

Oxford Christian School

Cornerstone Christian Centre, Quarry High Street, Oxford, OX3 8JT

Inspection dates	18–19 June 2013	
Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Pupils' achievement	Good	2
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Quality of curriculum	Good	2
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Adequate	3
Leadership and management	Adequate	3

Summary of key findings

This school is good because

- Students' achievement is good. Students make at least good progress from their varied starting points on entry to the school.
- Students behave well and demonstrate mature attitudes and independence in the organisation of their learning.
- The curriculum successfully combines the benefits of the ACE (Accelerated Christian Education) programme with a suitable range of additional subjects.
- The good quality of teaching and effective curriculum organisation contribute positively to students' good progress with their learning.
- The school's leaders and managers have established a safe and welcoming environment in which students' learning and personal development are given equal value. They have ensured that teaching and achievement are good.

It is not yet outstanding because

- The quality of teaching is good rather than outstanding.
- Routine matters, such as the monitoring of training for staff and volunteers, are not given a sufficiently high priority.
- The school's leaders have not coordinated their ideas for the future of the school into a systematic improvement plan.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was conducted with one day's notice.
- Six lessons were observed, taught by five teachers, including extended observation of students working on the ACE curriculum.
- A range of school documents were scrutinised and discussions took place with four members of staff, and informally with the majority of students.
- Questionnaire responses were considered from seven members of staff and volunteers. There were no parental responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire.

Inspection team

David Young, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Oxford Christian School is located in a residential area of Oxford. It is an independent, mixed, day Christian school situated in premises used jointly by a community church.
- It is registered to admit students in the age range of six to 18 years. There are currently 10 boys and girls on the roll of the school, aged between six and 15 years. No student has a statement of special educational needs.
- The school makes no alternative provision for students' education, apart from the use of local facilities for physical education and swimming.
- The school aims to 'develop Christian character to enable each to find and develop their individual gifts and callings God has given them'.
- The school was registered as an independent school in September 2012 and this is its first full Ofsted inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Consider how the provision of individual support might be used to accelerate progress for any student falling behind with learning, particularly in mathematics.
- Increase the range of visual and practical resources to extend students' learning within the ACE curriculum.
- Increase the range of opportunities for students to develop an understanding of, and respect for, those with different faiths and beliefs.
- Widen the range of opportunities for students to contribute to the local and wider community.
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers working with students have the opportunity to keep up to date with school policies and procedures.
- Implement procedures for continuous monitoring and review of all aspects of the school, and create a development plan with priorities for improvement.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Good

Students' achievement is good due to good teaching. Their progress in English, mathematics and science is at least in line with, and in many cases exceeds, national expectations. Students of all ages, and with a variety of levels of attainment on entry to the school, are skilled at managing their own learning in the ACE curriculum. The youngest students require some help with organisation and interpretation of tasks, but they quickly adapt to the high level of independence required. Older students, particularly those in Years 10 and 11, work to challenging agreed targets. They understand how much work is required, and at what level, to make better than expected progress. They are largely successful in achieving above average standards. Disabled students and those with special educational needs who find learning more challenging also make at least adequate, and sometimes good, progress with their learning. The teaching staff have a good understanding of individual students' levels of learning, and they target their support effectively to ensure that learning proceeds at a good pace.

The curriculum materials are suitably matched to the attainment of individual students, but some students require more help to understand the explanations and methods set out in the mathematics materials. This mostly results in faster rates of progress in English and science than in mathematics. The overall good rate of progress results from challenging tasks and a focused learning atmosphere. Students of all ages make good progress with the development of numeracy and literacy, including grammar and comprehension, applicable across all areas of learning. Students make good progress across a wide range of subjects, including music, in the afternoon curriculum. Students are working, in the long term, towards the International Certificate of Christian Education. Students have not been in the school long enough for any certificates to have been completed to date. The ACE curriculum guidance documents enable standards to be compared with National Curriculum levels and the school's data confirm that students are mostly working in line with, or in excess of, national expectations.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Good

Students' behaviour and personal development are good. Their good behaviour contributes positively to learning. Students' ability to persevere and maintain their concentration during the morning ACE curriculum is outstanding. The students respond well to staff expectations, show respect, and require no more than a gentle reminder to re-focus if their concentration lapses. Students experience no bullying and demonstrate a high level of cooperation and consideration in the treatment of each other. The sharing of the popular table tennis table illustrates this well. Attendance by students of all ages is good. There is a calm and business-like learning environment throughout the school, particularly during the morning session. Concentration wanes a little in some afternoon sessions, but students take an interest in the full range of subjects available and continue to make good progress. Students state that they enjoy both the morning and afternoon sessions and believe that the style of learning in the mornings enables them to make rapid progress without distraction.

The curriculum, activities and ethos of the school make a strong contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school places an effectively strong emphasis on personal reflection, shared prayer, and the development of personal beliefs and values derived from the school's Christian ethos. Students understand the expectations placed upon them and are keen to earn rewards for good behaviour and their contribution to the school community. Good opportunities are provided, through the citizenship curriculum in particular, for students to understand the workings of democracy, the legal system, and the responsibilities of citizens in the United Kingdom. There are themes within history, English and the humanities curriculum for students to consider cultural diversity and to develop respect for differences. The school ensures

that where political issues are considered that students are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views.

However, there are not yet sufficient opportunities to learn about the diversity of beliefs and faiths locally and nationally and students have few opportunities to contribute to the local community, other than through involvement in church-related activities. In her first year in post, the headteacher has focused successfully on the development of the school's ethos and learning. She has ideas for future development of the cultural and social aspects of students' development, but these are not presented systematically in a comprehensive school improvement plan.

Quality of teaching

Good

The quality of teaching is good and results in students achieving well. The ACE curriculum provides a strong foundation for learning, and is managed well by staff with appropriate intervention and support. All members of staff have high expectations of what students can achieve and convey these continuously. The staff work well together and, through good organisation and effective daily planning, ensure that all students are focused on their work. All students are aware of their daily and longer-term targets, and are presented with a balanced curriculum which both interests them and enables them to achieve. The self-managed approach to the morning curriculum enables students to develop essential organisational and study skills. They know when to ask for help and to refer to additional resources such as dictionaries, and how to self-mark many of their assignments. Occasionally, opportunities are missed to use additional visual resources to provide an enhancement or alternative to the programme in the ACE work book. The mathematics curriculum, in particular, is very challenging for lower attaining students; there are insufficient opportunities for these students to receive one-to-one support in understanding and consolidating new learning. This is the most essential requirement to move the quality of teaching and students' achievement to outstanding. Assessment procedures built into the ACE programme provide good information about the extent and rate of progress of individual students and are used well by staff to ensure that students are provided with work at an appropriate level.

The afternoon curriculum gives good opportunities for discussion and interaction. Students mostly respond maturely, they know how to listen as well as speak, and they demonstrate respect for the views of others. Staff act as excellent role models in their manner and behaviour towards students. Good examples were seen, in citizenship and literature lessons, of effective questioning which encouraged students to think deeply and to justify their answers. Students believe they are successful in their learning and that they are well supported by their teachers.

Quality of curriculum

Good

The quality of the curriculum is good. The ACE curriculum, used by all students each morning, provides structured courses in English, mathematics, science, humanities, word building and grammar. This programme is supplemented in the afternoons with additional subjects, including religious education, physical education and swimming, art and music. All students have access to various foreign languages, currently selected from Chinese, Spanish and Hebrew. Good extension opportunities are also provided with additional work in science, history and geography for different age groups. The overall curriculum provides a breadth of experience across all the required areas of learning and enables students to make good or better progress. Students have access to laptop computers to assist their studies in various subjects; the older students, for example, are studying for the European Computer Driving Licence. A suitable range of visual and practical resources is used to support learning in the afternoons, but there is insufficient use of visual materials to supplement and extend the morning sessions, particularly for students who sometimes find extensive written text challenging.

The curriculum leads to an international certificate which is accepted for entry to a number of universities in the United Kingdom and abroad. No students have yet reached the age to complete the certificate, but the units of study accumulated by students at present enable them to pass successfully through the required stages to certification. The curriculum also includes a personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme, together with citizenship, daily assemblies and regular opportunities for reflection. Older students have suitable access to careers education and planning for their futures through themes and activities within citizenship. A small number of educational trips, covering local history and a visit to the Houses of Parliament, have extended the curriculum effectively, and the headteacher has suitable plans for further similar activities.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety**Adequate**

Arrangements for students' welfare, health and safety are adequate. All independent school regulations for this standard are met. Students are safe in the school and the high quality of relationships between adults and students ensures that they are well cared for. The headteacher is the designated person for child protection and has received up-to-date training with the local authority. The school makes good use of a number of volunteers to contribute to and support students' learning. All required checks have been completed to ensure the suitability of staff and volunteers, and details are recorded in a suitable single central register. However, arrangements for training adults in first aid, child protection and fire safety, although adequate, are not systematically planned with careful monitoring of required timescales for updating. The personal commitment and quality of the staff result in excellent supervision and staff are very positive role models. Suitable admission and attendance registers are used appropriately. The school's policies and procedures for the management of behaviour and the assessment of risks, including for off-site visits, are appropriate and implemented consistently. Throughout this first year of the school's existence there has been no bullying or serious disobedience. Behaviour is managed well and staff have high expectations of safe and cooperative behaviour, to which students respond willingly. Healthy lifestyles are encouraged and appropriate themes in the PSHE programme ensure that students are taught to act safely and to avoid risks to their health and well-being. A fire risk assessment has been completed. Regular checks on fire-fighting equipment, the alarm system and portable electrical appliances are completed to required timescales in conjunction with the host church. Students are familiar with escape routes in the event of a fire, but practice evacuations are not completed as frequently as they might be.

Leadership and management**Adequate**

The quality of leadership and management is adequate and all the regulatory requirements are met. The headteacher, supported well by the trustees, has provided a strong lead in establishing a successful school in a short time. During its first year of operation an effective curriculum has been established and students have been enabled to make good progress in their learning. The style of teaching, with different approaches in the morning and afternoon sessions, has been well chosen by school leaders to develop independence and good organisation in students' learning.

A secure environment has been established in premises which are of a good size, provide suitable facilities and are maintained to a good standard of decoration and repair. Appropriate policies have been prepared and effective arrangements implemented for the provision of information for parents and carers, and for responding to any complaints. The staff have excellent relationships with parents and carers and ensure that they are regularly updated on the progress which students are making, both academically and personally. The oversight of training for staff and volunteers, and for some aspects of routine administration, are not thorough enough to ensure that gaps do not occur. High expectations and ambition are communicated to staff and students and a strong sense of purpose and community has been established. A lot has been achieved in a short time and the headteacher is aware of a number of areas for further development. However, these are

not set out in a systematic improvement plan, identifying priorities and directing resources to key development areas. The staff and volunteers who completed inspection questionnaires are positive about what has been achieved and are committed to the further improvement of the school.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and/or the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	138552
Inspection number	420259
DfE registration number	931/6008

This inspection was carried out 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.

Type of school	Christian faith day school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	6 to 18 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	10
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Oxford Christian School Ltd
Chair	Philip Herklots
Headteacher	Dorcas Herklots
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1200
Telephone number	01865 744222
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