

New Life Christian Academy

New Life Christian Centre, Bridlington Avenue, Hull HU2 0DU

Inspection dates

25–27 April 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Governors have not ensured that the leadership and management of the school have the capacity to be sustained during the absence of the headteacher. Consequently, systems to monitor the quality of teaching and learning have been neglected and the school is not improving.
- Teachers' assessment of pupils' academic attainment is not accurate and therefore shows an inflated picture of attainment and progress.
- Pupils, particularly the most able, do not make the progress they are capable of.
- Children in the early years do not have an appropriate balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning, and they do not learn through planned purposeful play.
- Leaders and managers have not ensured that the independent school standards or the early years statutory requirements have been met.
- Governors have not ensured that they, and other leaders and managers, have the appropriate safeguarding training or that incidents and accidents are monitored effectively.
- Teachers do not help pupils well enough during lessons. As a result, pupils do not fully understand what they are learning.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too often not high enough.
- Staff in the early years do not have a secure knowledge of how children of this age learn and develop.
- Older pupils do not get the opportunity to actively demonstrate tolerance and respect to others outside their own community.
- Governors have not addressed effectively the areas for improvement identified at the time of the previous inspection.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors and, as a rule, behave well in lessons.
- Pupils take on roles of responsibility with enthusiasm and many manage and run out-of-school clubs.

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 leadership and management by:
 - increasing the capacity of leadership and management so that, in the absence of the headteacher, the academic and welfare needs of pupils are better met
 - ensuring that assessments of pupils' learning are accurate
 - ensuring a more accurate and focused approach to school improvement
 - ensuring that all staff, including governors, are appropriately trained to improve pupils' safety
 - improving the monitoring of behavioural incidents and accidents so that potential trends and patterns can be identified and concerns tackled.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils make progress that is at least in line with their capabilities by ensuring that:
 - accurate assessments of pupils' current abilities are used to plan appropriate learning
 - pupils are supported during lessons so that they fully understand the work they are completing
 - teachers have higher and more accurate expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - pupils are provided with more opportunities to embed and reinforce skills they have learned through a range of contexts.
- Improve learning in the early years by ensuring that:
 - children learn through an appropriate balance of adult-led and child-initiated planned purposeful play and activities
 - the outside area becomes a better learning environment for children
 - staff working with these children have a more secure knowledge of how they learn and develop.

The school must meet the following independent school standards

- Part 1. Quality of education provided
 - The proprietor must ensure that all secondary education aged pupils receive up-to-date and impartial careers guidance. (Paragraphs 2(2)(e), 2(2)(e)(i), 2(2)(e)(ii), 2(2)(e)(iii))
 - The proprietor must ensure that pupils are effectively prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society. (Paragraph 2(2)(i))
 - The proprietor must ensure that teaching at the school enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress, gives them the ability to think and learn for themselves, involves well-planned lessons, ensures that needs and prior attainments are taken into account when planning lessons, demonstrates teachers' good subject

knowledge, utilises good classroom resources and uses assessment information to plan teaching. (Paragraphs 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(g), 3(h), 3(i), 3(j))

- Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
 - The proprietor must ensure that they actively promote mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs so that pupils develop self-knowledge. They must actively promote tolerance and respect for their own and other cultures, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics. (Paragraphs 5, 5(a), 5(b)(i), 5(b)(v), 5(b)(vi))
- Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils
 - The proprietor must ensure that arrangements to safeguard pupils have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State. (Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b))
- Part 6. Provision of information
 - The proprietor must ensure that information on the school's academic performance during the preceding school year is made available to parents of pupils, prospective parents and, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate. (Paragraphs 32(1)(b), 32(3)(e))
- Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools.
 - The proprietor must ensure that those with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role, fulfil their responsibilities and actively promote the well-being of pupils. (Paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c))

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leadership and management are inadequate because, in the absence of the headteacher, there is no one in a leadership capacity in school. Therefore, the academic and welfare needs of pupils and the independent school standards are not met.
- Leaders and managers have not addressed areas for improvement identified at the last inspection.
- Leaders have not completed any external moderation of assessments on academic performance. Therefore, the picture of pupils' achievements is overly positive, as is the overall evaluation of the school. This has led to insufficient focus on school improvement.
- The headteacher has a clear system in place to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. Her evaluations link to annual appraisals of staff performance and accurately note that some teaching in supplementary lessons is good. However, learning in Packets of Accelerated Christian Education (PACE) lessons is not evaluated. When the headteacher is absent, monitoring of teaching and learning does not take place.
- Pupils experience all areas of learning across the curriculum. Clubs they attend, visitors to school and visits enhance their experiences further.
- The headteacher and governors were unable to confirm which, or how many, places of further education or employers accept or recognise the International Certificate in Christian Education qualification. Nationally recognised qualifications, such as GCSEs in English, mathematics and science, are just being developed in school. Therefore, pupils' choices may be extremely limited at the next stage of their education, training or employment.
- Pupils do not receive impartial careers advice. This hinders pupils' knowledge of what their choices may be at the next stage of education, training or employment and how they fit in with their aspirations.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is generally good. Pupils have the opportunity to learn about different religions, cultures and lifestyles through open, honest and lively debates. This helps them to understand the diversity that we find in Britain today.
- Younger pupils regularly take part in events with peer groups in different settings to help them actively demonstrate the tolerance and respect they learn about in school. However, this active participation in events is not extended to older pupils. This limits older pupils' opportunities to actively demonstrate tolerance and respect outside their own community.
- All pupils learn about British values in assemblies and through discussions and debates in school. Debates are often lively and heated but a healthy respect is evident for the opinions of others. Regular visitors to school also help pupils learn about British values.

Governance

- Governors have not ensured that those with the responsibility for overseeing teaching and learning have the skills to do so. They have neglected to ensure that staff have clear roles and responsibilities. There have been long periods of time when governors have not

effectively monitored pupils' welfare and academic progress. They do not challenge information they receive from school staff and do not take the necessary steps to ensure that information, particularly academic information, is accurate. Consequently, the capacity in the leadership of the school for improvement is limited, as is the progress pupils make.

- Governors are keen to make this school a good school again.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Staff ensure that risk assessments are thorough, that all appropriate checks on adults are made and that any concerns over pupil safety are immediately addressed. However, training requirements in government guidelines are not followed, particularly for those staff with responsibilities for safeguarding. Consequently, pupils are potentially at risk.
- The headteacher, in her capacity as designated safeguarding lead, ensures that all incidents, concerns and referrals are well documented. She also ensures that appropriate action is taken and links with external professionals made when necessary. She engages well with parents to make sure that pupils are supported and safe.
- Governors have ensured that a suitable safeguarding policy is published and available for parents on the school's website.
- Staff record behavioural incidents and accidents on appropriate forms. However, these incidents are not monitored to see if there are any patterns or trends occurring which could be addressed to prevent them from occurring again.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- The absence of some teachers has affected the quality of teaching in the last 12 months.
- Teachers have an overinflated view of what pupils have achieved. Teachers have no impartial external checks of their assessment information about pupils' achievements. Therefore, when teachers use assessment information to plan learning, expectations are often too low.
- Teachers do not insist on basic skills being done well. They do not give pupils the opportunity to use these skills, particularly mathematical skills, in a range of contexts to embed learning.
- In PACE lessons, pupils work in booths they call offices and teachers' interaction with pupils is limited. Consequently, misunderstandings and misconceptions are not identified or addressed during the lessons.
- In PACE lessons, pupils too often spend time completing mundane and easy tasks which do not allow them to make the progress they are capable of.
- Pupils read well and read from a range of texts. However, when questioned, they have a limited understanding of the text as comprehension skills are often weak. These skills are not well taught.
- Teachers do not challenge pupils enough to increase the level of complexity in their work.

- In supplementary lessons, teachers are generally more effective at assessing how pupils are learning and teachers adapt learning so that better progress can be made.
- In some lessons, teachers' expectations are higher and therefore work is more appropriately matched to the pupils' abilities, helping them to make better progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Pupils, particularly older pupils, have limited opportunity to mix with those who may have different beliefs and lifestyles than those found in their small school community. This hinders pupils' ability to experience those who are different from themselves and therefore demonstrate tolerance and respect.
- Pupils do not receive impartial careers advice. They have high aspirations but the lack of advice means that they do not know if the qualifications they are studying are going to be useful for their next steps in education, training or employment.
- Older pupils are aware of how to keep themselves safe when using the internet and understand mobile technology and its potential pitfalls with regards to safety and welfare.
- Pupils enjoy taking on roles of responsibility. For example, pupils organise and manage a computing club and a singing club. They confidently use their skills to help others.
- Pupils learn about a range of religions and gain knowledge of the different lifestyles found in Britain today. Activities such as creating a presentation about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 lead to open and honest discussions at an age-appropriate level about sensitive topics such as child sexual exploitation.
- Teachers ensure that, where work completed within the PACE curriculum may appear unduly biased, for example with regard to protected characteristics, pupils do not complete these pages in the workbook.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Pupils comment that, on occasion, a few pupils are not as respectful to some teachers as they should be. They also comment that, from time to time, teachers treat some pupils more favourably than others.
- Pupils are polite and courteous. They are friendly and welcoming to visitors and spoke honestly and articulately to the inspectors. They are happy and mix well together.
- Pupils are aware that the behaviour policy with its guidance on rewards and sanctions is complex. However, they know what the system is and how it works.
- Pupils' attendance is high.
- Pupils whose behaviour has been less than acceptable and has, on occasion, led to an exclusion consider that their behaviour has improved considerably.
- Parents are very positive with regards to standards of behaviour within school.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- From their starting points, pupils do not make the progress across all subjects that they are capable of. Work in books shows that standards are generally lower in all subjects than those of other pupils of the same age nationally.
- Some pupils reach standards in mathematics and English which are similar to pupils of the same age nationally. However, pupils do not make good progress from high starting points.
- Younger pupils make less progress than older pupils, particularly since September 2016.
- Teachers' lack of secure subject knowledge means that pupils, particularly the most able pupils, do not have the opportunity to move quickly on to more complex and challenging work.
- Leaders have only recently considered giving pupils the opportunity to complete nationally recognised qualifications in English, mathematics and science. However, progress and standards reached in these subjects are not clear due to the lack of accurate and moderated assessment information and the absence of specialist teachers.

Early years provision

Inadequate

- The quality of teaching and learning in the early years has declined considerably in the last 12 months and is not improving at a fast enough rate. Therefore, children are no longer as well prepared for the next key stage as they should be.
- The information teachers gather on children's achievement is accurate and has been externally checked for accuracy. However, the assessment information is now limited and is not organised well enough to help teachers plan children's next steps in learning.
- Adults do not ensure that children have the opportunity to learn through well-planned purposeful play activities, as required in the statutory early years framework.
- Adults do not use the outside space effectively enough so that it is a good learning environment.
- Interactions between adults and children are often focused on direct and closed questions and offer little in the way of developing more challenging learning.
- Adults are not able to demonstrate a knowledge of how children learn and develop. They do not take into account the need for a range of both child-led and adult-initiated activities.
- Too often, children are prevented from learning as opportunities are missed. For example, children were told not to play with buckets when they were trying to catch dripping rainwater outside. The wide range of learning opportunities that could have evolved from this activity were lost as children were redirected to an activity where they were asked to identify shapes.
- Leaders have not addressed the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection as work is not set accurately to meet the children's needs.

- Children generally enter the early years at a level typical of or generally better than that expected. In the past, they have made good progress from these high starting points. However, currently the progress they make is not as good as it could be or has been.
- Children behave very well. They need very little direction from adults to maintain these high standards of behaviour. They share equipment gladly with their peer group and older children. Children are happy and develop good relationships.

School details

Unique reference number	136207
DfE registration number	810/6005
Inspection number	10033920

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	four to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	20
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Revive Church, Hull, formerly New Life Church, Hull
Chair of Governors	Stewart McKinlay
Headteacher	Joanne Bickerton
Annual fees (day pupils)	£3,000
Telephone number	01482 219 670
Website	www.newlifeacademy.co.uk
Email address	joanne@newlifelifehull.org
Date of previous inspection	June 2014

Information about this school

- The New Life Christian Academy is registered for up to 40 boys and girls between the ages of four and 19.
- There are currently 20 pupils on roll from early years to Year 10, who are taught in two classes.
- The school provides a Christian-focused education but accepts pupils who may have different or no religious beliefs.

- None of the pupils currently on roll have a disability, a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The school was previously inspected in June 2014, when it was judged to be good.
- The school operates from one site and does not give or receive services from any other provider.
- The school follows the American Accelerated Christian Education curriculum. Pupils learn through completing a series of workbooks called PACEs and are taught towards the International Certificate in Christian Education. The school is currently introducing GCSEs in English, mathematics and science.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out over two and half days by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.
- Inspectors held meetings and telephone conversations with the headteacher, teaching staff and governors, including the chair of the governing body, who is also the chair of the proprietorial trust.
- Inspectors spoke to a number of parents and also took into account 10 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors spoke to all pupils either formally or informally at different times during the school day. They heard pupils read and considered work in books and PACE workbooks for current and past pupils.
- Teaching was observed at different times of the school day, as was behaviour.
- The inspectors toured the building both inside and outside to ensure that the relevant independent school standards were met and that pupils' welfare is taken into account.
- The inspectors examined school documentation, including a range of policies required as part of the independent school standards. Documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour and welfare, as well as health and safety documents, were also studied.

Inspection team

Jo Sharpe, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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