



# School Prospectus 2016/17



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# The Christian School (Takeley)

## Ethos and Values

The Christian School (Takeley) was founded by a group of parents and friends in 1989 to provide a Christian education, fostering Christian faith and values. Today the school includes families from a wide geographical area, who are involved in a number of different churches.

We want Jesus Christ to be at the centre of our school and we encourage all pupils to develop a personal relationship with him.

Regular prayers and bible reading are an important part of the daily routine and Christian ideas are taught throughout the curriculum. Whilst it is not a requirement that all participating families are Christians, our expectation is that all members of the school will actively support our values.

The dynamic of our small school creates a unique learning experience for children, parents and teachers. The school affirms every person as different and special to God and there is an emphasis on each pupil achieving his or her full potential.

The school caters for children from pre-school (after their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday) through to 16 years of age. The school in many ways functions as a whole and this creates our family feel and common ethos. Pupils of different ages work and play together, but there is a clear sense of progression through the three sections of the school and an increased expectation of self-discipline and responsibility from older pupils.

Throughout the school there is an emphasis on the importance of the values of obedience, honesty, kindness, perseverance, service to each other, courtesy and consideration. We encourage everyone to make a positive contribution to school life as members of the school community.

This community should provide a happy and fulfilling environment for every pupil and member of staff.

Our pupils are prepared for GCSE examinations. With class sizes of between 4 and 10 they are ensured the individual attention they need to do well. We value both academic success and personal development. There are opportunities to explore issues; discuss ideas; develop a personal faith and relationship with God; to improve personal



communication skills; to try a range of creative subjects; to take part in sport; to develop leadership skills; to work in a team; to set personal targets; and to join in, or even organise, extra curricula activities and school events. These help make sure we provide both breadth and depth in the curriculum.

We promote co-operation over competition and personal achievement over league tables.

We provide a Christ centred education that enables children and young people to become confident, creative, aware and responsible members of their communities. This crucial work is shared between the school, the parents and, of course, the young person themselves.

### How the school is organised

Our small size means that we can adapt to meet the needs of the children that we have in the school. We make sure that group sizes are appropriate for the ages of particular needs of the children. This academic year (2015/16) the children are grouped into:

- An infant class (EYFS up to Y2)
- Junior classes (Y3 up to Y6)
- Lower senior classes (Y7 and Y8)
- Y9 and Y10 class
- Y11 (taught in two separate groups where necessary for compulsory GCSE classes)



Throughout the school, there is emphasis on the importance of literacy and numeracy.

The broader curriculum includes English, Mathematics, Science, Core Skills, French, Spanish, Geography, History, Business Studies, Drama, Media Studies, Music, Art, Technology and Crafts (including working with resistant materials, cooking, sewing and horticulture), Computer Science, Careers, Life Skills, Personal, Social, Health and Economics Education (PSHEE), Religious Studies (RS) and Physical Education (PE).

Our teachers are predominantly qualified specialists. Some are parents who are offering their expertise. Those of us who are both parents and teachers have discovered the privilege of combining a love of a subject, a commitment

to Christian Education and the chance of being fully involved in the education of our children.

## The Primary School

In the primary school, the pupils up to age 11 (Y6) are divided into two separate groups, the infants and juniors. EYFS pupils are included in the group after their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday, when they are ready. These pupils are able to receive the free hours provided by the government up to the end of the term they are 5. The younger pupils share a large teaching area which provides opportunities for a variety of play and learning activities. The older pupils are taught in a separate Portakabin for some of the time.

The primary children learn together from a rich curriculum that includes English, maths, project and science.

Music, art, horticulture, French, Spanish, PE, and PSHEE are also taught. We take the class swimming each week at a local pool.

Every child learns to play the recorder as part of the primary school curriculum. We encourage all our pupils to love music and take private lessons in other instruments if they can. We currently offer private music lessons on a Friday for those who are interested in learning flute, clarinet, saxophone or piano.

The infants and juniors care for a vegetable patch and love to be able to cook the food they produce. Respect for the natural environment is also fostered by a regular afternoon walk, during which the children monitor the seasonal changes in the countryside, sketching and making notes.

Pupils are encouraged through praise, appreciation of effort and active reflection on attitudes and behaviours. Individual needs are quickly recognised and strategies put into place. The students are actively



encouraged to show kindness to each other, sensitivity to other people's needs; respect for other opinions and possessions; and to listen while others speak.

We want parents to take a close interest in the work their children are doing. There is easy access to speak with the teachers on any day.





## The Secondary School

Y7 to Y11 are taught by specialist teachers in classes with a maximum size of 12 pupils, except for PE where larger groups are an advantage. Y7 to Y8 are referred to as the lower seniors; Y9,10 and 11 as the upper seniors. Pupils are taught in most part in their separate year.

The KS3 curriculum includes English, Mathematics, Science, Core Skills, Art, Music, Drama, French, Spanish, Geography, History, RS, PSHEE, Citizenship, Computer Science, PE, Sewing, Cookery, Horticulture and Technology. Y7 and Y8 pupils have weekly swimming lessons at a local pool.

In KS4 almost all students will take GCSEs in English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, two or more (iGCSE) Science qualifications, a modern foreign language and Religious Studies. Pupils can supplement these core GCSEs with subjects chosen from Geography, History, a second Modern Foreign Language, Level 2 Further Maths, all three Science subjects, Technology (Product Design), Music and Art. Other subjects, such as Psychology, Business Studies, Media Studies and Law, are available for suitably motivated children through the Oxford Open Learning program and courses devised in the school. GCSE Spanish students have the opportunity to spend a few days in Antequera in both Y10 and Y11 and French and History students are offered a residential trip to Normandy. Computer Science is taught throughout KS4 and pupils may take a GCSE in this subject.



We are proud of the standards achieved by our pupils in art and music. We have very dedicated music and art staff who help their students to produced excellent work for their GCSE examinations.

We hold two concerts or musical performances each year where we enjoy the musical abilities of students in the school.

The KS4 curriculum also includes PE, Life Skills (Citizenship and PSHEE), Computer Science and Careers Education. We use an Acorn Listening Course with Y11 pupils so that they are equipped as peer listeners for the younger pupils.

As pupils progress through the senior years they are encouraged to increase their levels of self-discipline. We teach them to take responsibility for their work and to use opportunities for personal study responsibly and fruitfully. They are supported in this by a tutor system. Y11 are given leadership roles in

a school House system, are part of the School Council and one member of this year group is chosen to take the position of Head of School.

We have high standards and expect that pupils are courteous, that their work is completed and given in on time and that they arrive promptly and with all their books and equipment to each lesson. In the Upper Senior school they have study sessions where they learn to work independently. Some tell us later how much they come to value this preparation for study at KS5.

In class all pupils are active participants. The small class sizes mean that individual needs can be catered for and each child is helped to achieve the best that they can.

We believe that teaching is much more than delivery of content. We want our pupils to acquire good learning, questioning and problem solving skills that will stand them in good stead for their further studies.

We want our pupils to have an appreciation both of their abilities, gifts and weaknesses, and to show respect for the abilities, gifts and weaknesses of other people.

Behaviour and progress are monitored and reported on using an online Management System.

### **Sports Education**

We make use of local sports areas to allow us to include a variety of sports and athletics across the age range. Pupils are taught by a PE specialist who joins us one day a week.

Primary, Y7 and Y8 pupils have weekly swimming lessons at the Great Dunmow Leisure Centre throughout the year.

Most years we run a residential trip for Y6 - Y9 pupils where they have the opportunity to try a range of outdoor activities such as rock climbing, team building tasks and canoeing.

## Clubs and extra-curricular activities



We encourage individuals to join teams or clubs outside school to extend the opportunities they have here. We have seen some very talented sportsmen and women, dancers, musicians and actors go through the school and we are keen to work with them and their families to allow them to pursue their interests and have the time they need to rehearse, train and compete. Many of our senior pupils attend local church youth groups

where they can strengthen their own faith and their school friendships as well as meet new friends.

## Religious Education

All the pupils attend a daily assembly. Assemblies usually include the study of a Bible passage, an opportunity to pray and perhaps a time to sing together.

Pupils are introduced to other faiths in RS lessons in the senior school.

All pupils take GCSE RS, which gives them an opportunity to learn more about the nature of God in and to explore how different faiths view different personal and world issues.

## Homework

### Primary School

Infants and junior pupils are set small amounts of homework such as spellings, multiplication tables and reading. We use a homework diary system so that parents can know what their child needs to do.

### Secondary School

Senior classes are set homework each night and we expect this to be completed promptly and to a good standard. For pupils in Y7 and Y8 we require work to be given in the following morning. This reduces the likelihood of work being lost or forgotten. Parents help from home by communicating via the homework diary if there are any problems from home. As the child makes their way through the senior years, this tight system for completion of homework is withdrawn as they learn to pace their work over the week, using study times as well as time at home to complete their work.



## Discipline

In the primary school we expect the pupils to be correctly dressed, increasingly responsible for their possessions, punctual, courteous and obedient.

A firm word should be sufficient to restore order.

We work on a principle of rights and responsibilities to develop a discipline system which uses an appropriate sanction to allow the pupil to make restoration and re-earn the right they have in some way abused.

In the secondary school each teacher completes weekly records on the school reporting system which we use to monitor effort and progress, particular success and any problems such as missing homework, forgotten equipment, lack of punctuality or incorrect uniform. Parents receive a weekly email summarising the records that teachers have completed.

We have a system of commendations to acknowledge good work, consistently good behaviour, kind or helpful actions, personal qualities, or other achievements and these are given out by the Head of School during our weekly Family Assembly

## Pastoral Care

The small size of the school means that no one is lost in the crowd and any problems are quickly spotted. Close liaison between the staff means that we pick up on problems quickly and can adopt a consistent approach,

Each week senior pupils have a tutor time either as a group or one-to-one and this is an opportunity to talk about any issues and problems and be supported in any roles of responsibility.

We are all, as staff, available to pupils if they need to talk something through and the comfortable relationships between pupils and staff mean that pupils should not be afraid to approach someone if they have a problem or concern.

Close relationships with parents, too, mean that we can communicate our concerns quickly and arrange opportunities to talk through problems and find strategies to support any particular child. Similarly, easy access to staff means that parents can come to us at any time to talk about anything they are concerned with in their child's education or well-being.

We use trained Y11 pupils as peer listeners and the rest of the school know that they can go to Y11 to talk things through.

Each term all the senior pupils have a chance to fill in a "Feedback" questionnaire and on this they can flag up a concern, however small, in confidentiality. Junior pupils are encouraged to keep a reflective writing diary in which they are able to communicate concerns.

The School Council provides a forum for any pupil in school to bring a problem or concern to the attention of the other pupils and the staff, One of the roles of our Head of School is to help with communication between staff and pupils.

### **Academic Achievement and School Leavers**

Our pupils achieve an excellent standard in their exams and we are confident that they are often exceeding expectations thanks to the small size of classes and the individual help they receive.

We cater for a wide range of abilities.

Pupils take part in the UK Maths Challenge each year. We regularly see students achieve the Gold certificate. At both junior and intermediate level pupils have gone on beyond Gold to achieve entry into the Olympiad or European Kangaroo levels.

At 16 our pupils choose a variety of courses at local sixth forms or colleges. These have included the International Baccalaureate, A Levels and BTECs. We have been delighted to see so many pupils go on to success at KS5 and then on to university.

Able pupils have been able to gain places at the local Independent schools after achieving scholarships for academic and musical achievement.

Whilst we are proud of these high achievers we feel the same amount of delight and of pride where we see success that reflects the best for each individual. Perseverance, focus and application are the key qualities we would like to see in all our pupils when they leave us, so that they will succeed in the next stage of their training or education.

So, whilst academic achievement is important; developing in confidence, self-worth, individuality, faith, thoughtfulness, independent thought and responsibility are less tangible but hugely valued outcomes, here.

## Careers Guidance

We organise our own two week work experience placement for our Y10 students. We have set up exciting and tailored placements for the students and this means that we build positive links with local businesses.

Y10 and Y11 look at the different 16+ options, prepare for work experience, create a Personal Statement, learn interview techniques and practise filling in application forms as part of the careers teaching in the Upper School. In Life Skills classes they learn skills to equip them for a range of practical and everyday tasks, as well as help with making wise choices in personal budgeting.

## Special Needs

The school has a Special Educational Needs Team (SENTeam) to co-ordinate provision and monitoring where we have a pupil who needs extra help either with academic learning or with confidence and personal well-being. Teachers meet weekly and this opportunity for discussion, together with the school's on-line reporting system provides a forum to highlight perceived needs. Use of standardised testing, where appropriate, allows us to collect measurable evidence of need and to help us identify specific learning difficulties.

However, we do not have the expertise to make formal diagnoses and parents will be encouraged to seek these from experts where necessary\*. The SENTeam will set up one-to-one sessions or put in place interventions for any children that need particular support. Senior School Teachers are encouraged to share strategies that they have found useful through the weekly meetings and through the school's on-line "Interventions" system.

\* Please note that the financing of special tuition and assessments beyond the normal testing provided by the school is the responsibility of the parents.

## Testing Policy

The school does not set National Curriculum tests. Children are assessed against N.C. standards.

Pupils are assessed using the CAT4 tests for verbal, quantitative and non-verbal reasoning scores and this gives us a good indication of general ability against which to measure their achievement and progress in class.

## Uniform

The school has a compulsory uniform in all sections of the school. Certain items of clothing and of the PE kit must be purchased from the School's Uniform Supplier (School Trends). Access to order is through the link on the School Website.

## Home Education Support

Families who have chosen to home school their family join our swimming session and are invited to join events such as sports day.

## Funding the School and Family Involvement



We are a fee-paying school and the fees we charge cover basic costs such as rent, utilities and wages. We try and keep fees to a minimum. Other major projects we may wish to undertake, such as developing the school site, are covered by free-will giving. The principal of free-will giving means that families who are able to pay more do so as a gift to the school.

Just as important as providing financial support is the willingness to contribute to the life of the school. We ask all families to help in practical ways with the maintenance of the school. We hold a termly "school clean" with which every family helps.

We also hope that some parents will want to be involved in infant and junior projects, volunteer teaching, events, outings and looking after the school grounds. In this way fees are kept to a minimum. These practical tasks also bring people together as a community and help create the close family nature of the school.

Please ask the school office staff or see the school website for current fees.

## **Admissions policy**

### **For all prospective parents:**

Our website will give you a useful first impression of our school and explain a little about our history and our ethos and what we offer.

A first step in the applications procedure is for you to visit the school. This can be arranged by contacting the school office (01279 871182 or office@tcst.co.uk). We will arrange a time for you to come and see the school in action so that you will be able to judge whether we are the right school for your child. Please be aware that teachers (including the Head Teacher) will not be available to talk to you at this time.

### **Applying for a place**

The next step is to complete the application form. This will be included in the admissions pack or can be found on the school website. There is an application fee.

If you have specific questions or wish to discuss the particular needs of your child, please ask for an opportunity to talk to a member of the Senior Leadership Team. This meeting will take place outside normal school teaching hours.

Most children applying to join the school are invited into school for a short session to take an entrance test. If the results show that the school is able to cater for the academic needs of the child then the application process continues with the taking up of two references: one from the pastor of the church you attend (where applicable) and one from the child's previous school.

Prospective pupils are invited to spend a morning in school to get to know us and to make sure they feel comfortable here and fit in.

If at this stage the Head Teacher feels that the school can cater for the needs of the child then we will arrange for the parents or guardians of the child to come for an interview with him and members of the senior leadership team. Interviews take place on a Wednesday at the end of the school day.

### **Applications for Y8 to Y11**

The family nature of our school means that we work on the principle that pupils in the older year groups choose to be here. As pupils who are already at the school move into Y9, we provide an opportunity for the Senior Leadership Team to meet with each pupil and their parents to talk together about Key Stage 4 and to make sure that the pupil is staying with us from their own



decision to do so. Where pupils are joining us after Y7 we ask for a written statement from the child to tell us a little about themselves and why they would like to learn here. If this applies to you then we will give you more information about this when we meet you.

Applications for pupils to go into Year 9 after the term has started and to join in KS4 are carefully considered but not encouraged. This is because the GCSE courses are started in Y9. It would be normal for pupils intending to join us for GCSE to start in Year 8.

### **Siblings**

Our fee structure reflects the importance we place on “whole family” involvement in the school. We are keen to take siblings of existing pupils into the school and would always do so unless there are clear educational reasons why this should not happen or where there are no spaces available.

### **Moving from the primary to the secondary school**

Any place at the school is only offered if the school is able to meet the educational needs of the child. Provision is reviewed in Y6 before a child moves into the senior school. Transition is anticipated but is not automatic.

### **...and finally**

Thank you for enquiring about the school. We welcome further enquiries and invite you to visit us at some mutually convenient time.

For further details of our school policy, further testimonies and a range of other information visit our website at [www.tcst.org.uk](http://www.tcst.org.uk)

**Call us on 01279 871182  
or email us at [office@tcst.org.uk](mailto:office@tcst.org.uk)  
to find out more!**

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