

Christian Fellowship School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Brian Blake HMI

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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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}

Information about the school

Christian Fellowship School, which is located in the Edge Hill area of Liverpool, is a mixed school for pupils aged from four to 16. The school organises this age range into distinct schools: lower (four to eight years of age), middle (eight to 13 years of age) and upper (13 to 16 years of age). The school opened in February 1981 and currently has 183 pupils on roll. The pupils come from around the Merseyside area and represent a range of different ethnic backgrounds, with the majority being of White British heritage. The school is part of the Christian Schools Trust, which provides professional training and links with a number of other schools. Around 28% of the pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Two pupils have a statement of special educational needs, and both are funded for specialist support by a local authority. The school aims to provide for parents who want an education, 'which through Christ-centred relationships will develop the pupils' characters and gifts and also lead them into God's purposes for themselves, the church and the world.' It further aims to develop 'young people who know God, understand God's redemptive purposes in Christ and, are equipped to serve Him.' The school was last inspected in November 2007.

Evaluation of the school

Christian Fellowship School is providing a good quality of education for its pupils and meets fully its published aims. The provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The pupils make good progress in both their formal learning and in their all-round personal development. The quality of teaching is good, which helps the pupils to develop good quality personal and social skills as an aid to them enjoying school and achieving personal success in a number of school-based activities. The school provides a safe and secure learning environment for its pupils, although it has yet to include full details in its single central register of the identity checks for the board of directors, as legally required. The school has successfully addressed most of the regulatory failures from the previous inspection, and now meets the very large majority of regulations for independent schools.

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

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is good overall, and satisfactory in the Early Years Foundation Stage. There is a good range of curricular and extra-curricular activities, which help promote pupils' learning and their personal, social and moral development. The subjects taught reflect well on the quality of planning and the needs of the pupils, and give a prominent role to the development of key literacy and numeracy skills. There is a good take-up from pupils to the range of extra-curricular activities on offer. The school's curriculum policy outlines a clear rationale for the school's Christian ethos and work ethic within the range of National Curriculum subjects and other activities that are taught across the school. There are detailed schemes of work for all subjects taught, and these help ensure that there is balance and continuity to the curricular provision throughout the school. The time allocations given to different areas and subjects are appropriate. The opportunities for the pupils to gain external accreditation in GCSE are good and expanding further to reflect their learning needs.

The quality and effectiveness of teaching and assessment across the school are good. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teaching is also good but assessment procedures are only satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge, which they use well in lessons to provide a range of activities suitable for the vast majority of pupils. Occasionally, however, some content fails to extend the learning for higher attaining pupils. The working relationships between school staff and pupils are very good in all lessons because of the effective management and organisation of learning, and the caring and sensitive way in which staff interact with the pupils. Teachers use lesson time well. The use of additional adult support in lessons works extremely well, and ensures that those pupils who require focused support are well catered for. Teachers' planning is always satisfactory and occasionally good. Although there is no set format to lesson planning, all teachers plan their teaching activities carefully. However, the extent to which all teachers identify sufficiently clearly what they expect the pupils to learn varies across the school. At its best, teachers know what progress can be expected in the pupils' learning because they have identified specific outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills and understanding. The planning for different ability groups, however, is too imprecise, and concentrates on doing more of the same task rather than extending the range of different learning skills that different pupils need. Assessment procedures are good and carried out on a regular basis. Teachers' marking is consistently carried out and generally contains praise and reinforcement for the pupils' efforts and learning. Occasionally, however, there is too little written comment in books about the quality of work produced and how it can be improved further.

The standards achieved range from above average to average in the subjects taught. The vast majority of pupils start at the school with broadly average standards, and by the time they leave at the end of Year 11 have achieved a number of good grades in their GCSE examinations; this includes pupils of all abilities. Overall, therefore pupils' progress is good.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The overall quality and effectiveness of the school's provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils is good overall, but outstanding in the moral and social aspects. These two areas are actively promoted throughout the school by all staff, and begin when the children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage. The excellence of this work is helping the pupils to know clearly the difference between right and wrong, and the consequences that any negative actions have on them and their peers in school. These strong characteristics are also making a significant contribution to the pupils' growing maturity as they prepare to leave school and enter the world of work, employment or further education. There is a well known and clearly understood approach to behaviour management in lessons, which ensures that the overwhelming majority of pupils adopt a very positive attitude to their learning. Behaviour is always good, with the pupils responding in a safe and sensible way to learning tasks set by the teacher. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development are good, and particularly strong in the provision made for their further understanding of the Christian values that underpin the school's ethos and work ethic. The curriculum also provides good opportunities for the pupils to understand about different faiths and cultures, and to develop further their understanding of public services. Although the vast majority of pupils say they enjoy school, a significant minority responding in the inspection questionnaire indicated that they feel the school does not take sufficient account of their views about the school. The students' attendance at school is excellent.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school's measures to promote the welfare, health and safety of its pupils, including child protection, are good. Procedures for safeguarding the pupils are well known and sensitively followed by all adults who work in the school. Supervision in lessons and when the pupils are moving about the school is very effective. Trusting working relationships between teachers and pupils and clear expectations of behaviour ensure pupils are sensible in and around school. The school actively promotes healthy living, particularly through its approach to the pupils' involvement in extra-curricular sport and regular physical education. Fire safety checks comply fully with the regulations. The school meets fully the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school meets the majority of regulations for ensuring that all staff are suitably qualified and appropriately checked for them to work with the pupils. The school maintains a single central register, as required, but it does not include sufficient details of the identity checks and confirmation dates of checking the criminal record bureaux (CRB) clearances for the directors of the school.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

The school's premises and accommodation ensure pupils' safety and are of a satisfactory standard. The classrooms and specialist accommodation are of a suitable size for the age and number of pupils on roll. However, there are limited outdoor facilities for the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Resources, overall, are satisfactory. The students have suitable access to washrooms and toilets.

Provision of information

The school meets all the regulations but one for this standard. Currently, there is no clear indication about the range of policies that should be made available to parents or carers, on request. Information provided in the school prospectus and on its website are clear and concise, and provide a good overview of the ethos and character of the school. Annual reports to parents are of a satisfactory quality.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The manner in which complaints are handled do not meet fully all the regulations. Although there is a written complaints policy, it does not include clear references to all of the requirements for the formal complaints process. The policy does not make it clear that there should be a panel of at least three people who have not been directly involved in the complaint, that one of the panel must be independent of school, that parents may be accompanied to the panel meeting, that the findings will be sent to the complainant and person complained about, that there are written records indicating at which stage the complaint has been resolved and, finally, that all correspondence relating to the complaint will be kept confidential.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall, the effectiveness, and leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory. Staff recognise the unique needs of every child and ensure a satisfactory level of provision to meet them. Children's welfare and safeguarding are at the centre of this provision, and including every child is a priority for leaders and managers. All policies and procedures with regard to safeguarding are securely in place. However, because staff do not yet have a clear understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum, the children's learning and development outcomes are satisfactory. The curriculum lacks clear direction and does not link sufficiently well with the early learning goals. Leaders and managers are aware of this and have future plans to improve staff expertise. The quality of teaching is good and characterised by good knowledge of the children as individuals. Indoor space is utilised well and is satisfactorily resourced. However, children have no direct access to an outdoor play space. To overcome this, the staff regularly take the children into the playground and off site for weekly swimming sessions; these help to satisfactorily promote their physical development. Staff are suitably qualified

and are subject to rigorous checks, and although they show a high level of care towards the children, their understanding of planning and assessment for the Early years Foundation Stage areas of learning are not sufficiently well developed. Self-evaluation is undertaken but is not always effectively used to inform staff of the next steps of development.

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 suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors (standards in part 4) and must:

- ensure that checks are made on the identity in relation to each of the directors of the school, and also that the date of when their CRB was seen is recorded formally in the single central register (paragraphs 21(6) (b) and (c), 22(6) and 22(7)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information (standards in part 6) and must:

- ensure that parents, carers and others are aware that they can request to see, either on the school website, or in writing the following information:
 - particulars of policies relating to bullying, health and safety, the promotion of good behaviour, and sanctions adopted in the event of pupils misbehaving as required under part 3, paragraph 9
 - particulars of the arrangements for tackling bullying, and for promoting pupils' health and safety on the school premises and on educational visits as required under part 3, paragraphs 10,11 and 12
 - details of the complaints procedure adopted by the school, together with details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year (paragraph 24(1) (b)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the manner in which complaints are to be handled (standards in part 7) and must:

- ensure that if parents and carers are not satisfied with the response to a written complaint, that there is provision for a panel appointed by the proprietor of at least three people who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint (paragraph 25(f))

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

- ensure that one of the panel is independent of the management and running of the school (paragraph 25(g))
- ensure that the procedure allows for the parents to be accompanied to the panel hearing (paragraph 25(h))
- ensure the panel makes findings and recommendations and that these are sent by electronic mail or otherwise to the complainant and the person complained about, and is made available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor or headteacher (paragraph 25(i))
- ensure that written records are kept of all complaints, indicating at which stage they were resolved (paragraph 25(j))
- ensure that the correspondence statements and records are kept confidentially (paragraph 25(k)).

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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The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage			√	
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage			√	
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage			√	
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage			√	

School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Christian		
Date school opened	1981		
Age range of pupils	4-16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 95	Girls: 88	Total: 183
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 2	Girls: 0	Total: 2
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 2,094		
Address of school	Overbury Street Edge Hill Liverpool Merseyside L7 3HL		
Telephone number	0151 709 1642		
Email address	info@cfschool.org.uk		
Headteacher	Miss Barbara Lord		
Proprietor	Mr Dennis Collins		