

The Lambs Christian School

113 Soho Road, Hockley, Birmingham B19 1AY

Inspection dates 19–21 January 2016

Overall effectiveness **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for children and learners	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school has improved well since the last inspection. The key issues raised at the last inspection have been fully addressed. The provision in the early years and pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding.
- The partnership with parents to ensure pupils achieve well is a strength. Parents and carers clearly know how well their children are progressing and what the next steps are for them to achieve.
- The thematic curriculum introduced recently has added further richness to extend pupils' experiences and breadth of study.
- Pupils achieve well in mathematics, English, and particularly in reading, preparing them well for the future.
- Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher provides very effective leadership. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They are polite and work hard to achieve.
- Teaching is good. Staff set high expectations for pupils and good use is made of homework and after-school clubs to support pupils' learning.
- The early years provision is outstanding. Children get off to an excellent start and enjoy the varied and imaginative activities on offer.
- The school promotes British values very well and is a happy and harmonious place to be, where tolerance and respect for everyone is strongly instilled into pupils. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted strongly.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some pupils are not punctual at the start of the school day.
- Some of the structured learning programmes lead to loss of interest for some pupils.
- Adults do not always spot mistakes in pupils' workbooks quickly enough, when pupils mark their own work incorrectly.
- The lack of senior leadership capacity constrains developments for future improvement.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve teaching and learning by:
 - checking pupils' understanding more effectively
 - ensuring tasks fully engage pupils in all lessons.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - developing the senior leadership role
 - working with parents more closely to ensure the good punctuality of some pupils at the start of the school day.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Leaders ensure that all the required regulations for independent schools are fully met.
- The headteacher and trustees have developed an ambitious culture in the school, which encourages pupils to achieve well and to maximise their potential: academically, personally and spiritually. As a result, pupils thrive and this is confirmed by parents, who recognise how well their children achieve. The headteacher and staff are highly regarded for their commitment to pupils, who are willing, as one parent noted, 'To go the extra mile', in order to help pupils achieve.
- The way in which some subjects are taught has been improved and this has resulted in more interesting themed topics, which link well to other subjects. This has helped to extend the curriculum and has led to increased enjoyment of learning and broadening of pupils' learning. Pupils have access to the full range of learning experiences that they should. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught, including French. English and mathematics are taught through the Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) programme and through other materials. The range of subjects taught and experiences provided for pupils prepare them well for their next stage of school life.
- The quality of teaching and learning is checked regularly by the headteacher, who provides support and advice to improve practice where necessary. However, there is limited scope financially for the school to reward good teachers through the performance management process.
- The school prepares pupils positively for life in modern Britain. The school has embraced British values very effectively and these are clearly articulated and sit well with the school's own Christian values. Strong emphasis is placed on equality and respect for people, irrespective of different views, beliefs and lifestyles. Discrimination of any kind is challenged vigorously, so that pupils learn the importance of equality. This contributes strongly to pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The potential to improve provision and pupils' outcomes further is restricted as there is very limited senior leadership capacity. In practice, this means that much of the operational and strategic leadership and management of the school are performed by the headteacher. Trustees are aware of this vulnerability and are keen to expand the leadership of the school.
- Some pupils who are reliant on parental transport are not always punctual at the start of the school day, meaning they often miss the school assembly. There has been limited success in improving this situation.
- Safeguarding procedures are rigorous. Concerns are acted upon quickly and record keeping for liaison with other agencies is meticulous. The headteacher and a trustee are trained at appropriate levels and all staff have regular awareness training. The safeguarding policy takes into account the latest statutory guidance such as the 'Prevent' strategy. The impact of this is that pupils and parents are confident in the safety and well-being of children while at school.
- The accommodation meets the needs of pupils and the subjects taught, but pupils commented how cramped they feel in some of the rooms.
- The quality of information available to parents is good. Parents spoken to felt they were well informed about the improvements their children make in their learning and liked the 'next steps for learning' in pupils' progress reports.
- The procedure for handling complaints meets regulations.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The role of governance through the small board of trustees is developing. Trustees are beginning to hold the school to account more effectively. They have had appropriate involvement in the school's self-evaluation, which is an accurate picture of the school's current strengths and areas for improvement.
 - Trustees challenge and support the school, for example in the area of promoting British values, and as a result the work of the school is very effective in this area.
 - The school improvement plan identifies appropriate priorities for further improvement, but trustees also know that the lack of senior leadership capacity limits the speed of implementation of these priorities.
 - Trustees are involved in the day-to-day work of the school and have an accurate view of teaching and learning and the progress that pupils make. Trustees have had suitable involvement in any areas of underperformance by staff.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment **is good**

- The teaching of English and mathematics is systematic. They are taught both through the structured teaching programmes, using other materials to broaden pupils' knowledge, and through group work to encourage pupils to discuss and refine their ideas.
- Reading is taught in a concerted way, so that pupils read widely and often. Older pupils act as reading buddies to younger children and the school has a good reading culture, so that pupils enjoy reading for pleasure as well as for information.
- Staff set high expectations for pupils' academic work and behaviour; pupils respond well to these and are keen to achieve. Staff frequently articulate the school's values to promote an aspirational, positive and encouraging learning environment.
- Teaching prepares pupils very effectively for their next stage of education, so that children in the early years class transfer well into Year 1, and Year 6 pupils transfer to secondary school successfully.
- Staff provide parents with detailed information on the progress their children make. Effective partnership working with home to promote pupils' academic progress is a significant strength of the school. Similarly very effective use is made of homework and after-school clubs to further support pupils' achievements.
- The school does not submit pupils for national assessments, but does carry out optional tests to ensure pupils' progress is measured against other pupils nationally. Assessments show most pupils make good progress from average starting points, although some pupils make outstanding progress, particularly in reading.
- Teaching actively promotes British values and challenges prejudicial attitudes, so pupils are very aware of the need to demonstrate Christian values of tolerance, kindness and respect.
- Sessional teachers teach specialist areas, such as music, art and French, to ensure pupils receive effective teaching in a broad range of subjects. Pupils enjoy practical investigative work in science.
- Pupils score units of their work, but adults do not always pick up misconceptions and errors. Occasionally, tasks are not always matched well enough to pupils' abilities and skills.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare **is outstanding**

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They learn to become responsible and motivated for most aspects of their learning,
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe through the curriculum. They are confident to confide in staff if they have any concerns. They say they feel safe from any form of prejudicial bullying. The personal, social, health and citizenship education programme provides pupils with an understanding of issues such as bullying and e-safety.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted exceptionally well. Pupils have opportunities for visits to places of interest such as art galleries, the countryside and seaside, to broaden their experiences.
- Pupils respond well to high aspirations and this is evident in their positive attitudes to learning. Past pupils say how much they enjoyed their time at the school and how well it prepared them for secondary school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour in and around school is excellent. They have positive attitudes to each other, the fabric of the school and their work. Pupils are polite and courteous and look smart in their uniforms.
- Pupils develop a sense of responsibility for themselves and for others. For example, there is a strong culture of older pupils helping younger children, such as being a 'hazard buster' at breaktimes and buddy readers.
- Pupils' attendance is above average and many have a 100% record of attendance.
- Incidents of bullying are very rare and pupils said they feel safe in school and know how to keep themselves safe online. They are aware of British values and develop an appropriate awareness of the dangers of extremism.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils achieve well in comparison to pupils nationally. The majority of pupils make better than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Nearly all pupils have reading ages well in excess of their chronological age.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. This is because they are given additional help and support to address gaps in their learning. For example, some pupils have a poorer understanding of some mathematical operations, such as division, but through extra support and practice they start to close the gap with their peers.
- By the age of 11 the most-able pupils have the skills and confidence to pass entrance examinations for grammar schools and often move into the top sets. Pupils who had left the school told the inspector how well they were able to cope academically when they had gone on to grammar school. The school has a high success rate in getting pupils into grammar schools.
- Pupils achieve well in a broad range of other subjects, such as French and humanities. Pupils increasingly enjoy the extended curriculum modules, which have led to richer and more interesting experiences. All pupils learn to play a musical instrument.
- In English, pupils know how to use literary devices, such as similes and metaphors, to enliven their writing. Pupils write for a range of different purposes, such as creative writing, recounting events and characterisation. Pupils study important people of Afro-Caribbean and African heritage. In a drama lesson, pupils reviewed a speech by Michelle Obama, identifying features of effective communication.
- In mathematics, pupils follow the Accelerated Christian Education programmes so that they gain mastery and confidence in mathematical operations. These programmes are supplemented by small-group work, so that pupils have opportunities to understand the concepts, rather than just obtain the correct answer.
- Parents are very satisfied with the progress their children make and believe they achieve well. Inspection findings support this view. After-school clubs, homework and regular progress meetings with parents boost pupils' academic performance well.
- Some aspects of the structured programme are mundane and lack of interest limits some pupils' rate of progress in English and mathematics lessons.

Early years provision

is outstanding

- Children join the school with skills that are typical for their age, and go on to make outstanding progress in all the areas of learning.
- Children benefit from a high staff ratio of adults to children which provides effective nurturing support, but without being overprotective. The provision is well led and managed to ensure children make outstanding progress. The early years classroom is vibrant and welcoming.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding, as practitioners understand the needs of young children well and provide a wide range of stimulating and interesting activities to promote children's curiosity. For example, an ice tray provided children with the opportunity to explore and know which animals live in cold climates.
- Children's progress is recorded using high-quality learning journeys which show children's achievement in various areas of learning.
- Children enjoy learning indoors and outdoors. There is a good mix of adult- and child-led activities. Younger children enjoy hunting for numbers around the classroom, recognise and understand the value of numbers to 20, and can use estimation. Older children add and subtract numbers confidently.
- Children's behaviour is outstanding as they are keen and enthusiastic learners. They listen and follow instructions carefully. Children are well prepared for Year 1 academically and socially. Parents are delighted with progress their children make and feel their children are very safe at school.
- The school meets the independent school standards in relation to the early years provision.

School details

Unique reference number	134091
Inspection number	10008549
DfE registration number	330/6105
Type of school	Christian
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	45
Number of part-time pupils	2
Proprietor	Patricia Ekhuemelo
Chair	Patricia Ekhuemelo
Headteacher	Patricia Ekhuemelo
Annual fees (day pupils)	£5,031
Telephone number	0121 554 3790
Website	www.lambschristianschool.co.uk
Email address	lambschristianschool@yahoo.co.uk
Date of previous school inspection	10–11 March 2010

Information about this school

- The Lambs Christian School is a small, co-educational independent primary school located in Birmingham. It was last inspected in March 2010.
- It is led and managed by the headteacher, who is also the senior trustee and proprietor of the school.
- Twelve children are in receipt of nursery education funding. All pupils are of a Black African or Black Caribbean or mixed heritage. Four pupils have English as an additional language, and none has a statement of special educational needs.
- There are two classes: one for children aged three to five (early years) and the primary class for those aged five to 11.
- The school has a distinctive Christian ethos, using the Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) programme. Its main aim is 'to enable children to reach their full potential in a safe, stimulating and Christ centred environment'.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection took place with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed 12 parts of lessons.
- Pupils' work, surveys, annual reports and other records were scrutinised.
- The school's documentation was examined, including planning for subjects, records of pupils' progress and the welfare and safeguarding of pupils. The inspector checked the school's compliance with the regulations for independent schools.
- The views of pupils were sought through discussions and responses to a survey.
- Five parents spoke to the lead inspector and nine made written comments. There were 18 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire Parent View.

Inspection team

Frank Price, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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