

Covenant Christian School

48 Heaton Moor Road, Heaton Moor, Stockport, Cheshire SK4 4NX

Inspection dates

3 May 2017

Overall outcome

The school does not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraph 3 and 3(a)

- The inspector, in the inspection in October 2015, judged these standards to be not met because pupils did not make good progress. In the progress monitoring inspection of April 2016, these standards were still not met because pupils did not build on their prior knowledge and skills well enough.
- Pupils' work in English and mathematics shows that the standard is now met. Pupils make good progress in their writing, particularly in their use of grammatical structures, punctuation and their spelling. They also make good progress in the structure of their writing, making sure that they adapt their work for different audiences and purposes.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics, particularly in arithmetic and written calculations. They also progress well in their ability to manipulate calculations to solve number problems.
- Their progress in other subjects is less strong, but satisfactory. In their science and history work, for example, their writing, use of vocabulary and the quality of their sentence structures is not as good as it is in English.

Paragraph 3 and 3(d)

- The inspector, in the inspection in October 2015, judged these standards to be not met because teachers' planning to develop the skills and knowledge of pupils was weak. In the progress monitoring inspection of April 2016, these standards were still not met because teachers did not share their plans with each other and not enough consideration was given to pupils' prior learning.
- These standards are now met. Teachers share their plans with each other in weekly meetings, in a daily diary and through classroom information boards. This means that any new teacher to the class knows what has been taught that day and what should be taught next. Similarly, because teachers upload assessments weekly, teachers use the latest assessments of pupils' attainments to plan the following week's lessons.
- There is a new planning system in place whereby teachers follow the medium-term plans as well as the objectives for each year group as defined in the national curriculum. The

improved medium-term planning means that teachers can build on pupils' prior knowledge and understanding and enable them to make good progress term by term.

- The planning is less detailed in project work. Plans do not build as well as they could on pupils' existing skills in English and mathematics or on pupils' subject-specific skills and understanding.

Paragraph 3 and 3(g)

- The inspector, in the inspection in October 2015, judged these standards to be not met because there was no commonly understood assessment or tracking system. Leaders were unable to state how much progress pupils were making. In the progress monitoring inspection of April 2016, these standards were still not met because some teachers had not been trained in how to use the systems.
- There has been significant progress and these standards are now met. All staff have been trained in the new tracking system. They upload their assessments weekly and track pupils' progress towards meeting the year group objectives identified in the national curriculum. There is now an efficient way of assessing pupils' progress through a mix of observations, checking pupils' work and informal and formal assessments.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7(a) and 7(b)

- The inspector, in the inspection in October 2015, judged these standards to be not met because the child protection policy did not place enough importance on the safety of pupils and some areas of the school were dangerous. In the progress monitoring inspection of April 2016, these standards were still not met because there was confusing guidance regarding what to do if there were allegations against the headteacher or a member of the management committee. In addition, the child protection policy had not been shared with staff.
- The standards remain unmet. There has been good progress towards meeting the standards. The school has more safety signs, particularly around potentially dangerous steps, tools in the design and technology room and equipment in the science room. Staff have been trained in safeguarding and the policy has been shared widely. However, one of the reasons why these standards remain unmet is because staff have not been trained in how to prevent extremism or radicalisation and there are gaps in the child protection policy. The policy does not make it clear what staff should do to prevent and tackle different types of bullying and peer-on-peer violence. There is no mention, for example, of racism or homophobia. Similarly, there is not enough guidance on how to prevent pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities from being bullied. There is also no mention of how the school will induct and train new staff and members of the management committee.

Paragraph 16, 16(a) and 16(b)

- The inspector, in the inspection in October 2015, judged these standards to be not met because risk assessments were not being identified or followed. The inspector, in April 2016, judged these standards still not to be met because the health and safety risk

assessments were not detailed enough and leaders did not check whether risk assessments had been acted upon.

- These standards are now met because risk assessments, particularly those for excursions, are detailed and thorough. There is an effective system for assessing risks and identifying how any risk can be reduced.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(b)

- The inspector, in the inspection in October 2015, judged this standard to be not met because leaders had not made available to parents the particulars of educational and welfare provision.
- Leaders have made good progress to meet the standard. There is a policy, which is shared with parents on request, providing details about the way in which the school assesses pupils and tracks their progress. It is, however, not available to prospective parents on the website.
- There is a curriculum policy which is available on request. However, this policy lacks the necessary subject-specific detail for prospective parents. It does not, for example, explain in enough detail what is taught in the different subjects that are taught at the school. There is no teaching and learning policy to share with parents to explain how their children will be taught.
- There is a child protection policy available on the website but this is not fit for purpose. It has been updated and significantly improved in December 2016 but has not been uploaded onto the school's website. The reviewed policy is incomplete. It omits some key aspects of 'Keeping children safe in education 2016', such as the use of staff telephones and tablets, different types of bullying and peer-on-peer violence.
- This standard remains unmet.

Paragraph 32(2), 32(3)(b)

- In the progress monitoring inspection of April 2016, these standards were still not met because some of the details about provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and for pupils who speak English as an additional language were inaccurate.
- There is a new policy for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and for pupils who speak English as an additional language. These are combined, giving the incorrect impression that pupils who speak English as an additional language also have special educational needs. The policies themselves, however, are now accurate and appropriate. Consequently, these standards are now met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33, 33g, (j)(i)(ii), 33(j)(i) and (ii)

- The inspector, in the inspection in October 2015, judged this standard to be not met because leaders had not made clear that on the occasion of a complaint one panel

member should be independent of the management and running of the school. In the progress monitoring inspection of April 2016, these standards were met.

- There is no written record of complaints because there have been no complaints. This also means that the panel has not had to sit and hear any allegations. These standards are met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)

- The inspector, in the inspection in October 2015, judged these standards to be not met, particularly in relation to the welfare of pupils. In the progress monitoring inspection of April 2016, these standards were still not met.
- Leaders have made good progress to ensure that they meet the standards. However, some standards remain unmet. Consequently, these standards relating to the quality of the leadership and management and welfare also remain unmet.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

The school does not meet the following independent school standards

Standards that were not met at the previous inspection and remain unmet at this inspection

- 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)).
- The information specified in sub-paragraph (3) is made available to parents of pupils and parents of prospective pupils and, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate (paragraph 32, 32(1)(b)).
- The proprietor must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently; fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and actively promote the well-being of pupils (paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)).

The school now meets the following independent school standards

- The proprietor must ensure that the teaching at the school enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught (paragraph 3 and 3(a)).
- The proprietor must ensure that teaching at the school shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons (paragraph 3 and 3(d)).
- The proprietor must ensure that the teaching at the school demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress (paragraph 3 and 3(g)).
- The proprietor must ensure that the welfare of the pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy (paragraph 16 and 16(a)). Appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified (paragraph 16(b)).
- The school should provide particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils with education, health and care plans and pupils for whom English is an additional language (paragraph 32, 32(3)(b)).
- Where there is a panel hearing of a complaint, the school should ensure one panel member is independent of the management and running of the school (paragraph 33g and 33(j), 33(j)(ii)).

School details

Unique reference number	106158
DfE registration number	356/6021
Inspection number	10034447

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	Independent school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	3
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	0
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Dr R S Slack
Chair	Not applicable
Headteacher	Dr Roger Slack
Annual fees (day pupils)	Nil
Telephone number	0161 4323782
Website	www.covenant-christian-school.co.uk
Email address	info@covenant-christian-school.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	6–7 October 2015

Information about this school

- The school is part of a registered charity called The Christian Education Trust. There are five trustees. The management committee is composed of parents and teachers and can have up to nine members.

- The school is located on the ground and basement floors of a Victorian detached house in Heaton Chapel. There are a number of separate buildings within the grounds, but outside the house, which are occasionally used as teaching spaces.
- Two pupils started two weeks ago, having transferred from a local school. At the time of the inspection, there were two classes, one for the key stage 2 pupils and one for the pupil in key stage 1.
- The school does not use alternative provision. No pupils sat the national assessments in 2016.
- The school received a full inspection in October 2015 when it failed to meet a number of the independent school standards. It received a progress monitoring visit in April 2016.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the Department for Education (the registration authority for independent schools). The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- The inspector looked through a number of documents including the school's risk assessments and policies. He spoke with a teacher about the tracking and assessment system and looked through pupils' work. He discussed systems to protect children with the headteacher and a member of the management committee.

Inspection team

Allan Torr, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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