

The Lambs Christian School

113 Soho Hill, Hockley, Birmingham, West Midlands B19 1AY

Inspection dates

15–17 January 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The strong leadership of this school has continued to ensure that all the independent school standards are met. The headteacher has inspired everyone to strive for continuous improvement.
- The headteacher has established a culture of respect and tolerance. All members of the school community share the values of the school.
- Leaders regularly evaluate the curriculum. Consequently, pupils participate well in a range of enriching, engaging academic and creative experiences.
- Teaching and assessment are outstanding. Teachers are aspirational for all pupils. Pupils thrive through personalised learning programmes. All pupils make significant progress from their individual starting points in mathematics and English.
- Behaviour is exemplary because of staff's high expectations and highly positive relationships.
- The provision for children in the early years is outstanding. The environment is stimulating, and pupils' vocabulary and grammar are developed well. As a result, children flourish and are well prepared for entering key stage 1.
- British values are at the heart of the school. The school provides rich and meaningful opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally.
- Safeguarding is effective. Staff are highly vigilant and appropriately trained. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and say they feel safe at school.
- The arrangements for governance have strengthened since the last inspection. Some aspects are particularly strong; however, oversight of teaching and learning is a relatively weaker aspect of governance.

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?

- Strengthen the trustees' understanding of the quality of teaching and learning in order to challenge leaders to improve provision further.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher, who is also the proprietor, has ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.
- The headteacher leads with passion and determination. The headteacher shares her clear vision with all staff, parents and pupils. As a result, the whole school community is aspirational. Pupils are inspired to be 'the best that they can be'. There is a well-established culture based on strong values. This results in pupils' impeccable behaviour, attitudes and respect for all.
- Parents hold school leaders in high regard. They say the school fosters understanding, growth and challenge and is preparing 'little gems' for the future. The vast majority of parents say they would recommend the school to others.
- Leaders have carefully considered the curriculum. All subjects of the national curriculum are taught through the Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) programme. This knowledge-based curriculum is combined with sessions taught in small groups so that pupils learn to apply their knowledge and skills. Leaders regularly review the curriculum and its impact. Pupils engage fully in well-planned lessons matched to their aptitudes.
- The headteacher has an accurate view of the strengths of teaching and areas for improvement. She provides support and challenge for teachers and is not afraid to tackle underperformance. Staff are clear about the school's expectations and their roles and responsibilities because of thorough and effective tailored performance management.
- Christian values underpin all aspects of school life. The school has embraced British values and established a kind and caring culture where all are valued. Pupils told the inspector that it was, 'Okay to be friends with everyone', regardless of whether they were different.
- Leaders provide pupils with abundant opportunities to grow spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. Daily devotion time allows pupils to learn about friendship, kindness and relationships. Pupils enjoy a variety of school trips including visits to science museums and London. Pupils learned about democracy and decision-making through participation in parliament week. As a result, pupils are well prepared for growing up and flourishing in modern Britain.
- Since the last inspection, the school has recruited an additional teacher. This has reduced the teaching commitment of the headteacher. The headteacher is supported by a business manager with operational oversight. As a result, the headteacher's capacity to lead strategically has significantly increased. This has resulted in improvements to teaching and learning and positive outcomes for pupils.
- The school provides comprehensive reports for parents on a half-termly basis. Parents told the inspector they were pleased with how well the school communicates with them. Parents have a clear and accurate understanding of how well their children are doing.

Governance

- The board of trustees provides good oversight of the school. Since the last inspection, the trustees have started to hold the school to account more effectively. The headteacher provides frequent comprehensive reports on all aspects of the school.
- Some aspects of governance are strong. The trustees have a secure oversight of safeguarding and routinely check on the reporting of concerns. The governance of safeguarding is effective.
- Trustees have an accurate understanding of the school's current strengths and areas for improvement. However, their scrutiny of teaching and learning is not as strong. Governors are aware of this and made it a priority for further action in the school's development plan.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and there is a strong culture of safeguarding within the school. Nothing is left to chance when it comes to the safety of children.
- The safeguarding policy reflects current legislation and guidance. It makes clear what to do if there are concerns about a child.
- The school's website is currently under review. However, electronic and hard copies of the safeguarding policy are available on request.
- There are two designated safeguarding leads who are trained appropriately. They are aware of their roles and responsibilities in keeping children safe. Staff have completed training in how to recognise abuse and neglect, are aware of their roles and responsibilities and are highly vigilant. For example, they know about the risks of child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation.
- Leaders are aware of risks within the local community. They engage well with external agencies, including the police. Teachers make sure the curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to learn how to keep themselves safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers are unwaveringly aspirational for all of their pupils. There is a well-established culture of high expectations. Pupils settle quickly to learning, remain on task and try hard. They take ownership of their own learning through the ACE curriculum and set their own challenging targets. Teachers review pupils' targets to make sure they are appropriate and stretching. Pupils told the inspector that they enjoy this way of learning. As a result, they immerse themselves in learning and make strong progress.
- Pupils access a wide, knowledge-based curriculum. Alongside the ACE programme, pupils are taught in small classes. Teachers make good use of the available information about pupils' knowledge, understanding and progress when planning their activities. Teachers know their pupils exceptionally well and match work to pupils' needs and aptitudes. As a result, pupils engage well in carefully planned activities. The most able pupils engage in tasks that stretch and challenge their thinking. They learn to apply their knowledge in

practical situations.

- The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is effective. Teachers quickly identify pupils who are at risk of falling behind. They reshape tasks and provide appropriate additional support. As a result, pupils with SEND or who have not done well quickly catch up and make good progress.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are positive and underpin pupils' experiences. Relationships among pupils are positive. There is a strong emphasis on being kind and friendly. Pupils help and support one another. As a result, pupils work well together, and group activities are highly productive.
- Teachers use skilful questioning. They probe effectively to deepen pupils' understanding. Teachers systematically check pupils' responses and provide developmental feedback to help pupils learn from mistakes. In mathematics, pupils can confidently explain how to solve complex problems. In English, pupils are encouraged to use higher-level vocabulary and grammar to craft extended sentences. They master basic skills that they can apply throughout the curriculum.
- Pupils' literacy skills are well developed. They write fluently on a range of engaging topics, such as heroes and villains. The thematic curriculum is well linked to their interests. Pupils have written fictional stories about superheroes and a newspaper crime reports based on 'Bonnie and Clyde', as well as diary entries based on their own experiences. They develop writing skills for a range of purposes and audiences.
- Teachers promote a love of reading. They make sure pupils have regular opportunities to read aloud, which they do with confidence and intonation. Pupils read widely and often, across a range of genres. Reading journals are detailed and form the basis of a strong partnership between home and school. Pupils told the inspector they enjoyed reading to teachers and parents. As a result, the vast majority of pupils are functioning at a reading age beyond their chronological age.
- Pupils are proud of their work and keen to talk about their achievements. They engage well in creative subjects. They access a wide range of enriching learning experiences that underpin their personal development. For instance, pupils have created art pieces including African landscapes and countryside scenes. All pupils learn how to play a musical instrument and they engage fully in singing and poetry.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- There is a positive culture and the school is a happy place in which to learn and thrive. Pupils are self-assured, confident and responsible. Strong learning experiences underpin their positive attitudes.
- Pupils learn about charity work and are thoughtful of those less fortunate. They extend this to their environment. For example, they are actively focusing on recycling and single-use plastic. As a result, they know about sustainability and how they can impact on their own surroundings. They care about their school building and local community.
- The school's personal, social, health and economic curriculum is extensive and enriching.

Leaders make sure that academic experiences are enhanced with opportunities to develop social and emotional skills. Pupils learn how to look after themselves, lead healthy lifestyles and form positive relationships. Pupils say they feel safe and that school teaches them how to keep safe. They know about stranger danger and how to stay safe online. Parents told the inspector that they have no concerns about their children's safety.

- The school is a place where all are valued. All staff genuinely care about pupils' well-being. The start of the day is warm and welcoming. For example, in assembly, pupils are reflective and think positively about their day ahead. As a result, they are emotionally secure and show resilience in all aspects of school life.
- Pupils thrive on additional responsibilities and take them seriously. Pupils on the school council say the school has listened to their suggestions because the views of children are valued and acted upon. Year 6 pupils oversee the small library. Older children elected as 'hazard busters' enjoy their role in checking the safety of the playground. Pupils are learning how to be responsible and considerate of the welfare of others.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have focused tenaciously and systematically on improving pupils' attendance and punctuality. For example, the school has successfully engaged with families to help improve pupils' attendance. As a result, punctuality has significantly improved, and attendance remains a strength of the school. Many pupils have a sustained 100% attendance. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school.
- There are consistently high expectations around behaviour. Pupils know what is expected of them. Staff take any reports of bullying extremely seriously. Records are detailed and followed up regularly. Teachers work with pupils to help them to resolve any disagreements with their peers. Pupils say that teachers sort problems out quickly. Bullying incidents are rare.
- Routines are well established and underpinned by high expectations. Pupils arrive at school in the correct uniform and with the correct equipment. They settle quickly to learning.
- Pupils' behaviour within lessons and during unstructured times is highly positive. They value their relationships with one another and their teachers. Pupils say that when they 'fall out' teachers help them to put things right. Consequently, pupils learn valuable skills about tolerance and harmony that they can apply effectively.
- All staff apply the school's behaviour policy consistently. Pupils understand the policy and respond well to the rewards system.
- Parents who met with the inspector, as well as those who completed the survey, said that behaviour is positive. In some cases, parents said the school had supported their children in improving their behaviour. Parents say behaviour is a key strength of the school.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils get off to a flying start in the early years and nursery. By the time they arrive in key stage 1, most pupils are functioning at a much higher reading age than their chronological age. Pupils read widely and often. The school has a small library and has created a love of reading. Pupils are well prepared for their next stages and able to access the full curriculum. The high focus on reading continues throughout key stage 2.
- Pupils in all age groups are making good or better progress across all subjects. Pupils are well prepared for their next stages of learning. As a result of outstanding outcomes, a high proportion of pupils who left in the last academic year transitioned successfully into local grammar schools.
- The work in pupils' books shows that they write with flair and confidence. They use a range of grammatical features to make their writing more interesting and sophisticated. Pupils are confident and expressive writers.
- In English, pupils thrive in a language-rich environment. In group work, where they communicate appropriately with peers, pupils develop appropriate speaking and listening skills. They debate with politeness and respect for the views of others; they are articulate and eloquent speakers.
- In mathematics, pupils apply their skills effectively and have regular opportunities to practise challenging and complex operations. They try hard and are resilient. Over time pupils develop strong reasoning and problem-solving skills.
- Parents are pleased with how well their children achieve. They receive detailed half-termly reports outlining the progress their children have made. Parents say children who could not speak when they started school have progressed significantly.
- Pupils' social and emotional development is outstanding. They demonstrate determination and positive behaviour. As a result, they achieve well across all areas of the curriculum.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Children arrive in the early years with skills and abilities that are typical for their age. On rare occasions, some children arrive with lower than age-related skills. Through skilful and individualised teaching, these children quickly make outstanding progress in all areas of learning. The vast majority of children are exceeding their goals and planned targets.
- The early years provision is led and managed well. Safeguarding is effective. Staff are appropriately trained and records of medication, accidents and first aid are well maintained. Leaders have ensured that all applicable independent school standards and statutory requirements are met. Therefore, children excel in a safe and nurturing environment.
- Teachers' planning for learning is a key strength in early years and underpins the progress children make. Leaders consider what children can do and create exciting learning opportunities to stretch and develop children further. The environment is well resourced and highly stimulating. Teaching promotes curiosity through creative indoor and outdoor activities. Children thrive in a highly stimulating learning environment.

- The teaching of phonics is highly effective. Through personalised direct teaching, children quickly learn letter sounds and start to form words. As a result, the teaching of reading is a particular strength. The majority of children read challenging texts that are beyond that expected for their age. They read accurately, fluently and with expression. They read confidently and use phonetic recall to sound out tricky words. They have developed a love of reading and enjoy reading independently. Children are well prepared for their next phase of learning.
- From an early age, children are taught how to make friends. When things go wrong children know to say sorry. As a result, relationships thrive through nurture and support.
- Relationships are highly positive. Staff engage well with children and know their individual needs. They know their children well. This is reflected in high-quality learning journals that outline the next steps in children's learning very clearly.

School details

Unique reference number	134091
DfE registration number	330/6105
Inspection number	10056216

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 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	39
Number of part-time pupils	7
Proprietor	Patricia Ekhuemelo
Chair	Lucy Akerele
Headteacher	Patricia Ekhuemelo
Annual fees (day pupils)	£5,282.76
Telephone number	0121 554 3790
Website	www.lambschristianschool.co.uk
Email address	lambschristianschool@yahoo.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–21 January 2016

Information about this school

- The Lambs Christian School is an independent day school for boys and girls aged three to 11. There are currently 13 children in the early years foundation stage. Currently, there are no pupils on roll with an education, health and care plan.
- The school was last inspected in January 2016, when it was judged good with outstanding early years provision and personal development, behaviour and welfare.
- The school is led and managed by the headteacher who is also the proprietor and a senior trustee.
- The school is housed in a former factory building in Birmingham. Pupils attend the school

from a variety of local areas. The majority are of Black African, Black Caribbean or mixed heritage. Pupils attend from the local and surrounding areas.

- Pupils are taught in three classes, early years and nursery and key stages 1 (Years 1 to 2) and 2 (Years 3 to 6). Pupils also access lessons within a learning centre with individual booths. The school has recently developed a small library.
- Pupils take part in physical education at a nearby leisure centre.
- The school has a distinctive Christian ethos, although pupils from other faiths are welcomed. The school uses the Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) programme combined with classroom-taught sessions.
- The school's 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 toured the premises accompanied by the headteacher.
- Key policies were reviewed including admissions, behaviour, curriculum and safeguarding.
- The inspector held meetings with staff including the headteacher and those responsible for safeguarding and the early years foundation stage. The inspector also spoke with the trustee responsible for safeguarding and examined minutes from trustee meetings.
- The inspector reviewed work in pupils' books in all subjects across all year groups.
- Meetings were held with parents and the inspector also spoke with pupils. Five responses to Parent View were considered.
- The inspector observed lessons in English, mathematics, art and music. The inspector also observed practice in the early years foundation stage. Lessons in the learning centre were also observed. The inspector observed pupils during unstructured times of the school day.
- The inspector listened to pupils read.

Inspection team

Melanie Callaghan-Lewis, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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