

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Christ's College Finchley

East End Road, East Finchley, London N2 0SE

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 February 2025

Outcome

Evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that the school's work may have improved significantly across all areas since the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Ruth Hill. The school is a single academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by John Bowra.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and students receive a first-class education at Christ's College Finchley (CCF). This is reflected in the excellent examination results at GCSE and A level, as well as pupils' highly positive attitudes to school and respect for others. The bringing together of academic excellence and high expectations for pupils' conduct is what makes CCF so successful.

The school is strongly committed to fully developing pupils' skills, talents and interests. Pupils, including students in the sixth form, study a wide range of subjects. The academic curriculum goes hand in hand with developing pupils' personal skills and character. Pupils are highly considerate of others, their teachers and support staff. They talk about the school and their work with maturity and understanding.

Behaviour across the school is impeccable. There is little, if any, low level disruption in lessons, and pupils behave very sensibly around the school, including in the lunch hall. This calm and purposeful atmosphere is the result of the school's exceptionally strong ethos. Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance is especially high. The school prepares pupils for the future very effectively.

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

The school's excellence is the result of the coherent way it brings everything together in the best interests of pupils. Its vision and ethos are the golden threads that run through everything it does. This shows in the way pupils rise to the school's high expectations and in their very positive attitudes. In lessons, for example, pupils are highly focused on their learning. Time in lessons is used to maximum effect.

The school's vision is reflected in the high-quality relationships between staff and pupils, and between pupils. This has a strong impact on pupils' achievements. Teachers are readily approachable for help. This is no less so than for disadvantaged pupils, who are supported effectively to catch up if they fall behind with their learning. For example, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive targeted help based on a thorough understanding of their needs. Similarly, pupils new to the country who are learning English as an additional language get one-to-one help with reading and writing, enabling them to access the full curriculum.

The ambitious curriculum is delivered expertly across the school, including in the sixth form, where students have a wide range of study opportunities. The school's clear framework for teaching emphasises high expectations and high outcomes. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to adapt their teaching effectively. Teaching strategies are modified to take account of the subject being taught and the age of pupils and students. Up-to-date research is used effectively to develop and hone these strategies. This has a very positive impact on pupils' and students' outcomes.

The curriculum is extended effectively through a range of visits, trips and experiences. This includes, for example, trips to China and Florida, local museums and places of interest. The school's 'My Zone' programme teaches pupils about fundamental British values, as well as sex and relationships education. Pupils speak knowledgeably about how the school promotes respect and tolerance. They are clear that racist or homophobic bullying is not accepted, but they are confident that when it does happen, it is dealt with swiftly and effectively.

Careers education is built into the 'My Zone' programme so that pupils learn about the world of work. Careers fairs that include local providers raise awareness of the range of opportunities. Sixth-form students get appropriate help to apply for university. All this has a positive impact on pupils' and students' next steps. The number moving on to further or higher education is very high.

The school uses a wide range of information to pinpoint areas that could be better. The commitment to continuous improvement runs through the school's work. For example, a focus on reading is having a positive impact on pupils' literary skills and their ability to express themselves clearly. Pupils become increasingly fluent readers as they move through the school. Similarly, the thorough analysis of absence data is improving pupils' already strong attendance.

Teachers appreciate that the school's actions to improve and sustain pupils' strong outcomes take account of teachers' workload and well-being. Development priorities are carefully planned to minimise overburdening staff. Those responsible for governance carry out their responsibilities most effectively using appropriate information to check that the school continues to perform highly.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in May 2016.

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	137388
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10366925
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	992
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	140
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Bowra
Headteacher	Ruth Hill
Website	www.christscollegefinchley.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	3 and 4 March 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Christ's College converted to an academy in September 2011.
- The school is part of the Christ's College Finchley Academy Trust.
- The school uses five registered alternative provisions and one unregistered alternative provision.
- The current headteacher took up their post in September 2024.
- 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

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The 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.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to pupils about their learning where appropriate and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, assistant headteachers and heads of department. Inspectors also met with teachers and support staff.
- Inspectors met with the chair of governors, governors and the school's improvement partner.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the written comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys.

Inspection team

Brian Oppenheim, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Juliette Claro

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025