

Emmanuel Christian School

Didsbury Street, Braunstone, Leicester LE3 1QP

Inspection dates

30 September – 2 October
2015

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The quality of teaching throughout the school and across subject areas is inconsistent.
- The progress of pupils across all subjects is variable. Pupils generally make better progress in English and mathematics than in other subjects.
- The systems used to assess pupils' learning across all subjects except English and mathematics do not further promote pupils' learning well enough.
- Staff and volunteers are not provided with sufficient opportunities for professional development.
- The impact of adult support in lessons is not always effective and is inconsistent across the school.
- Provision for secondary pupils to access a good quality programme of careers education is not in place. Pupils have limited opportunity to receive independent advice and guidance about future courses of study, training and employment.
- Not all of the independent school standards are met in relation to the curriculum, premises and accommodation.
- Subject leaders do not check pupils' progress or the quality of teaching well enough.
- The proprietorial body, which is the governing body in this school, does not gather enough information about the quality of teaching, learning, and safeguarding of pupils to support its work.
- The way in which the curriculum time is organised does not always engage all pupils in the most effective way.

The school has the following strengths

- The schools' reputation for providing an environment where pupils feel highly valued and cared for is well deserved.
- The school promotes British values very well. Pupils demonstrate a strong understanding of democracy and show tolerance and respect in all they do. The school promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils very well.
- Through effective work with other agencies the school meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs well.
- Parents are unwavering in their support of the school, and the partnership between home and school greatly enhances the pupils' education.
- The behaviour of pupils is consistently good. Pupils are polite and well mannered.
- Pupils in the early years make good progress in their learning.
- Staff morale is exceptionally high. Leaders, teachers, support staff and volunteers all contribute to make the school a happy place for pupils.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulation 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 the quality of teaching so that pupils make consistently good progress across all subjects by ensuring that:
 - all adults who teach pupils have access to high-quality feedback about their work, which informs the next stages of their professional development
 - teachers' feedback to pupils is consistently good and used more effectively by pupils to improve their work
 - additional adults in lessons are consistently effective in supporting pupils to achieve the next steps of their learning.
- Improve pupil outcomes in all subjects by ensuring that:
 - subject coordinators have good quality policies and schemes of work in place
 - individual subject assessment systems are all in line with the school's assessment policy
 - regular checks are made on all pupils' attainment and this informs the next steps of their learning.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring:
 - governors gather regular information about the quality of teaching, learning and safeguarding practice to inform their future work
 - the headteacher is given sufficient time to fulfil all of his responsibilities.
- The school must meet the following independent school standards:
 - ensure that for pupils receiving secondary education, access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance, that is presented in an impartial manner, enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options, and helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential (paragraph 2, 2(2)(e), 2(2)(e)(i), 2(2)(e)(ii), 2(2)(e)(iii))
 - ensure suitable changing accommodation and showers are provided for pupils aged 11 years and over at the start of the school year who receive physical education (paragraph 23(1)(c)).

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

requires improvement

- School leaders have not acted quickly enough on recommendations highlighted in previous inspection reports.
- The professional development of staff and volunteers is not a high enough priority for the school. Staff are very supportive of each other and give of their time freely to support colleagues. However this work is too ad hoc and does not help to accelerate the progress of pupils as well as it should. The performance management process for staff is not rigorous enough and is not sufficiently focused on improving outcomes for pupils.
- Planning in some subjects lacks depth. In Key Stages 3 and 4, for example, there is limited planning for physical education and therefore the learning is slowed. Pupils told inspectors that they would like more choice of subjects at Key Stage 4.
- Checks on the quality of teaching are too often focused on the actions of the teacher and do not pay enough attention to how well pupils are learning.
- The curriculum provided for all pupils across all age groups is broad and balanced. The National Curriculum has been used as a basis for planning across subjects. The Christian ethos of the school enhances the curriculum by providing a set of principles upon which teachers build their planning for pupils' learning.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual development is a significant strength of the school. Pupils are provided with guidance, which allows them to develop their faith, and guiding principles for their life. A moral code underpins all of the school's work and is enacted in all the behaviours of the staff and volunteers.
- The social development of the pupils is promoted through good use of family groups across the school, where pupils of different ages are given opportunities to spend time with each other. Cultural development is enhanced through opportunities to learn about other religions and ways of life.
- The school caters well for pupils who come from other countries, including those of a different faith. This diversity greatly enriches pupils' understanding of the wider world.
- The culture of the school is exceptionally positive. The headteacher, senior staff and governors have been very successful in creating an environment where everyone feels like they can thrive. Pupils' well-being and their emotional development are always at the forefront of leaders' minds and this means that pupils feel very well cared for.
- Staff are highly engaged with their work and have high levels of motivation. A parent commented that: 'The teachers are extremely considerate and lovely. You can see it's more than just a job for them, there is a genuine care and concern for the children.'
- Pupils are well-prepared for life in modern Britain. They are taught about different faiths and democracy throughout the curriculum. The excellent examples of tolerance and respect shown by the adults in the school successfully promote this aspect of pupils' development. One teacher, who is also a parent, said: 'My faith is what I believe to be true but I also respect that other people believe different things.' This sentiment is evident throughout the entire school.
- Leaders and governors engage well with parents and there have been no recorded complaints. Parents are extremely complimentary about the school, in the words of one: 'I am so happy to be able to send my son to Emmanuel School! He is blossoming each week, both in what he learns academically and in his character. The love and support of the staff and teachers in the welfare and the education of our children is excellent.' This comment was typical of the responses received by inspectors during the inspection.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body have not ensured that all of the independent school standards have been met. The schools' own self-evaluation indicated that they did not meet the standard related to careers education and guidance. However, no rigorous action plan had been produced to address this piece of work.
 - The governing body have not got enough oversight of all aspects of safeguarding pupils. The safeguarding of pupils is effective, pupils feel safe and an appropriate safeguarding policy is in place. However, the headteacher is not allocated enough time to ensure this aspect of the schools' work is exemplary.
 - Governors have not focused enough recently on the learning of pupils. They have a limited understanding of pupils' progress in different areas of the curriculum.
 - Governors have a good understanding about the general running of the school. They make regular visits to the school, both in relation to supporting in classrooms and for focused visits, which help to increase their understanding of the school's work.

- Governors and the supporting 'Spiritual Oversight Committee' are very effective at ensuring the Christian ethos of the school is a high priority. The work of these groups has a significant impact on the positive culture of the school, where pupils feel well supported to achieve their individual potential.
- The Chair of Governors and members of the governing body are highly committed to the work of the school. They give of their time freely and responded positively to the feedback from inspectors during and after the inspection process.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because the quality of lessons pupils experience varies too much across age groups and subjects. Older pupils told inspectors that they get the information they need to improve their work in English, mathematics and science but not in other subjects so much. The more regular checks by teachers on pupils' learning in the early years, in English and in mathematics are not as evident in other subject areas. This means that teachers and leaders do not have the most accurate information about pupil's attainment from which to plan the next steps of their learning effectively.
- The quality of planning is variable. In weaker lessons the emphasis in planning reflects how much pupils will do rather than what they will learn. As a result of this, in lessons where pupils do not make good progress, work is not challenging enough or activities are not adjusted to suit the needs of all the pupils. Pupils then start to get distracted and miss opportunities to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills.
- The inconsistencies in assessment practice across many subjects lead to teachers not having enough up-to-date information about how well pupils are learning. Not enough opportunities are created for teachers to check how well pupils are progressing. This means that school leaders cannot be certain that all pupils are making the progress they could be. When asked by inspectors about the next steps for their learning, Key Stage 2 pupils were unable to clearly identify what they needed to do in order to make progress.
- In stronger lessons, teachers' planning does take into account different expectations for pupils. This, combined with excellent relationships between staff and pupils, led to pupils in these lessons quickly starting to make better progress. This was seen to good effect during a Key Stage 3 mathematics lesson where the teacher and highly knowledgeable adult volunteer circulated around the room in a low-key manner questioning and supporting pupils with their learning.
- School leaders view the yearly parental reports as useful information from which they can ascertain how well pupils are learning. They are also viewed by school leaders as being helpful for teachers to plan targets for pupils. Inspectors found that the school's reports to parents do not evaluate enough how well pupils are learning in each subject and what their next steps should be.
- The school lacks suitable changing and showering facilities. This inhibits the teaching of physical education. Otherwise, the school accommodation, including the lighting and acoustics, is adequate. The addition of a temporary classroom and use of a science laboratory at a local school has helped teachers to deliver better lessons.
- Teachers have established links with other schools which provide Emmanuel Christian School with support to deliver GCSE courses. Colleagues from other schools have generously given of their time to help moderate teachers' judgements about pupils' progress and support controlled assessments. This recent development is supporting the professional development of staff.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare require improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. This is because of the limited provision for careers education and independent advice and guidance for pupils.
- The physical and emotional well-being of pupils is taken seriously by staff and volunteers, and is successfully promoted by them because they know the pupils so well. Pupils' individual needs are considered and acted upon. A pupil commented that the school felt like an 'extended family' to him and that he felt 'well cared for'. These comments are similar to many made by the pupils throughout the inspection.
- Regular fire drills mean that pupils are confident about what to do in the case of a fire. Older pupils

stated that they feel safer now than they did a few years ago, when the car park gates were always left open. The headteacher works closely with the landlord of the building to ensure all the areas are safe.

- Secondary-aged pupils demonstrate a well-developed and mature understanding of their personal safety, as seen, for example, in recently signed contracts they made with the school about staying safe online. The curriculum has yet to reflect this aspect of pupils' learning so well for primary aged pupils.
- The school provides pupils with regular assemblies, which focus on their personal development. The school welcomes a range of visitors to lead their assemblies, including representatives from the emergency services, public services and other faiths. These opportunities enhance pupils' understanding of life in modern Britain.
- The curriculum is designed to allow pupils the opportunity to visit places of interest related to their work. These visits are carefully risk assessed and clearly complement the work pupils are doing in school. Recently, Key Stage 2 pupils successfully took part in a concert with the Philharmonia Orchestra at the local De Montfort Hall.
- School leaders are clear that they aim to prepare the pupils' characters and to enable them to become good citizens. They do this successfully by being excellent role models, reflecting their Christian values.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. It is not outstanding because pupils do not always demonstrate a high level of engagement with what they are required to learn in all their lessons. During a visit to the local sports venue, for example, when secondary pupils had to wait for the sports coach to arrive, their behaviour fell below that expected of them in school.
- Bullying is rare. The characteristics of tolerance and respect for each other is reinforced through the moral teaching of the school, particularly in any instances where children fall out with each other.
- Pupils come prepared for lessons with well-organised books, files and equipment. They generally demonstrate a positive attitude to their work and school.
- Pupils are very polite to visitors.
- The overall attendance of pupils is good and family holidays during term time are rare. Where there are instances of non-attendance the headteacher makes contact before 11am on the first day of absence, and continues to follow this up as necessary. Pupils are punctual at the beginning of the day, with many arriving early in order to get themselves ready for the day ahead. Pupils usually arrive to lessons and registration on time, and any lateness is swiftly addressed by staff.
- Emmanuel School has not used exclusion as a strategy to improve or sanction behaviour. The school places most emphasis on the rewarding of positive behaviours. During an achievement assembly observed by an inspector, the pupils showed enthusiasm and pride in their peers gaining awards for stars of the week in academic achievement, social skills and Christian values.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- The outcomes for pupils require improvement because there is considerable variation across different subjects and age groups.
- Pupils are not well enough prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment because of the lack of a coherent programme of careers education and independent advice and guidance. Last academic year, the oldest pupils only received a short independent careers interview and a visit to a careers exhibition in Birmingham.
- There is no discernible difference in progress of any identified group of pupils. The school does not formally identify any pupils as being disadvantaged. There are no pupils who are looked after by a local authority.
- Some pupils make good progress in mathematics. Individual assessment files, pupils' work in books, evidence seen during lessons, and discussions with pupils and teachers demonstrate that some pupils are making or exceeding expected progress in mathematics. The most-able pupils generally attain the level expected of them by the end of each key stage. However, the progress made by all pupils in mathematics is not always consistently good across all age groups.
- Some pupils make expected or above-expected progress in English, but this is variable across the school. Pupils generally read well, and their discussion skills are strong. The small group teaching, combined with more effective assessments, is used effectively so that pupils learn quickly and gain in confidence. In an English lesson with pupils in Key Stage 4, the pupils reviewed their marked work and responded to the

feedback with maturity. This allowed the pupils to understand their individual learning needs and promoted good outcomes within that particular lesson.

- The small cohort of pupils in Year 11 during the last academic year achieved GCSE results across a range of subjects, each gaining 5 A*-C grades including English and mathematics, demonstrating good levels of attainment.
- Pupils who are identified as having English as an additional language are supported well by the school. Additional adult support is often used to accelerate the pupils' learning of English, particularly reading. This enables pupils to quickly access the wider curriculum offered to them and also helps them to benefit by developing friendships with other pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are identified effectively because staff know the pupils so well. Leaders make good use of the skills of both employed staff and volunteers when providing extra support to these students during their lessons. The school works effectively with other agencies to support pupils who require additional specialist support. Parents report that the support given by the staff and the effective way in which the school works with other agencies help their children make progress.

Early years provision

is good

- The provision meets the independent school standards and the Government welfare requirements in relation to the early years.
- Children enter the Reception class with attainment levels that are generally typical or more than typical for their age. They leave Reception with a good level of development and make greater progress in the area of communication and language.
- Inspectors have graded the early years provision higher than the rest of the school because children have access to better assessment systems and, as a result, more focused teaching. This is evident in the teaching of phonics (letters and their sounds) where the information teachers gather about children's learning clearly focuses their work and that of the additional adult support in the classroom. Inspectors observed staff and volunteers using a good level of questioning with children and then adapting the pace of the lesson in reaction to the children's responses.
- The early years provision is well led by a knowledgeable and experienced member of staff who has taken into account the statutory requirements of the early years. These have been combined with the aims of the school to provide children with a curriculum that quickly helps to promote their learning and develop their individual characters.
- The staff and volunteers have a good understanding of the emotional needs of each child, which they used well to enhance the children's personal development and welfare. Older pupils provide excellent role models, which successfully helps to promote good behaviour. The school provides opportunities for all pupils to mix with each other, consequently younger children quickly start to display more mature behaviours.
- The Reception and Key Stage 1 teaching spaces are structured to provide a smooth transition for children as they move up to start a more formal curriculum. Staff and volunteers take the time to discuss the academic and social needs of each child as they move through the youngest year groups, helping the children to be well prepared for Year 1.
- Parents contribute to the initial assessment made about their children and are kept well informed of their child's progress throughout their time in the early years. One parent said that he was delighted with the quality of reports from the school, and that his child had made extremely good progress in the short time he had attended the school. He described the staff in the early year's provision as 'leaving no stone unturned'.
- The curriculum is well planned, with the characteristics of effective learning as a basis for its implementation. Pupils would benefit from more time to play and explore, which would enhance their independent skills. The outdoor area could be used more effectively to support children's learning.

School details

Unique reference number	134595
Inspection number	10007859

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

DfE registration number	856/6018
Type of school	Co-educational day school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	4–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	45
Proprietor	The governing body
Chair	Ms Patricia Wells
Headteacher	Mr David Baynes
Annual fees (day pupils)	10% of family income to a maximum of £4000
Telephone number	0116 2220792
Website	www.leicesterchristianschool.org
Email address	office@leicesterchristianschool.org
Date of previous inspection	4–7 July 2011

Information about this school

- Emmanuel Christian School has been located in its current premises in the Braunstone Evangelical Free Church since it was established in 2003.
- The Department for Education approved the school as one of special religious character in 2004.
- The school was originally for primary-aged pupils. It now provides education for pupils aged 4–16 years of age.
- Pupils travel to the school from across the city of Leicester and beyond. The school has obtained a licence from the Home Office so that it can admit overseas students.
- The school rents the main building from Braunstone Evangelical Free Church. The building has been modified to meet the needs of the youngest pupils. The school has extended the space available by the use of a temporary classroom in the grounds.
- The school aims to provide a Christian, God-centred education which equips pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- The school welcomes pupils of different faiths to be educated at the school.
- The headteacher is the only full-time member of staff. There is a mixture of part-time staff and volunteers who undertake teaching and support roles.
- The last full inspection of Emmanuel Christian School by Bridge Schools Inspectorate took place in July 2011.

Information about this inspection

- Ofsted announced the inspection to the headteacher the day before the inspection started.
- Inspectors formally observed nine lessons. Due to the small size of the building, inspectors were able to gather a full picture of how pupils experience their days at the school.
- Inspectors observed pupils arriving at school, assemblies, breaktimes, lunchtimes and the end of the school day.
- Several meetings were held with the headteacher to gather information and to keep him fully informed about the inspection process.
- Inspectors were able to have frequent conversations with pupils and also held formal meetings with small groups from different year groups.
- The lead inspector met separately with three governors.
- Inspectors met with all members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors talked to several parents and took into account the responses to Parent View (Ofsted’s online questionnaire for parents)
- The Ofsted inspector conducted meetings with a specific focus on early years education and special educational needs.
- There were 11 responses to the staff questionnaire and these were evaluated by the inspection team.
- The inspectors were unable to speak to the Chair of the Governing Body during the inspection due to her being out of the country.

Inspection team

Phil Harrison, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Janis Warren

Ofsted Inspector

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