

Phoenix Academy

Independent school light-touch inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Daniel Towl HMI

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.^{1, 2}

This was a light touch inspection which focused principally on the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding pupils; and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

Information about the school

Phoenix Academy, in the London Borough of Enfield, is a Christian school that follows the Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) curriculum which is provided by Christian Education Europe. For much of the time, pupils follow individual programmes of work leading to the International Certificate of Christian Education (ICCE). There are 34 pupils on roll aged six to eighteen years. There are more boys than girls. The majority of pupils have White British and Black or Black British Caribbean backgrounds. There are no pupils who have a statement of special educational needs. The school aims to provide a strong foundation on which pupils can build their lives within an ethos of respect, responsibility and Christian faith. The school was last inspected in March 2008. Since the last inspection, the Beehive School, a primary school of the same foundation, has combined with the Phoenix Academy. A new headteacher took over in January 2011.

Evaluation of the school

The quality of the education provided by the school is satisfactory. This is an improving school. The new headteacher has brought added rigour into the school's work. Pupils' personal development is good and a strength of the school, a feature that parents and carers particularly welcome. Provision for welfare, health and safety, including safeguarding, is good. Staff take good care of pupils. Improvements made since the last inspection are satisfactory. Parents and carers, both in their returned questionnaires and in discussions, showed very positive views about the school. All but one of the regulations for independent schools are met.

Quality of education

The curriculum is satisfactory and suitably broad. The ACE curriculum is supplemented with a planned programme of National Curriculum subjects including art and design, history, geography, design and technology, physical education and

¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162

² www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8

citizenship, which are taught in discrete lessons in a cycle of projects. This is an improvement since the last inspection because it is increasing opportunities for pupils to take part in creative work. Most of the time, pupils work systematically and diligently through booklets and units of work called PACEs. These units cover a wide variety of subjects and topics through graded levels. There is a strong focus on key skills in English and mathematics but units also cover other subjects including science, social studies, history and geography. Biblical themes run through several of the units of work. The ACE curriculum does not allow for regular collaborative or investigative work but other whole-class lessons in the afternoon are beginning to increase these opportunities, for example through work in art and science. Pupils welcome these wider opportunities but say that most of their learning is book-based. Off-site physical education, including swimming, successfully promotes a healthier lifestyle and makes up for the lack of outside space at the school premises.

Pupils in Key Stage 4 and post-16 follow courses which lead them to the International Certificate of Christian Education (ICCE) which equates to GCSE and A-level qualifications. This enables pupils to go on to employment or further education, including university. Further opportunities to gain additional Award Scheme and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) qualifications are being developed in order to accredit more of the pupils' achievements. This is helping to bring more rigour to the curriculum. Older pupils successfully complete a variety of projects as part of their course work required by the ICCE by researching and writing about topics such as the First World War in history and dietary fats in science. Information and communication technology is used effectively for research and presentation of work and for developing key numeracy and literacy skills in the form of ongoing 'practice' programmes. Older pupils also follow a Computer Literacy and Information Technology (CLAIT) course to increase their skills in this area of learning. They receive good support during these sessions.

Teaching and assessment are satisfactory. Relationships between staff and pupils are exemplary. When pupils are working individually on their PACE booklets, staff provide good individual supervision. They give guidance when pupils are struggling and also support them in their self-assessment using the ACE marking schedules. Where staff do not have sufficient expertise, for example with some of the higher-level mathematics, additional support is arranged to help those pupils who require it. There is very little specific teaching while pupils work on their PACE booklets. This means that there are missed opportunities to directly teach skills to individuals and groups and give them more strategies and confidence to complete their work, for example in their computation, spelling and writing. As a result, individual needs are not always met for all tasks.

Staff plan discrete subject and topic lessons in addition to the PACE curriculum. This is successfully extending and broadening pupils' learning. Pupils talk positively about these lessons; for example, one group enjoyed learning about the Great Fire of London. Although these lessons are planned using national guidelines, staff are not sufficiently knowledgeable to ensure that the expectations of pupils in Key Stage 1

and 2 are well matched and appropriately challenging for all abilities and ages. The new headteacher is very aware of the need to increase staff skills in this area.

There are few opportunities in the PACE booklets, especially for the younger pupils, to develop writing in a wide range of styles. This is reflected in the variable quality of writing in their other lessons. Pupils are not developing a range of writing styles from an early age, although this does improve for the older pupils as the breadth of topics studied broadens.

Pupils' progress is satisfactory and largely governed by the expectations of the PACE booklets. No group of pupils is underachieving. Parents are satisfied with their children's progress. Marking and assessment, as required by the ACE curriculum, is undertaken very diligently and this gives a good picture of how pupils are progressing in the system. Records show that pupils are making the expected progress but the system does not readily enable pupils to accelerate their progress where this may be appropriate.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The spiritual, moral and social development of pupils is good. Pupils develop good personal skills. They behave well and are respectful to each other and staff. In discussion, pupils were unanimous that they liked their school and this is reflected in their responses in the returned pre-inspection questionnaires. Their attitudes to learning are good. They apply themselves well and show determination in completing their PACE booklets in order to meet their challenging daily targets. Older pupils believe that the individual working and self-direction, required in the ACE curriculum, has helped them to develop good independent and study skills. Older pupils have become confident young people, able to hold views and discuss matters in a mature way. This, together with work experience and the qualifications they gain, provides good support for their future economic well-being. Attendance and behaviour are good. The Christian principles which underpin the school support the excellent relationships between all those in the school. Daily assemblies give opportunities for the school community to come together to worship and to share achievements which are readily and warmly celebrated. Pupils also take the opportunity at these times to share their thoughts and explain what they have been learning.

Regular lessons in citizenship enable pupils to learn effectively about responsibilities and rights within the community. This aspect of the curriculum and topics in the ACE curriculum successfully support the development of knowledge and understanding of public institutions. Pupils learn about other faiths through their ACE curriculum as well as listening to visiting speakers who have in the past spoken about Islam and Judaism.

Pupils learn about other cultures through a number of overseas projects in which the school's overarching trust has an involvement. Some pupils have made visits to Sri Lanka, Kenya, Switzerland and Norway. They regularly organise fund-raising events to raise money for people less well-off than themselves. Pupils take part in local

festivals but their contribution and involvement in their immediate community are not well developed. Within the school, there are daily jobs for all pupils and they regularly contribute to assemblies and take part in drama productions. Some older pupils help to supervise younger ones when they are working on their PACE booklets. There is an inherent sense of everyone taking care of and 'watching-out' for each other. In discussions, pupils said that they often help each other overcome difficulties in their studies by sharing knowledge and experiences.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

Provision for safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. Pupils are well cared for and supervised. Staff appointment procedures, child protection training, and risk assessments meet requirements. The staff central register is detailed and shows that all the required checks have been carried out. Pupils move around the building safely and their good behaviour minimises the effect of the narrow passageways and stairs. Pupils say that, although from time to time there are disagreements, these are few and everyone gets on well. They could not recall any incidents of racist behaviour and are sure that any behavioural incidents including bullying, if they occur, are dealt with very quickly. They know that there is always someone they can turn to for help. Pupils are taught and know about healthy eating and there is soon to be a school 'healthy eating' event to which parents and carers are invited.

The school has a plan to improve access which meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations'), with the exception of those listed below.³

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the quality of education provided (standards in part 1) and must:

- ensure that staff in Key Stage 1 and 2 become sufficiently knowledgeable about the curriculum and how to plan appropriately challenging tasks for pupils for all ages and abilities (paragraph 3(e)).

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development.

³ www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1997/contents/made

- Increase the amount of specific individual or group teaching of some key skills such as strategies for calculations and improving spellings to support pupils in their PACE work.
- Create more opportunities for pupils to write at length for a wider range of purposes.
- Develop a greater role for pupils in the immediate community.

Inspection judgements

Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education			✓	
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils			✓	
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs			✓	
How well pupils make progress in their learning			✓	

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		✓		
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School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Primary and secondary Christian school		
Date school opened	September 2004		
Age range of pupils	6–18		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 25	Girls: 9	Total: 34
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 2,700		
Address of school	85 Bounces Road, London N9 8LD		
Telephone number	020 8887 6888		
Email address	Paulkelly89@btinternet.com		
Headteacher	Paul Kelly		
Proprietor	NLM Trust		