

Inspection of Covenant Christian School

48 Heaton Moor Road, Heaton Moor, Stockport, Cheshire SK4 4NX

Inspection dates: 10–12 December 2019

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Requires improvement

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

A strong Christian ethos shines through every aspect of this nurturing school. Parents and carers are encouraged to play an active part in their children's education. Parents and staff share leaders' high aspirations for every pupil, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to be the best that they can be.

Pupils behave well. They are polite and courteous. They listen to each other's views and opinions during reflective discussions. Pupils of all ages are comfortable in each other's company. They said that they feel valued and cared for in this small school. Pupils are confident that should bullying occur, it would be dealt with quickly. Pupils who said that they felt bullied in other schools feel safe in this school.

Staff provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils to take part in experiences beyond the classroom. Visits to a mining museum, or an automated distribution centre, enhance the curriculum that teachers provide. Pupils talked enthusiastically about the recent trip to the theatre. Pupils are encouraged to have an active role in the life of the community. They organise fundraising events to support charities at home and abroad.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school's curriculum reflects the Christian principles fostered by staff and parents. The knowledge taught matches the ambition and breadth of the national curriculum. Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are developed across a wide range of subjects. Curriculum plans are detailed. They are set out in a logical, ordered way. Planning helps pupils to build on their prior knowledge and provides a secure starting point for new learning.

Some of the curriculum is taught by parent volunteers. Leaders ensure that these parent volunteers have the reading, writing and mathematical knowledge and skills that they need to deliver the curriculum effectively. Plans are in place to support parent volunteers so that they also have the skills that they need to deliver other subjects equally as well.

Improvements in the way mathematics is taught has had a positive impact on pupils' knowledge and understanding of key mathematical ideas. Assessment information is used well to identify what pupils need to learn next. Staff adapt their planning effectively for pupils with SEND. Pupils take pride in their work and achieve well.

Pupils enjoy listening to stories. Teachers read with expression, bringing the characters to life. Older pupils discuss their favourite authors. They explain how the descriptive vocabulary that authors use helps to create pictures of magical worlds in their minds. Pupils' increasing vocabulary knowledge supports their project work in other subjects. Pupils learn phonics as soon as they start school. They quickly begin to read books that match the sounds they are learning. Pupils who are struggling

with their reading are supported well by knowledgeable staff. They catch up quickly. Pupils, including pupils with SEND, become confident and fluent readers.

Pupils work hard in lessons. There is little disruption to learning because teachers plan interesting projects for pupils to study. Pupils' knowledge and understanding in subjects other than English and mathematics are developed effectively by teachers. Pupils talked confidently about the work of Dr Barnardo to improve the living conditions for children during the reign of Queen Victoria. They reflected on the impact of his work on the lives of children today. Pupils' learning across the curriculum is enhanced through field work in geography, visits to places of local interest, museums and art galleries. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning help them to achieve well.

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils learn about different religions and make mature comparisons to their own Christian faith. They develop a strong moral purpose, showing respect and care for others, and for the world around them. They understand how their actions can impact on the lives of others. They are proud of the contribution that they make to provide fresh water and education for children in other parts of the world.

The governance of the school is led by a management committee. This consists of the proprietor, staff and parents. They are kept well-informed of the day-to-day running of the school through monthly meetings. As a result, they know the school's strengths and weaknesses well. Staff feel very supported, valued and listened to.

The proprietor monitors the school well and keeps a close eye on improvements. As a result, pupils' achievement has improved since the previous inspection. Together with other members of the management committee, he has ensured that the independent school standards are met. For example, the buildings are kept to a good standard; school policies contain relevant guidance; the school's website has all the necessary information for parents; the curriculum complies with the Equality Act 2010; and they have set out a comprehensive accessibility plan.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all checks are carried out to make sure that adults in the school are safe to be with pupils. Training ensures that staff and volunteers understand what to do if they have any safeguarding concerns. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. They understand the importance of using the internet responsibly. Pupils know that they should tell a trusted adult if they have any concerns.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Parent volunteers do not always have sufficient knowledge and understanding in curriculum subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, they are not always as confident when delivering these subjects to pupils. Leaders should build on the training they already provide and support parent volunteers to be able to implement the detailed subject plans to the same standard.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	106158
DfE registration number	356/6021
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	10112061
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	16
Number of part-time pupils	5
Proprietor	Roger Slack
Headteacher	Roger Slack
Annual fees (day pupils)	nil
Telephone number	0161 432 3782
Website	www.covenant-christian-school.co.uk
Email address	info@covenant-christian-school.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–15 March 2018

Information about this school

- The school is a member of the Christian Schools Association.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- During the inspection, we spoke with pupils about their work and school life. We spoke with the headteacher, the senior teacher, the leader for pupils with SEND, members of staff and volunteer parent teachers. We also spoke with a trustee of the school by telephone.
- We considered the nine responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and spoke with six parents during the school day. We considered the two responses from the online survey for staff and the nine responses to the pupils' survey.
- We looked in detail at several subjects. These were reading, mathematics, personal, social, health and economic education and history. We met with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and spoke to pupils about their learning. We also looked at pupils' work and listened to pupils read.
- During the inspection, we reviewed a range of documentation, including curriculum plans, documentation relating to safeguarding and information relating to the independent school standards. We also looked at records of pupils' attendance.

Inspection team

Amanda Stringer, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Tim Vaughan

Her Majesty's Inspector

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