

Tabernacle School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	207/6396
Unique Reference Number	131778
Inspection number	316959
Inspection dates	25-26 September 2007
Reporting inspector	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).

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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE
T 08456 404040

www.ofsted.gov.uk



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 Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Tabernacle School is an independent Christian school for pupils between the ages of three to 16. There are 42 pupils on roll, taught in five classes by five full-time and seven part-time staff. The majority of pupils come from African, African-Caribbean and White British backgrounds. The Trustees of Tabernacle Christian Centre Trust manage the school. The accommodation, which is a converted four-storey town house, is located in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. The current principal has been in post since the school opened in September 1998. Until July 2007, the school used the Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) programme, but has now adopted the Christian Schools' Trust (CST) curriculum for the primary department and is adapting the National Curriculum and GCSE syllabi for its secondary department. The school opened in September 1998.

The school's main educational objectives are *'to implement a curriculum that meets the child's specific needs and learning capabilities'* and *'to introduce and reinforce traditional values that will increase personal responsibility, character development and wisdom principles'*.

Evaluation of the school

The quality of education provided at Tabernacle School is satisfactory. There has been a major change in the curriculum and the school is still adjusting to the implications of the change. The curriculum for the younger pupils is good, but there are weaknesses in the curriculum for secondary age pupils. Teaching and assessment are satisfactory overall, although again, there are weaknesses in both at secondary level. Pupils make satisfactory progress in most subjects and the youngest learners make good progress. Pupils' personal development is good. Their behaviour is good throughout the school. Parents and pupils are positive about the school, which has a clear Christian ethos and provides a good quality of care. The school meets all of the regulations with the exception of aspects of the curriculum and teaching.

Quality of education

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. There is a suitable written curriculum policy, which outlines the Christian principles on which the curriculum is based. Pupils

appreciate the Christian nature of the curriculum. A girl in Year 6 said, *"I really think that I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength. This is a very encouraging school."* Although the curriculum provided for the Foundation Stage and primary pupils is good, the curriculum for secondary pupils is not sufficiently well developed to ensure continuity and progression. It does not sufficiently build on what pupils have learned in the past and lacks clear objectives. Planning is in an early stage of development and several schemes are incomplete. As it stands, the secondary curriculum is not being implemented effectively, as planning does not provide teachers with sufficient guidance. Although the subject matter in the Foundation Stage and primary department is well matched to learners' needs, the subject matter in the secondary part of the school is not yet well adapted to the age and aptitude of pupils. Work for pupils with learning disabilities and difficulties is not always appropriate to their needs or linked sufficiently to the targets set in their individual education plans. Careers guidance is at an early stage of development and pupils have had only one lesson so far. Pupils themselves feel that they have not been given sufficient information to enable them to make informed choices for the future. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is satisfactory and is rooted in the Christian ethos of the school.

Teaching and assessment are satisfactory overall. Relationships between staff and pupils and between the pupils themselves are good. Pupils are confident when speaking to staff and will share their problems and ask for help with their work, assured that they will have a positive response. In the main, teachers have appropriate expectations and challenge pupils to work to their full capacity, although this is not always the case towards the upper end of the school. Planning for lessons is variable, but generally satisfactory. The best planning clearly identifies what pupils are to learn and how pupils' achievement is to be assessed. Although the tasks given to pupils lower down the school are generally well matched to their needs, further up the school there is little evidence that teachers have a good understanding of pupils' prior attainment in the subjects they are teaching and the activities are not well matched to pupils' individual needs. Teachers are appropriately qualified and have good subject knowledge. A good feature of teaching is the effective use of questioning to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of the subject being taught. Resources are good for the younger pupils, but inadequate for pupils of secondary age. There are insufficient science resources and some books for geography are out-of-date.

The changes to the curriculum have meant the school has had to change its assessment system. Planning for assessment is satisfactory and systems for assessing pupils' progress on a regular basis against National Curriculum attainment targets have been put in place. The ACE assessment systems used up until the end of last term were comprehensive and detailed. However, assessment is not being used effectively at secondary level, as work is not well matched to the needs of pupils and assessment information is not being used to adjust teachers' planning so that tasks are well matched to pupils' prior attainment.

Pupils make satisfactory progress overall. In the Foundation Stage and the lower primary class, progress is good because of good provision and teaching. Evidence from last year, when pupils were still on the ACE programme indicates that progress in the rest of the school was satisfactory overall. Present progress in lessons is variable, but is better at the lower end of the school. Progress in writing is unsatisfactory in the older classes. All pupils make good progress with speaking and listening and reading. Progress in numeracy and information and communication technology is satisfactory. Outstanding teaching in art enables pupils to make very good progress and they find the subject very enjoyable.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are enthusiastic about their school and all say they enjoy being there. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory and they are generally punctual. However, the level of unauthorised absence is well above average. The daily acts of collective worship reinforce the Christian ethos of the school. Religious education has a strong Christian element and focuses on spiritual qualities, such as kindness and self-control. Pupils have regular opportunities to pray and express their views on spiritual matters. As a result, their spiritual development is good. Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong and their moral development is good. Their study of the Ten Commandments has given them a good understanding of the law. Pupils' social development is good. They interact well with each other and with staff. They have a number of responsibilities around the school, but feel that they do not have enough opportunities to contribute to the decision making process.

Behaviour in and around the school is good and pupils are consistently polite. Pupils report that there is some occasional rough behaviour, but it is dealt with effectively by staff. They are adamant that there is no bullying or racism. Pupils say that they feel safe and enjoy working in a happy and friendly Christian environment. *"The school is a big happy family,"* said one pupil in Year 7. The school's PSHE programme gives pupils a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in England. Pupils have visited the Houses of Parliament at the invitation of a local politician. As a result of studies in a number of subjects, pupils are developing an appropriate appreciation of their own and other cultures; for example, they took part in a Nigerian Day and dressed up in national costume. The multicultural nature of the school is celebrated appropriately and pupils say that there is a good level of racial harmony. Older pupils think that they are adequately prepared for the next phase of their education although they agree they need to further develop their writing skills. Some also commented that they would like more regular access to computers for research purposes.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety are good. This is because the school's managers place such a high level of importance on this area. Procedures

for fire safety are very good. Pupils' personal needs and welfare are supported well by all staff. Teachers are readily available to discuss pupils' concerns. The school encourages pupils to eat healthily by teaching them about a balanced diet in domestic science lessons. Pupils also have regular swimming and physical education sessions. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe effectively in and out of school. Attendance and admissions registers are kept in accordance with the regulations. The school fulfils all its obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school has good procedures for ensuring the suitability of staff. Careful checks are made to verify potential employee's identity, medical fitness and qualifications. Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks are made on every person coming into contact with pupils, including trustees. The school has an appropriate single record indicating that all checks have been carried out.

School's premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation are satisfactory. The building is safe and in good order. Classrooms are of a satisfactory size and quality. Pupils make good use of the computer suite. A separate building is used effectively for art, drama and as a lunchtime eating area. A playground, which has a soft play surface, is securely fenced and an appropriate range of equipment is available for physical education. A nearby park is also available to pupils for sporting activities. The school lacks appropriate facilities for science, although there are plans to use the laboratories at a large higher education establishment later this term.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school has good communication procedures, with regular reports being sent to all parents to keep them informed of their children's achievements. Regular parents' evenings are also good opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress with teachers. Parents are alerted quickly if the school has any concerns and they are welcomed into school to meet with staff whenever the need arises. Close links with home and local churches to support pupils in their learning and development is a strong feature of the school. The school has a brief and colourful prospectus and a more detailed parents' handbook that contains a wealth of useful information.

Procedures for handling complaints

There are suitable procedures for receiving and handling complaints.

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:

- complete schemes of work and curriculum planning for all subjects taught to secondary pupils (paragraph 1(2))
- ensure that the subject matter taught to secondary pupils is appropriate to their aptitude and needs (paragraph 1(2)(b))
- complete the programme of study for careers guidance (paragraph 1(2)(g))
- improve teachers' planning at secondary level to ensure that teaching builds progressively on pupils' prior attainment, and that it is suited to their aptitude and learning needs (paragraph 1(3)(d))
- improve resources for learning in the secondary department (paragraph 1(3)(f))
- make better use of assessment information at secondary level to ensure that planning is adjusted effectively to match pupils' prior attainment (paragraph 1(3)(g)).

School details

Name of school	Tabernacle School		
DCSF number	207/6396		
Unique reference number	131778		
Type of school	Primary and Secondary		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	08/09/1998		
Age range of pupils	3-16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 17	Girls: 25	Total: 42
Annual fees	£4,500		
Address of school	32 St Anne's Villas Holland Park London W11 4RS		
Telephone number	0207 602 6232		
Fax number	0207 602 6232		
Email address	tabernacleschool@hotmail.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs P A Wilson		
Proprietor	Tabernacle Christian Centre Trust		
Reporting inspector	Stephen Dennett AI		
Dates of inspection	25-26 September 2007		