

Christian Fellowship School

Overbury Street, Edge Hill, Liverpool, Merseyside L7 3HL

Inspection dates

14–16 February 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders, managers and trustees share a common vision for excellence and work tirelessly to achieve this. They care passionately for the welfare of their pupils and are relentless in their efforts to improve provision.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Teachers engage pupils in a variety of activities which inspire them to want to learn. All staff are highly committed to pupils' learning and well-being.
- Boys and girls of all ages make good progress in a wide range of subjects. From their different starting points, pupils who speak English as an additional language and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make the same good progress as others.
- Pupils are exceptionally polite and courteous. They say that they feel valued and can voice their opinions. Behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary.
- Children in the Reception Year make a positive start to their learning because they like school and feel safe and secure at all times.
- The curriculum is rich and innovative. It promotes effective academic skills and the pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Parents are highly appreciative of the school's work and hold the staff and school leaders in high regard.
- The headteacher, senior leaders, governors and trustees know their school extremely well. They are fully aware of strengths and how to further improve the school. Together they ensure that all the independent standards are met.
- Leaders have rightly identified that the level of challenge is not as consistently high as it could be for the most able pupils.
- Middle leaders do not currently play as significant a role as they might in checking the quality of provision and pupils' outcomes in their areas of responsibility.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the curriculum and teachers challenge the most able pupils more consistently by:
 - sharing the good practice that already exists across the lower, middle and upper schools
 - continuing to develop more effective practical strategies to extend the learning and skills of the most able pupils.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - making sure that middle leaders have the skills and opportunity to take more direct responsibility for improving the quality of teaching and holding their teams to account for pupils' progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, provides inspirational and ambitious leadership. In response, staff work tirelessly and successfully to improve and extend the school's provision and pupils' outcomes. Staff enjoy working here because they say 'the pupils are always eager to learn' and 'there is an exceptional sense of community'.
- All staff promote an ethos where every pupil is seen as a special individual, with many opportunities to flourish and succeed.
- Senior leaders are constantly evaluating and improving what the school offers and as a result outcomes for pupils are improving along with the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils learn to read quickly and well. The proportion of Reception children achieving a good level of development has increased. Pupils' GCSE results in Year 11 are rising.
- The role of middle leaders is underdeveloped. Subject leaders and heads of lower, middle and upper school do not have enough opportunities to check on what is happening across the school and to share good practice.
- The engagement with parents is excellent. Leaders and the trustees regard themselves as being in partnership with parents who are actively encouraged to take part in the life of the school. Parents approve of the balance between academic and pastoral support.
- The school works well to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Families are involved in all decision-making regarding their children's support and development. Staff are well trained to support these pupils, who make good progress as a result.
- The curriculum reflects the values of the school and its strong Christian roots. Younger pupils follow the early years curriculum and key stages 1 and 2. Older pupils have the opportunity to achieve the EBacc qualification. Even though the school is relatively small, it provides a varied range of subjects and through the 'Flexi-Ed' programme the school seeks to provide additional courses, which follow pupils' individual interests. In recent years, these have included computer science, music, performance arts, a second modern foreign language and other options.
- Facilities for sports are extended by using local providers so that pupils can enjoy developing skills in water sports, swimming, tennis, athletics and badminton, among others.
- The curriculum has a global dimension through the emphasis on politics, economics and world faiths. This term, pupils have already heard directly from guest speakers from Uganda and Iraq. There are annual visits to Holland and Romania, where pupils work with Romany families. Pupils have recently debated topics such as the referendum about Britain's continuing membership of the European Union and the United States presidential election. Pupils are effectively taught to see themselves not only as British citizens but also as 'global citizens'. As a result, all these experiences contribute significantly to pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The curriculum also has a practical dimension through a course the school calls 'Equipped

to Serve' (ETS). Here, pupils learn many practical skills and make a strong contribution to the local and wider communities. For example, some pupils visit a local care home as part of a 'memory friend project', recording the reminiscences of older residents about life in Liverpool during the war years.

- All Year 11 pupils go on to higher or further education courses when they leave this school. Their academic and personal development ensures that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders, governors and trustees pay particular attention to ensuring that the school premises are safe and secure. The site manager regularly inspects the building and grounds, and keeps exemplary records relating to fire, water and electricity checks and other health and safety matters. His work is overseen by an experienced governor.
- The proprietor, leaders and managers are rigorous in ensuring that the independent school standards are met. The school's effective safeguarding policy is published on its website.

Governance

- Governance is good.
 - Experienced and well-qualified governors, some of whom are trustees, ask challenging questions of leaders and probe the answers. Governors keep an ongoing action log to monitor what actions have been decided upon and how they are being pursued. At least one governor is in school each day so governors are able to see for themselves the quality of the school's work.
 - Governors set the tone and ethos of the school in line with the founding trustee's Christian vision and make it relevant to the modern world. This vision is shared by parents and all staff.
 - Governors ensure that the school is on a secure financial footing and that it is well resourced.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Arrangements are robust and fully meet requirements. Extensive safeguarding training is provided for all staff and the process is overseen by a governor with a professional background in safeguarding children. Files on any vulnerable children provide a meticulous record of actions taken and the subsequent outcomes.
- Trustees, governors and school leaders engage fully with parents to make sure that all pupils are supported and safe.
- Records of site security are kept daily. Any unusual activity is followed up if necessary with the community police officer.
- The school has records of the required extensive searches which take place of the suitability and background of all staff, including those who have lived or worked abroad for some time.
- The school has a rigorous approach to ensuring that pupils are safe when using the

internet and are protected from unsuitable websites.

- All staff receive appropriate training in first aid and fire safety.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Good teaching results in pupils of all ages, backgrounds and abilities making good progress across all subjects.
- Excellent, positive relationships and mutual respect between adults and pupils underpin all learning.
- Teachers have strong subject knowledge and plan lessons which inspire and enthuse their pupils. Pupils particularly enjoy their learning in history and science.
- The teaching of English is a particular strength across the school. There is a very effective focus on correct spelling, grammar and punctuation so that pupils write accurately. Pupils regularly use dictionaries and develop a mature and sophisticated vocabulary at an early stage. They are quickly able to understand the skill of authors in creating a particular effect. For example, Year 6 pupils quickly identified the hallmarks of Badger's character and the conceit of Toad in 'The Wind in the Willows'. Pupils in Year 9 were able to identify Shakespeare's view of the complexity of love in 'Twelfth Night'.
- In mathematics, clear, methodical explanations ensure that pupils have a quick understanding of concepts and learn calculation methods readily. This methodical approach helps less-confident pupils but on occasion the most able pupils could work faster and in greater depth. In the upper school, pupils' learning in mathematics and science was rapid and well pitched to suit different abilities.
- Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to constantly reflect on their learning. For example, in design technology pupils consider the intrinsic value of manufacturing and the importance of creating useful and decorative objects.
- In the upper school, teachers put a very useful emphasis on ensuring that pupils develop good examination techniques.
- There are many ways in which the most able pupils are encouraged. For example, in Year 8, pupils regularly enter the national writing competition and have twice been winners. All Year 8 pupils enter the Guildhall communications examination and most achieve distinction. In Year 7, pupils follow a classical English course, which includes Chaucer and Shakespeare.
- Although there is often evidence of pupils of different abilities completing work at different levels of difficulty, this is not consistently the case across all year groups and in all subjects. In some classes, pupils find the work too easy. The good practice in evidence is not shared widely enough across the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.

- Pupils have highly positive attitudes to learning and demonstrate an outstanding ability to concentrate and complete activities. They show determination to succeed and are proud of their achievements.
- Pupils show genuine empathy, not only for their classmates but also for children and families overseas who are living in challenging circumstances. They talk readily about the many charities the school supports. For example, they have provided football kits for children in Zimbabwe, sent money to support a new school for children in Uganda, and regularly raise funds for families in Romania. They have displays of letters of thanks, for example, from two Yazidi teenagers who wrote to say that messages from Christian Fellowship pupils gave them hope.
- Pupils enjoy assembly and readily volunteer to spontaneously lead prayers. They are proud of their own faith but understand and fully respect that of others.
- Pupils say that they feel very safe and nurtured in school. Bullying is extremely rare and is dealt with very effectively if it occurs. Most pupils say that there is no bullying at all; it is just a 'falling out' between friends. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe through many subjects in the curriculum and from discussions with the community police.
- There is an excellent awareness among pupils of how to use the internet and social media safely. The school is vigilant as regards pupils' access to the internet in the interests of safety. Pupils are keenly aware of the dangers of radicalisation and know that the 'Prevent' duty exists to protect them.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' conduct around the school and at breaks and lunchtimes is impeccable. They are very courteous, friendly and helpful. Older pupils take great pride in supporting and guiding young ones.
- Disruptions to learning are extremely rare and there are very few entries of incidents in the school behaviour log book.
- Attendance rates are above the national average because pupils greatly value and much enjoy their learning at school.
- The attendance, progress and welfare of any pupils attending day-release courses elsewhere are rigorously checked by senior leaders. These pupils gain useful qualifications and their attitudes and attendance at these courses are also exemplary.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Evidence from observing pupils' work in lessons and analysing their written work in a number of subjects shows that from their different starting points progress is good for all pupils. Standards of presentation of work are high.
- In the lower school, pupils make equally strong progress in mathematics and writing. They achieve well in a range of mathematical skills and are writing short stories by the end of Year 1.
- Standards in reading are high. There are extensive opportunities to read in school. Pupils

in Year 8 take part in 'Book chase', where they read 15 different genres across a term. Pupils in Years 6 and 7 aim to read a minimum of five challenging books. Younger pupils read with pleasure. They enjoy a range of different types of books and can recount plots and narrative successfully. Pupils in Year 6 identify their favourite authors and why certain books appeal to them. They read with fluency and expression and understand how characters develop and change. For example, pupils are readily sympathetic with Edmund in 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe', while not condoning his actions.

- Older pupils in the middle and upper schools are attaining well above expectations in both English and mathematics. Pupils are able to weigh evidence carefully, for example, arguing for and against different issues in religious studies, and developing the necessary skills to compare and contrast the works of different authors.
- In mathematics, older pupils demonstrate a good understanding of different mathematical concepts. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more passes at GCSE, including English and mathematics, was above the national average in 2016.
- Work is well adapted for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, enabling them to make the same good progress as others. Their achievement is carefully measured by senior leaders. Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve as well as other pupils in school.
- The most able pupils achieve well in a range of subjects. Standards in English are particularly high in all parts of the school. In mathematics and science, pupils display good skills in reasoning and problem-solving. However, there are sometimes missed opportunities to further accelerate their progress when more able pupils find work too easy.
- The 'equipped to serve' sessions introduce pupils to all manner of practical and life skills, such as gardening, sustainable technologies, financial management, work experience, British political institutions, public speaking, first aid, cookery, car maintenance, painting and decorating. Pupils enjoy these topics and the skills they develop in the aspects they study are impressive.
- The outcomes achieved by pupils help them, virtually without exception, to progress to the next stage of their lives, be it in education, employment or training. Their qualifications, personal development and communication skills, ensure that they are well equipped to take their place in modern Britain as worthwhile citizens.

Early years provision

Good

- Children in the Reception Year make good progress from their different starting points. Most begin school with the skills and knowledge which are typical for their age. Children settle quickly and are keen to learn.
- Excellent relationships with parents are made from the outset. Parents have often brought their children to school before they start formally, so they are used to the other children and staff. Children's behaviour is outstanding for their age.
- Progress is good across the year so that nearly all children are well prepared to enter Year 1. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development is usually above the national average but varies from year to year because class numbers are small. Children use their phonics skills well to read simple unfamiliar words and show a good

understanding of the books and stories they read.

- Leaders carry out assessment regularly and this data is used to ensure that individuals who are not achieving as well as expected are supported to catch up. Lower-attaining children make noticeable progress in phonics, letter formation and understanding and using numbers beyond 10.
- Teachers make learning enjoyable, for example by using puppets and storytelling. Pupils make good progress in independent writing. Many strategies are used to help children visualise mathematical problems, for example using strings of beads in different colours.
- The school has effective partnerships with other agencies and the local authority to support children who are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, these children make good progress. Children who speak English as a second language make good progress because of the individual attention they receive.
- Children feel loved, safe and secure. Strong relationships give children confidence. No child is overlooked. A real strength is the interaction the Reception children have with the rest of the school. Older pupils play with them and support them. They regularly attend whole-school events and the summer term is devoted to ensuring that they are 'Year 1 ready'.
- Leadership is good. All safeguarding and welfare requirements are met. All adults have undertaken paediatric first aid training. Vigilant staff ensure children's safety and take every opportunity to teach children the skills needed to manage their personal health, hygiene and safety. Annual staff appraisals review targets and set learning and development needs with teachers and teaching assistants.

School details

Unique reference number	104730
DfE registration number	341/6040
Inspection number	10020913

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

Type of school	Other Independent School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	4 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	135
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Christian Fellowship School Trust
Chair	John Graham Sharples
Headteacher	William Richard Worsley
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,434–£4,867
Telephone number	01517 091642
Website	www.cfschool.org.uk
Email address	info@cfschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–21 November 2013

Information about this school

- Christian Fellowship School is a mixed non-denominational Christian day school. Almost half the pupils belong to a minority ethnic group. Over 20 nationalities are represented in the school.
- The school is registered to admit up to 200 pupils aged between four and 16 years of age.
- An above-average number of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The school aims to assist parents in developing the hearts, minds and practical capabilities of their children to equip them for productive life and work, recognising the

spiritual and eternal, as well as the physical world, and to become responsible citizens.

- The website is fully compliant with statutory requirements.
- The school is housed in one building. It is divided into the lower school (Reception to Year 3), middle school (Year 4 to 8) and upper school (Year 9 to 11). The premises are safe, well maintained and suitable for learning.
- The school occasionally uses alternative provision for day-release pupils at Myerscough College, Preston.
- The school was last inspected on 19–21 November 2013 and was judged to be good. Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed. The post of deputy headteacher has been created and a new Reception teacher and special educational needs coordinator have been appointed. Many members of the governing body are new, including the chair of the governing body.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all year groups in a range of subjects, attended an assembly and listened to pupils in Years 2 and 6 reading. Some of these observations were done jointly with senior leaders.
- They held meetings with staff, pupils, trustees, the chair of the governing body and other governors.
- The inspectors scrutinised all policies and procedures in order to establish the school's compliance with the independent school standards.
- The views of staff were gained from the 35 responses to the Ofsted questionnaire and from discussions with teachers, teaching assistants, administration and other support staff.
- Inspectors gained the views of parents from the 72 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, letters parents wrote to the inspection team and from meeting parents who were collecting their children from school.
- The inspectors scrutinised the school's documentation relating to safeguarding, the quality of teaching and learning, pupils' attainment and progress, behaviour and attendance records, curriculum planning and school policies. They looked at the work in pupils' books in all year groups.

Inspection team

Judith Straw, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Michael Gaskill

Ofsted Inspector

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