

School inspection report

7 to 9 July and 15 July 2026

Immanuel Christian School

Rodford Tabernacle

Westerleigh Road

Westerleigh

Avon

BS37 8QG

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 have established a caring school community underpinned by a clear Christian ethos. Pupils behave respectfully and relationships between pupils and staff are positive.
2. Leaders have the appropriate knowledge and skills and fulfil their responsibilities effectively to ensure that the Standards are consistently met. Governors maintain effective oversight of key regulatory and operational matters and provide leaders with appropriate support and challenge.
3. Leaders use self-evaluation effectively to identify the school's successes and areas for development. Their current priorities include curriculum development, assessment and emerging risks such as those relating to the use of social media.
4. Leaders maintain the required policies and make most required information available to parents of current and prospective pupils. However, at the start of the inspection, particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year were not published on the school's website. Leaders rectified this during the inspection.
5. Leaders actively identify and manage risks to pupils' wellbeing, including careful consideration of those arising from the recent move to the secondary school site.
6. Leaders and teachers provide an appropriate curriculum with regular creative and enrichment opportunities, including sport and public speaking. Teaching and support staff help pupils to make good progress from their starting points. Pupils show positive attitudes to their learning, which contributes to their progress.
7. Secondary-aged pupils study a broad range of GCSE subjects and receive suitable guidance about future education and career pathways. They gain useful practical understanding of the world of work through work experience.
8. Leaders ensure that there is effective provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), enabling them to receive well-targeted support and make good progress.
9. Early years teachers promote children's communication and language development effectively by helping them to explain their ideas, talk about their learning and engage confidently with others.
10. Leaders use assemblies to support pupils' personal development, including through weekly 'big questions' for secondary-aged pupils linked to current and moral themes. Pupils gain confidence and develop independence through performances, celebration assemblies and, for older pupils, timetabled study sessions.
11. Pupils receive timetabled physical education (PE). However, current arrangements are not sufficiently tailored to pupils' differing ages and abilities, so pupils do not make as much progress in PE as they could.
12. Leaders ensure that all pupils receive relationships and sex education (RSE). RSE is taught through the school's personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) curriculum, in science lessons and supported by visiting speakers. However, assessment in RSE is not sufficiently developed to identify consistently where pupils may need additional support.

13. The school's RSE policy is shared with parents and consulted on appropriately. However, the RSE policy does not fully reflect the school's practice in the teaching of RSE. Although all pupils receive their entitlement to RSE, the policy does not set out clearly and in line with statutory guidance, the arrangements for a pupil to choose to opt back into sex education from three terms before they turn 16, even if their parent has requested a withdrawal.
14. Pupils learn about democracy, respect and community responsibility through the school council, charity work, care home visits and writing to their local member of parliament. Leaders prepare pupils effectively for their next steps through carefully planned transition activities, including 'moving-up days' to visit their new year group.
15. Leaders maintain a robust safeguarding culture and respond effectively to emerging online risks, including those associated with artificial intelligence, misogyny, scams and image sharing. Pupils know how to report concerns and understand that adults will listen and act appropriately.

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 particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of any public examinations, are consistently made available to parents of current and prospective pupils
- ensure that physical education provision for secondary-aged pupils is sufficiently age-appropriate so that it meets pupils' differing abilities and physical needs
- ensure the school's relationships and sex education policy fully reflects both statutory guidance and the school's current practice, including clarifying that, from three terms before a pupil turns 16, the pupil can choose to opt back in to sex education even if their parent has requested withdrawal
- ensure that pupils' knowledge and understanding in relationships and sex education is assessed effectively so that teachers can provide pupils with extra support where needed.

Material change request

Inspectors considered the school's request for a change to the details of its registration to increase its capacity from 60 to 110.

- Safeguarding arrangements are effective and reflect current statutory requirements. Staff receive suitable safeguarding training and regular updates. They understand their responsibilities, including how to report and escalate concerns. Leaders respond appropriately to any concerns raised. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding oversee, test and understand internet filtering and monitoring arrangements effectively. The safeguarding team has sufficient capacity to cater for the proposed maximum number of pupils.
- Health and safety and fire safety arrangements are suitable and effective. Fire risk assessment actions are completed within required timescales, fire equipment is regularly tested and maintained, and fire marshals receive suitable training.

- Staffing levels are sufficient to ensure appropriate supervision throughout the school day once the proposed increase in pupil numbers takes place.
- Effective risk assessments are in place and regularly reviewed. Leaders have appropriately assessed any potential risks for the proposed increase in pupil numbers.
- The premises and accommodation, including teaching, dining, medical, and toilet and washing facilities, are suitable and sufficient to cater for the proposed maximum number of pupils. Adequate space is available in classrooms and outdoor areas.
- All required safer recruitment checks are conducted prior to adults commencing work at the school.
- Leaders have planned effectively for the proposed increase in pupil numbers. They ensure that the Standards are met consistently, demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities to promote the wellbeing of pupils.

16. It is recommended that the material change be approved.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

17. Leaders have established a clear vision for the school based on its Christian principles. They work closely with parents to support pupils' personal and academic development. Leaders ensure that values, including integrity, patience, kindness, obedience, honesty and self-control, shape relationships throughout the school. As a result, pupils mix well across year groups and support one another in a respectful and inclusive environment.
18. Governors assure themselves that leaders demonstrate the appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding to fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the Standards are met consistently. Leaders implement the school's policies effectively and ensure that these are understood by parents, staff and pupils.
19. Leaders use self-evaluation to set relevant priorities for improvement, including the development of science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM), improvements to curriculum progression in music, greater emphasis on refining teaching approaches in mathematics and more effective assessment systems for monitoring pupils' progress.
20. Governors maintain oversight of risks, including safeguarding, attendance, health and safety, supervision and site security. They check these through reports, school visits, training and regular updates from the school's association. Governors pose questions to leaders and follow up key aspects of provision.
21. Leaders identify emerging risks to pupils' wellbeing, including risks associated with artificial intelligence, social media, mental health and misogynistic culture, and take proactive steps to educate and inform pupils. Leaders consider any potential unintended consequences associated with their actions and act accordingly, such as ensuring that safeguarding information is shared effectively across the two sites and that curriculum progression is maintained as pupils transition to the secondary site.
22. Leaders manage complaints appropriately. The complaints policy includes a suitable three-stage procedure and clearly defined timescales. Leaders respond appropriately to the circumstances of individual cases and keep records relating to how complaints are managed.
23. Leaders make available the required information and policies to parents of current and prospective pupils. However, at the start of the inspection, particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, including public examination results, were not made available. Leaders rectified this during the inspection.
24. Leaders maintain appropriate links with external agencies where necessary and fulfil their responsibilities in relation to pupils who join or leave the school at non-standard transition points. They consult with the local authority about the financial arrangements and use of funds relating to any pupils who have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
25. The school fulfils its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and implements an appropriate accessibility plan. Leaders promote inclusion by adapting classrooms and the curriculum, when required, to support pupils' academic and pastoral needs.

26. Leaders with responsibility for the early years provide effective oversight of children's learning, development and welfare. Staff create a caring environment in which children feel safe, develop confidence and make good progress through well-planned activities.

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

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

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

28. Leaders provide an appropriate curriculum that covers all of the required areas of learning. Leaders reflect on and evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum and make improvements where required, such as revising the music curriculum to create clearer progression and introducing different teaching strategies in mathematics. STEAM activities, including workshops with external providers, provide pupils with opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills effectively. Leaders provide a broad GCSE curriculum so that teachers prepare pupils for a wide range of different subjects.
29. In English lessons, leaders prioritise pupils' reading, writing and speaking skills. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 perform poems by well-known children's poets. Quiet reading at the start of afternoon activities helps pupils to develop their literacy skills. Pupils read aloud fluently and expressively and use inference effectively to explain meaning. Teachers further enrich pupils' engagement with literature through online interviews with authors and opportunities to write to the authors whose books they read, helping pupils understand writers' intentions and the creative process.
30. Leaders promote participation in events such as the Mid-Somerset Festival and the Eisteddfod to help pupils develop confidence as they speak and perform to a wider audience. Pupils in Year 7 research topical questions linked to current affairs before presenting and defending their ideas to their peers. This helps them to speak with increasing clarity and consider different viewpoints.
31. In mathematics lessons, pupils show intellectual curiosity and confidence when applying concepts such as the correct order of operations and calculating co-ordinates. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 demonstrate secure mathematical vocabulary, including terms such as vertex, reflection, quadrants and axes. Pupils achieve well in external competitions, including the UK Maths Challenge.
32. Teachers in the early years support children's communication and language development by encouraging them to explain their ideas with each other and share work they are proud of. Children develop early reading and writing skills through a systematic phonics programme and through reciting familiar rhymes, such as *Little Miss Muffet*. Leaders with responsibility for the early years help to develop children's mathematical understanding through a variety of resources that match quantities to numbers, identifying odd and even numbers, and talking about sharing. These activities help children build confidence in early literacy and using mathematical ideas in purposeful ways.
33. Experienced teachers use good subject knowledge to support pupils' progress. Teachers meet regularly to discuss curriculum content, assess pupils' progress and review samples of pupils' work. This helps them identify common areas for development, such as punctuation in English, clearer sequential progression in mathematics and the introduction of a two-year spiral curriculum in science to better meet the needs of pupils.
34. Teachers plan lessons that give pupils a variety of learning opportunities to develop creativity and deepen their understanding as they move through the school. In Years 1 and 2, teachers carefully select texts to prompt discussion about biomes. In Years 3 and 4, pupils create museum artefacts linked to their history and geography topics, such as models of the Hanging Gardens of Babylon and Celtic knots made from clay. In Years 5 and 6, pupils dissect a mackerel as part of a topic about the sea, to understand how fish feed and breathe. Older pupils benefit from effective teaching in GCSE subjects so that they deepen their understanding of more complex topics, such as food

technology experiments on aeration and emulsion, and chemistry work on carboxylic acids and structural diagrams.

35. Teachers check pupils' understanding regularly and use what they find to adjust teaching and support. They ask questions that help pupils to clarify their thinking and improve their work. Leaders and teachers use a range of assessment information, including tests, reading checks and baseline assessments, to identify pupils' levels of attainment and to enable them to provide additional support where required. Pupils receive regular feedback on their work, which helps them understand the next steps in their learning.
36. In lessons, teachers provide engaging activities that encourage pupils to show an interest in their learning and to be proud of their progress. As a result, pupils work independently and collaboratively and demonstrate an ability to remain focused for sustained periods. Leaders and teachers have high aspirations for pupils' academic development, which helps pupils to make good progress from their starting points.
37. Teachers manage combined year groups effectively by setting tasks matched to pupils' prior attainment, including challenge for pupils with higher prior attainment and reinforcement for those who need further consolidation.
38. Leaders identify and support pupils who have SEND through careful tracking, targeted support sessions and regular review. Leaders with responsibility for provision for pupils who have SEND use their expertise to screen pupils and plan support. Teachers adapt lessons accordingly, including through visual resources, movement breaks and small-group or one-to-one support sessions. This helps pupils who have SEND make good progress from their starting points.
39. Leaders identify pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL), track their progress and provide targeted support where needed. This helps pupils to access learning and make good progress from their starting points.
40. Leaders provide a suitable programme of recreation and activities. These support pupils' wider development by encouraging them to make the most of the available resources and facilities. Pupils can develop their skills through gardening club, where they plant and tend to their own vegetables and fruit, arts and crafts clubs, and a range of sports and games.

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

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

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

42. Leaders and teachers know pupils well and create a caring and supportive school community where positive relationships are evident. Teachers are warm and friendly and pupils know that they can share concerns with adults in the school. Pupils mix well across year groups and support one another in a welcoming and inclusive environment.
43. Leaders plan a comprehensive programme of assemblies that brings pupils together across the school and actively promotes their spiritual and moral development. In lessons, primary-aged pupils learn about Christian figures from different walks of life and periods of history. They study biblical texts and their relevance to modern life in regular Bible studies sessions. The secondary assembly programme supports critical thinking through weekly 'big questions' that explore challenging themes such as toxic masculinity and justice. Daily collective worship and singing further support pupils' spiritual development.
44. Pupils develop confidence as they perform in front of wider audiences at public events. Leaders ensure that weekly celebration assemblies recognise pupils' achievements and this helps to enhance their self-esteem. In the secondary school, leaders promote pupils' independence and self-knowledge through timetabled study sessions across a range of subjects, where they learn to take increasing responsibility for their learning as they work towards clear goals.
45. The PSHE curriculum and assembly programme support pupils' physical and mental health by helping them to understand the importance of regular exercise, sleep and sensible screen use. Leaders plan opportunities to promote pupils' physical development. Children in the early years develop physical skills through PE, outdoor learning, balance bikes and the development of ball skills. Leaders provide PE lessons for pupils to develop their fitness and co-ordination. However, pupils in Years 7 to 11 are taught together, and planning and teaching do not cater sufficiently for their different ages, skills and abilities. As a result, pupils do not make as much progress in PE as they could.
46. RSE is taught as part of the PSHE and science curriculums and supported by visiting speakers. Leaders take the school's religious character and parents' views into account when planning the curriculum. For this reason, required content related to intimate and sexual relationships is not taught until pupils reach Year 10 and Year 11. Children in the early years develop personal and emotional skills by learning to follow rules, take turns and resolve conflicts with others. Primary-aged pupils learn about families, caring friendships, respectful and online relationships, and how to recognise appropriate boundaries and seek help. Secondary-aged pupils learn about healthy and intimate relationships, consent, contraception and sexual health, pregnancy, marriage, the risks of pornography, abuse and online sexual risks as set out in statutory guidance. Leaders support pupils who have SEND by providing individualised RSE lessons, if appropriate.
47. Teachers use discussions in RSE lessons to help pupils to develop their knowledge and to enable teachers to check pupils' understanding. Within RSE lessons, pupils have some opportunities to evaluate their own understanding through written self-assessment, for example in Years 9 and 10. However, assessment is not sufficiently well developed to enable leaders to identify consistently where pupils may need additional support to ensure that they have a clear understanding of relationships and sex education.

48. Leaders consult with parents on the school's RSE policy. Leaders ensure that all pupils receive RSE and that the curriculum fully reflects statutory guidance. However, the school's RSE policy does not make clear enough when and how the requirements about sexual relationships are taught, or clarify parental withdrawal arrangements, including that a pupil can choose to opt back into sex education from three terms before they turn 16, even if their parent has requested withdrawal in line with statutory guidance.
49. Leaders promote clear behavioural expectations through the school's values and routines. They apply appropriate sanctions where necessary. Pupils behave well in lessons, at lunchtime and as they move around the school. They are polite and respectful towards staff and each other.
50. Leaders implement an effective anti-bullying strategy and respond appropriately to bullying when it occurs. They maintain detailed records and monitor these carefully to identify patterns. Leaders use assemblies, PSHE lessons, discussion times and individual conversations to reinforce respectful behaviour, including educating pupils not to be bystanders to bullying or unkindness. Pupils know how to recognise bullying. Staff respond appropriately if bullying occurs.
51. Leaders ensure that the school's two sites are well maintained and provide a safe physical environment. They maintain the premises through regular checks of fire alarms, emergency lighting, electrical equipment, water temperatures and escape routes. Leaders take prompt action to address identified hazards and ensure that fire safety requirements and evacuation procedures are met.
52. Leaders provide pupils with suitable accommodation to support their medical needs. Staff qualified in first aid, including paediatric first aid, provide appropriate medical care, maintain medical information appropriately and store medicines securely.
53. Staff supervise pupils throughout the school day, including during lessons, breaktimes and lunchtimes, transitions around the school and educational visits. They understand their supervisory responsibilities and respond to pupils' needs.
54. Leaders maintain suitable admission and attendance arrangements. Staff keep admission and attendance registers accurately and in line with statutory requirements. Leaders monitor attendance, identify patterns and follow up concerns promptly with parents and, where necessary, external agencies.

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

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

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

56. Through PSHE and citizenship, pupils think about identity, responsibility and how their actions affect others. Leaders promote the school's Christian ethos to encourage pupils to show mutual respect and compassion to others.
57. The curriculum promotes pupils' understanding of different cultures and identities. Pupils learn about other cultures through practical experiences, such as cooking and tasting different food, and by learning traditional songs from different cultures and in different languages.
58. Leaders ensure that pupils learn about British values through PSHE lessons, the work of the school council and house captain elections. Pupils hold positions of responsibility and contribute to the school community. Pupils learn to respect the school's rules and take responsibility for their environment, including by wiping desks after lessons and tidying shared spaces. They learn about public life and the rule of law through debating, visits to the Houses of Parliament and question-and-answer sessions with their local MP. They further develop their understanding of democracy by writing to their local MP about issues that they feel are important.
59. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to raise money for local, national and international causes. Pupils contribute annually to a food collection for a local homeless charity and the school has links with a local care home, where pupils sing and play games with the residents. Pupils, including children in the early years, participate in events such as ice cream sales to raise money for international charities. These activities help pupils to understand the needs of others, both in their immediate community and beyond, and to develop a sense of social responsibility.
60. Pupils receive suitable guidance about future pathways and develop readiness for the next stage of education. Teachers provide carefully planned activities that are designed to help pupils to prepare for the transition to the next phase of their education. Leaders provide careers guidance and opportunities to learn about the world of work. Secondary-aged pupils hear from visiting speakers who share their experience of careers in business, medicine, youth work and volunteering. Pupils in Year 10 complete work experience and approach organisations themselves to arrange local placements. Pupils receive one-to-one guidance from external careers advisers so that they can understand how their GCSE choices support their future A-level pathways and career aspirations.
61. Pupils develop economic understanding through the PSHE curriculum and wider school activities. Children in the early years begin to develop relevant skills through involvement in whole-school charity events, such as cake sales, so that they learn how to buy items. Younger pupils earn paper money through the reward system, record their savings in bank books and decide how to spend their money. This helps them to understand saving and budgeting and how to make considered financial choices. Older pupils develop their understanding of economic wellbeing through PSHE, including financial planning in Years 7 and 8.
62. Leaders in the early years ensure that children begin to develop social confidence by taking part in whole-school events, sharing their ideas and work, and engaging confidently with others. They develop social skills through collaborative activities, including taking turns, resolving disagreements and negotiating during play. Children also begin to take responsibility by joining whole-school routines, such as daily tidying duties.

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

63. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

64. Leaders promote a robust safeguarding culture throughout the school. Policies and procedures reflect current statutory guidance and are implemented effectively. Governors maintain appropriate oversight of safeguarding through regular review of safeguarding practice, procedures and records. They seek assurance that safeguarding arrangements are effective through meetings with leaders and scrutiny of records.
65. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding are appropriately trained for their roles. They receive regular updates to maintain up-to-date knowledge and provide suitable safeguarding induction and ongoing training for all staff. This enables staff to respond appropriately to a wide range of safeguarding matters including child-on-child abuse, online safety and concerns relating to adults working with pupils.
66. Leaders put suitable processes in place for staff to raise any low-level concerns about adults or more serious allegations. They make staff aware of the importance of reporting such concerns, including self-referral where appropriate. Leaders take appropriate action in response to concerns that are raised.
67. Leaders maintain comprehensive safeguarding records. They identify patterns over time and understand local safeguarding thresholds. Leaders refer concerns promptly to external agencies to secure early help and appropriate support for pupils and families.
68. Leaders provide pupils with appropriate ways to report concerns. Pupils know who to speak to should they need to. Staff listen and act appropriately to concerns, if raised. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including online. This includes learning about scams, image sharing, artificial intelligence and misogyny. Leaders have appropriate internet filtering and monitoring systems in place and these are tested and reviewed.
69. Safer recruitment procedures are followed consistently. Leaders responsible for recruitment are appropriately trained and complete all required pre-employment checks before adults begin work at the school. These are accurately recorded on the single central record of appointments (SCR).
70. Leaders implement effective safeguarding and welfare arrangements for children in the early years, which meet statutory requirements. Staff understand safeguarding procedures and reporting expectations. Children's welfare is actively promoted through appropriate supervision, well-established routines and effective safeguarding practice.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Immanuel Christian School
Department for Education number	803/6010
Registered charity number	1150240
Address	Immanuel Christian School Rodford Tabernacle Westerleigh Road Westerleigh Avon BS37 8QG
Phone number	01454 311710
Email address	jrgulliford@gmail.com
Website	www.immanuelsschool.org.uk
Proprietor	Immanuel Christian School Limited
Chair	Mr Jonathan Gulliford
Headteacher	Mrs Joanna Gulliford
Age range	4 to 16
Number of pupils	60
Date of previous inspection	24 to 26 January 2023

Information about the school

72. Immanuel Christian School is an independent co-educational day school located near the village of Westerleigh in South Gloucestershire. The school is a registered charity overseen by Immanuel Christian School Limited. The directors of the company are also the governors of the school. The school comprises two sections: primary, for pupils from Reception to Year 6; and secondary, for pupils from Years 7 to 11. Secondary-aged pupils moved to an additional site in Yate in June 2026.
73. There are seven children in the early years, in one Reception class.
74. The school has identified nine pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. A small number of pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
75. The school has identified a small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language.
76. The school states that its aims are to provide a stable, caring environment that fosters high expectations of personal conduct and helps pupils to develop both understanding and personal qualities of integrity, patience, kindness, obedience, honesty and self-control.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

7 to 9 July 2026 and 15 July 2026

77. A team of three inspectors visited the school for two and a half days. Two inspectors returned to the school for one day to gather additional evidence.

78. 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 and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

79. 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**.

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