

Carmel Christian School

Independent school inspection report

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A¹ of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005², the purpose of which is 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

Carmel School is an independent Christian school run by Carmel Ministries International. It provides full time education for 70 pupils aged two to sixteen years, including 11 children in the pre-school who receive nursery funding. 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, an industrial unit on a suburban industrial estate. The school uses the Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) programme. There is also a separately registered pre-school, 'Little Eagles', which is managed by Carmel Ministries. It was inspected at the same time as the school as part of this inspection. The school was last inspected in January 2007.

Evaluation of the school

Carmel Christian School provides an inadequate quality of education. There were several regulations not met at the time of the last inspection, and overall the school provided a satisfactory education. There are now a significant number of regulations not met. The school's safeguarding arrangements do not meet all the regulations and are not secure. The promotion of pupils' welfare, health and safety is inadequate and many of the regulations are not met because of the wide range of hazardous areas in and around the building. The curriculum is inadequate, as is the Early Years Foundation Stage provision. There are some satisfactory aspects, for example, pupils make satisfactory progress because of the satisfactory teaching. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall, with good spiritual and moral elements. The pupils' behaviour is good; they are polite and courteous and have good attitudes to their school life.

Quality of education

The quality of education overall is inadequate. The inadequate curriculum contributes to this. The school follows the Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) programme, which ensures that pupils are able to follow individualised materials as part of the Packages of Accelerated Christian Education (PACES). These materials provide a satisfactory platform on which individual pupils can learn to make progress at their

¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162

² www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8

own speed. However, the curriculum is very narrow, and although pupils do have opportunities to experience different subjects and activities, these are not well planned over time. As a result, pupils' access to activities such as science and design and technology is limited and insufficiently practical to help fully develop their understanding and knowledge or develop their skills. The inadequate Early Years Foundation Stage has a lack of rigour in the planning of the progression of learning from the very young children. This continues through to the provision for the older pupils and, although there are schemes of work that follow national guidelines, these are not consistently followed across the whole school. The school has insufficient information regarding how the school implements pupils' statements of special educational needs. The scheme of work to ensure pupils receive appropriate personal, social and health education (PSHE) is inadequate. Although some older pupils are given some limited experiences of the world of work, there is too little opportunity for careers advice or work experience.

Teaching and assessment are satisfactory. Teachers supervise the PACE and provide adequate feedback and information to pupils, enabling them to complete their programmes successfully. They maintain a sound overview of pupils' work and encourage them to self-mark their work using the materials provided. Pupils are suitably encouraged to work independently and they behave well during lessons. Some pupils have to work through a PACE book twice because they have fewer than 80% of the answers correct. They have to complete the whole book, including the work they correctly completed the first time. This re-working of the material slows down their progress. There are good elements in some lessons, where older pupils particularly have opportunities to present their research findings to the rest of their classmates. This is usually done in a confident manner and other pupils listen well and ask questions. The school is developing an 'enrichment' curriculum which provides pupils with experiences and activities based on national programmes of study. For example, some older boys were seen baking scones, discussing the recipes and comparing and contrasting different types of scone. Pupils use computers confidently and these resources are adequate for their needs. The use of the PACE materials ensures that assessment is satisfactory. Pupils receive adequate feedback on their progress from both their own regular self-marking and the teachers' monitoring of work on PACE materials across the different subjects. As a result of this process, pupils' progress is satisfactory overall. From the Foundation Stage through to the secondary aged pupils, the PACE materials provide an adequate framework to ensure there are adequate processes supporting satisfactory progress of most pupils.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The spiritual and moral development of pupils is good. The Christian ethos of the school underpins all the work and the discussions of the pupils and staff. Pupils are generally happy and attendance is good. Pupils' behaviour is good. They are polite, courteous and friendly. There are virtually no cases of bullying and there are no exclusions. One of the pupils said about bullying, 'That just doesn't happen here.'

Pupils' social and cultural development is satisfactory because there are limited opportunities in school time where pupils are encouraged to develop roles of responsibility. There are a few prefects who work with younger pupils and carry out some activities to help staff. The opportunities for pupils to contribute to the local community mainly come from participation in the Heartsong Children's Choir, which recruits mostly from the school. These pupils perform for the local elderly and in shopping centres. Apart from a few visits by the police and a Key Stage 2 visit to the fire service, there are too few opportunities for pupils to learn about public institutions and services in England. This was the same at the time of the last inspection. Pupils are able to learn about other faiths, beliefs and cultures informally because of the mixture of backgrounds of their schoolmates. There is a general atmosphere of tolerance and harmony in the school and some opportunities to celebrate other cultures' festivals and assemblies, which raise multicultural awareness. This approach is insufficiently formally planned to ensure that pupils have a wide enough range of experiences and activities over their time in the school.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school's provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is inadequate. Safeguarding procedures are not secure and the policies are out-of-date. Training for staff is overdue. The central register is not fully in place. The school's behaviour and anti-bullying policies and procedures are out-of-date. Most areas of the fire safety procedures are adequate but there are some important aspects not in place such as a fire risk assessment policy and staff training. The school has no admission registers and although daily attendance registers are called, they are not all fully completed. Recent registers have not been kept as required. The recently appointed facilities manager has begun to draw up appropriate procedures for general health and safety requirements but these are not always specific to the needs of the school which is within the ministry's premises. A general health and safety policy is in place and there are suitable first aid procedures and policies. The disability and discrimination plan does not meet the needs of all the pupils; this was a requirement not met at the time of the last inspection. The school has insufficient wheelchair access.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school's systems for making appropriate checks on all staff to ensure they are suitable to work with children are not good enough. There are significant aspects which do not meet many of the regulations, including an incomplete single register of staff who have enhanced criminal record checks.

The school's premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation for the school have a range of hazardous and inappropriate facilities which place all pupils at risk. The school is situated in the Carmel Ministries building within offices and within premises for the Ministry's various business activities. There are bible classes for adults which take place adjacent to

pupils' lessons and there are no adequate methods to stop unauthorised adults having access to the school. There are no suitable resources or areas for the older pupils to experience practical design technology and science. The outdoor facilities are inappropriate for the children because of the close vicinity of the playground to the car park. The toilet facilities for the under-fives are unsuitable, including the toilets and washbasins not being the appropriate size for young children. The facilities for pupils who are ill are inadequate, with no reasonable access to washbasins or toilets. This was the same at the time of the last inspection. There are an insufficient number of washbasins in the downstairs boys' toilets.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school makes most of the required information available to parents and prospective parents on request. However, the prospectus on the website is out-of-date and there are a number of aspects missing, including the name of the principal, and information regarding a number of school policies and procedures. The availability of the complaints procedure is not made clear.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a complaints procedure, but there are some required aspects missing.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is inadequate. Children do not learn in a safe and secure environment. Staff and officers from the local authority have raised concerns about a number of risks to children's health and safety. These include unsecured toilets, storage arrangements for equipment and the unsafe outdoor learning environment. Inspectors share these concerns. They have not been addressed sufficiently by senior leaders. Current arrangements do not allow the children to use the toilet facilities independently. The outdoor learning environment is dangerous. Pre-school and Reception children have to share this outdoor area with the rest of the school. Consequently, there is insufficient space to ensure that children have access to an exciting, inviting outdoor area which might promote their learning and development across all the necessary areas. Outdoor resources are old and unattractive and some are broken and unsafe and are not fit for purpose.

Children in the 'Little Eagles' pre-school room enjoy a lively indoor curriculum which is taught in interesting ways by keen and enthusiastic adults. They enjoy numerous practical activities and their learning is enhanced by smiling adults who are good play partners. Children's language development is successfully promoted as adults seize every opportunity to discuss and extend their learning. Children make at least satisfactory progress in all the areas of learning. They enjoy learning while having lots of fun. Adults know each individual child and their families well, which eases

their transition into the pre-school. They use regular and ongoing assessments to plan the next steps in children's learning and are, at present, developing these systems even further by refining documentation.

In sharp contrast, the provision in the Reception class is inadequate. There is very little planning for purposeful, active play and exploration. The curriculum is very formal and children are expected to sit still for long periods. This is inappropriate and restricts their personal, social and emotional development, and their enjoyment of learning. Resources are inadequate and many are old and unappealing. There are few records of pupils' attainment and achievement apart from the evidence of their progress through the PACES workbooks. It is evident that the Reception children develop a satisfactory understanding of phonics to aid their reading and writing skills. However, it is currently impossible to assess their progress in other areas of learning and to determine children's attainment at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage because of a lack of ongoing assessment records.

The Early Years Foundation Stage leader evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of the pre-school setting well and has actively sought advice and support from the local authority. This has led to some important changes in planning and record keeping for the youngest children. However, leadership and management are inadequate overall because the leader has no opportunities to observe and monitor the provision for children in the Reception class and the teacher in this class does not yet hold suitable qualifications, although training is reported to be underway. The outdoor learning environment, inadequate toilets and out-of-date safeguarding policies mean that children's welfare needs are not met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

- implement schemes of work consistently across the school (paragraph 1(2))
- provide opportunities for pupils to experience practical sessions in science and design and technology (paragraph 1(2)(a)(ii))
- provide the requirements in pupils' statements (paragraph 1(2)(e))
- provide a coherent personal, social and health education programme (paragraph 1(2)(f))
- provide careers advice and support for pupils (paragraph 1(2)(g))
- provide adequate preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life (paragraph 1(2)(j))

- provide classroom resources of an adequate quality to support the teaching of science and design and technology (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 provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- prepare and implement an up-to-date anti-bullying policy (paragraph 3(2)(a))
- prepare and implement an up-to-date policy for the safeguarding and welfare of children (paragraph 3(2)(b))
- prepare and implement an up-to-date policy for the promotion of good behaviour (paragraph 3(2)(d))
- prepare and maintain up-to-date fire safety policies (paragraph 3(5))
- maintain an admission register and attendance registers in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 3(9))
- in order to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 amended by the Special Educational Needs & Disability Act 2001, prepare a three-year plan to improve access to the premises.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- ensure all staff have had an enhanced criminal record check (paragraph 4(2)(b))
- ensure that additional staff who are employed through agencies have an enhanced criminal record check (paragraph 4A(3-5))
- check the identity of any staff not directly employed by the school before they begin work at the school (paragraph 4A(6))
- ensure that the single central register of staff checks is complete with all checks for staff and volunteers (paragraph 4C(2) and (3))
- ensure that staff who are not directly employed by the school have shown written notification of criminal record checks being made, with copies of

certificates, and that these are recorded on the single central register (paragraphs 4C(4) and 4C(5))

- ensure the register is kept in a form which can be reproduced in full in a legible form (paragraph 4C(9)).

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

- improve the school premises so as to safeguard the health and safety and welfare of pupils (paragraph 5(e))
- ensure there are sufficient wash basins in the toilets (paragraph 5(k))
- provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill (paragraph 5(l))
- provide appropriate safe space for pupils to play safely (paragraph 5(t)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- provide particulars of the headteacher's name (paragraph 6(2)(a))
- ensure that parents are aware they can request:
 - particulars of the discipline and exclusions policies (paragraph 6(3)(a))
 - particulars of the educational and welfare provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs (paragraph 6(3)(b))
 - particulars of particulars of policies relating to bullying, health and safety, behaviour and sanctions adopted in the event of pupils misbehaving (paragraph 6(3)(d))
 - particulars of academic performance during the preceding year, including the results of any public examinations (paragraph 6(3)(e))
 - details of the complaints procedure adopted by the school (paragraph 6(3)(f))
- publish on the school website or send to parents of pupils a copy of their safeguarding children policy (paragraph 6(4)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of procedures for handling complaints (standard 7) and must:

- ensure that the complaints policy provides for the panel to make findings and recommendations and stipulate that a copy of the findings and recommendations are sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the

complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about, and are available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the headteacher (paragraph 7(i))

- provide for written records to be kept of all complaints indicating whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage, or whether they proceeded to a panel hearing (paragraph 7(j))
- provide that correspondence, statements and records of complaints are to be kept confidential (paragraph 7(k)).

In order to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended, the school should devise a three-year accessibility plan³ and implement this accordingly to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

In order to comply with the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the school must:

- ensure the Reception children have full access to all aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.

In order to meet the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006, those who provide the registered provision for children under the age of three must:

- improve the outdoor learning area and toilets so children are kept safe and secure at all times
- make sure all safeguarding policies and procedures are up to date and adhered to.

³ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1995/ukpga_19950050_en_1

Inspection judgement recording form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education				✓
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils				✓
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs			✓	
How well pupils make progress in their learning			✓	

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development			✓	
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils				✓
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The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

How good are the outcomes for children in the EYFS?				✓
What is the quality of provision in the EYFS?				✓
How effectively is the EYFS led and managed?				✓
Overall effectiveness: how well does the school meet the needs of children in the EYFS?				✓

School details

Name of school	Carmel Christian School		
DCSF number	801/6021		
Unique reference number	132774		
EY URN (for registered childcare only)	275783		
Type of school	Day all-age school		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	2000		
Age range of pupils	2–16 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 25	Girls: 34	Total: 59
Number of pupils aged 0–3 in registered childcare provision	Boys: 5	Girls: 6	Total: 11
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 2,580		
Address of school	817a Bath Road Brislington Bristol BS4 5NL		
Telephone number	01179 775533		
Fax number	01179 775678		
Email address	school@carmelcentre.org		
Headteacher	Mr David Owens		
Proprietor	Carmel Ministries International		
Reporting inspector	John Seal HMI		
Dates of inspection	29–30 September 2009		