

Bradford Christian School

Livingstone Road, Bolton Woods, Bradford BD2 1BT

Inspection dates

22–24 November 2016

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Arrangements for safeguarding do not meet statutory requirements. Leaders have not made proper checks on adults during recruitment. Leaders have taken insufficient care to keep a close eye on pupils at risk of harm.
- The proprietor, leaders and governors have not ensured that all independent school regulations are met, including those that relate to pupils welfare.
- Governance is at an early stage of development so leaders have received limited challenge.
- Leaders do not make frequent enough checks on the quality of teaching. As a result, although teaching brings about good outcomes in most year groups and subjects, some teaching is weaker. In addition, more of the most able pupils could reach higher standards, given stronger challenge.
- The early years welfare requirements are not met. This is because the weaknesses in safeguarding that affect the rest of the school also affect the youngest children.

The school has the following strengths

- Teaching is usually good. As a result, most pupils make good progress in most subjects across the age range.
- Outcomes are good at each stage of pupils' development. Pupils generally enter school with average skills, knowledge and understanding. By the time they leave the school, their attainment is above average.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and stimulating, giving pupils a truly rounded education.
- Leaders and teachers actively promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Consequently, they prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Strong relationships help pupils develop confidence. They are encouraged to think freely and express their views. They behave well and feel safe.
- Children make good progress in all areas of learning in the early years because of the effective provision for learning.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve safeguarding arrangements so they meet statutory requirements, by:
 - ensuring that all staff, including the designated safeguarding leaders, receive the statutorily required training
 - ensuring that a number of leaders and governors undertake safer recruitment training and follow guidance with exactness when vetting adults
 - keeping more robust and detailed safeguarding records and always checking more carefully that those responsible take appropriate action.
- Further strengthen teaching so that more of the most able pupils reach the highest standards, especially in their GCSE examinations, by:
 - taking better account of what pupils, especially the most able pupils, already know, understand and can do, when planning learning
 - using the strengths of the best teachers to support teaching where it is not as strong.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - making sure that leaders have the time to regularly and thoroughly check the quality of teaching
 - paying more attention to the impact of teaching on pupils' learning when making these checks
 - ensuring that staff training leads to improvements in teaching
 - strengthening governance so that the governing board is able to more effectively challenge and support leaders, particularly with regard to safeguarding arrangements.
- The school must meet the following independent school standards:

Part 3 Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- The proprietor must ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school and that such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 7, 7(a) and 7(b)).

Part 6 Provision of information

- The proprietor must ensure that the name of the headteacher; the proprietor's full name, address for correspondence during both term-time and holidays; a telephone number or numbers on which the proprietor may be contacted; and the name and address for correspondence of the chair of the governing board is provided to parents of pupils (paragraph 32(2), 32(2)(a), 32(2)(b), 32(2)(b)(i), 32(2)(b)(ii) and 32(2)(c)).

Part 8 Quality of leadership in and the management of schools

- The proprietor must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role; that they fulfil their responsibilities effectively; and that they actively promote the well-being of pupils, so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)).

Statutory requirements of the early years foundation stage

- The proprietor must fulfil the safeguarding and welfare requirements.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leadership and management is inadequate because leaders and managers do not fulfil their responsibilities effectively in meeting the independent school standards (ISS) relating to the safeguarding of pupils. Arrangements to protect children do not meet statutory requirements and are not compliant with guidance.
- The safeguarding policy available on the school's website at the time of the inspection was not suitable because it does not take into account government requirements. Leaders made an updated, recently agreed policy available to inspectors. This contains improvements, but is still not fully compliant.
- Leaders and managers do not fulfil a number of independent school standards relating to the provision of information. Leaders can easily and quickly remedy these shortcomings.
- Leaders' checks on the quality of teaching last year were infrequent. Leaders' teaching commitments left little time for the important work of checking and improving the quality of teaching. The training given to teachers to improve their skills further has been limited in its effect because nobody has checked well enough to make sure that teachers act on the advice given.
- Some of the leaders' observations of teaching concentrate too much on what teachers do, rather than on the effect of teaching on pupils' learning.
- Leaders ensure that teachers assess pupils at regular intervals, and collate information that enables them to see which pupils are at risk of underperformance, ensuring that they receive extra help. Because leaders and teachers are in the process of changing methods of assessment, different methodologies in different phases make it difficult to present information in a way that would help governors and others to judge progress or ask challenging questions.
- In line with the aims of the school, leaders and teachers provide a broad, balanced and stimulating curriculum, underpinned by the school's Christian ethos. All aspects of learning required by the ISS are taught using the English national curriculum.
- Pupils benefit from a wide variety of enrichment activities, which pupils of all ages value and enjoy. These activities broaden pupils' horizons and contribute strongly to their personal development. For example, pupils visited London to learn about British heritage and to experience cultural events. Others have travelled to Berlin, from where they visited concentration camps. Pupils have planned and performed shows, such as Jekyll and Hyde, and have put on a Strictly Come Dancing charity event. They have taken part in inter-school sporting events. Pupils have received visitors who have taught them about fair trade and the Bradford food bank.
- The school actively promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. While instilling Christian values, pupils are taught about other religions and show understanding and respect for different beliefs. Pupils are encouraged to think for themselves and express their views openly. They demonstrate respect and tolerance for different ways of living, learning to disagree without being disagreeable.
- Leaders promote equality of opportunity well, enrolling pupils of all cultures and beliefs,

including those from non-Christian traditions or with no religious belief. The school has recently established a specialist provision for pupils with an autistic spectrum diagnosis (ASD), aiming for all pupils to fulfil their best potential. Pupils have settled in quickly because of the high-quality care and support provided by this facility. They are fully included in the life of the school.

- The headteacher takes a personal interest in providing each pupil with impartial advice regarding career and study paths, to good effect. He helps pupils to make informed decisions based on their interests and aptitudes and ensures that they visit a number of post-16 providers. Older pupils visit a careers fair each year. All pupils undertake work experience during their GCSE years. Consequently, all pupils go on to study A levels or other equivalent qualifications well matched to their needs, at either school sixth forms or further education colleges. The vast majority of pupils leave the school well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Governance

- Governance is in the early stages of development. There have been too few checks on the impact of leaders' work, including safeguarding. Governors are beginning to offer leaders more challenge, particularly since some disappointing GCSE results in 2015.
- The governing board has reconstituted, understanding that individual governors need to be more independent and objective. They have appointed members with the skills and experience needed. Governors are now being strategic and considering how they can better check that leaders are improving teaching, for example, and how they can contribute to decisions about teachers' pay.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are ineffective. If pupils are safe, it can be put down more to good fortune than to effective practice.
- During the inspection, leaders put right a number of omissions from the record of vetting and recruitment checks for each member of staff, volunteers and governors. Leaders had not carried all required checks. Employment references do not meet requirements and selection processes do not test prospective employees on their understanding of safeguarding. No leaders or governors have undertaken essential safer-recruitment training.
- The training of the safeguarding lead has not equipped him to carry out his duties properly. The deputy safeguarding leader has not had the legally required training, nor have other staff had adequate training. Induction materials for new staff or temporary staff do not include sufficient safeguarding information.
- The procedures for recording concerns about pupils are lax. Staff have reported concerns and disclosures from pupils, but leaders have not always sought advice or taken action as and when they should. Where referrals have been made to the local authority children's social care services, these have not been recorded properly or followed up to make sure that action is taken. Leaders have not initiated plans to secure early help for pupils.
- Last year, leaders treated an allegation about the conduct of a member of staff as a complaint rather than an allegation, and did not report it to the local authority designated officer as required.
- Despite these serious flaws, adults actively teach pupils how to stay safe, and pupils feel

safe in school. Leaders took swift action during the inspection to begin to rectify shortcomings.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Most pupils make good progress through each stage of their education due to good teaching. Teachers have good subject knowledge so they know what pupils need to learn next to be able to progress. They plan interesting lessons that stimulate pupils' enjoyment and secure full involvement.
- Where learning is most effective, teachers ask probing questions to deepen pupils' thinking and give pupils effective feedback to help them see where they can improve. Teachers regularly assess pupils against exam criteria, stretching them to give 'full marks' answers.
- Mathematics teaching is especially strong in all phases of education and especially at GCSE level. Pupils make quick and sustained progress because teachers pitch learning at the level of each individual's need. Pupils work hard to solve problems and teachers intervene to check that pupils understand and to address misconceptions. Small class sizes mean pupils receive plenty of one-to-one attention to help them move on in their learning.
- Pupils develop good literacy skills. In Year 1, pupils build on the good progress they make in the early years. They develop accuracy, learning to punctuate their sentences and spell words correctly, because teachers prioritise these skills. In the GCSE years, pupils have the literacy skills to be able to express complex ideas.
- Where pupils are at risk of underperformance or struggling with some aspect of their learning, teachers take the time to offer extra support outside of lesson times, helping pupils to catch up.
- Teachers' skills are not equally well developed across the school. Though the overall effect of teaching year-on-year is to bring about pupils' good progress, some teachers are not as adept at making effective use of assessment information as others. As a result, the most able pupils in particular sometimes sit through explanations they do not need or practise work they can already do. However, in most subjects, the most able pupils make good progress to achieve above average standards. Leaders recognise that further improvement in teaching would enable more of these pupils to reach the very highest standards.
- Teaching in science is weaker than in other subjects. This is evident in GCSE outcomes over time. Pupils tend to work through the same content at the same pace, whatever their starting points.
- Adults give effective support to pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. In the ASD specialist provision, strong relationships with key workers and effective support help pupils to improve their communication skills and to develop well socially and emotionally. This allows these pupils to access learning in main school lessons. Teachers recognise the need to set more precise learning targets for these pupils to accelerate further the progress they make.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement because weaknesses in safeguarding mean that pupils cannot be considered safe. However, pupils feel safe and teachers and leaders do much to teach pupils of all ages how to stay safe. Pupils' personal development is a real strength of the school.
- Pupils across the primary and secondary years show a strong understanding of how to stay safe online because teachers prioritise this. During the inspection, younger pupils enjoyed an interactive session on road safety. The West Yorkshire Fire Service visits annually to teach about fire safety. Year 8 pupils learn about safe relationships as part of the Bar Mitzvah programme.
- A friendly, vibrant atmosphere pervades the school. Pupils are polite and friendly. The specialist ASD provision is a safe, caring haven for pupils.
- Leaders and teachers actively promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. The school aims to help pupils consider what being a Christian means in the modern world. Pupils show a good understanding and knowledge about a number of world faiths and this understanding breeds respect. Pupils learn about democracy through the school council and have received a visit from a local MP. Older pupils undertake a GCSE in citizenship.
- The school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. Pupils are not naive about issues to do with sexual orientation. They are encouraged to think for themselves. Pupils say that they feel safe to express their views in debates and that it is acceptable in this school to have a non-Christian religious belief or no belief at all.
- Pupils have a strong sense of empathy for people who are less fortunate than themselves. They proactively engage in many fundraising activities for a variety of charities. For example, pupils on their own initiative have raised funds for BBC Children in Need and Save the Children. Pupils have opportunities to engage in service within the school, the local community and abroad. For example, older pupils occasionally help in primary classes and attempt basic site maintenance. Among other opportunities, a number of pupils have had the experience of working with orphans in Mumbai. They have built a playground in an orphanage and conducted lessons on the streets and in makeshift slum-schools.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good, founded on strong, trusting relationships. Strategies for managing behaviour are effective, including for the few more difficult to manage pupils.
- Pupils behave well in the playground and other areas of the school. Younger pupils play actively together, with no sign of aggression or inappropriate behaviour. Older pupils socialise together calmly.
- Good relationships between adults and pupils make a strong contribution to a positive classroom climate; pupils are motivated and keen to learn.
- Pupils of all ages say that bullying is very rare and that if it does occur it tends to be mild. Pupils are happy that adults deal quickly and effectively with any incidents, nipping it in the bud.

- Attendance is broadly average. Few pupils are persistently absent.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Effective teaching of basic skills helps pupils in the primary years to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. School information based on national test materials and teachers' assessments shows that attainment by the time pupils are 11 years old is generally above average. A large proportion of the most able 11-year-olds last year achieved above average standards. There are no national test comparisons for Year 2 pupils, but observations of lessons and pupils' workbooks evidence good progress.
- In 2016, the percentage of pupils achieving A* to C grades in at least five GCSEs, including English and mathematics, was above the national average. The A* to C pass rate for almost all GCSE subjects was between 89% and 100%. Eight out of the nine students reached A and B grades in at least some subjects. The proportion of pupils achieving the English Baccalaureate was well above the national average. All of this represents good progress from starting points. Most pupils had at least an 80% success rate in reaching target grades.
- The most able pupils generally achieved higher grades, enabling them to go on to study courses of their choice. Leaders recognise that with further challenge and more stretching targets, more pupils could achieve A and A* grades in more subjects.
- Achievement is especially strong in citizenship, religious education, art and design and in mathematics because of especially strong teaching in these subjects across the school. Pupils are knowledgeable about a range of religious traditions and are taught to question, while showing respect. High-quality artwork from pupils of all ages is displayed around the school.
- Conversely, pupils' performance in science is weaker because of shortcomings in teaching. Outcomes in Spanish were weak in 2016.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities mostly make good progress because of the effective support adults provide. For those pupils with the most complex needs, teachers have prioritised support for their social, emotional and communication needs, to help these pupils increasingly access main school classes. The progress made by pupils who are funded by the local authority represents good value for money.

Early years provision

Inadequate

- The early years provision is judged inadequate because the weaknesses in safeguarding arrangements in the school also affect the youngest children. The provision does not meet the early years safeguarding and welfare standards. Staff carry out regular safety checks, inside and out, but do not risk assess activities and equipment thoroughly enough.
- In all other respects, the early years provision is strong. Teachers have created a well-organised, well-resourced and inviting learning environment that addresses all areas of learning. Teachers systematically teach the skills of reading, writing and mathematics, giving each child personal attention. Along with plenty of opportunities for children to practise these skills through play and exploration, this teaching helps children to make sustained progress.

- Children enjoy a balance of self-initiated and teacher directed or supported activities. The way in which teachers arrange resources draws children into a world of imagination. Children consequently sustain concentration for long periods of time.
- Adults intervene sensitively to challenge children. A group of nursery children challenged themselves to build a complex structure to house small-world people, using small blocks, encouraged by the teacher. Adults respond to children's interests. For example, adults provided artificial power tools to an enthusiastic group of children and encouraged them to find repair jobs to do, as modelled by the busy building superintendent.
- Assessment is comprehensive and systematic. Each child has a key worker who knows them well. Adults gather evidence, building up a profile of children's development in each area of learning, and identify the next steps in each child's learning. They then use this to plan for children's further progress.
- From generally typical starting points, children make good progress so that most reach the early learning goals in almost all areas of learning and some exceed the early learning goals. There is scope for stretching the most able children yet further so that even more of them exceed the early learning goals in more areas of learning.
- A large number of children who have special educational needs and or disabilities made good progress last year from their starting points. Overall, the proportion of pupils reaching a good level of development is at least in line with the national average. Children are well prepared for Year 1.
- Children play and learn inside and outside well. The inside provision is better developed than the outside provision. Children enjoy a range of activities outside, but adults recognise the need to more fully exploit the outside space as some of the activities are simply inside activities brought outside.
- Children cooperate with each other and play together safely. Adults encourage them to develop independence. They get children to tidy up after themselves. Children are well behaved, listen to adults and follow instructions when asked.
- While adult interactions with children enhance learning opportunities, adults' questioning is not consistently effective. Sometimes adults miss opportunities to ask open questions in order to get children to talk at greater length. The more confident children tend to dominate and adults sometimes miss opportunities to get the less-confident children to speak.
- Adults involve parents in their children's learning and assessment effectively. Parents are welcomed into the classroom to chat about what their children have been doing and value these opportunities. From time to time, parents take home the learning journey books so they can find out about how their child is developing. Parents add their own contributions to these books so staff can see how children develop at home and learn about children's interests.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 107461 |
| DfE registration number | 380/6110 |
| Inspection number | 10020709 |

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.

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| Type of school | Other independent school |
| School category | Independent school |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 146 |
| Number of part-time pupils | 0 |
| Proprietor | Mr Matthew Walker |
| Chair | Mr Andrew Taylor |
| Headteacher | Mr Phillip Moon |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £2,460 to £4,440 |
| Telephone number | 01274 532649 |
| Website | http://bradfordchristianschool.com |
| Email address | bchristians@btconnect.com |
| Date of previous inspection | 9–11 July 2013 |

Information about this school

- Bradford Christian School was opened in 1993. The current school building has been in use since 2002. The early years provision was opened in 2009.
- Most pupils are from homes of parents of the Christian faith, attending approximately 20 different churches. About 30% of the pupils are from homes of faiths other than Christianity, or are from homes of no faith.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly in line with the national average. The school operates a specialist provision for ASD. The local authority has selected the school as the named setting for a number of pupils with education, health and care plans (EHC).

- The school receives no government pupil premium, Year 7 catch-up or sports funding.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all classes at least once, many of these with school leaders. They looked at a range of pupils' work and listened to some pupils read.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, all members of the governing board and a number of teachers. The lead inspector held conversations with the local authority designated officer and the local authority safeguarding lead about safeguarding in the school.
- Inspectors took account of 39 responses to the Ofsted online parent questionnaire, Parent View, and a number of written responses. Twenty-nine responses to the staff questionnaire were also considered. Inspectors met with pupils across the age range to listen to their views about what it is like to be a pupil in the school.
- Documents were analysed, including school development plans, minutes of the governing body meetings and information about pupils' achievement. Inspectors scrutinised a number of policies and other documents to check compliance with the Independent School Standards.

Inspection team

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Philip Riozzi, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Margaret Farrow | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Judith Gooding | Ofsted Inspector |

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