone number	020 7373 3944
Website	www.stpschool.co.uk
Email address	office@stpschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 to 8 March 2018

Information about this school

- This is a Catholic preparatory school for boys. The school is registered for up to 110 pupils aged seven to 13 years.
- The school is in a former residential property in Kensington and Chelsea. Pupils have access to a large garden at the rear of the school. Sporting activities take place at an off-site specialist sports provision.
- Leaders do not use any alternative provision.
- The school had its most recent standard inspection in March 2018, when it was judged to be outstanding and all the independent school standards were met.
- The name of the proprietor body is not listed on the government's Get Information about Schools website.
- The proprietor body comprises trustees who are also governors of the school. A number of new governors have recently been appointed to the governing body.

Information about this inspection

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

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other school leaders and members of staff. An inspector met with two members of the governing body who are also representatives of the proprietor body. Inspectors held formal and informal discussions with pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, science, art and French. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject teachers, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors talked to staff and pupils about the curriculum in some other subjects, including mathematics, Latin, English, religious studies and music.
- Inspectors met with leaders with responsibility for safeguarding and reviewed a range of safeguarding documentation, including pre-employment checks on staff and employee files. Discussions were held with pupils and staff to consider the school's safeguarding arrangements.

- Inspectors considered a range of evidence to check compliance with the independent school standards.
- An inspector spoke with a number of parents and carers at the school gate to gather their views of the school. Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey of parents' views, Parent View, and responses to the online staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Jude Wilson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annabel Davies

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
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M1 2WD

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