

# Greater Grace School of Christian Education

Church Lane, Backford, Chester, Cheshire CH2 4BE

## Inspection dates

18–20 October 2016

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Inadequate</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Inadequate</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Satisfactory

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- The leaders and managers have not taken action to provide a safe and secure environment. The condition of the school premises does not meet requirements.
- The school safeguarding policy is out of date and does not meet current requirements. As a consequence, some procedures taken by the school are not effective and do not ensure that children are safe.
- The school's procedures for handling complaints do not comply with requirements.
- The range and number of other agencies the school works with to support education and safeguarding are too narrow.
- The trustees have limited capacity to ensure that the school meets the required standards.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils learn well. The academic standards they reach match those achieved by pupils nationally. Pupils' independent learning skills are very good and they have a strong desire to improve and succeed.
- The school's core curriculum is enhanced through a range of additional activities and courses. Pupils benefit significantly from these experiences. They play a major role in improving pupils' communication, creative and sporting skills. Pupils' social skills are developed through working and playing with other pupils, often much older or younger than themselves.
- Pupils' spiritual and moral qualities are excellent. They have a clear code to live by which is founded on their strong Christian belief.
- Pupils' cultural experiences extend beyond the communities within which they live. Teachers ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of other faiths and that people may have no faith.
- All adults working in the school are passionate about providing an excellent foundation for pupils from which they can develop in the world. The headteacher leads the educational aspects of the school with great integrity and skill.

The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. The details are listed in the full report.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the premises so that all aspects conform to the independent schools standards.
- Ensure that all policies and risk assessments required to keep children safe are up to date and effective. Complete all procedures and actions described in these documents in a timely manner.
- Work more closely with a wider range of agencies to ensure that all staff are well informed about current educational and safeguarding practice.
- Improve the support and challenge school trustees offer the headteacher in order to ensure that the premises meet standards and all aspects of safeguarding are secure.

### The school must meet the following independent school standards

- Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils
  - 6 The standards about the welfare, health and safety of pupils at the school are those contained in this Part.
  - 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
    - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
    - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
  - 11 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy.
  - 15 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that an admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.
  - 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
    - 16(a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
    - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.
- Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools
  - 22 The standards about the premises of and accommodation at the school are those contained in this Part.
  - 23(1) Subject to sub-paragraph (2), the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
    - 23(1)(c) 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.
  - 24(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that suitable accommodation is provided in order to cater for the medical and therapy needs of pupils, including–
    - 24(1)(a) accommodation for the medical examination and treatment of pupils;
    - 24(1)(b) accommodation for the short term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet facility.

- 25 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured.
- 28(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
- 28(1)(b) toilets and urinals have an adequate supply of cold water and washing facilities have an adequate supply of hot and cold water.
- 29(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that suitable outdoor space is provided in order to enable–
- 29(1)(b) pupils to play outside.
- Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled
  - 33 The standard about the manner in which complaints are handled is met if the proprietor ensures that a complaints procedure is drawn up and effectively implemented which deals with the handling of complaints from parents of pupils and which–
  - 33(f) where the parent is not satisfied with the response to the complaint made in accordance with sub-paragraph (e), makes provision for a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the proprietor and consisting of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint.
  - 33(i) provides for the panel to make findings and recommendations and stipulates that a copy of those findings and recommendations is–
  - 33(i)(i) provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about.
- Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools
  - 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school–
  - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their roles so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
  - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
  - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Inadequate**

- Leaders and managers of the school have not taken effective action to ensure that standards are met with regard to the quality and safety of the premises and with regard to policies and procedures to ensure that safeguarding is effective.
- The school has failed to meet many standards because some aspects of the building are in a poor state; some required facilities are non-existent; some required documentation is out of date and ineffective. However, the documents that have been recently updated demonstrate the headteacher's considerable capacity to produce work of quality. Classrooms are bright, safe and reasonably well resourced.
- The headteacher has ensured that pupils learn well, make good progress, have very strong personal development and go on to aspirational future careers, training or education. This school provides a very good spiritual and academic start in life.
- Parents send their children to this school because they believe in its ethos and the qualities pupils develop. Parents want their children to follow a Bible-based curriculum. The headteacher is instrumental in setting the culture of the school through her strong belief, hard work and dedication to the pupils.
- The core of the curriculum covers mathematics, English, social studies, science, word building and literature. These elements are usually studied in the morning sessions. Throughout the afternoon pupils study other subjects including drama, French, citizenship, practical science, design and technology and physical education, including sport. Pupils learn to use computers. During core sessions, pupils work systematically through a series of workbooks. Pupils work on their own at their own desk. They learn for themselves. They assess their own work. Only if they cannot understand the content after trying hard to, or they get things wrong, will they ask for help. Pupils are discouraged from talking to each other so all can concentrate fully on their work. The style of the afternoon sessions is a contrast. Pupils work collaboratively and discuss their ideas freely.
- There is a considerable emphasis on knowledge throughout the core curriculum. Afternoon sessions give pupils good opportunities to develop their creative and social skills and broaden their cultural understanding. Although pupils' social and cultural development are good, they are not as strong as their spiritual and moral development.
- The headteacher has developed a very good system that rigorously tracks pupils' progress across their subjects. This helps the headteacher adjust how much time pupils allocate to different subjects, helping them to catch up and ensuring that they cover the full breadth of the curriculum. The headteacher compares pupils' development with nationally recognised cognitive tests. This is one of the methods she uses to ensure that pupils in this school are making good progress and reaching similar standards to other pupils following curricula in mainstream schools. Academic pupil targets are set early during pupils' time at the school. Expectations are high, including for the most able pupils.

### Governance

- The board of trustees do not give sufficiently effective support or challenge to the headteacher and do not demonstrate the capacity to do so. They ensure that the school finances are managed prudently. As with the headteacher, trustees are ambitious to

ensure that all aspects of their school are of high quality. However, because there are only three trustees, their efforts are limited by time and resources.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- The school's current safeguarding policy is published on the school website but it is out of date. It does not make reference to current documentation issued by the Department for Education. As a consequence, some actions described in the school's policy in response to concerns about children do not meet requirements.
- The relationship the school has with the local authority is not good enough, so accessing guidance and information from them about safeguarding is limited. There are emerging signs that this situation is improving.
- The school has not informed the local authority when pupils are removed from the school roll to be educated at home. The school is now aware of the requirement to do this.
- The headteacher is aware of the need to inform other agencies if there is a concern about a pupil or adults showing signs of extremist behaviour. However, school staff have not received training on this and so are not aware of the signs to look for or how to respond if they have a concern.
- Other aspects of safeguarding and child protection are strong, including rigorous procedures to recruit suitable staff.
- There is considerable trust between pupils and the adults within the school who look after them. Pupils seek guidance from adults, and adults give good advice.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Adults in charge of the two classes are referred to as 'supervisors'. Their role is to support pupils as they systematically work through their morning units of work. The supervisor will only give guidance once the pupil has spent time trying but genuinely struggles to understand a point. The supervisors prepare and lead a range of different group activities in which the pupils participate throughout afternoon sessions. Supervisors ensure that there is a good balance of activities for pupils.
- Routines are well established; pupils concentrate well on their work. In the afternoons, pupils work well in groups, support each other and express their ideas.
- In the main, pupils assess their own work. A record is made of end-of-unit tests. This enables the headteacher to review the progress of every pupil and adjust their work programmes to ensure that they do not fall behind and to ensure that their curriculum is balanced.
- Those responsible for supervising pupils' work in classrooms receive regular training provided by the organisation that provides the curriculum and produces pupils' workbooks. Every four years, supervisors meet for a week of training on how to improve their skills and strategies. Supervisors say they also learn a great deal from their annual three-day conference, which also includes a full day of training. However, the school does not make effective use of other schools and agencies closer to home to share practice.

**Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- The quality of the premises is very variable. While classrooms are bright, well organised and safe places, the quality of other rooms is poor. Some required facilities do not exist. There is no running hot water for pupils to use or a suitable space for pupils to go when they need medical attention. Older pupils use the kitchen area for some activities. The general level of housekeeping in this area is poor and so there are many unsafe aspects. Equipment and cleaning products are not suitably or securely stored. At two places in the school, electrical distribution boards and mains feed electrical cables are too easily accessible to children.
- The school's policy document on health and safety is sound. However, too few prescribed actions are followed through. For example, activities that pupils undertake are not properly assessed for risk. Where risk assessments have been completed, many actions to improve safety have not been completed in a timely manner.
- Parts of the large outdoor play space are unsafe because good-quality, routine maintenance has not been sustained.
- Other aspects of pupil welfare, particularly emotional well-being, are very strong. Adults care deeply about the welfare of all pupils. Relationships are warm. Adults know the personal qualities of individual pupils and so know when and how to give support. Pupils feel very well looked after physically and emotionally.
- Pupils are taught well how to identify potential dangers and how to manage them. For example, they know how to behave safely when using the internet and suitable internet filtering systems are in place. Pupils in the school are free from bullying.
- A large part of the school curriculum requires pupils to set their own daily learning targets, manage and assess their work. They learn quickly how to progress successfully through programmes of work. They are self-reliant and independent learners. Pupils have strong convictions and discuss their views with confidence.
- The school is clear that the qualifications their pupils achieve may or may not be accepted by further and higher educational establishments. Current pupils are not so clear on this. Pupils have left this school to go on to a wide range of different jobs, training and education, including local universities. All pupils are given good advice and encouraged to consider a wide range of aspirational careers.

**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' spiritual and moral development is excellent. All live by a principled ethical code. They confidently know what they believe in and this includes a belief that God gave people 'free will'. Pupils show considerable respect for people who have a different faith or no faith, saying people have the right to choose. Pupils have high expectations for their own futures as adults, irrespective of gender. They have an age-appropriate understanding of sexual orientation. They show understanding of and respect for all groups covered by the protected characteristics.
- All pupils play together. Older children will make up games where all can join in, even the youngest. If one pupil were to show anything but care and love for another, a different

pupil would find a way of addressing this with sensitivity. These incidences are, however, very rare.

- Pupils' attendance is excellent and almost all are punctual. Pupils quickly develop very good independent routines and demonstrate highly positive attitudes to their learning. They are confident in school and with their work. Classroom culture is one of industrious endeavour.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

### **Good**

- No matter what age pupils join the school, they start with a set of diagnostic assessments. These establish the standards pupils are at across a number of subjects. The assessments also identify any specific weaknesses the pupils have in their understanding. Pupils then begin their programmes of learning at a range of starting points which match their levels of understanding. Over time, pupils make good progress.
- Pupils' skills in reading independently are an important requirement for them to progress in all elements of the core curriculum. Pupils learn to read well. They are slower to develop the writing skills that enable them to write creatively and at length. This is because most of their workbooks require single-word answers. However, the activities pupils do in addition to their core curriculum help them to develop these skills and older pupils make more rapid improvement in writing creatively and at length.
- Pupils' knowledge of number bonds and mathematical tables is strong. This gives them a good foundation from which they can learn more complex aspects of mathematics. Pupils start to learn mathematics with many practical activities. Older pupils are required to solve problems using mathematics. However, these are often theoretical and expressed as simple questions in their workbook. Older pupils have few opportunities solve real-life, practical problems with mathematics. Overall, standards in mathematics are similar to age-related expectations across the country.
- Pupils' context for all of their learning is the teachings of the Bible. So, in social studies for example, pupils will consider how people behave and this will be linked to key learning from the Bible. Consistent with this, creation is taught, but within the context of their belief. Pupils fully understand about the theory of evolution and accept that, for others, this belief is commonly held.

## School details

Unique reference number	131791
DfE registration number	896/6027
Inspection number	10020947

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	5
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Trustees of Greater Grace School of Christian Education
Chair	Shirley Titlow
Headteacher	Anne Mulligan
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,688
Telephone number	01244 851797
Website	<a href="http://www.wix.com/greatergraceschool/ggs">www.wix.com/greatergraceschool/ggs</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:greatergraces@gmail.com">greatergraces@gmail.com</a>
Date of previous inspection	20 November 2007

## Information about this school

- Greater Grace School of Christian Education is situated in a small village near Chester.
- The school is registered to admit 14 pupils aged from five to 18 years. There are currently five pupils on roll, aged between five and 15 years.
- There are no pupils identified as having a special educational need and/or disabilities.
- As a condition of pupil admission, at least one parent must be a 'born-again' Christian and attend their church frequently.
- The school follows the Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) individualised Bible-based



curriculum.

- Each morning, pupils work at their own pace and level in six core subjects. In the afternoon, pupils are taught other subjects.
- The school's mission is 'by the grace of God, to glorify Him by preparing pupils for time and eternity through providing a Bible-based education with staff who are committed Christians in full agreement with the school's vision'.
- Since the previous full inspection on 20 November of 2007, the school was subject to a 'light touch' inspection on 9 December 2010, where it was judged as providing a good quality of education.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector gathered a wide range of evidence during the inspection, including through observations of pupils working in classrooms, and looked at resources, including library books and pupils' workbooks.
- Meetings were held with school staff, including the headteacher and the chair of the board of trustees. Account was taken of two responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.
- The inspector spoke with pupils in formal interviews and during lessons.
- Inspectors considered a large variety of documentation related to the school's work, including the school's view of its performance and information concerning pupils' attainment, progress and attendance.
- Inspectors scrutinised documents and records concerning safeguarding, health and safety and pupils' behaviour.
- There were too few responses on Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, to analyse. The inspector spoke to parents from all the families who send their children to this school. The inspector also joined staff, parents and other visitors at the start of their Harvest Festival.
- The inspector conducted a tour of the premises with the headteacher.

## Inspection team

Neil Mackenzie, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

### Parent View

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted).

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2016