



Carmel Christian School

Independent School

Inspection report

**Better
education
and care**

DfES Registration Number 801/6021
Unique Reference Number 132774
Inspection number 296790
Inspection dates 11–12 January 2007
Reporting inspector Mr Stephen Dennett AI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

Age group 5-17	Published 06 February 2007	Reference no. 296790
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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Carmel School is an independent Christian school run by Carmel Ministries International. It provides full-time education for pupils aged five to eighteen years. The school was established in September 2000 and moved to its present site in Brislington, Bristol in 2003. It occupies part of the Carmel Centre, a multipurpose industrial unit on a suburban industrial estate. The school uses the Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) programme. Pupils spend most mornings working in carrels, called 'offices', using individualised workbooks called 'PACEs' (Packages of Accelerated Christian Education). The ACE programme is an individualised system in which pupils work through PACEs at their own rate. Pupils are divided into mixed-age classes that are called 'learning centres'. On most afternoons, pupils work on other subjects using more conventional learning methods. The school's mission statement says that the school is *'an extension of the Christian home'*. The school aims to *'build positive relationships with parents'*, to *'deliver a balanced Christian curriculum'* and to *'care for each child in a safe, loving environment'*. The school also seeks to promote good standards of behaviour, provide opportunities for pupils to develop their skills, and to foster pupils' intellectual, social, physical, moral, creative and spiritual development.

Evaluation of the school

The school is currently going through a transition, with a recently appointed headteacher, who has already identified several of the issues raised by this report. The quality of education provided is satisfactory overall and the school's implementation of the ACE programme is good. Parents and pupils are overwhelmingly positive about the school, which has a good Christian ethos.

Quality of education

The curriculum is satisfactory. There is a suitable range of activities provided for pupils, although there is inadequate coverage of aspects of practical science and design and technology (DT). Schemes of work for some subjects are inadequate, as they do not indicate how the pupils' learning and skills are to be progressively developed as they move through the school. The ACE programme provides good coverage of basic literacy and numeracy, scientific knowledge, and aspects of history, geography and religious education. Other lessons

provide good coverage of art, music, physical education, swimming, dance and drama. There is also a good range of after-school clubs and church-related activities. Pupils are given the opportunity to receive individual and group instrumental tuition. The curriculum plan also includes provision for the teaching of a modern foreign language. The school actively supports the annual ACE European Student Convention, which provides excellent opportunities for pupils to develop their talents and skills in a range of areas, including art and design, public speaking, drama, music performance and athletics.

Personal, social and health education is rooted in the Christian ethos of the school. The school makes good use of an outside agency to provide older pupils with appropriate careers education. Pupils take part in regular exercise, including weekly visits to a local sports centre and swimming pool. They are taught the importance of healthy eating and lifestyle. Regular visits to sites of historical and cultural interest also enliven the curricular provision. The school make good use of visiting speakers, especially from the Bible School, which is part of Carmel Ministries. The school has good links with the church, parents and the local community. Pupils are encouraged to play a full role in the church and the community.

Teaching is satisfactory overall and good in the senior learning centre. Teachers make good use of the ACE learning centre procedures to ensure that pupils are set a level of work where they can learn according to their ability and prior attainment. The ACE programme has good systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress and teachers use these systems well to ensure that pupils achieve appropriately. The school has identified a few pupils with additional learning needs and these have individual learning plans with clear targets for improvement. The ACE programme encourages pupils to take the responsibility for their own learning. As a consequence, pupils are well motivated to become good independent learners. Teachers give good individual support to pupils and offer clear explanations when needed. Good use is made of questioning to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of the material being studied.

Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, routines are less well established and some learning time is lost. Assessment systems in non-ACE subjects are being developed appropriately. At present they mainly consist of end of unit test and informal teacher assessments. Apart from the ACE programme, the range and quality of resources is unsatisfactory. Books for reading are old and some are in a poor condition. Resources for independent research are limited and again largely out of date. There are very few resources for practical science and design and technology. Pupils in the youngest (ABCs) learning centre do not have sufficient or appropriate resources for their needs. However, staff do make good use of the limited resources at their disposal.

Pupils make satisfactory progress in most subjects. They complete sufficient PACEs in the academic year in accordance with ACE recommendations. They

are also making satisfactory progress in their acquisition of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Some pupils are achieving good standards in their PACE work, as indicated by the number of times they achieve 100% in their PACE tests. Standards in non-ACE subjects are more variable, and pupils are making insufficient progress in their acquisition of investigative skills in science and design skills in DT. Pupils with additional learning needs make similar progress to their peers.

Older pupils are enrolled in the International Certificate of Christian Education (ICCE) programme, which requires the same level of work expected for General Certificate of Secondary Education and Advanced Levels. No pupils have yet graduated from the school on the ICCE programme.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and pupils emphatically report there is no bullying in the school. This is backed up by parents' comments to the same effect. Pupils are enthusiastic about their school and all say they really enjoy being there. The daily act of worship and weekly assembly reinforces the Christian ethos of the school. Opportunities are taken to celebrate pupils' individual efforts by the handing out of 'Congratulations Slips' and other awards. Pupils are willing to pray, read the Bible and make spiritual comments about passages they are studying. Pupils are consistently encouraged to take responsibility for their own work, and there are incentive schemes such as 'Honour Roll' and 'Privileges' to support this. Pupils also have a range of jobs around the school, which encourages their sense of responsibility.

The ACE programme does not provide pupils with the opportunity to learn about English public institutions and services and the school has not sought to compensate for this omission. This is a weakness. However, the school does make good use of the multicultural nature of the school and church community to develop pupils' appreciation of their own and other cultures.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school makes good provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety. Staff show a strong and genuine commitment to pupils' welfare. The policy for managing behaviour is based on the ACE Procedures Manual and is rooted in the principle that the individual is responsible for his or her actions. Pupils are very positive about the rewards for good behaviour as well as being well aware of the sanctions for unacceptable behaviour. Pupils say they feel very safe in the school and they all know who they can turn to if they have a problem. Relationships between pupils and staff are very good and are marked by a

caring concern. Each learning centre has a supervisor (teacher) who is responsible for pupils' pastoral care as well as their academic progress.

Pupils are encouraged to follow a healthy lifestyle and there are regular opportunities for vigorous physical exercise. Pupils are only permitted fruit and vegetables as snacks at break-times. There is an appropriate health and safety policy, which ensures that regular safety checks of the building are carried out. Appropriate risk assessments are carried out in relation to school visits and other activities. Procedures for the administration of First Aid are rigorous and the policy offers comprehensive guidance to staff. The child protection policy is up to date and takes account of the latest guidance. The nominated member of staff for child protection has received recent training.

The school does not meet requirements for the Disability Discrimination Act as it does not have a current three-year action plan to increase disabled access to the school and the curriculum.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school has carried out all the necessary Criminal Records Bureau checks for all staff and adults in contact with pupils. This includes foreign nationals working in the school. The school has a good staff appointment system which ensures that all appropriate checks are undertaken before staff are appointed.

School's premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation have a number of important shortcomings. Provision for the younger pupils is unsatisfactory. This learning centre is too small and lacks adequate lighting. There is insufficient space for child-directed and role-play activities and the lighting strip over one bank of offices does not work. There is no natural lighting in the room. There are no specialist areas or rooms for practical science or design and technology, which significantly impedes the teaching of these aspects of the curriculum. The outdoor hard play area is too small for the number of pupils in the school and there is no grassed area for sports.

The school does not meet the regulations for sufficient toilets and washrooms, as the existing facilities are used by both adults and children. In addition, the urinals in the male toilets are too high for young boys and the provided 'step-ups' are unsafe. The school also lacks facilities for pupils who are ill.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The quality of information provided for parents and prospective parents is good. There is a very well designed prospectus, which includes all statutory information. Parents appreciate the termly reports provided by the school, but

these lack information about their children's progress in non-ACE subjects. Parents say they are kept well informed about the school's activities.

Procedures for handling complaints

Parents feel very comfortable about approaching the school with problems and all those interviewed were aware of the school's complaints procedure.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the curriculum (standard 1) and must:

- provide detailed schemes of work and plans for all subjects taught in the school (paragraph 1(2))
- ensure there is sufficient coverage of practical science and design and technology in the school's curriculum plan (paragraph 1(2)(a)(ii))
- improve resources in those areas identified in this report (paragraph 1(3)(f)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (standard 2) and must:

- provide pupils with a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in England (paragraph 2(d)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- improve the accommodation in those areas indicated in this report (paragraph 5(j), 5(t))
- provide separate toilets for adults and ensure that facilities in the pupils' toilets are suitable to their needs (paragraph 5(k))
- provide suitable facilities for pupils who are ill (paragraph 5(l))
- ensure the lighting in the ABCs' learning centre is improved (paragraph 5(p)).

In order to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002 the school should devise a three-year accessibility plan.

School details

Name of school	Carmel Christian School		
DfES number	801/6021		
Unique reference number	132774		
Type of school	Christian school		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	September 2000		
Age range of pupils	5-17		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 18	Girls: 21	Total: 39
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,620		
Address of school	Carmel Christian School 817a Bath Road Brislington Bristol BS4 5NL		
Telephone number	0117977 5533		
Fax number	0117977 5678		
Email address	daveo@carmel-uk.org; ccs@carmel-uk.org		
Headteacher	Mr David Owens		
Proprietor	Carmel Ministries International (Charity)		
Reporting inspector	Mr Stephen Dennett AI		
Dates of inspection	11 January 2007 - 12 January 2007		