



**British School  
Overseas**  
Inspected by Penta International

**Inspection report on  
St Christopher's  
Infant and Junior Schools  
Bahrain**

15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> November 2011

Penta International  
is a Department of Education approved inspection provider

*This inspection was conducted against the standards introduced by the Department for Education (DfE) for British schools overseas. These standards are based on those for independent schools in England.*

*To be recognised by the Department for Education, a British School Overseas must have an inspection report which shows that their performance against all the standards is at least satisfactory. This reflects the standards required for continuing registration as a school in England. Schools meeting the standards will have their inspection reports published on the Department's website and will be registered on Edubase.*

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## 1. Context

### 1.1 What are the key contextual factors?

St Christopher's School is a co-educational, international school, providing a British-style education for pupils from the age of 3 to 18 years. The school is formally licensed under Bahraini Law as a private and non-profit making school. It is registered with the Ministry of Education of Bahrain as a 'Foreign Educational Institution'.

The school is presently situated on two separate sites some 17km apart.

All entrants from Year 1 and above sit an entrance test to establish their ability to access the curriculum. Pupils who have specific learning needs are accepted if the school judges it has the ability to support them. Around 4% of pupils are placed out of year group.

There are 2,075 pupils, representing 75 nationalities. The gender split is almost 50:50. The major nationalities are: 40% British, Arab nationals 20% (including 17% Bahraini), Indian 7%, American 6%, Pakistani 4% and Canadian 3%. Other nationalities make up the remaining 20%. Almost 50% of pupils have a native language other than English. The majority of pupils come from professional families, a significant number of which have at least one parent travelling extensively overseas on business.

The English National Curriculum forms the basis for the school's curriculum, with the addition of IGCSE in certain subjects. Post-16 pupils have the choice of following GCE Advanced Level or the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme. In accordance with Bahraini law, all Arab nationals study the Arabic language during the school day – four and a half hours per week from Years 1-3 and three hours per week from Year 4-11. All Muslims, regardless of nationality, must also study Islam for one lesson per week. Muslim pupils may not be exposed to any other forms of religious teaching.

The Board of Governors of the school is responsible for the financial and strategic direction of the school. The Board comprises members representing the Founding Companies, the Dean of St Christopher's Cathedral, the Ministry of Education and parents. The Board delegates the leadership and management of schools to the principal, who in turn delegates specific aspects to heads of school.

The principal has been in post for 16 years. He is supported by a leadership team which includes a Head of Infants and a Head of Juniors.

## 1.2 British nature of the school

The school aims to provide the best aspects of a British education, in a suitable cultural context. The name of the school and its links with the Anglican cathedral in Bahrain help to establish its identity. The school is a member of the British Schools of the Middle East (BSME). The language of the playground is English and the educational terminology derives from the UK.

Over 40% of the pupils are British nationals with experience of UK state and independent schools or of other British International Schools.

Over 90% of staff are British nationals with British qualifications who have taught in the UK. Nine out of the 13 senior managers hold the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH). The school contracts British educational professionals to deliver aspects of the continuous professional development (CPD) programme.

The English National Curriculum forms the basis for the school's curriculum from primary through to secondary. In the early years, similarly the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum forms the basis for the curriculum in Nursery and Reception. It successfully recognizes the children as individuals and competent learners and delivers the curriculum through a play-based approach to learning and development.

Strong links are maintained with the UK for a range of professional development opportunities. Recent staff training has been provided by Ian Gilbert, Ros Wilson, Paul Ginnis, David Hodgson, Sir John Jones and Professor Geoff Southworth.

The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of curriculum and extra-curricular activities including drama, music, and sports activities. A House system and student council provide further enrichment opportunities. Field trips to support learning are undertaken each year and include trips to the UK.

Parents are supportive of the British nature of the curriculum. Interviews with parents and feedback from parental questionnaires suggested they appreciate the high quality of education delivered at St Christopher's School.

The school is an active member of the British Schools in the Middle East (BSME) and is involved in a range of subject cluster groups where good practice and current UK initiatives are supported.

## 2. Quality of learning

### 2.1 How effective are learning and teaching?

The quality of teaching and the provision of learning opportunities across the primary phase are consistently high. The pupils are very enthusiastic about their learning and clearly enjoy being in school. They are keen to begin the lessons and are able to discuss their learning with fluency. This was evident throughout the school, from the witches' cauldrons boiling with worms in Early Years to the car designers of Year 6.

Where modelling by teachers is used effectively, children demonstrate a strong commitment to their work, are highly motivated and make the progress they are capable of. Pupils take immense pride in their work and have a clear love of learning. This was witnessed for example, when a Year 3 child relished the opportunity to share the treasures of King Tut.

The 'activity streets' enhance the learning environment very effectively and provide a wealth of learning opportunities of the highest standard. The Year 6 'Titanic' display is clear testament to the fact that pupils learning does not stop at the end of the day. Parents were keen to point out the enthusiasm of children to take part in all that the school has to offer: they are keen to be involved themselves wherever possible, even acting as serving wenches at the Tudor banquet.

The move to standardise planning and to incorporate the 'Learning to Learn' skills is evident as a major contributing factor in developing the 'autonomous learner'. Where lessons were at least good, there were opportunities for pupils to do more than just achieve the objective of the lesson, for example applying their thinking skills in a new way and to self-assess. There was clear evidence of links to prior learning and to other areas of the curriculum. An excellent example of this was seen in physical education (PE), with the use of the flip-cam and reference to the pupils' work in mathematics for measuring. Nearly all lessons are well planned and teachers adopt a lively pace which engages the pupils. Teachers' subject knowledge is excellent, and they are able to utilise a variety of learning styles and techniques to meet the needs of the pupils.

Teachers use an excellent range of strategies to support learning. Planning is differentiated, and individual pupils who may require additional support are highlighted. 'Brain Buddies', paired opportunities and group work ensure that all pupils are allowed to contribute to the lesson.

The learning support department is clear in its rationale to support those pupils with additional needs, implementing sixteen different, child-centred, programmes of support. The department is well managed and has a clear vision. Pupils are identified for additional support by extensive data analysis and by teacher observations. The school provides additional

support for other groups who may need a boost for a short period or extension work. Where lessons were at least good, teaching assistants were integral to the success of the learning by supporting individuals or groups. Teaching assistants understand their role in the learning and complement the teaching. In some lessons, they were not as well directed.

A strength of the primary phase is the outstanding relationships within the school community. The rapport between all staff and pupils is extremely positive. Most teachers are able to demonstrate their personality and sense of humour through their teaching. The atmosphere of fun is very conducive to high quality learning. The teachers at St Christopher's take an interest in, and know the pupils interests beyond the classroom. This was evident in a Year 4 ICT lesson where the teacher made reference to a pupil's pet. The relationship between pupils and their peers is exemplary. Children are polite and courteous, both in the classroom and beyond.

The break times provide pupils with opportunities to extend their friendship groups and become creative in terms of the games that they can invent. Staff are proactive during break supervision, with one Reception teacher maintaining visibility by using a scooter to get around!

## 2.2 How well are pupils cared for, guided and supported?

Pupils at St Christopher's are exceptionally well cared for, carefully guided and sensitively supported. They feel safe in their environment and know that any issue causing concern will be dealt with carefully. Parents have been actively involved in health issues and had an input into, for example, the location of shading and benches around the school.

Pupils' views are listened to carefully, and this has led to the development of quiet areas within the outside learning environment for those who prefer a less active playtime. Health and safety procedures are securely in place. Break time supervision is very effective, and is monitored by members of the senior management team (SMT).

There are also rigorous procedures in place to maintain the safety of pupils, beyond the school environment itself. Staff at the school are subject to pre-employment checks as part of the child protection policy. The site is very secure with a pass system in place for all visitors. The school premises are very well-cared for and very clean. There are regular fire and emergency evacuation procedures. The site also has an intercom system in all areas that would be utilised in the event of an emergency.

Staff involved in the teaching of swimming have current life-saving qualifications and the pool area has life-saving equipment. The school also promotes safe internet usage. It is school policy that all buses used by the pupils are equipped with safety belts. The school premises, facilities and resources are outstanding: they are well suited to the educational needs of all pupils, including those with learning support needs. They ensure that pupils are safe at all times whilst able to participate in a wide range of experiences.

The school nurse is actively involved in the health and welfare of the pupils: she is proactive in utilising her skills in the promotion of a healthy life style. She is assisted once a week by a second nurse who administers routine testing of pupils. They use the 'Engage' system to maintain pupil medical records and share information with staff. Detailed records are distributed to all staff outlining pupils' medical history and those at risk. The Infant and Junior site is now a nut-free environment. There is close liaison between staff and the nurse who offers relevant advice and support. Medical records are maintained in line with the Ministry of Health. There are additional policies that support the well-being of pupils. There is easy access to First Aid facilities throughout the school, including two defibrillators. Sufficient staff are currently trained in first aid skills and first aid training is offered regularly to pupils, parents and carers.

The school promotes a healthy lifestyle which is linked to curriculum areas and dedicated events in the school calendar. The school provides very good advice to pupils and their parents on food choices and offers a broad and regular programme for PE and sport. There

are numerous water coolers situated around the school and pupils have continuous easy access to drinking water.

All staff play an active role in the pastoral care of individual pupils. The needs of individuals are discussed on a regular basis and shared with specialist staff. Parents believe that the 'open-door' policy works and that if any concerns arise that they are dealt with appropriately. There are opportunities built into the curriculum for pupils to discuss pastoral issues in a safe, secure forum. There are regular, high quality assemblies that reinforce personal, social and health education (PSHE) themes. The PSHE programme provided a high quality curriculum designed to help pupils become more effective and considerate members of the school community. New pupils and staff to the school are allocated a buddy to assist in settling in to the new environment.

The quality of support is outstanding and is a particular strength of the school.

St Christopher's is a data-rich environment. Pupil information is used as a basis to set targets and identify focus groups for further support or enrichment opportunities. These range from fixed-term to short- and long-term interventions. Individuals are tracked and regular dialogue between SMT and teachers ensures that good practice is highlighted and disseminated. The marking of pupils' work refers back to the learning objective/s and often relates to the current target. When the current target had been consistently achieved, then reference is made to the next steps in the pupils' progress.

## 2.3 How well does the curriculum meet pupils' needs?

St Christopher's follows the English National Curriculum which has been adapted to make it relevant to the pupils' needs and the school's context. The curriculum is regularly reviewed and updated as part of the school's self-evaluation process. The curriculum has a clear rationale underpinned by developing the 'autonomous learner'. There are opportunities for pupils to be creative, and to experience learning physically. Cross-curricular links are planned and implemented to ensure that pupils' skills are developed in context.

The curriculum offered by the school provides a very good framework for teaching and learning. Team planning and rigorous monitoring by curriculum leaders and year leaders ensures that the curriculum delivered is consistent across year groups, and that there is progressive learning throughout the school. There is a broad range of opportunities which meet the needs, capabilities and interests of the pupils.

The school follows ministry requirements for Arabic language. The Arabic department is developing a more interactive and creative approach to teaching and learning. This is not yet consistent across the department and there is still evidence of traditional formal methods and a reliance on worksheets. Arabic for non-native speakers includes fun team games and extension opportunities for self-improvement with pupils writing words in Arabic and using new vocabulary.

In Nursery and Reception, the pupils work towards achieving the outcomes of the early learning goals. They are given the opportunity to work collaboratively, independently or as part of a focus group identified within teachers' planning. Integrated learning is achieved through matching appropriate activities and tasks, to learning objectives.

In Key Stages 1 and 2, the school follows the English National Curriculum from Years 1-6: this is adapted where necessary to better meet the needs of the pupils. The curriculum is broad and varied, and covers all subjects. It is practically based, which greatly assists learning. Teachers use their strong knowledge to challenge expectations and to plan for the delivery of the well balanced curriculum. It is successfully adapted to meet the developmental, social and emotional needs of the pupils. Creativity is well developed: the high quality work by pupils on display around the school is only one indication of this.

Planning in the primary school is generally very good. However, the integration of information and communication technology (ICT) in the curriculum is not shown in all planning and was not seen in all lessons.

Data on the progress made by pupils from Nursery to Year 6 shows a significant degree of value added. There is evidence in schemes of work and planning that pupils' learning is extended within the curriculum. Where lessons were at least good, the most able are provided for with higher level tasks and/or class extension work. Pupils with special

educational needs are supported by teachers or teaching assistants (TAs) in lessons. The school has a learning support policy, and this details provision for pupils who need a modified curriculum. Pupils with special needs are identified by testing and common consent: teachers then ensure that they are able to access the curriculum and achieve their potential. Identified pupils have individual education plans and/or targets set for their learning.

St Christopher's is highly effective in providing an extensive range of sporting, musical, academic and fun activities, also enlisting outside agencies to enhance the programme.

## 2.4 How well does the school work in partnership with parents, other colleges and the community?

In the most recent 2010 questionnaire, parents registered strong approval in all aspects. They report that they feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or concerns.

Parents who were interviewed referred to the excellent home/school communication systems in place. They strongly valued the accessibility of the heads of school, the open door policy and very prompt responses to enquiries. They are listened to and decisions were always made in the best interests of the pupils. Communications are enhanced by strong two-way interaction between parents and teachers - through personal books, target setting, monitoring, pastoral and academic meetings and end of year written reports.

Parents are provided with a wide range of information about the life of the school through its website. They publish weekly letters, and regular newsletters; these provide updates on curriculum and school events. The school has a volunteer group, 'Friends of St Chris', who organise community events and fundraise for local community and wider community needs. There are many volunteers that support the school on a regular basis. Parent helpers were seen supporting focused activities in the reception years, Year 5 history day and mothers were also listening to pupils read. Curriculum update meetings for parents are hosted by the school, providing clear opportunities for them to be updated on developments and how they can support learning at home.

There are frequent opportunities for celebrating social and cultural events, for example a National Costume Day, and an Arabic Activity Day where the local community is invited to school to demonstrate their crafts and sell their goods. Festive celebrations involve Christmas and Easter in a culturally sensitive manner.

Pupils are encouraged to be involved in charitable events. The school has been generous to many causes over the years. In 2010, St Christopher's launched a Community Service Programme to involve all pupils in service, benefitting the wider community of Bahrain and beyond.

Close links are maintained with other schools in Bahrain and the region. The school is an active member of BSME, and organises and hosts many events. These include the BSME Games, Music Camp and the Bahrain Private Schools Sports League.

Staff training opportunities are shared with other schools and professional dialogue is enhanced through BSME conferences and high quality CPD.

## 2.5 How well does the school prepare pupils for future learning?

Throughout the school, transitions between key stages are well managed and care is taken to support pupils at every stage.

Nursery and Reception classes have joint assemblies. Shared learning experiences are encouraged through buddy systems and taster sessions.

Pupils moving from Junior to Senior are exposed to several senior school taster experiences and this is overseen by the Assistant Heads responsible for the year groups. Cross phase lesson observations and meetings ensure learning continues to be challenging. Year 6 parent information meetings are held; additional meetings are provided for those parents with pupils requiring learning support.

The school has a thorough monitoring framework in place which includes work scrutiny by SMT, year leaders and curriculum leaders at various times during the year. This ensures consistency in learning across year groups and progression in learning throughout school. The work scrutiny shows consistent marking across subjects, with teachers marking against the learning objective of the lesson. Teachers are providing clear guidance on how pupils can improve. Comments are constructive and personalised: achievements are recognised and valued.

Parents report that pupils are well prepared for future learning and life. In the great majority of lessons, teachers encourage pupils to follow good work habits. Most pupils demonstrate resilience and become absorbed in their learning, manage distractions well, make keen observations and persevere in the face of difficulties. Across the majority of lessons, pupils are heavily involved in collaborative learning with excellent focus on 'learning to learn' skills.

The whole school focus on 'The Five Pillars of Learning' is further embedding an ethos which supports its goal: developing autonomous learners who are fully prepared and competent to meet the challenges in the outside world. The teaching staff are united in working towards developing skills in their pupils, which will help them in future learning.

The school encourages the development of personal interests and practical skills and offers a wide range of hobby and vocational skills through their extensive range of enrichment programmes.

### 3. Standards achieved by pupils

#### 3.1 How high are standards achieved in the areas of learning, subjects and courses of the curriculum?

The school has a well-established system to monitor the progress of all children from Nursery to the end of Key Stage 2. The leadership of the school successfully delegates the implementation to the assistant head teachers who analyse pupil progress regularly and effectively. Training sessions planned by the assistant head teachers ensures that all teachers understand and are competent to interpret the data and identify any underachievement. The data is used by class teachers to revise and adapt learning plans so that all pupils achieve at least 2 sub levels of the National Curriculum each year.

In Nursery and Reception all children are making the expected progress or better: some make outstanding progress. A range of assessment tools are used to assess the children when they begin school, and at regular intervals as they progress. The summative assessments are triangulated with teacher assessments, so that this good progress is maintained to enable the children to achieve well. Any underachievement is addressed quickly by teachers. This year there has been an increased emphasis on improving speaking and listening skills. For example, teachers were seen to model asking and answering questions in the Nursery. In the Reception classes, children practised making the correct sounds in their phonics lesson.

In Key Stage 1, pupils attain standards well above the expected level when compared with the United Kingdom. The 2011 assessment data shows 100% of pupils attained the expected level 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. A significant number of pupils attained the higher standard of level 3 in reading, writing and mathematics. In mathematics boys attain higher standards than girls. These consistent high standards prepare pupils well for the next steps in their learning.

In Key Stage 2, pupils attained higher standards than similar pupils in the UK. 2011 test data shows that 98% of pupils attained the expected level 4 in English and Mathematics. At the higher level 5, attainment is outstanding. In English, 71% of pupils attained level 5 (compared with 29% of pupils in the UK). In mathematics, 68% of pupils attained level 5, compared with 35% in the UK.

These consistent high standards across the school can be attributed to a range of factors: the high quality of lessons, regular and effective assessments, and the senior leaders' strategic and planned actions in monitoring pupils' progress.

The school's senior leaders collect very comprehensive data and plan regular training sessions for the teachers. Pupils' work is regularly moderated, they have individual targets and teachers agree a data target as part of their appraisal for their own performance management.

There are a variety of ways that pupil targets are organised in the school. In discussions with the pupils, some were not clear of their targets. In many lessons, teachers made little reference to individual, group or class targets. However, the targets are printed in pupils' literacy and mathematics books.

End of year reports for parents of pupils' attainments and achievements have been reviewed and improved to give parents detailed information of the standards being attained by their son or daughter. Individual pupil targets for development are printed in their report.

Assessment for Learning (AFL) is being effectively implemented in lessons to help pupils to begin to evaluate their own progress and inform the teacher of the next steps in individual pupils learning.

Through moderation training, teachers agree and understand the national curriculum levels very well. They are able to judge individual progress accurately and plan effective lessons. Year group leaders undertake work sampling, focussing on any underachievement, ensuring that learning in lessons adds value to pupils' attainment. The test and assessment data indicates the success of the school in the monitoring of pupil progress.

The pupils have further opportunities to achieve in the many after-school activities. There is a great variety planned to match the interest and ages of the pupils, including sport, music, computers, cooking and art. These are well attended and pupils derive much enjoyment and fun, as well as developing further skills and knowledge. In cooking club for example, the pupils were successfully making cookies, co-operating with a partner, sharing equipment, listening well to the teacher and teaching assistant. The clubs enrich the learning experiences for the pupils.

Themed days such as the outstanding Tudor Day and other educational visits linked to the curriculum maintain the enthusiasm for learning shown by the pupils throughout the inspection.

### 3.2 How well are pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities developed?

The pupils at St Christopher's are happy and enthusiastic learners. They are proud to be members of the school community. At the beginning of the school day, pupils arrive promptly, move to their classrooms quickly and are ready to make the most of every lesson. Teachers are well prepared and set high expectations of behaviour, learning and personal and social skills.

The pupils respond positively, with exemplary behaviour in and outside the classrooms, and hard work in lessons: they are kind, caring and considerate. At break times, they relax with friends, invent games and use the equipment and outside resources sensibly. No poor behaviour was observed in lessons. In discussions, they are thoughtful, articulate, confident and responsive to any questions posed.

Attendance is excellent, though there was a slight dip in the last academic year due to the civil unrest. Registers are taken at the start of the day: the data is monitored and analysed effectively. The end of year report publishes actual attendance, punctuality and any absences taken at parents' request.

In nearly all lessons, pupils have very good attitudes to learning. They listen well to their teacher and to each other in whole class sessions. Pupils settle well to individual and group work because they understand what to do from the clear instructions and explanations given to them. Independence in learning is strongly promoted in lessons. In a Year 5 mathematics lesson, pupils were able to set problems about fractions for their partner. They were confident and able to apply the knowledge acquired in the first part of the lesson to accurately solve the challenge: attainment was excellent. In less exciting lessons, pupils still respond well and worked hard to complete the learning objective. Pupils respect each other, take turns and share resources very well. This makes for nearly all lessons being a happy and enjoyable experience for pupils and teachers.

The relationships between children, pupils and all adults working within the school are exemplary. Everyone works together, ensuring that the vision and values of the school are realised. Responsibilities given to the pupils are carried out very well, whether it is being a classroom monitor or a member of the school council. Efforts of the pupils are noticed and valued by the adults. This adds to the friendly, learning atmosphere that is experienced by the pupils at St Christopher's. The pupils are committed and loyal to the school, and express their delight at the kindness of the teachers, the quality of the learning environment and the superb facilities and resources.

Pupils' opinions are heard through the student council. It meets weekly to discuss ideas and make suggestions to their teachers for improvements. New equipment for the playground

and the creation of a quiet area has been as a direct result of the student council. Suggestion boxes in each class are planned for the future. There is also a well-established house system to develop team work, co-operation and competition in sporting activities. The pupils express enjoyment at cheering on their team. The pupils know they are selected to take on the post of house captain for their ability to demonstrate good sportsmanship, whether on the losing or winning side.

There is a detailed curriculum and scheme of work for PSHE. Weekly lessons focus on helping the pupils to develop a range of skills to help them learn and grow into responsible adults. In a good lesson seen about conflict, pupils listened well to each other's experiences and made sensible suggestions on how best to resolve such problems. PSHE skills are developed further in lessons and pupils are secure and able to ask questions knowing that they will be respected. The commitment by teachers to integrating PSHE into most planned learning, results in well balanced, happy, confident and independent pupils.

## 4. Leadership and management of the school

### 4.1 How well is the school led and managed?

The Principal provides exemplary leadership. He has a clear vision for the school, and the skills, knowledge and disposition to develop and articulate a shared goal of continual improvement. The Principal takes a firm strategic hand in monitoring the success of all students and encourages effective levels of accountability for all staff involved in developing the learning and well-being of students at St Christopher's. This was clearly evidenced through the delegated responsibilities and the effective whole school improvement planning.

He leads the Leadership and Management Team (LMT), consisting of himself and the Heads of Infants, Juniors and Seniors: this is the school's major policy-making body. Together they form an outstanding team that ensures that the vision and preferred practices of the school are applied consistently across all key stages. A very positive learning culture is promoted throughout the school.

The management of operations, facilities and resources is excellent. This is based on clear pathways of delegation, promoting a safe, efficient and highly effective learning environment. Leading and guiding successfully, the principal ensures that the school responds effectively to students, parents, community members and the diverse range of community interest. As a result, St Christopher's is a highly respected and valued community member.

The Board of Governors are highly effective in their role of 'critical friends' and have made a valuable contribution to ensuring St Christopher's is an outstanding school. The Board has an established complaints procedure that meets all the requirements for 'best practice': no formal complaints have been made to the board during recent years.

The implementation of the roles of guidance, support and monitoring by the board is outstanding. Clear policies provide concise details on responsibilities and accountability of the board and principal. This clear structure highlights areas of accountability and avoids 'over' and 'micro' management. Governors have a clear understanding of their individual and collective responsibilities, and ensure high levels of attendance and involvement at all Board meetings. The collective contribution of the board members is excellent: they add significantly to the continual process of improvement at St Christopher's.

In partnership with the principal, senior leadership and management team and wider community the board provides a high quality of guidance, support and challenge. This has ensured that the school both operates highly effectively and undertakes a range of inspirational developments.

Leadership and management of the Infant and Junior schools are outstanding. The leadership team meet regularly, to plan and monitor progress: they work collaboratively and have a clear vision. They ensure school values are formed and implemented around the key documents: the mission statement, the strategic intent, fundamental principles and St Christopher's 'School Pillars of Learning' that together drive the success of the school.

Staff are well aware of the direction and vision of the school, and support developments actively. All are involved in a purposeful appraisal and self-evaluation process. Support provided by the leadership sets clear expectations. Staff have clear roles and responsibilities, and the handbook gives clear guidance on procedures, visions and values. There are clear structures to evaluate performance. The year leaders and curriculum leaders have clearly identified priorities and systems for monitoring performance. Appraiser training and buddy systems provide support and ensure consistency.

Middle managers have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and know the impact of their leadership on school improvement. Year leaders and curriculum leaders work together to ensure consistently high standards within their subjects and across years, planning for cross-curricular and cross-phase links. Cross-phase action teams have had a positive impact on school improvement, ensuring seamless transition and high consistency of teaching and learning.

Professional development at St Christopher's is at the heart of the self-evaluation and school improvement processes. The school has developed a framework of provision to support the whole school community in their various roles. The impact of the high quality CPD opportunities provided, is evident across the school.

Decisions taken by leaders and staff are based on in-depth research and data analysis. The senior management team are continuously looking for ways to improve and better ensure consistency of high quality teaching and learning.

Effective policies and strategies are fully implemented. These include an outstanding 'Framework for Learning Strategy' incorporating the autonomous learner, the competent individual and the global citizen.

## 5. Quality of provision

### 5.1 How good are the accommodation, the staffing levels and the resources?

The quality of provision is outstanding. The site provides excellent facilities and resources. The school provides a stimulating learning environment with activity streets in year corridors, and displays of pupils' work in classrooms and public areas. Pupils have space to move around and learn, both inside and outside the classroom.

The school has provided large shaded social areas with playground equipment, games and a chill out zone. Each nursery class has an outside learning environment. The SMT regularly review the quality of the premises and the impact it is having on the pupils learning: for example, the learning support teams have been relocated together to support collaborative planning.

The school is currently working to introduce Wi-Fi throughout the school, as it is currently limited to a few areas near the administration block. There are a number of excellent specialist facilities, including infant and junior halls with specialist lighting, an outdoor stage, music and instrumental teaching rooms including a music technology room. There is a very well-equipped and spacious library. The school also has a tennis/netball court, a sports hall and swimming pool. The school is clean, well-maintained, safe and secure.

The quality of teaching and non-teaching staff is a strength throughout the school. Their areas of expertise make a significant contribution to the personal and academic development of pupils. All staff are highly qualified and very committed. Over 90% are UK trained and job descriptions are clearly defined. There is a range of experienced and more recently qualified teachers, including recently qualified PGCE students.

All classrooms are well-resourced and are carefully chosen to support learning. All classes have interactive whiteboards. The activity streets have shared and designated areas for learning and play. Displays of pupil work in the activity streets and throughout the school are of a high quality, current and plentiful.

There are 3 ICT labs. ICT resources include flip HD video cameras, laptops, netbooks, Activote systems, ipods, ipads and programmable robots.

## 6. Overall effectiveness of the school

### 6.1 How successful is the school?

Overall the primary school provides a quality of education that is well above the DfE standards. The school is successful in meeting its vision of providing high-quality British style education to pupils, from nursery to sixth form. This vision is clearly understood by all stakeholders: it provides the focus for all school developments and improvements. Leadership is outstanding.

St Christopher's has very high expectations of all its pupils and they respond by making excellent progress in their lessons and external examinations.

The school is highly successful in enabling all pupils to develop their personal skills and qualities. Pupils are thoughtful, well behaved, treat others with respect and have excellent social skills.

St Christopher's has implemented a curriculum that engages pupils effectively and is well matched to their needs, interests and aspirations.

The school is held in high regard by the wider community and by parents. The pupils are proud to be members of the school community and value the opportunities it provides.

## 6.2 What the school does well

There are many strengths in the primary school. The following are the most important:

- The outstanding and rigorous planned provision that enables the pupils to be confident and independent learners.
- The principal is inspirational in his drive to continually improve all aspects of the school. The school uses the latest research findings to ensure it remains at the cutting edge of school improvement.
- The high quality of teaching and learning that accounts for the pupils' excellent attainment and progress.
- The early years practice enables the youngest children to be happy, successful, well cared for and secure in their learning.
- The high quality of research that underpins and evaluates existing provision to pioneer innovative methodology and practice.
- The school ensures each pupil is valued and supported at all times and this fosters their love of learning.
- The strong emphasis on developing and encouraging trust, responsibility and co-operation with all pupils and adults that results in an outstanding school.
- The facilities provide outstanding resources and accommodation that contribute to high achievement and attainment.
- The whole school community works as a team to promote high quality learning for all pupils.
- The outstanding leadership of the heads of Infant and Junior schools that empowers all senior and middle managers to fulfil their roles and responsibilities to a high standard.
- The sense of pride associated with being a member of St Christopher's community.

### 6.3 What should the school do to improve further?

Areas for consideration are to

- develop further the pupils' use of ICT, to enhance learning more effectively;
- increase the level of challenge through target setting, involving the pupils more closely in the process.

### 6.4 Does the school meet the DfE standards?

St Christopher's Infant and Junior School has many aspects that are outstanding: the quality of education provided exceeds all the standards set by the DfE.

#### **Evidence source/s**

During the inspection, 40 full or part- lessons were observed across the whole school, school documentation and policies were analysed, pupils' workbooks were scrutinised, and discussions were held with senior staff, middle managers, a range of teachers and groups of Year 2, 4, and 6 pupils. Other children were talked to informally. Some parents were also asked for their views on the school. Two whole schools days were monitored.