

Phoenix Academy

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	308/6068
Unique Reference Number	134580
Inspection number	320375
Inspection dates	18 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Patricia Cox

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

The school occupies an end of terrace house in Edmonton. It follows the Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) curriculum provided by Christian Education Europe. The curriculum is based on individual learning and has a Christian ethos which runs through the life of the school. The students work towards the International Certificate of Christian Education (ICCE). The main aim of the academy is to provide good quality, Christian education. There are currently 17 students on roll, aged 11 to 19, with more boys than girls. However, the school is only registered for students up to the age of 16. No student has been identified as having learning difficulties. A few students are of White British heritage and most come from a range of other ethnic backgrounds.

Evaluation of the school

Phoenix Academy is a satisfactory school where teaching and assessment, the curriculum and students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory. The students' behaviour is sound. The academy's provision for their health and welfare is satisfactory, as is the information provided for parents. The academy meets all but one of the regulations.

Quality of education

The curriculum is satisfactory. There are appropriate plans and schemes of work in place for the sound range of subjects available. It includes five core subjects of English, mathematics, science, social studies (including history and geography) and word building. Students progress through learning activities at their own pace, moving logically through the scheme of work for each particular subject. The core subjects are supplemented with sports, art, creative/extended writing, French and citizenship. The school has also recently introduced the computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) course. Students study art and music and go to the local leisure centre to participate in swimming and sports. However, there are limited opportunities to promote creativity, such as design and technology, and physical development in the curriculum. Nevertheless, the school plans to introduce dance and drama.

There is a satisfactory range of accredited courses available to students consisting of the National Christian Schools Certificate (NCSC) and the ICCE. The course materials themselves are mainly suitable but because they are American there is the potential

for some confusion, particularly with coinage, measurement of distance and spelling. The curriculum, which is based on Christian principles, is relevant to students' needs. It provides five levels of certification, the foundation level for students at an early stage of learning up to an honours certificate for the more able students, especially those considering entry to the medical or other professions. Older students said they would prefer to specialise in a particular subject rather than continue to learn a wide range of subjects at post 16. The religious strand is a strength of the curriculum and promotes spirituality effectively through daily prayer and references to scripture within each unit of work.

The curriculum makes a satisfactory contribution to preparing students for the next stage of education and their future lives. Overall, the pupils make satisfactory progress. The individual learning approach enables older students to develop good independent learning skills and make good progress in examination courses so they can enter further or higher education. At the end of their studies, students receive a certificate showing the level they have reached and a record of achievement which contains a description of the work they have done, as well as all certificates gained.

Opportunities for enriching learning through links with other schools or colleges are limited. There is satisfactory provision for careers education and work experience. A unit of work is provided to enable pupils to learn how to prepare a curriculum vitae (CV) and for job interviews. The school also works closely with parents and students in providing work experience on an individual basis. For example, one student carried out work experience in a local hospital and another in a solicitor's office. However, there are no formal careers guidance lessons and no formal links with outside agencies to promote work experience.

Teaching is satisfactory. The organisation of the curriculum means that most lessons are not taught in the usual way. In many subjects, students follow the courses individually and check that their answers are correct at the end of a block of work. The course books contain the necessary information for students to understand what they are to learn and do. Therefore the staff act as supervisors rather than teaching whole class lessons, or summarising them at the end and checking the accuracy of work. Staff are available to support those students who need extra help when they have made errors or fail to understand the instructions. Learning periods generally take place in an atmosphere of calm, although the school's records show, and students themselves report, that there is some disruption to learning through inappropriate behaviour. Many of the students make good progress in some of their courses because they are highly motivated and work hard to complete the units of work. However, while they are encouraged, and given many opportunities, to apply intellectual effort, there are fewer opportunities to apply physical and creative effort and develop these skills.

Staff provide sound individual guidance when necessary and spend considerable time with those who have difficulties. However, there are occasions when staff do not have sufficient subject knowledge to provide guidance, especially in mathematics

and geography. There are suitable and stringent assessment systems, based on the courses the students follow and which involve them in taking some responsibility for measuring their own progress. The students are assessed on entry and begin on the level appropriate to their needs. Assessments are used soundly to provide students with the next course, or to repeat part of one if they have not completed it adequately. These fit well with the academy's own aims.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. The strong religious ethos and the religious curriculum, which is based on Christian principles, promote spiritual development effectively. The daily assembly provides opportunities for reflection. Good provision for spiritual development enables pupils to grow in self esteem and confidence. Students' behaviour and moral development are satisfactory. Although they are taught right from wrong, particularly through the Christian teachings, they do not always behave appropriately. Many behave well in lessons and around the school but there are some times when inappropriate behaviour occurs, which distracts students from learning. Social development is satisfactory but there are too few opportunities to promote collaborative learning or to contribute to the wider community beyond the ACE schools. Pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of public institutions through the satisfactory personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship programmes.

Attendance is satisfactory and reflects students' satisfactory enjoyment of learning. Younger students said they wished the school could be bigger so they would have more friends. Older students said that they enjoy learning independently and acknowledge the good opportunities for them to take responsibility for their own learning in lessons. Students develop satisfactory awareness of other cultures and good awareness of their own through the rich diversity of cultures represented in the school community. Students say that they have learned about Buddhism in PSHE and they have visited other Christian schools in Kenya and Sri Lanka. However, opportunities for promoting awareness and appreciation of the richness and diversity of other cultures are limited.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school takes good care of the students' physical and emotional needs and they are supervised well while in the school building. Almost all of the regulations are met. However, while the admission register is satisfactory, the attendance register is not completed properly. There are gaps, and in most cases the reason for students' absences are not recorded. The attendances are not totalled for each session and therefore it is difficult to calculate attendance statistics. Requirements for child protection and first aid policies are all in place and staff have suitable up-to-date training. The behaviour code is sound and sets out clearly the rewards and sanctions that will be incurred. There are copious, appropriate records of incidents and accidents and the records show the outcomes and action taken as a result. The

accident record book is mostly filled in correctly, although the most recent occurrences do not show the date of the accident and the pages are not numbered. The racist incident log has not had the information about these incidents transferred to it from other files.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

All requirements are met. The school carries out all the detailed checks required on staff and governors and has a central register showing the necessary information.

School's premises and accommodation

The accommodation meets all of the regulations. The building is well maintained and has appropriate security systems. There are sufficient and separate washrooms for staff and students and suitable facilities for any who are ill. Classrooms are of adequate size and are kept reasonably tidy. The furniture and fittings are satisfactory for the age of the students. The outside area, however, while meeting the requirements, is of very limited size for the students to take any exercise and they say there is little for them to do outside during breaktimes. Therefore, when it is cold, they tend to stay indoors rather than having any fresh air. They say that when the weather is warm they go outside but stand around chatting.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides all the necessary information for parents and all the regulations are met. However, there are spelling mistakes in the termly reports for students' parents.

Procedures for handling complaints

All requirements are met. The procedure is concise, to the point and is very clear about how complaints will be dealt with. There have been no complaints in the past year.

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 provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- Maintain the attendance register in accordance with Education (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2006. (paragraph 3(9)).

The school must also, as a matter of urgency, ensure that it is registered for the whole age range it is teaching at present.

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- Extend the student's opportunities to study creative and physical subjects, and to follow formal careers guidance lessons, with appropriate work experience links with agencies.
- Ensure that teachers improve their subject knowledge in mathematics and geography.
- Provide further opportunities for students to develop awareness and appreciation of the richness and diversity of other cultures.
- Provide more opportunities for students to have fresh air and exercise each day.
- Ensure that all records of accidents and racist incidents are completed accurately.

School details

Name of school	Phoenix Academy
DCSF number	308/6068
Unique reference number	134580
Type of school	Secondary
Status	Independent
Date school opened	September 2004
Age range of pupils	11-19 (registered for 11 – 16)
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 10 Girls: 7 Total: 17
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,400
Address of school	85 Bounces Road Edmonton London N9 8LD
Telephone number	020 88876888
Fax number	020 88855007
Email address	adrianhawkes@phoenixcommunity.co.uk
Headteacher	Mr A Hawkes
Proprietor	NLM Trust
Reporting inspector	Patricia Cox
Dates of inspection	18 March 2008