

Paragon Christian Academy

Independent school inspection report

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| DCSF registration number | 204/6389 |
| Unique reference number | 100301 |
| Inspection number | 341968 |
| Inspection dates | 14 October 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Angela Corbett HMI |

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.

Age group: 4–18

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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, 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.¹

This was a light-touch inspection which focused principally on: the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding pupils; and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

Information about the school

Paragon Christian Academy is a co-educational Christian day school for pupils aged four to 18 years. It is located in Clapton, in the London borough of Hackney. Pupils are taught in four different teaching groups, depending on their age. There are currently 48 pupils on roll from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. The eldest of these is 15 and three are in the Early Years Foundation Stage; all are in the pre-school and none in the Reception or 'ABC' class. The school, which was founded in 1992, is a registered charity and the trustees are the World Vision for Christ. The school offers the Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) curriculum, which is a highly structured and individualised programme of learning. Its stated main objective is to incorporate the teaching of the Bible into every aspect of a pupil's education to enable them to grow spiritually, physically and academically. There is after-school child-care provision for pupils until 6pm each day and this formed part of the inspection. The school was last inspected in March 2007.

Evaluation of the school

Paragon Christian Academy provides a good quality of education for all its pupils. The quality of the curriculum, teaching and assessment are good overall. Pupils enjoy and make good progress in their learning; consequently, their academic achievement and personal development are good. In particular, pupils achieve high standards in the basic skills of reading, writing and numeracy. The school successfully meets its stated aim of incorporating Biblical studies into the heart of each pupil's education. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Since the last inspection, the school has improved many of its policies and procedures, put in place a disability action plan and provided space for pupils who are unwell. The school meets most of the regulations. However, a number of important ones relating to health and safety and the safeguarding of pupils are not met. Accordingly, although appropriate

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

attention is given to most aspects of their care, overall the welfare, health and safety for the pupils is inadequate.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good, meets the needs of all pupils and is firmly based on the school's wish to base all teaching on the Bible. All pupils, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, follow the ACE curriculum for the majority of their time in school. This is formed on a series of structured learning units called Packages of Accelerated Christian Education (PACES) which pupils follow in sequential order. The core PACES curriculum consists of mathematics, English, literature and creative writing, word building, social studies, science and Bible reading. History and geography are covered within social studies. Additional subjects such as art, music, physical education (PE), Spanish and information and communication technology (ICT) enrich the curriculum. PACES become progressively more demanding as pupils move through the curriculum. Older pupils can choose 'electives' from among an extensive list of options that include modern foreign languages, Biblical studies, nutritional science, business studies, typing, accounting, business mathematics, photography and website design. Older pupils can achieve the International Christian Education Certificate of Education (ICCE) at levels appropriate to their age and ability. These qualifications, whilst not recognised nationally, are accepted by many colleges of further education and universities and do enable pupils to progress to other schools and to further or higher education. Older pupils can also gain a recognised ICT qualification.

The school provides an appropriate personal, social and health education and citizenship programme, which makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to apply their good independent learning and basic skills in open-ended 'real-life' problem-solving or cross-curricular activities. Older pupils receive personalised careers education and guidance, which for some includes work experience. Pupils also have access to a reasonable range of extra-curricular activities which includes trips and performances. Although there is an adequate and well-supervised after-school care provision for the younger pupils and access to ICT and games for the older pupils at lunchtimes, there are no other clubs provided to extend pupils' interests or experiences.

The overall quality of teaching and assessment is also good. Teaching is best in the lessons that follow the highly structured PACES curriculum. These lessons form the majority of the pupils' learning through the week. Work is closely matched to pupils' needs and teachers closely supervise and monitor the progress pupils make, and provide help when needed. Pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to learn each day and they work on their PACES in the correct sequence. From the age of six, pupils become increasingly responsible for their own learning. They set their own personal daily goals and assess their own work as they move through the different PACES booklets. At the end of each booklet or PACES unit they do both a

self-test and a more formal test which is marked by the teachers. Pupils receive a star when they score highly and then progress to the next unit. For each pupil, a projection chart shows the expected progress for each pupil for the school year and this helps inform and motivate pupils to achieve. Pupils progress at their own rate and many are working at levels above their age-related expectations. These well-established and highly structured procedures and assessments ensure that pupils make good progress and achieve well.

However, teaching is less secure in the minority of lessons across the week that form the extended curriculum, which is designed to broaden the learning experience and to stimulate pupils' creativity. Pupils' progress slows in these lessons. This is because the learning objectives are not well defined and the learning steps are insufficiently visualised or well sequenced to enable pupils to make use of their previous knowledge and good basic skills and to apply them to the tasks and activities. Nonetheless, pupils enjoy these more relaxed and flexible lessons and the opportunity to interact with each other and as a whole class. However, these issues related to this weaker teaching were identified at the last inspection and do not appear to have improved.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The personal development of pupils, including the very few in the Early Years Foundation Stage, is good. This reflects the emphasis placed by the school on guiding the development of the whole person based on the Bible and Christian values. Pupils value the Christian ethos, and speak about their enjoyment of school and of the good relationships they have with staff and each other. They feel well supported by staff and have confidence that when they need help on either academic or personal issues they will receive it. Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong. They are polite, helpful and their behaviour is good. Their attendance is good. Pupils' mature and positive attitudes to learning are reflected in their very responsible approach to working individually on their PACES books. This, together with the good advice and guidance they receive on selecting 'electives' and courses and the high focus on basic skills, prepares them well for the next steps of their education. Pupils raise funds for a number of charities and this enables them to develop a good understanding of those much less fortunate than themselves. Pupils know they will be listened to but they would like more opportunities to express their views and contribute to school life. Pupils all come together for 'Daily Devotions'. This promotes their good spiritual development by enabling them to reflect on a wide range of issues from a Christian viewpoint, as well as broadening their cultural and international understanding. They learn about British institutions, the national community and other faiths and cultures through both PACES steps and citizenship lessons. However, the school does not map all this provision to ensure that all aspects are fully covered.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

This aspect of the school's work is inadequate overall. Nevertheless, the day-to-day running of the school ensures all pupils, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, are well supported pastorally and good attention is given to most health and safety issues around the school. The school has worked since the last inspection to put in place policies and procedures that are designed to minimise health and safety risks to pupils, although, in a few instances the implementation of these policies and procedures has not been rigorously followed. In particular, this is so in relation to recruitment procedures and the checks made on staff and volunteers for their suitability to work prior to commencing employment with the school. All staff have been provided with child protection awareness training but the training for designated teacher is out of date. In addition, the school does not always give sufficient attention to some health and safety issues, for example, by carrying out checks on portable electrical appliances. Most staff have received recent paediatric first aid training.

Pupils say they feel safe and well cared for. Pupils are very well supervised and incidents of bullying or other forms of harassment are rare and the pupils know who to go to if they have a problem. The school carries out a range of risk assessments, including those for educational trips and visits. Plans to encourage pupils to bring healthy food with them to eat at break and lunchtime are in the early stages of implementation. While pupils attend local sports centres each week as part their curriculum and there are opportunities for them to go outside and play each day, the outside space for this still does not meet regulations. A three-year accessibility plan is now in place and the admissions register now meets requirements. However, while the daily attendance registers are accurately kept, useful information such as emergency contact and addresses is kept separately.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall. Children aged between four and five have attended the school since its opening in 1992. However, the provision in relation to the Early Years Foundation Stage framework has only been in place since September 2009, although there is a clear desire to learn more and promote improved practice, in line with Early Years Foundation Stage framework. All the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have very recently enrolled and it is too early to form a full view of their development. Current evidence indicates that they have settled well, feel safe and secure, and are making steady progress. This applies particularly to their personal and social development, confidence in speaking, and in sound and letter recognition. They appear very happy and are benefiting from the high ratio of adults to children. There has, until recently, been limited knowledge in the school of the full breadth of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum and outcomes. Consequently, based on developments made so far, the provision is satisfactory. Indoor accommodation is sufficient for the

small number of children. Activities, based mainly around the ACE structured learning units called PACES, appear largely teacher-directed at present and currently there is no access to an appropriately resourced outdoor area. Records are maintained in line with the ACE scheme requirements, although this is matched to the early learning goals. Staff focus well on promoting the welfare of these young children and there is good contact with parents. However, recruitment procedures which are managed by the main school do not fully meet requirements. Risk assessments are satisfactory.

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:

- ensure that the training for the designated teacher for child protection is updated and complies with DCSF guidance 'Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education (2007)' (paragraph 3(2)(b))
- have regard to the DfES guidance 'Health and safety: responsibilities and powers' by attending to the health and safety issues identified in this report and during the inspection (paragraph 3(4)).

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

- ensure prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff that all the required checks have been carried out (paragraph 4(2)(a))
- establish prior to the confirmation of appointment that in the case of any person for whom, by reason of living or having lived outside the UK, further checks have been made to establish his or her suitability to work in a school as the proprietor considers appropriate, having regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 4(2)(c))
- ensure that no member of staff commences their employment without the correct checks having been undertaken with regard to their suitability to work in schools (paragraph 4(2)(d))
- ensure that the required checks have been carried out on all members of the proprietorial body (paragraph 4B(4) and (5))
- ensure that the single central register provides evidence that all checks made on the suitability of staff, including their right to work, have been made (paragraph 4C(2) and (3))

- ensure that the single central register provides evidence that all checks made on all members of the proprietorial body, including their right to work, have been made (paragraph 4C(6) and (7)).

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

- improve the arrangements for providing outside space for pupils to play safely (paragraph 5(t)).

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:

Early Years Foundation Stage:

- Continue to build staff knowledge and understanding of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.
- Improve the Early Years Foundation Stage provision so that it meets all aspects of framework, particularly in relation to outdoor learning opportunities.

Inspection judgement recording form

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|-------------|------|--------------|------------|
| outstanding | good | satisfactory | inadequate |
|-------------|------|--------------|------------|

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 | | | | ✓ |
|--|--|--|--|---|

The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

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

The quality of boarding provision

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|----------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Evaluation of boarding provision | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|--|--|--|

School details

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|---|---------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Name of school | Paragon Christian Academy | | |
| DCSF number | 204/6389 | | |
| Unique reference number | 100301 | | |
| Type of school | Faith | | |
| Status | Independent | | |
| Date school opened | 7 September 1992 | | |
| Age range of pupils | 4-18 | | |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | | |
| Number on roll (full-time pupils) | Boys: 30 | Girls: 18 | Total: 48 |
| Number on roll (part-time pupils) | Boys: 0 | Girls: 0 | Total: 0 |
| Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need | Boys: 0 | Girls: 0 | Total: 0 |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | Junior £2,520 Senior £2,760 | | |
| Address of school | 233–241 Glyn Road, London, E5 0JP | | |
| Telephone number | 0208 985 1119 | | |
| Fax number | 0208 553 9855 | | |
| Email address | paragonchristianacademy@hotmail.co.uk | | |
| Headteacher | Mrs Sharon Curry | | |
| Proprietor | World Vision for Christ | | |
| Reporting inspector | Angela Corbett HMI | | |
| Dates of inspection | 14 October 2009 | | |