

Bradford Christian School

Livingstone Road, Bolton Woods, Bradford BD2 1BT

Inspection dates

13–15 November 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher, along with effective senior leaders, provides calm and considered leadership, and strong capacity for further school improvement. Collectively, they have ensured that the areas for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection have been addressed.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use it effectively to engage and enthuse pupils in their learning. However, not all teachers insist upon high standards of written English, particularly as pupils move from the primary into the middle school setting.
- The curriculum is compliant with the independent school standards. However, there needs to be greater cohesion between the primary and middle school phase.
- The schemes of work, which identify the progression of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding to be taught, vary in quality, particularly for careers guidance.
- Pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress from their varying starting points. However, occasionally the most able pupils are not challenged sufficiently.
- The strong Christian ethos and a carefully mapped out personal and social curriculum ensures that this is a truly inclusive school. Pupils are valued for who they are, and the contributions they make. As a result, pupils flourish, behave well and share positive attitudes to their learning in this happy school.
- Occasionally, pupils struggle to explain their answers. This is because their reasoning and problem-solving skills are not developed sufficiently, particularly in mathematics.
- The specialist unit for autism spectrum disorder is well led. It provides extremely effective support for pupils with complex needs. As a result, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) thrive.
- Teaching and leadership of the early years are good. Children achieve a good level of development. However, leaders acknowledge that they need to enable those children who can to exceed this, particularly the most able.
- Governors are dedicated to the school. They give generously of their time and fulfil their statutory responsibilities with due diligence. However, governors acknowledge that their strategic role needs to be more focused.

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?

- Improve leadership and management further, by:
 - developing governors' roles in evaluating the work of the school
 - ensuring that the school curriculum has greater cohesion, particularly as pupils transfer from the primary school to the middle school
 - ensuring that all schemes of work, particularly for careers advice and guidance, identify precisely the desired progression of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Improve the quality and effectiveness of teaching further by ensuring that:
 - all teachers insist upon high standards of written work, particularly as pupils transfer from primary into middle school
 - pupils receive increasing opportunities to develop their reasoning, investigation and problem-solving skills, particularly in mathematics
 - more pupils reach the higher standards that they are capable of, particularly the most able pupils, and including children in the early years.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has been unremitting in his resolve to turn around the fortunes of the school. He has addressed assiduously the areas for improvement identified at the last full inspection, with high levels of professionalism and sensitivity. It is testimony to his leadership that despite the school's previous inadequate judgement, the loyalty of staff and parents and carers was retained. He has ensured that the school is compliant with the independent school standards.
- The expansion of the senior leadership team has increased the school's capacity to continue to lead improvement. Careful appointments have brought new energy and enthusiasm to senior leadership posts. Senior leaders now have additional time to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is checked systematically and to provide support for staff to improve any weaknesses identified. As a result, the proportion of good teaching across the school has improved and the quality is securely good.
- The leader of the specialist unit for autism spectrum disorder is extremely skilled and knowledgeable. She has ensured that the pupils in the unit receive expert support, care and guidance. Such is the regard with which the specialist unit is held, that places are in high demand and the unit is currently full.
- The special educational needs coordinator has improved procedures for the identification of pupils' needs and ensures that all pupils receive appropriate support. Pupils' 'passports' are useful documents that identify the support needs and the individual targets set for pupils' academic and personal success. These act as a useful guide: staff appreciate and use them to plan learning effectively.
- The school curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the requirements of the independent school standards. Leaders have ensured that there is a comprehensive curriculum policy in place, which reflects their vision for education through discipleship. They ensure that pupils continue to experience a broad range of enrichment activities to supplement and enhance their learning. However, leaders acknowledge that their curriculum needs greater cohesion, to ensure a smooth transfer of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding as they transfer from the primary to the middle school setting.
- Schemes of work reflect the English national curriculum expectations, but they vary in quality. The personal and social scheme of work is especially strong, where Christian perspectives are mapped out carefully and systematically. Likewise, schemes of work for English and history take account of pupils of differing abilities. However, in some subjects schemes are not as precise in identifying the knowledge, skills and understanding that pupils will build sequentially. This is particularly so for careers advice and guidance.
- Parents are wholly supportive of the school. They welcome the support that they receive and feel valued and listened to. Almost all parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, would recommend the school to others. Parents were keen to talk to inspectors about their confidence in the school staff. One parent explained how 'loved and nurtured' her child was. While others talked about how teachers go 'above and beyond expectations' to ensure their children 'feel safe, important and loved'.
- The school actively promotes British values by instilling in pupils strong Christian values.

Pupils are encouraged to be responsible and reflective and to show respect for others of different beliefs and of none. As a result, pupils are respectful and supportive of one another. This leads to a harmonious school.

- Leaders have created a truly inclusive school. Leaders foster equality of opportunity exceptionally well, and nurture positive attitudes in pupils towards people who have protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. Although the school is Christian in its ethos and values, pupils from a range of faiths and cultures are welcomed with open arms.

Governance

- Governors are highly skilled and committed to the school. Since the last full inspection, the governing body has increased in size, with new governors appointed for their skills.
- Governors undertake their duties with due diligence and have reviewed their work and structure. They use their wide-ranging skills to question school leaders and to look for ways to improve the school further.
- Governors have maintained a strong focus on the school's journey of improvement and ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures are fit for purpose.
- Likewise, they ask pertinent questions about pupils' outcomes, but recognise that in the past they have focused too heavily on Year 11 achievement at the expense of the achievement of pupil groups and that in other phases. Recently appointed governors from the field of education have been recruited to develop other governors' knowledge and skills in this role.
- Governors have areas of specialist responsibility. They visit the school on a regular basis and report their findings to the wider governing body. This is most noticeable in the work of the safeguarding governor, who meets regularly with the designated safeguarding lead for the school to ensure the utmost vigilance is sustained. While other governors make regular visits, they acknowledge that they need to be more focused in evaluating the work of the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have worked hard since the last full inspection to address the weaknesses in their safeguarding practice. They have done so with gusto. The designated safeguarding officer has rewritten the school's safeguarding policy, so it is in line with government requirements, and has ensured it is freely available to parents via the school's website. She is supported in her work by a dedicated safeguarding governor, who visits the school regularly to ensure that the school systems are effective, and procedures are keeping pupils safe.
- All appropriate checks are completed on those staff working at the school, to ensure that they are fit to do so. Staff receive regular training and updates, to make sure that they are familiar with the government's most recent safeguarding legislation. Those staff spoken with were able to explain the role that they play in keeping children safe and the processes that they must follow to report any concerns.
- Record-keeping is detailed, and the actions taken by staff are timely and proportionate. A

review of the school's referrals to external safeguarding agencies highlighted the level of vigilance now given to any cause for concern.

- Parents who made their views known, say that their children are safe in school. Leaders ensure that all appropriate health and safety checks are maintained and that risk assessments to ensure that the school site is secure, and for any school activities, are complete.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- At times, teaching within the school is quite simply inspirational. Teachers' deep knowledge and passion for their subject ignites pupils' thirst for knowledge, which is a delight to observe. This underpins pupils' good attitudes to learning.
- Teaching in the designated specialist unit for autism spectrum disorder is exceptional. Staff in the unit have a detailed understanding of pupils' complex needs and use it effectively to support pupils in their academic, personal and social achievements.
- The school's assessment system is secure and effective. Leaders ensure that they complete formal assessments of pupils' learning regularly, and they use this information well, to set targets for pupils' future success. While teachers regularly adjust their teaching to support pupils who have fallen behind in their learning, occasionally they do not adjust their teaching to ensure that the most able pupils receive work that is challenging enough.
- The teaching of reading is effective in instilling in pupils a love of reading. Pupils immerse themselves in literature and stories and younger children benefit from having older pupils as reading buddies. Teachers encourage pupils to try new authors and new genres to develop preference and their wider reading skills. As a result, by the time pupils leave the primary setting, most are fluent readers, with a good grasp of language comprehension techniques and an increasing subject-specific vocabulary.
- The teaching of phonics is effective in developing pupils' knowledge of the sounds letters make. However, leaders recognise that over time, teachers have developed their own approaches, which has led to some inconsistencies in the delivery of the phonics programme. Leaders have already organised training and invested in resources to remedy this.
- Pupils are taught to write in a range of different styles. Teachers use a range of stimuli to engage and enthuse pupils. For example, pupils in Year 8 became immersed in a mediaeval battle re-enactment, learning all about specific historical vocabulary. Likewise, pupils in Years 5 and 6 were enthused by a theatre company workshop on 'Romeo and Juliet'. Such stimuli provide pupils with a reason to write. However, occasionally teachers in subjects other than English, pay insufficient attention to consolidating pupils' technical skills of English grammar, spelling and punctuation. This is particularly the case when pupils transfer from the primary phase into the middle school.
- Teachers ensure that pupils' early mathematical skills are developed effectively, which gives pupils a strong arithmetic foundation for future learning. However, pupils receive limited opportunities to deepen their understanding of mathematical reasoning and problem-solving. As a result, pupils often lack confidence in explaining their answers fully and in grappling with complex problems.

- Teachers in the secondary phase plan lessons that enable pupils to make good progress from their starting points, while also being mindful of the demands of the examination syllabus. The school's own assessment information indicates that individual pupils are building their knowledge and skills in a range of subjects progressively. While this is pleasing, occasionally teachers do not always make it clear to pupils how they can improve to reach the higher grades. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils, who have the capability of doing so.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school is a happy school. Pupils who talked to inspectors said that they feel safe in school and that there were no unsafe places. Even some of the youngest pupils could talk confidently about how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. Older pupils were knowledgeable about the dangers of grooming, scamming and radicalisation when using social media and gaming.
- The school forums enable older pupils to lead discussion groups with younger pupils. Discussions are measured and sensible and cover a range of themes. During the inspection the focus was anti-bullying. Pupils were open and confident to share their experiences. Older pupils demonstrated great confidence in explaining strategies for dealing with internet bullying.
- A thoughtful programme of assemblies, combined with a strong personal and social curriculum and religious education scheme of work, is supporting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well.
- Although the school's formal career advice meets the independent school standards, the majority of careers education takes place in Year 11. Leaders accept that their offer for careers advice and guidance needs to be mapped out more carefully and sequentially for pupils across the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. High expectations are set by all staff and pupils respond appropriately. Exclusions of pupils from the school are rare, and when they are used they are proportionate.
- The pupils love learning, and they demonstrate highly positive attitudes in lessons. Pupils across the school are proud of their achievements and generally take care when presenting their work. Occasionally, there is slippage in the standard of pupils' written work in subjects other than English.
- The pupils' movement around the school is orderly and smooth. Older pupils are good role models for younger pupils. Even the very youngest pupils take pride in holding doors open for each other and are quick to say please and thank you.
- Leaders' actions are improving pupils' attendance and punctuality effectively. Although there are marked improvements to individual pupils' rates of absence, there is more to do

to reach leaders' exacting standards.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Overall, pupils' outcomes can vary depending upon the context of each year group. Small numbers and increasing proportions of pupils who speak English as an additional language, and have complex and varying needs and abilities, make any comparisons with national data difficult. However, when reviewing individual pupils' progress from their starting points, progress is good overall.
- Teachers know their pupils exceptionally well and the school's new approach to assessment means that all pupils have their achievements carefully monitored. Teachers address any dips in performance quickly. All pupils receive a target for their end of year success, based upon their starting point and making good progress. Leaders involve parents in this process, so that they can support their children at home. This brings about improvements in pupils' progress across the curriculum.
- A review of pupils' achievements across the school shows a dip in outcomes, particularly in English and mathematics in Year 5. This is the year when pupils move from the primary to the middle school phase. Leaders acknowledge that there needs to be greater cohesion between the primary and middle school curriculum to mitigate against any dips in pupils' performance.
- Pupils' outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check are not reported, and vary year on year, depending upon the complexities of each small cohort. However, by the time pupils leave Year 2 most have reached the required standard and have positive attitudes to reading.
- Pupils attending the school's specialist provision for autism spectrum disorder make excellent progress from their starting points, personally and socially and often academically. Teachers are skilled in preparing pupils for integration into mainstream classrooms, so that they can access appropriate and relevant qualifications as appropriate for their aspirations and abilities.
- Pupils within the rest of the school with SEND make good progress. Teachers quickly identify their needs, and an appropriate range of support and advice is put in place to ensure that they make progress.
- Increasing proportions of Year 11 pupils gain a good suite of GCSE qualifications that reflect the broad and balanced curriculum offer from the school, alongside pupils' needs, interests and abilities.
- All pupils who leave the school go onto further education or apprenticeships successfully.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders have ensured that the school has met the independent school standards in relation to the early years provision effectively.
- Teachers in the early years have a good understanding of young children's needs. Relationships are caring and warm, which means that even the most reticent children are calmly and lovingly eased into school.

- Teachers plan activities carefully and provide purposeful learning opportunities that motivate children and sustain their interests. Skilful adults support children well and develop children's early vocabulary effectively.
- High expectations for children to share and take turns and to support each other in their achievements are clear. As a result, children behave well, settle well and are confident in their classes.
- Children enter school with varying needs and pre-school experiences. By the time children leave Reception class, they make good progress, and the majority of children achieve a good level of development.
- Indoor learning activities are well considered and reflect all areas of learning. Resources are highly appropriate for young children and for the activity. Adult-led activities are targeted specifically to meet children's needs and abilities, particularly when children's learning falters. However, those activities that are freely accessible to children in both Nursery and Reception are not always challenging enough. As a result, historically, no children have exceeded a good level of development by the time they leave the Reception class.
- Although pupils are keen to access learning outdoors, learning there is occasionally less effective than that seen indoors. This is often because children do not receive the same level of adult direction to enable them to sustain their interests and extend their learning. Leaders are already considering the organisation of activities to enable more effective adult support in the outdoors.
- Leaders ensure that children's learning journals provide an accurate record of their achievements from Nursery to Reception. However, the commentary within them is descriptive rather than evaluative. Leaders are already taking measures to improve this.

School details

Unique reference number	107461
DfE registration number	380/6110
Inspection number	10053826

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	3 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	126
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Mr Matthew Walker
Chair	Mr Andrew Taylor
Headteacher	Mr Phil Moon
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,460–£4,440
Telephone number	01274 532649
Website	http://bradfordchristianschool.com
Email address	office@bxs.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	22–24 November 2016

Information about this school

- Bradford Christian School was opened in 1993. The current school building has been in use since 2002. The early years provision was opened in 2009.
- The number of senior leadership roles in the school has increased from three to six, following the previous inspection in November 2016.
- Most pupils are from homes of parents of the Christian faith, attending approximately 20 different churches. About 30% of pupils are from homes of faiths other than Christianity or are from homes of no faith.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is broadly in line with the national average. The

school operates a specialist provision for pupils who have an autistic spectrum diagnosis. The local authority has selected the school as the named setting for several pupils with education, health and care plans.

- The school receives no additional funding from the government for the pupil premium, Year 7 catch-up or physical education and sport funding.
- The school is divided into three phases: primary, including the early years, middle and upper school.
- The school does not make use of any alternative education provision.
- The school received its last full standard inspection in November 2016. It received a further additional inspection in November 2017, where it was deemed to have met all of the independent school standards.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons in all year groups of the school and most subject departments. Most visits were undertaken alongside members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors met with several pupils, spoke with many more during lessons, and heard a group of pupils read. Meetings were also held with the proprietor; headteacher; governors of the school, including the chair of the governing body; senior leaders; the school's business manager; special educational needs coordinator and heads of department.
- A range of school documents was examined, as part of checking on their compliance with the independent school standards. These documents included pupils' assessment information, schemes of work, policies, safeguarding information, records and the school's website.
- Inspectors talked to staff and took account of the 56 responses to Ofsted's parental questionnaire, Parent View, and talked to parents at the end of the school day.

Inspection team

Diane Buckle, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Joan Hewitt

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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