

Christian Fellowship School

Overbury Street, Edge Hill, Liverpool, Merseyside, L7 3HL

Inspection dates	19–21 November 2013	
Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Pupils' achievement	Good	2
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Quality of curriculum	Good	2
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This school is good because

- Pupils throughout the school, including those with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs, make good progress.
- The religious ethos which permeates the school results in pupils' excellent behaviour and in them showing outstanding consideration for one another.
- Teachers plan their lessons well and use a range of techniques to enable pupils of all levels of ability to achieve well.
- The school has created a strong sense of community, involving pupils, staff and parents and carers. This ensures that all pupils feel very well looked after.
- Leaders and managers monitor teaching and pupils' progress closely. As a result, staff feel well supported in achieving good outcomes for pupils.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Teachers do not have ready access to visual resources to support pupils' different learning styles.
- The school does not yet offer an exceptional range of accreditation opportunities in the upper part of school in line with pupils' interests.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school requires improvement and must take action to meet 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. The details are listed in the full report.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection took place with one day’s notice.
- The inspectors observed 17 lessons taught by 15 teachers and an assembly. They held discussions with staff, pupils, parents and carers and the Chairs of the Board of Directors and the Governing Body.
- The inspectors analysed 159 survey responses from pupils and 27 responses from staff. There were 79 parents and carers who completed the online Parent View survey.
- The inspectors examined samples of pupils’ work and scrutinised a range of relevant documentation including curriculum planning, registers and school policies and records.

Inspection team

Michael Glickman, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Shellie Barcroft

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Christian Fellowship School is a mixed Christian day school located in the Edge Hill area of Liverpool. Most pupils live within the city. Almost half of the pupils belong to a minority ethnic group and just over one tenth have English as an additional language.
- The school is registered to admit up to 193 pupils aged between four and 16 years of age and currently has 182 boys and girls on the roll. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs and none is looked after by a local authority.
- The school aims to 'assist parents in developing the hearts, minds and practical capabilities of children to equip them for productive life and work in a plural society, recognising the spiritual and eternal as well as physical world.'
- The school is divided into the lower school (Reception to Year 3), middle school (Years 4 to 8) and upper school (Years 9 to 11).
- The school was last inspected in September 2010, when it was judged to be providing a good standard of education with the exception of the Early Years Foundation Stage which was satisfactory. At that time, a number of regulations were not met.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make better use of resources to improve teaching and learning by extending the range of visual resources, including technology, available to teachers and pupils in classrooms.
- Increase the opportunities for pupils in the upper part of school to achieve accreditation by extending the range of GCSE study options available in languages and sport, in line with their interests and abilities.
- **The school must meet the following independent school standards**
 - The proprietor should ensure that suitable changing accommodation and showers are provided for pupils aged 11 years or over at the start of the school year who receive physical education (paragraph 23A(1)(c)).
 - The proprietor should ensure that the temperature of hot water at the point of use does not pose a scalding risk to users (paragraph 23F(1)(d)).

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Good

Pupils' achievement is good as a result of good teaching and a good curriculum. Most pupils enter in Reception, which follows the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum, although pupils are admitted into different year groups throughout the school. The school carries out initial assessments on admission and uses the information to guide planning and teaching. The small size of the school allows pupils to be placed in the class most appropriate for their ability, which is sometimes below their chronological age.

Data from the school's detailed tracking system shows that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage progress well against the Early Learning Goals and pupils in the lower and middle schools make good progress in literacy and numeracy in comparison to national figures. Most pupils leave in Year 11 after taking their GCSEs, in which they achieve good results. Some successfully sit examinations for selective sixth form schools.

It is indicative of the school's holistic approach that the system for supporting pupils identified as in need of additional support is known as ALPS – Additional Learning and Pastoral Support. Individualised support has enabled pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs to achieve good grades at GCSE. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are also supported to gain an additional GCSE in their mother tongue. School monitoring shows that pupils from minority ethnic communities make good progress and achieve examination results comparable to those achieved in the rest of the school.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Outstanding

Pupils' behaviour and personal development are outstanding. Pupils are polite, respectful and welcoming to visitors. They rush to hold doors open and stand up when adults enter the classroom. Behaviour during lessons is exemplary. Pupils work quietly and with concentration, even when the pace of the lesson slows. They spontaneously help one another and are considerate, for example, apologising when they bump a desk as they walk past. They dress smartly in school uniform and are clearly proud of their school. Attendance is good in all sections of the school.

Pupils have an opportunity to contribute to school life through the elected school council which meets regularly and undertakes projects such as purchasing playground equipment and conducting a survey on school uniform. The school council is currently piloting a scheme where older pupils read with younger ones and help them with their work. Year 11 prefects on duty during break act in a caring way towards younger pupils, with whom they are clearly popular. Although some pupils believe that the school does not listen to their opinions, the headteacher is very much aware of what they want and provides clear reasons why it is not always possible to implement their requests.

The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school's Christian ethos permeates every aspect of school life. For example, the lack of software in an information and communication technology (ICT) lesson was used as an opportunity to talk about God's plans for the pupils' futures. A genuine sense of community has been created. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, for example, dolls houses are grouped together to reinforce the idea of a community.

Pupils learn about other cultures and religions through curriculum subjects such as geography, history and religious studies, but also participate in pupil exchanges with the Netherlands and host Korean pupils. The school has forged close relationships with a nearby senior citizens' home and a refugee and asylum seeker project and is currently developing plans for Year 11 pupils to spend

time helping a community in Africa after their GCSE examinations are over. Local councillors and Members of Parliament visit the school regularly. The school has a policy to ensure that extremist views are not presented to pupils and this has been circulated to all outside speakers. Pupils are encouraged to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme and have recently won a regional debating award.

Quality of teaching

Good

The quality of teaching is good and enables pupils to make good progress. Teachers plan their lessons well and provide appropriate work for pupils of different levels of ability. The small size of classes allows them to focus their attention where it is most needed and teaching assistants are deployed well in larger classes. Provision for pupils who have English as an additional language is tailored to their individual needs and is directed towards supporting them to function within the classroom environment; some initially receive additional English lessons outside the class before being integrated with appropriate support. Learning support assistants enable pupils with special educational needs to participate fully in regular class lessons.

Lessons are generally very well paced and pupils rise to the challenge. For example, a French lesson was taught entirely in French, requiring the pupils to respond in that language. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils eagerly joined in at story time which was exploited as an opportunity to reinforce their literacy and numeracy skills, as well as to discuss kindness and consideration for others. In the best lessons, pupils are encouraged to work independently, with the teacher providing support when needed. In history, for example, they worked in groups to prepare a debate, carrying out their own research and rehearsing their arguments. Also, the teacher in ICT allowed the more able pupils to work at their own pace on a project involving computer graphics.

Assessment is very thorough. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the school has deployed a simple but comprehensive tracking system and records progress in children's profiles which are shared with parents and carers. Pupil tracking continues throughout the school with regular assessments and this data is used to highlight pupils in need of additional support.

Due to financial constraints, the school has limited technological resources such as interactive whiteboards. Although overall resources are adequate and teachers are skilled at managing with the resources that they have, senior leaders recognise that the school could make better use of visual resources, including for example interactive technology, to further engage pupils with different learning styles.

Quality of curriculum

Good

The quality of the curriculum is good and enables pupils to learn and achieve well. Because most pupils attend the same school from Reception to Year 11, the school can ensure that the curriculum allows for clear progression. Clear schemes of work exist for all subjects and teachers produce detailed lesson plans. Pupils in the lower school make good progress in literacy and numeracy while the curriculum in the middle and upper school leads to a range of full and short course GCSEs.

The school's provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is extremely well developed and results in exceptional personal development. Although there are timetabled religious education lessons, the school's religious ethos pervades the curriculum. For example, pupils using the 'thinking hats' approach to problem solving are first asked to use an additional hat, 'what does God think?', while pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage marvel at the wonders of creation as they learn about the world around them. The religious studies curriculum is predominantly Christian, and the school is careful to present authentic views of other world faiths from the perspective of believers.

Because of the small size of the school, it is necessary to combine year groups for certain subjects, such as art and physical education. Good planning ensures that pupils progress well regardless of their year group. Although all pupils in the upper part of school are able to gain GCSEs in modern languages and physical education, their range of choices of language and sport is limited because of the small numbers in the class. The school is considering using after-school clubs to enhance the range of sports on offer, a model which could also be applied to other subjects.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Outstanding

The school makes outstanding provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety and all regulations are met. All policies, including those to prevent bullying, are fully implemented. Although the policies have a less formal structure than is usual because they have been produced collaboratively by the entire staff, they fully meet requirements and staff feel a greater ownership of them as a result. All the required recruitment checks have been carried out on staff, proprietors and volunteers and are recorded in a single central register which complies with requirements. Because many parents and carers act as volunteers within the school in some capacity, the school routinely carries out checks on them when they enrol their children in the school. The school is aware of its duty to refer any member of staff who may be unsuitable for working with children to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Pupils say that they feel very safe in school and refer to the community atmosphere that prevails, describing it as 'a family feeling'. Older pupils feel responsible for younger ones and they are confident that they can approach staff if they have a problem. They say that there is no bullying and that if any issues arise staff will intervene to help resolve the problem.

All staff have received training in child protection and carry an aide memoire of procedures together with their identity badge. In addition to the designated child protection officer, a director and a governor with professional experience in the field of safeguarding are available if staff have concerns. Pupils are well supervised at all times, and Year 11 prefects enhance supervision at break times. The school has identified concerns about internet and mobile phone safety outside school and a suitably experienced governor has delivered relevant lessons to pupils. A training session for parents, carers and pupils together has also been scheduled.

Regular fire drills are carried out and all fire safety equipment is professionally serviced. All staff have been trained as fire wardens. There are suitable facilities for pupils who feel unwell and two members of staff have received first aid training. The admissions and attendance registers comply with requirements.

Leadership and management

Good

Leadership and management are good and leaders ensure that pupils learn and achieve well. Leaders also deserve much credit for establishing outstanding provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. The excellent standards of behaviour seen in school are clear evidence of this. The school meets all the independent school regulations apart from two which relate to the premises and accommodation. The school sees itself as a community and all parents and carers are expected to play an active part. Many parents and carers work or volunteer within the school as do a number of former pupils. Directors and governors are closely involved in all aspects of the school, even carrying out repairs and setting up computers. When senior staff are absent, members of the governing body regularly spend time in the school to provide a leadership presence.

School leaders have responded well to issues raised in the previous inspection. They have a realistic view of the strengths of the school and have accurately identified points for further development. They regularly monitor the quality of teaching and have implemented a system of

peer observations of lessons.

The school premises consist of a three-story classroom block and a single-story section which houses the administration offices and the hall which is also used as a gymnasium. There is a sizable area at the rear for pupils to play. The Early Years Foundation Stage has its own outdoor area which is well equipped with toys and equipment to support imaginative play and outdoor learning. The premises are safe, well maintained and suitable for learning. Walls are decorated with pupils' work and inspirational displays. The directors have drawn up an ambitious plan for future rebuilding work. At present, there are no showers available for pupils receiving physical education on the premises. The school is currently installing hot water regulators on the taps in pupil washrooms. Installation in the washrooms used by senior pupils is firmly scheduled. The water in these taps is currently rather too hot, although the school has ensured pupil safety by displaying clear warning notices.

The school provides all the required information to parents and carers via its website and in writing during an extensive induction programme before their child joins the school. The school's complaints policy complies with requirements.

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	104730
Inspection number	422694
DfE registration number	341/6040

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 Day school
School status	Independent School
Age range of pupils	4–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	181
Number of part time pupils	1
Proprietor	Denis Collins
Chair	Mike Whiting
Headteacher	Barbara Lord
Date of previous school inspection	29 September 2010
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,028–£4,056
Telephone number	0151 709 1642
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Email address	info@cfschool.org.uk

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