



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Report for a Material Change Visit

Thames Christian School

November 2021

School's details

School name	Thames Christian School
DfE number	212/6403
Registered charity number	3986193
Address	Thames Christian School Wye Street London SW11 2HB
Telephone number	020 7228 3933
Email address	info@thameschristianschool.org.uk
Headteacher	Dr Stephen Holsgrove
Chair of governors	Mrs Marie-Louise Wells
Age Range	11 to 16
Number of pupils on roll	164
Date of visit	09 November 2021

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Thames Christian School is an independent co-educational day school. It is owned by Thames Christian School, a company limited by guarantee and a registered Charity. The directors of the company are also the charity trustees and school governors. At present the school is housed in a refurbished library, and it makes use of local sports and recreational facilities. The school is currently building new premises a short distance from the current site. There are thirty-five pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom three have an education, health and care plan. Twelve pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL). The school's previous inspection was a regulatory compliance inspection in April 2018.

Purpose of the visit

- 1.2 This was an announced material change visit at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to assess the school's proposal to move to new premises in January 2022 at 12 Grant Road, London, SW1 2FR. At this time the school wishes to increase its registered pupil capacity to 400. The visit focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs).

Regulations which were the focus of the visit	Team judgements
Part 3, paragraph 7 (safeguarding)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 11 (health and safety)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 12 (fire safety)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision of pupils)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment)	Met
Part 4, paragraph 18 – 21 (Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors)	Met
Part 5, paragraph 23 – 29 (premises and accommodation)	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (publication of safeguarding policy)	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management)	Met

2. Inspection findings

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 7]

Safeguarding policy

- 2.1 The school meets the requirements.
- 2.2 The school has an appropriate policy for safeguarding which provides suitable arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school.

Safeguarding implementation

- 2.3 The school meets the standard.
- 2.4 The school takes appropriate steps to ensure pupils are safeguarded. Staff are suitably trained, including in the reporting of allegations of sexual violence and sexual harassment. Inspection evidence confirms that they have a secure understanding of their training and implement the school's procedures effectively. New staff receive copies of the safeguarding policy, the most recent iteration of Keeping Children Safe in Education, the staff code of conduct (including the whistleblowing policy) and all other required documents. Staff are confident that should they need to implement the whistleblowing policy, they will be taken seriously, and their concerns dealt with in line with the school's policies. Records seen by inspectors support this view. The designated safeguarding lead, and deputies, are cognisant of their duties and responsibilities, and execute these effectively. Accurate records are kept of all concerns so that they can be addressed promptly and, where it is necessary to do so, the appropriate authorities are contacted without delay. Pupils are confident that, should they raise concerns, these will be listened to, and appropriate action taken. Pupils understand how to stay safe online due to the effective e-safety training they receive in lessons and through workshops delivered by visiting experts. Governors evaluate the effectiveness of the safeguarding policy and procedures through an annual review and regular monitoring visits. Safeguarding arrangements are sufficient to continue to meet the needs of the increased numbers of pupils in the new location.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – health and safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 11]

- 2.5 The school is likely to meet the standard.
- 2.6 The school takes appropriate steps to ensure the health, safety and well-being of pupils through the effective implementation of a suitable health and safety policy. The school has worked closely with external health and safety consultants, architects and other agencies to ensure that the new building will meet the standards of health and safety required by building regulations and the independent school standards. These measures take into account provision for increased numbers of pupils. Governors and senior leaders take appropriate steps to ensure the suitability of the health and safety policy and its effective implementation.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – fire safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 12]

- 2.7 The school is likely to meet the standard.
- 2.8 The school has worked closely with the appropriate authorities and independent fire safety consultants to ensure that the new building will meet the requirements of building regulations and the independent school standards. It has commissioned a full fire safety audit covering all aspects of the buildings and facilities at the new site. The subsequent action plan has been followed appropriately to ensure that completed work meets the required standards. Suitable testing of fire

safety equipment, including fire alarms and emergency lighting, is completed at appropriate intervals, and additional tests have been scheduled prior to the anticipated opening in January.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – supervision of pupils [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 14]

2.9 The school meets the standard.

2.10 The school has and implements an appropriate supervision policy that ensures pupils are suitably monitored throughout the day. A comprehensive duty rota and cover list for before and after school, break and lunch duties, clubs and trips helps to ensure that sufficient staff are always available to pupils. A full audit of the new site has been conducted to identify when, where and how many staff will be required to provide supervision at different times, taking into account increased numbers of pupils. Staff understand that it is everyone's responsibility to keep pupils safe.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – risk assessment [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 16]

2.11 The school is likely to meet the standard.

2.12 The school has, and implements effectively, a comprehensive risk assessment policy. It has undertaken a full range of risk assessments covering all aspects of provision at the new premises, including to reflect the proposed increase in the number of pupils. Individual risk assessments have been completed for science laboratories, the use of power tools in design and technology, and the open courtyards. Senior staff review and revise risk assessments as each part of the project is completed as part of a dynamic approach to risk. Staff receive training in risk assessment as part of their induction and in follow-up health and safety briefings. Suitable individual risk assessments are completed for outings.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors [ISSR Part 4, paragraphs 18–21]

2.13 The school meets the standards.

2.14 The school takes all appropriate steps to ensure the suitability of staff by completing all required checks on each employee prior to appointment and recording these checks accurately on the single central record of appointments. Consideration has been given to the potential recruitment of additional staff as pupil numbers increase. Governors and senior leaders monitor recruitment procedures and review the single central register of appointments at least once a term to ensure all recruitment checks have been completed and correctly recorded.

Premises and accommodation – toilet and washing facilities [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 23]

2.15 The school is likely to meet the standard.

2.16 Suitable and sufficient toilet and washing facilities have been included in the new premises, distributed across the building, to accommodate the proposed number and ages of pupils attending.

Premises and accommodation – medical accommodation [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 24]

2.17 The school is likely to meet the standard.

2.18 The new building has suitable accommodation for the administration of first aid and to enable appropriate care for pupils who are unwell. The medical room has a basin and is near toilet facilities. Sufficient staff hold first aid qualifications to meet the proposed number of pupils.

Premises and accommodation – maintenance [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 25]

- 2.19 The school is likely to meet the standard.
- 2.20 The work completed so far is to an adequate standard to provide suitable accommodation for the age and number of pupils who will be attending. Classrooms, communal areas, and other facilities, where completed, are finished to a suitable standard. There is considerable work still to be completed, but the schedule of work indicates that everything is designed to be complete in time for the arrival of pupils. The school has drawn up a schedule of ongoing maintenance, including servicing of boilers and the general fabric of the building, to ensure that the premises are consistently well-maintained.

Premises and accommodation – acoustics [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 26]

- 2.21 The school is likely to meet the standard.
- 2.22 The new building has been designed with consideration given to acoustic conditions. Baffle boards and acoustic underlay have been used to limit noise spill between areas.

Premises and accommodation – lighting [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 27]

- 2.23 The school is likely to meet the standard.
- 2.24 A tour of the site and buildings indicated that, although work is not yet complete, both internal and external lighting, including emergency lighting, is suitable throughout the new premises.

Premises and accommodation – water supply [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 28]

- 2.25 The school is likely to meet the standard.
- 2.26 The new building provides suitable sources of drinking water that are clearly marked, although not all were connected at the time of the visit. Suitable temperature controls have been installed to prevent water reaching excessive temperature.

Premises and accommodation – outdoor space [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 29]

- 2.27 The school is likely to meet the standard.
- 2.28 The school will continue to use a range of suitable off-site facilities in the local area, including parks, sports fields, and other sporting facilities. Four open courtyards located on various floors of the building provide suitable areas for play, relaxation, and outdoor learning. Careful consideration has been given to the safety aspects of these areas.

Provision of information [ISSR Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c)]

- 2.29 The school meets the requirements for providing information relating to safeguarding to parents. Particulars of the arrangements for safeguarding are published on the school's website.

Quality of leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34]

2.30 The school meets the standard.

2.31 The proprietors and senior leaders have the required skills, knowledge and understanding to discharge their responsibilities effectively, and thereby ensure the health, safety, and well-being of the pupils. Due consideration has been given to the refurbishment and relocation of the school to enable the independent school standards regulations to be met. Leaders and managers have taken appropriate steps to ensure that the new premises will provide suitable accommodation for the age and number of pupils it is planned to accommodate.

3. Recommendation with regard to material change request

- 3.1 The proprietors and senior leaders have taken appropriate steps to ensure that the proposed relocation of the school to new premises provides a safe and secure environment for the age and number of pupils attending. Suitably careful consideration has been given to the health, safety and well-being of pupils, particularly in designing facilities that will be accessible to all, including those with SEND. Appropriate priority has been given to safeguarding. Existing and proposed health and safety procedures, including those for fire safety, are effective, and suitable risk assessments are in place. Recruitment procedures are robust and suitability checks on new appointments are accurately recorded.
- 3.2 It is therefore recommended that the proposed material change, to relocate the school to new premises, increasing pupil capacity over time to 400, should be approved.

4. Summary of evidence

- 4.1 The inspector held discussions with the head, senior leaders and other members of staff and met with chair of governors. He visited different areas of the school and talked with groups of pupils. He scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.