

# School inspection report

25 to 27 March 2025

## **Saint Christina's School**

25 St Edmund's Terrace

St John's Wood

London

NW8 7PY

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 promote the school's aims and ethos effectively throughout the school. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of 'the golden thread' which reflects the school's values of inclusion, respect, diligence and kindness. Leaders work in partnership with staff and pupils to create a harmonious and supportive school community. As a result, pupils' emotional wellbeing is promoted so that they approach their education with resilience and confidence.
2. The proprietor, governors and leaders work together effectively. Leaders implement the school's development plan through careful evaluation and decision-making. School policies and procedures are reviewed regularly. As a result, the Standards are consistently met.
3. Leaders maintain a clear school website which provides a range of useful information for parents and includes a three-stage complaints policy. At the beginning of the inspection, the complaints policy did not specify how quickly a panel hearing would be convened at stage three of the complaints process. This was rectified during the inspection.
4. Teachers plan interesting lessons and provide pupils with focused feedback and marking. Pupils consistently demonstrate responsible and diligent attitudes towards their learning so that they make good academic and personal progress. However, in some lessons teachers do not consistently provide those pupils with higher prior attainment enough challenge so that they widen their knowledge and understanding as well as they could.
5. Children in the early years are taught a stimulating and well-designed curriculum. They develop confidence and skills through an appropriate programme of lessons and activities. Children learn to be independent, articulate and resilient. They are prepared well for Year 1.
6. Pupils behave well at the school. Leaders and staff are quick to reinforce positive behaviour. Pupils are taught to be kind and helpful, so they demonstrate responsible and supportive attitudes to others. As a result, the school community is calm, orderly and friendly.
7. Leaders promote a robust and school-wide approach to managing health and safety procedures and the mitigation of risk. The school maintains a systematic approach to health and safety checks. Risk assessments are reviewed regularly so that they remain suitable and effective.
8. Leaders provide a range of effective opportunities for pupils to demonstrate responsibility and service to others. Pupils support their school community as prefects, captains and ambassadors. Pupils are keen to raise funds to support local and international charities.
9. Leaders promote a vigilant safeguarding culture throughout the school. Those with designated safeguarding responsibilities are trained effectively for their role. Staff receive regular safeguarding training and are confident about how to respond to any concerns. Safer recruitment procedures are thorough.

## 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 the complaints policy consistently contains clear timescales for each stage of the complaints process
- ensure that teaching routinely challenges pupils with higher prior attainment so that they consistently achieve as well as possible.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

10. Governors and the proprietors work well together. They provide leaders with systematic challenge, support and guidance so that leaders continue to demonstrate appropriate knowledge and understanding to fulfil their responsibilities effectively. Governors visit the school regularly, conduct learning walks, meet with leaders and staff and discuss school provision with pupils. This means that governors have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the school. Governors scrutinise and provide regular oversight of school policies so that school procedures and practices are suitable and clearly understood by pupils, staff and parents. As a result, the Standards are consistently met.
11. Leaders promote the school's aims and ethos effectively. Pupils understand 'the golden thread' which guides and teaches them to be respectful, tolerant and inclusive towards each other. The school's ethos is centred around its Catholic traditions and pupils understand that their behaviour and actions affect other members of the school community. As a result, pupils work together well to create a nurturing and harmonious school environment. Pupils' wellbeing is promoted by all staff so that pupils approach their education with enjoyment and confidence.
12. Leaders consult regularly with staff and consider their viewpoints carefully when taking appropriate and suitable decisions to improve school provision. Following staff consultations, for example, leaders revised the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme and implemented a new wellbeing hub. Pupils' emotional wellbeing and pastoral welfare is supported consistently and effectively.
13. Leaders provide useful and detailed information for parents, mainly on the school's website. Parents receive appropriate written reports so that they are informed about the progress their child is making. The school informs the local authority about any financial arrangements for pupils who hold an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
14. Leaders in the early years provide a stimulating and carefully planned curriculum. Children develop independence and confidence through their engagement with effective lessons and activities. Leaders meet with staff every week so that children's individual needs are reviewed regularly. As a result, children's wellbeing is supported well.
15. Leaders maintain constructive and regular links with external agencies. The expertise they provide informs and develops school policies and practices. For instance, leaders in the early years attended training about maintaining a sustainable school. This resulted in revising the early years curriculum to include more outdoor and environmental learning opportunities.
16. Leaders implement a thorough approach to managing risk. Staff receive specific training so that they know how to write appropriate and careful risk assessments. Comprehensive risk assessments cover classrooms, outdoor facilities, trips and the early years. Leaders provide systematic oversight of all risk assessments and check that, when appropriate, staff have carefully considered pupils' individual needs. When risks are identified, leaders take timely and suitable actions to mitigate them. Risk assessments are reviewed regularly so that they continue to be effective.
17. The school provides a complaints policy which outlines the required three-stage process. Leaders maintain a proactive approach and deal with informal concerns effectively. They respond appropriately when formal complaints are raised and maintain detailed records, including of any actions taken. At the start of the inspection, the complaints policy did not clearly specify all the

timescales relating to the third stage of the complaints process. This oversight was rectified during the inspection.

18. Leaders fulfil their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. The school maintains a suitable accessibility development plan which is reviewed regularly and considers all those who may need to access the school's premises. When visitors arrive at the school, for example, they are asked if the school can provide any further assistance to help them access the school's facilities. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported effectively. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are given appropriate help. As a result, the educational provision is accessible to all pupils at the school.

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

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

## Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

20. Pupils are taught a broad and balanced curriculum which covers all the required areas of learning. Leaders monitor the academic programme by conducting 'book looks', visiting lessons and consulting with staff. Leaders regularly review and revise the curriculum so that it remains suitable, relevant and effective for pupils. For instance, philosophy has recently been added to the academic programme so that pupils learn to respond effectively to a range of philosophical and moral questions. The curriculum supports pupils' understanding of respect, inclusion and cultural awareness. During International Week, for example, the curriculum focuses on a different country and lessons are planned carefully so that pupils learn more about the country's cultural traditions. Leaders provide effective opportunities for pupils to widen their knowledge, skills and understanding so that they are prepared well for the next stage of their education.
21. Pupils demonstrate a diligent and thoughtful attitude to their learning. They work and use resources in a responsible and orderly manner so that everyone can concentrate fully and make good progress. In English, pupils share their creative diary extracts and receive helpful, supportive and constructive feedback from other members of the class. Pupils in geography apply mathematical knowledge, demonstrate independence and use their digital skills when they research information about latitude and longitude. In mathematics, pupils collaborate effectively and apply problem-solving skills to calculate the area of trapeziums, triangles and parallelograms. Pupils apply effort consistently in their lessons and make good progress.
22. Teaching is typically effective throughout the school. Staff have secure subject knowledge which they use to plan interesting and appropriate lessons. Teachers consistently provide pupils with focused and constructive marking and feedback. This informs pupils about what they do well, how to improve and typically sets suitable subsequent challenges to widen pupils' knowledge and understanding. However, in some lessons pupils with higher prior attainment are not always provided with enough challenge once they have completed the initial tasks. This means that the achievement of pupils with higher prior attainment is sometimes limited.
23. Staff meet every week to discuss pupils' academic progress. They analyse data from standardised assessments and compare this to pupils' current levels of academic performance. Teachers in the early years regularly assess and track children's work. Staff identify older pupils who need additional challenge or further support and adapt the curriculum in response. This means that staff are quick to adapt teaching to meet children's academic and pastoral needs. As a result, pupils throughout the school consistently make good progress in their work. Parents receive regular information about the progress their child is making through an appropriate schedule of parents' meetings and written reports.
24. Leaders carefully identify the individual learning needs of pupils who have SEND. Pupils are offered individual and group support, when required. Leaders provide booster sessions, such as reading comprehension clinics and mathematics lunchtime sessions, to help pupils who have SEND to consolidate their knowledge and understanding. Teachers write individual provision maps for these pupils so that staff support pupils' learning targets consistently. These provision maps are reviewed and revised regularly so that pupils' targets continue to promote their academic needs effectively. Pupils who have SEND are supported well so that they make good progress.

25. Teachers assess pupils who speak EAL regularly to identify and support their language needs effectively. Teachers use appropriate resources, such as subject topic word cards and writing frames, to help pupils who speak EAL. As a result, these pupils make good progress.
26. Teachers in the early years provide children with effective opportunities to develop their communication and language skills. Children learn and practise the sounds of letters which supports their reading development well. Children use their imagination to invent and share creative stories with the class. Teachers ask questions skilfully so that children think carefully before responding. Children learn to write sentences and include full stops and capital letters. As a result, children develop a secure understanding and knowledge of important language skills.
27. The school provides an appropriate programme of extra-curricular activities so that pupils learn new knowledge and skills. They learn, for example, how to create mini films using digital recording and editing techniques in film club. Pupils who enjoy music join the choir or orchestra where they learn and perform new repertoire. Pupils join judo club and develop skills in self-defence and how to appropriately engage with an opponent. The wide range of extra-curricular clubs helps pupils to gain new skills and understanding and to build self-confidence.

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

**28. All the relevant Standards are met.**



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

29. Leaders place pupils' wellbeing at the forefront of school provision and planning. Staff meet every week and discuss pupils' emotional wellbeing. This means staff know the pupils thoroughly and respond to their individual needs quickly and effectively. As a result, pupils develop self-esteem and confidence. Their emotional wellbeing is supported carefully and consistently.
30. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to develop their spirituality. For example, pupils celebrate a weekly mass, share daily prayers and visit the chapel, where they practise hymn singing. Year 6 pupils thoughtfully perform an annual Passion Play at Easter. Pupils learn about all of the world's major religions through their religious education (RE) curriculum.
31. Leaders implement an effective PSHE and relationships programme. Lessons are age-appropriate and cover themes which teach pupils how to consider their own safety and wellbeing. For example, pupils learn about mindfulness and practise how to develop calmness and resilience. They are taught about personal hygiene and the importance of maintaining a balanced and healthy diet. Pupils engage well in neurodiversity week and explore scenarios which teach them the importance of acceptance and tolerance. Pupils learn about consent and how to establish supportive, lasting and appropriate friendships. As a result, pupils learn to be kind and respectful towards other people.
32. Pupils' behaviour is positively reinforced through well-established reward systems. For example, leaders award house points and 'you've been spotted' awards which recognise pupils who are noticed extending kindness and support to others. In the early years, teachers reward children with democratically chosen class treats when 'star jars' are filled. When pupils' behaviour falls below the school's high expectations, leaders maintain appropriate records and analyse any emerging trends or patterns. As a result of these measures, pupils have a well-developed moral understanding and consistently demonstrate inclusivity, kindness and respectful behaviour at the school.
33. Incidents of bullying at the school are rare. Leaders provide a range of well-planned opportunities for pupils to learn about bullying, such as through PSHE lessons and the school's effective moral teaching. Pupils write stories, for example, during anti-bullying week which demonstrate their understanding of the harmful consequences of bullying. As a result, pupils learn that respectful behaviour towards others leads to a tolerant and supportive school environment.
34. Leaders provide a suitable programme of physical education (PE). Pupils keenly participate in PE lessons, traditional sports and extra-curricular activities. Pupils are taught specific skills so that they improve their understanding of how to play sport at an improved level. For example, pupils learn how to dribble, pass and shoot in structured football training activities before using these skills effectively in competitive match situations. Pupils learn to value sportsmanship and demonstrate support and respect to each other, the opposition and towards the rules of the sport. Pupils understand that regular exercise promotes a balanced lifestyle and positive physical and mental health.
35. In the early years, leaders plan a stimulating and careful programme of lessons and activities. Children use the outdoors effectively to plant and grow flowers and vegetables. They develop agility, balance and co-ordination and use these skills effectively during PE and extra-curricular ballet

activities. Children collaborate well during arts and crafts activities. The wide range of activities encourages children to develop self-esteem and approach new opportunities with confidence.

36. Vigilant staff supervise pupils effectively during breaktimes. Leaders supervise pupils carefully when they arrive and depart from school. An appropriate number of staff supervise children in the early years.
37. Leaders maintain a thorough and systematic approach to health and safety. Several staff are trained as fire wardens. Pupils regularly rehearse the school's fire evacuation and lockdown procedures. Staff quickly raise any health and safety concerns which are immediately prioritised and investigated. Leaders discuss health and safety concerns regularly and maintain detailed records of any actions taken. As a result, the school premises and accommodation remain secure and suitable.
38. The school provides appropriate first aid and medical facilities. First aid is administered in a competent and timely manner. A large number of staff receive appropriate training, including paediatric first aid training for those who work in the early years.
39. Leaders maintain admission and attendance registers which reflect the latest regulatory guidance. Staff are alert to any concerning attendance patterns. The school correctly notifies the local authority when pupils leave or join the school at non-standard transition points.

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

**40. All the relevant Standards are met.**

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

41. The well-designed curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to learn about different cultures and religions. In English, for example, pupils read books which explore friendships between characters from different parts of the world. Pupils write prayers and answer the daily register in different languages. In geography, pupils study global rainforests and explore farming practices in a range of countries. The curriculum supports the school's aims that its pupils develop a social and moral responsibility towards others. Pupils learn about the values of respect, inclusion and tolerance effectively. They are prepared well for life in British and global society.
42. Pupils are provided with a range of appropriate opportunities to learn about money and financial responsibility. Children in the early years, for example, visit local shops and independently pay for items. Leaders invite banking experts to visit the school to teach older pupils about online finance and the challenges of banking, such as dealing with fraudulent behaviours.
43. Pupils learn about law and order through effective assemblies and PSHE lessons. They follow class and school rules sensibly and understand that rules lead to a well-ordered school community and society. Pupils discuss the possible effects of living without laws and write potential new laws for British society. As a result, pupils behave responsibly and learn the difference between right and wrong.
44. Children in the early years learn how to act responsibly. Teachers act as positive role models and demonstrate friendly conversations and helpfulness towards others. Children learn well from their teachers and cheerfully tidy away their classroom equipment after lessons and activities. Children are elected as ambassadors and represent the early years classes on school committees. They show responsibility by looking after designated areas of the early years environment and regularly check their area is organised and tidy. As a result of these measures, children are responsible, confident and respectful in their interactions with others.
45. Pupils are taught about British services and institutions effectively. The local fire service visits the school so that pupils learn about the role they play in keeping the local community safe. Leaders invite members of the medical profession into school to discuss the work of the National Health Service. Year 6 pupils learn about the role of the transport police in helping to protect those who travel around London. As a result, pupils develop their understanding of civic society.
46. Pupils learn about British and international politics through appropriate assemblies and carefully planned curriculum activities. They participate in discussions about current affairs and explore different political perspectives. Pupils hold mock elections and learn about the main British political parties and the role of government. They write letters to their local member of parliament to raise concerns about homelessness in the local community. Any political information is presented to pupils in a balanced and impartial manner.
47. Leaders provide a range of suitable opportunities for pupils to hold positions of responsibility. Year 6 pupils are elected as prefects and help staff by organising resources and providing mentorship to younger pupils. Pupils from across the school are democratically elected to serve on school committees such as the Eco committee and school council. Wellbeing and inclusion ambassadors help to supervise the wellbeing hub and offer advice and support to other pupils. These

opportunities mean that pupils develop leadership skills and understand that it is responsible and kind to help others.

48. Leaders maintain positive links with organisations locally and further afield. The choir sing for elderly residents at a local retirement home. Pupils donate food to the local foodbank and create 'parcels of love' for a hospice. The school raises funds through bake sales to improve clean water and bathroom facilities for schools in other continents. As a result, pupils learn that it is socially responsible and inclusive to support charitable endeavours.

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

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

## Safeguarding

50. The school maintains an appropriate safeguarding policy which reflects latest statutory guidance. Experienced governors provide thorough and regular oversight of the school's safeguarding procedures.
51. Leaders provide effective induction training for staff who work at the school. This includes training for child-on-child abuse, for the risks of extremism and how to report any safeguarding concerns. The safeguarding team offer ongoing safeguarding training to all staff every week. As a result, the staff have a confident and thorough understanding of the school's safeguarding procedures. Safeguarding practices are robust throughout the school.
52. Those with designated safeguarding responsibilities are trained appropriately for the role. They have sufficient time and status to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities effectively. Leaders consult with local safeguarding partners in a timely and constructive manner when safeguarding concerns arise. Clear and detailed safeguarding records are maintained in accordance with the latest statutory guidance.
53. The school provides appropriate systems for pupils to ask for support if they have a worry. Assemblies and well-planned PSHE lessons teach pupils that it is always better to seek advice and help, if required. Pupils know they can talk to any trusted adult at the school. 'Worry boxes' are positioned in classrooms which teachers check regularly. Leaders have implemented a wellbeing hub where pupils can seek support from staff trained in mental health first aid. As a result, the emotional wellbeing of pupils is supported effectively.
54. Pupils learn about different aspects of personal safety effectively. For example, PSHE lessons begin to teach pupils at an age-appropriate level about the dangers of drugs and alcohol. Transport for London visit the school to educate Year 6 pupils about navigating London's transport systems responsibly. Pupils learn how to protect themselves when online through appropriate computing lessons. Pupils are taught, for example, not to share any personal information and to keep their passwords private. The school implements a robust filtering and monitoring system which is monitored regularly. Any alerts are quickly investigated and recorded, including details of any actions taken.
55. Leaders in the early years ensure that staff and visitors act in accordance with latest statutory guidance. For example, staff are meticulous about locking away their mobile phones. Clear signs remind visitors that the use of digital devices is prohibited when visiting the premises.
56. Leaders complete all required safer recruitment checks for adults who work at the school. These checks are recorded appropriately on a suitable single central record of appointments. Specific training is provided for leaders who are involved in recruitment procedures. The school's safer recruitment practices are thorough.

## The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

## School details

<b>School</b>	Saint Christina's School
<b>Department for Education number</b>	213/6225
<b>Registered charity number</b>	221319
<b>Address</b>	Saint Christina's School 25 St Edmund's Terrace St John's Wood London NW8 7PY
<b>Phone number</b>	020 7722 8784
<b>Email address</b>	office@saintchristinas.org.uk
<b>Website</b>	www.saintchristinas.org.uk
<b>Proprietor</b>	The Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Joan McConnell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Damien Walshe
<b>Age range</b>	3 to 11
<b>Number of pupils</b>	177
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	23 to 25 February 2022

## Information about the school

58. Saint Christina's School is an independent Roman Catholic co-educational day school. The school is in the diocese of Westminster. The proprietor is the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and the school is overseen by a board of governors. Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed.
59. There are 21 children in the Nursery arranged into one class. There are 40 children in Reception arranged into two classes.
60. The school has identified 57 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A very small number of pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
61. The school has identified English as an additional language for 19 pupils.
62. The school states its aims are to educate pupils in accordance with the Roman Catholic tradition. It seeks to promote an environment where pupils are excited to learn independently and feel safe and happy. The school endeavors to pursue excellence in all areas whilst recognising the individual needs of each pupil. It seeks to support pupils' spiritual, moral, intellectual, emotional, physical and social development so that they may grow towards the fullness of life promised by Christ.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

25 to 27 March 2025

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

64. 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 other 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
- health and safety tour and scrutiny of related documentation
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

65. 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](http://www.isi.net)**.

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