

St Philip's School

6 Wetherby Place, London, SW7 4NE

Inspection dates

14–16 May 2013

Overall effectiveness

Good **2**

Pupils' achievement Outstanding 1

Pupils' behaviour and personal development Outstanding 1

Quality of teaching Outstanding 1

Quality of curriculum Outstanding 1

Pupils' welfare, health and safety Good 2

Leadership and management Good 2

Summary of key findings

This school is good because

- Pupils' achievement is outstanding. Almost all pupils are making rapid and sustained progress.
- Pupils' outstanding behaviour and personal development are evident in their exceptional consideration for one another and their highly positive attitudes to learning.
- Parents and carers are very supportive of the school. They are confident that the school keeps their child safe and cares for them well.
- The curriculum provides outstanding opportunities for learning and personal development.
- The whole school is a very caring and supportive community, where pupils flourish and develop confidence and self-esteem in abundance. Pride in the school is shared by all pupils, teachers and support staff.
- Leadership and management are good. School leaders set high expectations and have created a culture where pupils are nurtured and supported to achieve both academically and socially.

It is not yet outstanding because

- The monitoring activities by leaders and managers need to be sharper and used to drive improvements in the school.
- The implementation of policies in respect of recording actions and processes is inconsistent.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with half a day's notice.
- Inspectors observed 21 lessons or part lessons and one whole school assembly. They held discussions with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, staff, two groups of pupils and the Chair of the Governing Body.
- Consideration was given to the 64 responses by parents and carers to the online Parent View questionnaire and 13 staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors heard pupils read, looked at school documents relating to pupils' attainment and progress, curriculum planning, minutes of meetings and school records for behaviour and attendance. They also checked the school's compliance with the independent school regulations.

Inspection team

Ann Henderson, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Peter Callaghan

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Philip's School is a Catholic boys' preparatory school which was founded in 1934. It is located in a former residential property in the borough of Kensington and Chelsea. It was last inspected in January 2010.
- The school is registered for boys from the age of seven to 13. At present there are 107 pupils on roll. There are 10 teachers, a deputy headteacher and a headteacher.
- The school prepares pupils for Common Entrance and scholarship examinations for a range of public schools.
- The school aims to encourage and inspire pupils to develop their academic and personal potential, develop a social conscience and respond to the needs of society.
- There are a few pupils with special educational needs. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs. No pupils speak English as an additional language although a broad range of heritages is represented.
- There is no alternative provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop a robust system to monitor and feedback on the quality of teaching so that teachers have an opportunity to reflect on their practice, share their successes and improve any weaker areas.
- Ensure that managers keep accurate records of the actions they take to support the welfare, health and safety of pupils.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Outstanding

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. Pupils enter the school with standards that are above those found nationally. Most pupils make rapid and sustained progress and achieve high standards in literacy and numeracy by the time they leave at the end of Year 8. All leavers pass Common Entrance examinations for senior schools of their choice. Small proportions obtain scholarships and are attaining standards which are exceptional for their age. Pupils develop and apply a wide range of skills in communication, language, literacy and mathematics. They articulate and express their views and ideas clearly and demonstrate a very good understanding of technical vocabulary. When asked to read in lessons, pupils do so confidently and fluently. Pupils demonstrate high levels of concentration during lessons and are tenacious and eager to complete their work to a high standard. A combination of high academic achievement, very positive attitudes to learning and a keenness to succeed makes them exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well because of the additional support provided for them. The school demonstrates excellent academic progress for these pupils so they are well equipped for their next stage of life.

Pupils play a dynamic role in their learning and wherever possible, offer their ideas and respond to challenges with great enthusiasm. They show high levels of curiosity and concentration. Pupils also excel in art, music and sport. They regularly take part in inter-school sporting fixtures and are rightly proud of their wide range of musical skills. Pupils' artistic talents, evident in displays of their artwork around the school, show high levels of skill and creativity.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Outstanding

Pupils' behaviour and personal development are outstanding. They have very positive attitudes to learning, demonstrating perseverance and resilience in lessons. Pupils are happy in school and are keen to do well. They feel valued and very well supported. This is reflected in their above average attendance. They are eager to excel in all they do and talk with enthusiasm about all that the school offers them, particularly the opportunities to develop their creative and sporting skills. Pupils have a well-developed sense of right and wrong and a strong moral code is embedded in the school's ethos. Pupils are always ready to support one another in lessons. They are courteous and polite to each other, to staff and to visitors. Pupils say instances of unacceptable behaviour are rare, but when they do occur, they are dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff. Pupils have very good understanding of all forms of bullying, including cyber bullying, and have a very good understanding how to keep safe and manage risks.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They have a very good understanding of personal faith, and are given many opportunities to reflect about themselves and others, showing a maturity in their compassion and kindness towards others. They are very loyal to one another and the school and attribute the religious ethos to maintaining what they consider the school family. The programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE) successfully enables pupils to develop self-confidence and self-esteem, as does the academic success they enjoy. Pupils have an excellent knowledge and understanding of public institutions and services in England. They are keen to take on additional responsibilities and 'The Witan' provides them with a very good opportunity to understand democracy, exert responsibility and influence decisions. This is evident in the introduction of additional awards for music, alongside awards for sport and the arts, which has been welcomed by pupils. There are numerous examples of high-quality artwork around the school and many pupils are accomplished musicians. Their sense of awe and wonder and reflectiveness is evident, which also contributes to their wider cultural understanding. There is a high level of tolerance and understanding of those from other cultures and those with different

faiths and beliefs.

Quality of teaching

Outstanding

The quality of teaching is outstanding. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and high expectations of what pupils are able to achieve. They create an extremely positive climate for learning. The highly positive classroom environment that teachers create helps pupils to develop excellent attitudes and has a powerful impact on their learning in lessons. Teachers' questioning encourages pupils to think deeply and helps them to develop a thorough understanding of the subject. High quality discussions help to give pupils a well-developed ability to articulate their views. They craft their responses to questions in a way that shows maturity beyond their years. Rigorous teaching ensures that pupils are exceptionally well prepared and able to achieve highly in tests, assessments and the common entrance examination. Pupils who sometimes find learning difficult are well supported by adults. This support, with the effective use of appropriate resources, enables them to flourish and learn at the same rate as their classmates.

Teachers mark pupils work regularly and provide helpful comments which encourage pupils and increase their self-esteem. Pupils know what they need to do to improve as a result of the high quality feedback they receive in lessons, both verbally and in written marking.

Some teaching is good rather than outstanding. In a few cases pupils are given the same task, which is too easy for some and too hard for others. On occasion teachers do not check pupils' learning carefully enough during the lesson to ensure that everyone is making rapid progress.

Quality of curriculum

Outstanding

The quality of the curriculum is outstanding. Pupils are provided with a broad range of opportunities for learning both during the school day and in the extensive range of extra-curricular activities which are well suited to their needs and interests. Pupils say they enjoy the variety of lessons they experience, including music, art, science, design and technology, history, geography, French, Latin, sport and religious studies. This range of subjects is well balanced alongside good opportunities to develop communication, reading and writing and mathematics skills effectively. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported through additional adult assistance. The curriculum also offers opportunities to develop new skills and interests beyond academic study, which ensure pupils become well-rounded individuals and develop the essential skills they need to succeed in the next stage of their education. There are many opportunities to develop interests and skills in creative arts, and first-hand experiences to visit theatres, galleries, museums and field trips, as well as ski trips and cultural visits to Europe, serve to widen pupils' awareness and experiences.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Good

The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good and all regulatory requirements are met. The school has significantly improved this aspect of its provision since the previous inspection. Policies and procedures are in place which include the up-to-date single central register containing all the required information. Staff are trained to understand how to protect pupils and keep them safe from harm. Regular checks to ensure pupils' health and safety take place, including fire safety and first aid. The school now has suitable provision for pupils if they become unwell during the school day. Risk assessments are in place. However staff are inconsistent in the way in which they record their actions when following some welfare arrangements. Pupils thrive in the relaxed and welcoming atmosphere where all staff share a commitment to care for pupils in this small, caring and nurturing environment. Parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire have every confidence in the school's procedures. There are good systems in place

to ensure pupils behave well and pupils have a clear understanding of the rewards and sanction set out in the behaviour policy. The school promotes personal and health education well through PSHE lessons and in the teaching of science. The extensive training for staff and pupils in dealing with cyber bullying was extended to parents and carers to raise awareness of how to keep safe when using computers and mobile technology.

Leadership and management

Good

Leadership and management are good. Leaders are successful in achieving the school's aims and securing high standards of achievement for pupils. Staff morale is high and there is a common commitment to improve the school even further. The experienced and dedicated staff, many of whom have worked at the school for a number of years, create a strong team, devoted to achieving the very best for their pupils. The headteacher and staff know the pupils well and have largely used informal methods to identify the school's most important strengths and areas for development. Regular meetings to discuss concerns and follow up previous actions serve to identify additional support for particular pupils. However, the school's systems to monitor teaching are insufficiently well developed to hold staff to account for their teaching and help them identify strengths and improve areas of weakness.

There are effective systems in place to check on the attainment and progress of pupils in reading, spelling and mathematics through commercial tests each year. However, this information is not always used with sufficient precision to pinpoint the cause of some fluctuations in pupils' progress. Nevertheless, pupils' overall achievement by the end of Year 8 is high. Appropriate training and development opportunities are provided for staff.

The school has recently updated a number of its policies and the school website is increasingly providing helpful information for parents and carers to access. These are appropriate, but checks on their implementation lack rigour. Staff are inconsistent in their recording of actions taken to support pupils' welfare, health and safety. Information about the curriculum is available for parents and carers on the school website and additional details are given to parents and carers at the start of each term. The school conveys information on individual pupils' achievement to parents and carers through regular written reports for each subject. The procedures for handling complaints meet the requirements set out in the independent school standards.

Trustees and the members of the governing body have a good understanding of what the school does well and the priorities for further improvement. Governors, led by the knowledgeable and experienced Chair of the Governing Body ensure the school is moving forward in the right direction. School leaders and governors have ensured the school accommodation is suitable and safe. They are fully aware of the constraints of limited space. Effective use is made of the outdoor garden during break times and pupils benefit from weekly swimming lessons and the use of the sports facilities at the well-appointed Barn Elms site. Leaders have ensured the independent school standards are fully met.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and/or the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	100516
Inspection number	420169
DfE registration number	207/6104

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, 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	Independent
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	7–13
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	107
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	St Philip's School Trust Ltd
Chair	John McIntosh CBE
Headteacher	Harry Biggs-Davison
Date of previous school inspection	14 January 2010
Annual fees (day pupils)	£12,750
Telephone number	020 7373 3944
Fax number	020 7244 9766
Email address	info@stphilipschool.co.uk

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