

Carmel Christian School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

Carmel Christian School, which opened in 2000, is a non-selective independent Christian school located in Brislington, Bristol. It is operated by Carmel Ministries International and the school is housed in the same building as the Carmel Church Ministry. The school provides full-time education for 40 pupils aged from three to 18. The school does not presently have pupils who are post-16. Currently there are 17 boys and 23 girls on roll; this number includes 17 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, all of whom receive government funding. Twelve of these children attend part time. The school is run on Christian principles and provides a curriculum with a significant emphasis on Bible teaching. The curriculum is taught through Packets of Accelerated Christian Education (PACEs). The school roll is multi-ethnic and pupils travel to the school from Bristol and the surrounding areas. None has a statement of special educational needs. The school was last inspected in 2009 and since that time two monitoring inspections have taken place. The school aims to provide 'a Christian education through high standards, care, encouragement and positive relationships'.

Evaluation of the school

Carmel Christian School meets its aims and provides a good education for its pupils in both the school and the Early Years Foundation Stage. The curriculum is good, with particular strengths in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Teaching and assessment are good and some teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. The provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good; pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Safeguarding arrangements are securely in place. The school meets all of the regulations required for its continued registration and since the last inspection it has made good improvement.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good and enables pupils of all ages to experience the required areas of learning. This includes the curriculum for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage where the curriculum is sufficiently broad and includes both adult-

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

led and child-initiated activities. These activities are planned around each child's interests. The current provision represents an improvement since the last inspection.

The school's broader provision has also improved since the last inspection. The curriculum is divided into two focus areas. In the mornings pupils work in booklets or PACEs. These are highly structured and provide individualised blocks of learning; pupils set their own objectives and work through these at their own speed, working through 12 booklet levels in each subject. They include mathematics, English, science, social studies and word building. An appropriate emphasis is given to development of skills in literacy and numeracy, and enhancement activities are used to extend these. For example, pupils are expected to give presentations to their peers about topics they have researched. In the afternoon the curriculum includes subjects such as art, information and communication technology, history and geography, among others. These subjects are planned in appropriate detail that reflects the National Curriculum. The quality of this planning, which includes the use of assessment, is good and secures the progression of learning in these subjects. The range of the subjects studied varies according to the age of the pupil. Older pupils study optional subjects such as astronomy, business studies, economics, typing, health studies and the history of civilisation, along with others. They have also taken part in science workshops organised by Bristol University. The provision enables pupils to prepare effectively for future careers or the next stages of their education.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good and some outstanding teaching was seen within the Early Years Foundation Stage. The quality of the teaching throughout the school enables all pupils to make at least good progress and for some individual pupils this is outstanding.

The staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage have developed very clear classroom routines where children develop independence and good behaviour. Children develop very positive attitudes to learning, for example in their love of books. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader is skilled at planning for adult-led activities to meet the needs of all the children, including those with English as an additional language. However, opportunities for child-initiated activities, such as those for free-flow activities between the indoor and outdoor areas, are underdeveloped. The school works effectively with parents and carers to help them support their children at home.

In the rest of the school, teachers use their considerable knowledge of the PACEs to ensure that pupils understand the tasks they undertake. In the best examples of teaching, pupils' learning is secured and enhanced by 'lifting the information off the page' as one teacher put it, with explanations, illustrations and examples that make the knowledge provided in the PACEs more relevant. There are good links between the information learned in morning sessions and the content of afternoon enhancement activities so that pupils can use their learning in different contexts. This is particularly the case for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2.

Assessment procedures are rigorous and used well throughout the school; this is especially so in the Early Years Foundation Stage. In the Early Years Foundation Stage there is a very careful match of task to the capability of the child because of the manner and rigour with which the teachers and assistants record their observations of each child's success. These are used to effectively plan the next steps in learning. Continuous assessment throughout the rest of the school ensures that teachers and senior staff can monitor the rate of pupils' progress successfully.

Pupils' attitudes to their learning are extremely positive. This results from their studious approach to their tasks. All are familiar with the protocols of the PACEs and they work quietly at their 'office' (a partitioned area for working). When they need assistance they place a marker above their office and are quickly offered help by the teacher or assistant. Pupils are highly motivated and take significant responsibility for planning their own daily schedules and completing their own work. Enhancement subjects offer opportunities for more group and cooperative working. Pupils' relationships with their teachers are good and trusting, because the teachers provide positive and constructive feedback and this adds to the progress made by each pupil.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good and in the Early Years Foundation Stage it is outstanding. The provision has been improved and strengthened since the last inspection.

Throughout their time at the school personal development is very good so that by the time they leave, the pupils are thoughtful, self-assured and self-confident young people. It is clear that pupils enjoy being at the school. Discussion with them reveals that they think school is a safe place to be. They adopt high moral values and this is reflected in their outstanding behaviour. These values are further enhanced through spiritual reflection and prayer at different points during the day. Pupils are happy to come to school and high attendance figures confirm this. Within the Early Years Foundation Stage, children readily cooperate with each other. They are willing to share equipment and understand that occasionally they cannot have what they want because it is being used by another child.

From the Early Years Foundation Stage, children and pupils have developed strong relationships with adults and their peers. Personal development and self-confidence are promoted by teachers, for example by encouraging each pupil to take part in public speaking. Pupils also develop a very good understanding of the importance of healthy eating and taking exercise. They are confident to share their concerns with their key worker. Children of different heritages play well together and show great respect for the diversity and different cultural traditions of their peers. These good attitudes to work and relationships are also prevalent throughout the remainder of the school.

Pupils develop an appreciation of citizenship through study of a specific programme that includes diversity and images of Britain, Parliament and personal identity. However, opportunities to develop participation within the school are

underdeveloped; there is, for example, no school council or representative body of pupils.

There is a strong sense of community and pupils assist one another wherever possible. The school develops this by encouraging pupils to take part in external events, such as singing in the choir when it performs for different local groups. Pupils broaden their sense of community through their use of local facilities, including visits to the library and regular use of the swimming pool and other sports facilities. Visitors to the school have included police and fire service representatives who have helped pupils understand the importance of the work they do. Older pupils study global issues and learn of the cultural differences in the world. This promotes their understanding of and respect for people from different cultural and religious backgrounds.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is good. Safeguarding arrangements reflect current guidelines and there are clear procedures in place to ensure the safety of all pupils and children. The training of staff is up to date and they are knowledgeable about their child protection duties.

All required policies are complete and reviewed regularly and reflect national guidance. Good health and safety procedures are provided for, including those for first aid. Risk assessments and fire safety procedures are carried out and rigorously recorded; these are done in conjunction with the other users of the Ministry. The anti-bullying policy is implemented well. Pupils are confident that adults show concern for their safety; for example they are supervised well at all times and, when going on visits away from the school, the arrangements are rigorously checked. The development of a healthy lifestyle is promoted well; for example the morning break is called 'fruit time' and lunch boxes contain healthy options that reflect the cooperation of parents and carers.

The school's admission and attendance registers are maintained according to requirements. Since the last inspection the school has improved these arrangements considerably.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The required procedures for the vetting of staff and their suitability to work with children are rigorously implemented and have improved since the last inspection. The single central register of staff is duly completed.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school's accommodation provides appropriate facilities for learning and these are supplemented by use of local facilities such as for swimming and physical education. Since the last inspection improvements have been made to the facilities, especially for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Provision of information

The school provides or makes available to parents, carers and others all of the required information; this is clear and up to date and parents and carers appear confident that they can obtain any of the information they require.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school's complaints policy meets requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

What the school could do to improve further

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

- Further improve the quality of teaching by disseminating the examples of outstanding practice throughout the school.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, develop the planning and opportunities for child-initiated activities.
- Establish a representative body of pupils, so that they can take a more influential role in the school and its life.

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	Christian		
Date school opened	November 2000		
Age range of pupils	3–18 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 11	Girls: 17	Total: 28
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 6	Girls: 6	Total: 12
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	Juniors: £ 1,800 Seniors: £ 2,100		
Address of school	Carmel Centre 817a Bath Road Brislington Bristol BS4 5NL		
Telephone number	0117 977 5533		
Email address	jaapv@carmelchristianschool.org		
Principal	Mr Jaap van Wyk		
Proprietor	Carmel Ministries International		

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



15 November 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Carmel Christian School

You may remember that, along with a colleague, I came to visit your school to see how you are getting along. I want to tell you of some of the things that I saw.

I think you go to a good school where the adults work hard on your behalf. In turn you too work very hard and all of you seem to be making good progress in your studies. Some of you make very rapid progress. The quality of some of the teaching is outstanding and I have asked the school to think how to make teaching that is already good even better.

I think that your teachers keep you safe. Some of you mentioned that you do not see any bullying in the school and if there are any problems there is someone you could turn to for help.

It was a pleasure to talk with many of you and I think your behaviour is outstanding. You are very considerate and respectful to one another. It was especially enjoyable to visit the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and see all the good work you are doing. It was good to see how you all get along well together and I was impressed with how hard you work.

Although many of you contribute well to the school life and take on various roles I have asked your teachers to consider setting up something like a school council, so that as a whole school you might be able to make suggestions and express your views about school life.

Thank you for being so friendly and I wish you every success in your future.

T Fisher-Smith
Lead inspector