

Paragon Christian Academy

233-241 Glyn Road, Hackney, London E5 0JP

Inspection dates

15 to 20 May 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders and trustees have not made sufficient improvements to the standard of education since the previous inspection.
- Leaders and trustees have not ensured that information accessible to pupils is appropriate. The inspector found materials in the school's library that present a restrictive or negative view of people with specific protected characteristics.
- Leaders were not able to demonstrate how they promote mutual respect and tolerance towards everyone, irrespective of their sexual orientation. This does not prepare pupils adequately for life in modern Britain.
- The curriculum and some teachers' limited subject expertise restrict pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils are not routinely challenged to think about complex concepts and ideas.
- Children and pupils, particularly the most able, do not make sufficient progress. Consequently, pupils' outcomes require improvement.
- The early years provision requires improvement. Children are not confident early readers and writers. The outdoor area has not improved since the last inspection.
- Leaders have not ensured that all the independent school standards are met.

The school has the following strengths

- Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are effective.
- Pupils' behaviour is good.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and do so regularly. They enjoy learning and work hard. Pupils are articulate, confident and polite.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school does not meet 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 of the school by:
 - ensuring that all information available to pupils is appropriate, is not one-sided, and does not promote partisan views
 - ensuring that pupils are taught specifically to respect the rights of people of different beliefs or sexualities, and to understand that these rights are protected in law
 - reviewing the curriculum to ensure that it is sufficiently challenging to bring about pupils' good progress
 - enabling staff to gain relevant subject expertise to extend and deepen pupils' learning
 - ensuring that the teaching of early reading and writing enables children in the early years, and pupils in key stage 1, to read and write with greater fluency
 - improving the outdoor space so that it supports children and pupils' learning and development.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leaders have not addressed the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. A falling roll, financial challenges and staff leaving have had a negative impact on the quality of education leaders are able to provide. Leaders have not ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- Leaders and trustees have not ensured that information accessible to pupils is appropriate. Leaders say that they promote mutual respect and tolerance towards everyone, irrespective of their culture, race, religion, disability or gender. However, they did not provide evidence of how respect is promoted for all the protected characteristics, particularly around sexuality. Pupils are not prepared adequately for life in modern Britain.
- The curriculum and some teachers' limited subject expertise restrict pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils are not routinely challenged to think about complex concepts and ideas. Children and pupils, particularly the most able, do not make good progress. Consequently, pupils' outcomes require improvement.
- Leadership of the early years requires improvement. Children learn the sounds that individual letters make and can read simple words, which they practise routinely. However, children are not supported well enough to become confident early readers and writers of extended texts. Improvements to the outside area have been limited.
- Leaders ensure that pupils learn about other religions, cultures and societies. Pupils go on regular educational trips, and participate in charity activities, such as the 'Samaritan's Purse's Operation Christmas Child Appeal'. They enjoy time in the local park. Pupils are encouraged to participate in regular discussions with the pastor and staff about current affairs and relevant news items. Older pupils are clear about their future aspirations, and staff help them to secure appropriate college placements.
- Parents are very complimentary about the school, the progress their children make, and the care shown by staff members.

Governance

- Trustees have not ensured that information on display in the area shared by the school and the church is appropriate for pupils. They have not protected them from partisan views. While they believe that pupils are taught to 'love and respect' everyone, this demonstrates that they do not promote respect for everyone protected by the Equality Act 2010.
- Trustees know the school, staff and pupils well. They volunteer and accompany pupils on trips and activities.
- After the previous inspection, trustees were aware of the improvements needed. However, they have not addressed these areas for development. Consequently, leaders have not been able to make the necessary improvements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have undertaken relevant checks on the suitability of staff to work at the school. Staff have attended appropriate training and understand their role in keeping pupils safe. There is a clear policy and procedures for reporting any concerns, including making referrals to outside agencies if necessary.
- Leaders have ensured that the building is secure and tidy.
- Appropriate risk assessments are made to ensure that any external visits or trips are supervised effectively.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The core curriculum units, while providing a basic education, give limited scope to extend pupils' deeper knowledge and understanding of complex concepts and ideas. For instance, pupils studying poetry analyse the structure and narrative of the poem. They are not taught how to analyse the imagery, language or poet's intent. Consequently, older and most-able students do not have the necessary skills to construct their own creative pieces, commensurate with other pupils of a similar age and ability.
- Younger pupils practise reading and writing words. While this helps increase their confidence and familiarity with simple words, it does not enable them to write longer, imaginative pieces independently. They do not experience writing for a range of different audiences, or in different genres.
- Teachers check pupils' completion and accuracy of the set core subject tasks. They do not give advice about how the quality of pupils' work might improve. As a result, while pupils enjoy a sense of achievement at completing a unit, their skills and understanding do not progress quickly enough.
- Plans to provide a stimulating extra-curricular programme have been slowed by changes in staffing and resources. Pupils undertake a range of activities, including studying science and history, and they use computers. However, the quality of this work is variable, and depends on the teachers' individual subject expertise.
- Pupils enjoy learning and apply themselves diligently throughout the day. They complete their core curriculum work independently. Pupils said they were proud of their achievements and were keen to show the inspector the number and breadth of units they had covered. The pupils explained how the units aim to integrate Godly character building into learning. Pupils work methodically and sensibly on these bespoke programmes of study.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Leaders have allowed materials to be on display in the school library that present a

restrictive or negative view of people with specific protected characteristics. Pupils are not given opportunities to discuss the validity of the information, present opposing views or understand why it may be misleading.

- Staff and pupils learn, enjoy activities and eat together in a harmonious and calm environment. Pupils described the school as an extended 'family'. Everyone's needs and interests are known well; members of staff offer a bespoke programme of study and support for each child.
- The religious ethos permeates daily school life. Pupils are taught this through the core curriculum and bible studies. They demonstrate these traits through the way they interact with each other, with staff and with visitors.
- Pupils receive appropriate information about how to stay safe on the road, while travelling home from school, and when online. Pupils talked with confidence about how they might protect themselves in a number of dangerous situations, including when being coerced into joining a gang, or being mugged.
- Pupils learn information about different religions, cultures and countries. Pupils said that they are taught to respect people from different faiths and cultures.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils arrive at school on time. They take pride in their appearance, and they are consistently polite. They work very hard and are keen to do well, socially and academically.
- Pupils said that there is no bullying at the school, and that they look after each other well. Many are related and have strong familial ties with each other and with the church.
- Pupils and staff eat together each day, and regularly cook food together. In this way, they learn about healthy eating, financial prudence and environmental conservation.
- The school is a warm and welcoming place. Pupils routinely show respect and tolerance towards each other, staff and visitors. They appear happy and relaxed in their school environment.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' progress is variable. While they complete the units of work, some pupils, particularly the most able, could achieve more if they were routinely challenged and set work that extends their learning. This is true for pupils of all ages.
- Older pupils work hard and independently towards their final general certificate in the core curriculum. This accreditation, which includes the development of English and mathematics skills, enables them to access appropriate courses at local colleges and sixth forms.
- Junior pupils demonstrate a love of learning. They enjoy completing the core units independently, working together in groups and socialising. For instance, during the inspection, they explained clearly how they were making their plastic animal shapes, using raw materials, during a science lesson.

- Pupils are articulate and confident. They were keen to show the inspector their work, and the progress they had made in completing the units.
- Pupils are keen readers. Much of what they read daily is from their unit booklets. However, they also enjoy listening to stories and reading fiction books.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children are taught new letter sounds each week through a structured phonics programme. Children practise writing their letters and their consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words during structured time. They can demonstrate segmenting these sounds and blending them to form words. However, children are less confident in understanding the links between words they can sound out and sight words. Children are not routinely encouraged to practise reading texts that match their phonics understanding so that they are able to gain speed and fluency.
- Children spend significant time copying letters and words to practise their handwriting and fine motor skills development. However, there are far fewer opportunities for them to practise early writing.
- The outdoor area has not improved since the previous inspection and still presents limited opportunities for children to play and learn.
- The small early years provision is a bright and separate area, with appropriate creative, imaginative and learning resources. Activities engage children and provide them with opportunities to practise speaking, listening and interacting with each other.
- Children are assessed on entry, and their progress is monitored closely. They begin the core curriculum units when they are assessed as ready.
- Children enjoy listening to stories and talking about books.

School details

Unique reference number	100301
DfE registration number	204/6389
Inspection number	10092435

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 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	15
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	World Vision for Christ
Chair	Abigail Chambers
Headteacher	Sharon Curry
Annual fees (day pupils)	£3,300 to £3,600
Telephone number	020 8985 1119
Website	http://pca-education.co.uk
Email address	pca@wvfc.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 to 30 November 2017

Information about this school

- Paragon Christian academy is a small, all-through school.
- Currently, there are children and pupils aged between four and 16 years on roll. Many of the pupils are related to the church's pastor or school staff.
- No pupils are placed by the local authority or have an education, health and care plan.
- The school follows Christian Education Europe's programme, known as Accelerated Christian Education (ACE). This is the core of the school's curriculum. It is supplemented by additional lessons in additional science, technology and history.

- In February 2013, the inspection found that the school did not meet one of the independent school standards. This related to the provision of showering and changing facilities for pupils aged 11 or over. The school produced an action plan, which was deemed acceptable in April 2013.
- In November 2017, the school was judged to require improvement. While all the independent standards were met, inspectors highlighted areas for development involving the quality of leadership and the standard of education being provided.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher about the context of the school.
- They undertook a site walk to ascertain the suitability of the premises, and whether safeguarding arrangements are effective.
- The inspector spoke to two parents. The staff and pupils' surveys were not distributed by the headteacher. Therefore, none were completed.
- The inspector scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including curriculum plans, minutes of trustees' meetings, risk assessments and school policies.
- The inspector spoke to staff and pupils. They looked at pupils' work and the progress they had made since starting at the school.
- The inspector spoke to the pastor about the ethos and context of the school.
- The inspector reviewed safeguarding records, policies and procedures, and they checked the school's procedures for ensuring the safe recruitment of staff.

Inspection team

Helen Matthews, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school must meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if–
 - 2(1)(b)(ii) do not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
 - 2(2)(d) personal, social, health and economic education which-
 - 2(2)(d)(ii) encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act[9];
 - 2(2)(i) effective preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school–
 - 3(i) does not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs; and
 - 3(j) does not discriminate against pupils contrary to Part 6 of the 2010 Act[10].

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 5 The standard about the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school is met if the proprietor–
 - 5(a) actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs;
 - 5(b) ensures that principles are actively promoted which-
 - 5(b)(i) enable pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence;
 - 5(b)(vi) encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act; and
 - 5(c) precludes the promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in the school; and
 - 5(d) takes such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that where political issues are brought to the attention of pupils-
 - 5(d)(i) while they are in attendance at the school,
 - 5(d)(ii) while they are taking part in extra-curricular activities which are provided or organised by or on behalf of the school, or
 - 5(d)(iii) in the promotion at the school, including through the distribution of

promotional material, of extra-curricular activities taking place at the school or elsewhere.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 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.

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 role 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.

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Manchester
M1 2WD

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