

Inspection of Greater Grace School of Christian Education

Church Lane, Backford, Chester, Cheshire CH2 4BE

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 March 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

No

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at this small, caring and friendly school. They like their teachers and make firm friendships. Pupils benefit from the individual attention that their teachers give to them. They feel safe in school and confident that they can share any concerns that they have with adults. Pupils said that should any bullying occur, teachers would deal with it swiftly and effectively.

Leaders are determined that each pupil will achieve well. To fulfil this aim, leaders have put in place a broad curriculum, firmly rooted in Christianity. In some subjects including mathematics and English, pupils achieve well. However, in many other subjects in the wider curriculum, pupils' learning is less secure.

Pupils behave well. They try their best in their work and are keen to contribute to class discussions and debates. Pupils strive to earn merits for positive behaviour. They enjoy exchanging their merit awards in the school shop.

The school provides a tranquil space for pupils to learn in. Pupils enjoy spending time in the beautiful school grounds, playing football, chatting with friends and relaxing. At breaktimes and lunchtimes, leaders provide pupils with a wide selection of activities and games. Pupils value the events in school, for example, when celebrating birthdays.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

For subjects taught through the school's core curriculums, including English, mathematics, science, social studies and religious education, leaders follow a Bible-based curriculum. The school's core curriculums are well matched to pupils' needs. In these subjects, leaders have identified the most important information that pupils need to learn. The curriculums are carefully organised. This ensures that pupils make logical steps in their learning. They have plenty of opportunities to revisit and strengthen important aspects of these curriculums.

In the core curriculums, teachers make regular checks to ensure that pupils know and remember more. Through mini-quizzes and quick tests, leaders gain a precise knowledge of how well pupils are progressing. Where needed, teachers give pupils additional time and support to address any parts of their learning that they struggle with.

In subjects not taught through the core curriculums, including music, French and physical education, leaders have not set out the exact knowledge that they intend pupils to learn and remember. Less thought has been given by leaders to the end points that they want pupils to work towards. Consequently, pupils do not build their learning on what they already know. They do not deepen their understanding in these subjects. Leaders began addressing weaknesses in the non-core curriculums following the previous inspection. However, their efforts to improve them have been hampered by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pupils learn to read in carefully ordered steps. The texts that pupils read are closely matched to their reading ability. Across subjects, teachers give pupils daily opportunities to read. Teachers ensure that pupils gain an understanding of new and varied vocabulary. Pupils develop as confident, fluent and accurate readers.

Staff work closely with parents and carers to ensure that the needs of any pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified. Teachers make careful adaptations to their teaching in order to support these pupils with their learning, when needed. Staff ensure that any pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers.

Pupils value their learning. They attend school very regularly and concentrate well in class. They complete their written work with care. Pupils show consideration and respect to others. They are polite and friendly to visitors.

Teachers ensure that pupils develop personally and are well prepared for their next steps. Teachers provide pupils with daily time for prayer and reflection. Pupils learn about other religions, such as Judaism. They benefit from visiting a range of museums and places of interest. Pupils learn about different cultures and appreciate difference. They enjoy taking part in debates and discussions about interesting topics. They also learn important social skills, such as understanding the differing views of others.

Leaders provide unbiased careers advice for pupils. Through regular visits to careers fairs, pupils find out about a wide range of careers and opportunities. They learn about the different skills and knowledge that will help them in future careers. Pupils move with success to a range of colleges and schools.

Staff value working at the school. They share a passion to provide the very best for pupils in their care. Staff support each other well, sharing ideas and expertise. They work closely with the proprietor body and are able to discuss any concerns.

The proprietor body keeps a regular check on the provision for pupils. They ensure that safeguarding systems and policies are in place. They make sure that the building is well maintained and that repairs needed are undertaken. Classrooms are bright and spacious.

The independent school standards (the standards) for leadership and management are not met because the proprietor body had not ensured that external lighting is provided in order to ensure that people can safely enter and leave the school premises when dark. In other areas, the proprietor body fulfil their statutory duties and ensure that the school is a safe place. For example, they check that fire safety regulations and risk assessments are compliant.

The proprietor body has ensured that the school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. For example, they make sure that staff, pupils and visitors are

treated equally and with respect. Leaders have an appropriate accessibility plan in place which is published on the school's website.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all staff have regular safeguarding training. This means that staff are alert to possible signs of abuse.

Leaders follow the latest government guidance when dealing with any safeguarding concerns. They have ensured that the safeguarding policy is up to date and published on the school's website. Leaders work closely with external agencies to protect pupils when needed.

Through the curriculum, pupils find out about situations which may lead to harm, including when they are online. They learn about the dangers of drugs and alcohol. Pupils know what steps to take when they feel unsafe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In some subjects, the structure of the curriculum does not make clear what pupils should learn and when they should learn it. This means that pupils do not build their learning on what they already know and can do. Leaders should ensure that in these subjects, they identify the important knowledge pupils need to secure before moving on to new learning. They should also identify the end points in these curriculums that they intend pupils to work towards.
- The proprietor body has not ensured that leaders are meeting all of the standards. At present, there is no external lighting to the school building. The proprietor body should ensure that this issue is rectified so that people can safely enter and leave the school premises when it is dark.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	131791
DfE registration number	896/6027
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10210337
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	4
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Trustees of Greater Grace School of Christian Education
Chair	Alastair Craddock
Headteacher	Anne Mulligan
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,472 to £2,976
Telephone number	01244 851797
Website	greatergracechristianschool.com
Email address	greatergraces@gmail.com
Date of previous inspection	9 to 11 April 2019

Information about this school

- The previous standard inspection took place on 9 to 11 April 2019.
- This is a Christian school.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

The school has failed to meet the independent school standards. These are the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history and personal, social, health and economic education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with teachers to discuss curriculums, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also visited some lessons. Inspectors spoke with teachers about curriculums and looked at schemes of work in some other subjects.
- During the inspection, inspectors spoke with pupils about school life. They spoke with the headteacher, members of staff and a member of the proprietor body.
- There was one response to Ofsted Parent View. There were no responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff or pupils.
- During the inspection, inspectors reviewed a range of documentation including that in relation to safeguarding and information relating to the independent school standards. They looked at records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors checked the school premises.

Inspection team

Elizabeth Stevens, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Tim Sherriff

Ofsted Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school failed to meet the following independent school standards

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 27(b) external lighting is provided in order to ensure that people can safely enter and leave the school premises.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school-
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

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