

Inspection report
Emmanuel
School
Independent school
DfES ref no: 831/6000

Inspection under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002

Dates of inspection: 13 - 16 November 2006

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by the Office for Standards in Education under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002 in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Emmanuel School is a subsidiary of East Midlands Christian Fellowships, a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. The Elders of the church are responsible for the oversight of the running of the school but a School Council comprising staff, elders and parents appointed by the elders act as the governing body.

The school exists to serve parents and the community by training and educating pupils, paying due attention to their spiritual, social, intellectual, emotional, physical and moral development. The education offered is based on Christian principles, within a biblical frame of reference, and takes place in a loving and disciplined environment where each child is valued and encouraged in the "fulfilment of their God-given potential."

Summary of main findings

Emmanuel School provides pupils with an effective and well-rounded education. The school is highly successful in promoting the Christian concepts which underpin its ethos. The quality of the curriculum and teaching are satisfactory. All pupils make satisfactory progress, however the monitoring of pupils' progress and assessment is inadequate. Pupils enjoy school and fully appreciate the support, care and consideration of the very committed staff. Teachers and all who work in the school, together with many parent volunteers, set very high expectations of pupils' discipline and the vast majority of pupils respond well. The quality of relationships is outstanding as seen in the high levels of interest shown for each pupil by every member of the school community. The accommodation is well managed and the school day runs smoothly.

What the school does well:

- it successfully achieves its vision of providing a secure and loving environment within which pupils can enjoy learning;
- it provides very well for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development;
- it enables pupils to make good progress in the Nursery and Reception years; and

- it successfully develops excellent relationships between pupils and with all adults..

What the school must do in order to comply with the regulations:

- ensure a framework is in place by which pupil performance can be evaluated by reference to either the school's own aims, as provided to parents and/or, by national norms;
- provide an annual written report to parents of the progress and attainment of each registered pupil in the main subject areas taught; and
- ensure the nursery provision is registered with the Department for Education and Skills (DfES).

Next Steps

Whilst not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- improve the consistency of the quality of teaching to match the best standards in the school; and
- improve the curriculum so that it identifies clearly how the pupils are to develop their skills and knowledge over time.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION

1. The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of the curriculum

The school offers a satisfactory curriculum with elements of good provision. A strength of the curriculum is how successfully it is developed in accordance with the school's Christian principles. For example, the inclusion of 'Heart concepts' in curriculum planning. This is highly successful in ensuring that pupils develop a good understanding of the character of God and his purposes for their lives. The curriculum is broad and generally adheres to the main aims and objectives of the National Curriculum. It is implemented in conjunction with published schemes and practices which the school has developed to help it achieve its aim to provide a '*Christ-centred*' education. Pupils get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes because the curriculum provided here is very carefully planned to provide a wealth of stimulating, creative, 'hands on' experiences which develop very positive attitudes to learning. Teachers in the Foundation Stage ensure a good balance between teacher- and pupil-led activities against a background of high expectations in all things.

The school provides effectively for pupils' personal, social and health education, much of which is implicit in the school's ethos or is taught through topic work and other subjects. The strength of this provision results in pupils developing as well-rounded individuals who behave sensibly, show respect and care for others. For example, the school's drinking and eating policy, combined with its emphasis on physical activity have resulted in pupils being able to make healthy lifestyle choices. The curriculum for physical education provides appropriately for the significant number of pupils who enjoy participation in a number of sporting tournaments. However, some pupils said they would like an opportunity to take part in activities after school which would cater for the needs of those with other than sporting or competitive interests or talents.

The curriculum is enriched by visitors to school and visits which help to bring learning alive for pupils. French is now being taught to older pupils. The contribution made by parents in the variety of roles they carry out in school considerably enhances the curriculum opportunities that the school is able to offer to pupils.

In Key Stage 1 and 2 planning for the organisation of the curriculum in subject areas is often carefully done. However, it is not consistent in showing progression in skills, knowledge and understanding in all areas of the curriculum. This has the effect of slowing the progress that pupils make. Information and communication technology (ICT) is not used enough to support learning in other subjects.

The school has a clear special needs policy, the aim of which is to provide for pupils of all academic abilities including those who find learning more difficult and those who have a recognised gift. These pupils are provided with effective support from a special needs teacher and a teaching assistant. A pupil whose home language is not English also receives good support.

The quality of teaching and assessment

The quality of the teaching is satisfactory and ranges from satisfactory to outstanding. Teaching is consistently good in Nursery and Reception classes where pupils make good progress. In Years 1-6 pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve well. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection.

Lessons are characterised by well-motivated pupils with high levels of concentration. Pupils appreciate the system of rewards and sanctions in school, they are eager to achieve merits and teachers' praise and these are a frequent feature of lessons. At the forefront of teachers' planning are 'Christian Concepts' which are integral to teaching and are founded upon biblical training. Committed teachers are highly effective in supporting an ethos of care and consideration for all. Planning for lessons is based upon an agreed lesson format. In a Year 3/4 lesson pupils learn quickly as they discuss authors such as Roald Dahl, read extracts from enlarged texts and act out the characteristics of "Mrs Trunchbull" who "stomps, grunts and marches". The pupils smiled and laughed as they described this character. In those lessons where the objectives for learning are clearly understood and levels of co-operation are high, the progress that the pupils make is rapid. There is, however, inconsistency in the clarity of learning objectives and in the effectiveness of teachers' ability to use different styles and strategies, to fully engage all pupils in learning. Pupils are too often given commercial worksheets to complete which lack challenge and concentrate on one style of learning. Dominant teacher talk can restrict opportunities for pupils to discuss and share knowledge and experiences.

Teachers know their pupils well. Classes are small and informal assessment is effective in developing pupils' learning. Formal assessments are in place but insufficient use is made of these to track progress and to inform pupils, parents and teachers about the standards they achieve, or to inform pupils what they need to do next to improve. Pupils have targets for personal development which provide a regular basis for reflection and prayer; these successfully contribute to pupils becoming mature and responsible young people as they move through the school. Academic targets are far too broad, they are not based upon any accurate assessment of pupils' performance against national norms and lack the rigour needed to accelerate their learning.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

The school meets all but one of the requirements.

What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

In order to comply fully with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- *ensure there is in place a framework by which pupil's performance can be evaluated by reference to either the school's own aims, as provided to parents and/or, by national norms (paragraph 1(4)).*

2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The provision for pupils' spiritual, social and moral development is good and for cultural development is satisfactory. A strong moral code is encouraged by the role models of staff who expect high standards of pupils' discipline. There is very effective use of incentives such as merits and awards given in assemblies, which the pupils value highly. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Older pupils provide good examples to the younger ones and act as supportive mentors in groups. A strong sense of family and community is successfully developed. Pupils take on additional responsibilities such as setting out the dining tables, organising playground games, looking after the physical education store and keeping cloakrooms tidy. They are well prepared for the demands of the next phase of education when they move on to secondary schools.

The development of pupils' self-esteem and confidence is very effective through the commitment of the headteacher, staff and parent volunteers who demonstrate a high level of care and consideration. The enthusiasm and energy of all adults in the school is encapsulated in their self-belief of the Christian values which underpin the focus of all provision. This is inspiring to everyone who works, studies or visits here. It was seen by inspectors during an assembly when pupils recited "*memory verses*" with passion, enjoyment and firm belief. This was an uplifting and affirming experience for everyone present and included song and prayer.

Opportunities for pupils to develop cultural awareness are provided through contacts in Africa which enables them to exchange writing with their peers. Visitors from various church groups come to share their experiences of life across the world. Assemblies focus upon pupils with relations in other cultures. Pupils learn about the culture of their own country as they study historical and geographical topics. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to learn about the wider diversity of multi-cultural Britain. Trips to the local museum and visits from the emergency services add to pupils' development.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The pastoral care that the school provides for pupils is a real strength of the school. Adults take great care to get to know all the pupils really well in order that they can respond effectively to their individual needs. They present positive role models for pupils and let them know that they are loved, valued and respected. Consequently they receive the same from pupils in return and the relationships which develop are a strength. There is an effective written policy to combat bullying and pupils questioned were adamant that there is 'no bullying' in the school. They were also clear that they feel safe at school. The pupils know that if they have a problem or a worry there is always someone they can turn to for help and advice and that any incidents would be dealt with swiftly. Pupils are happy to use the school 'help box' to communicate to adults anything which may be concerning them. They are not so confident about what action is taken as a result of the concerns they raise, as this is not fed back to them.

The pupils are effectively motivated by the reward systems and are delighted and proud to have their achievements celebrated. They also respond positively to the cell and mentor systems which help them to develop their willingness and ability to take on responsibility for the care of others. Pupils confirm that the system of sanctions are clearly understood and fairly and consistently applied.

The school's child protection policy is up to date and implemented effectively. The headteacher is the responsible child protection officer. He is readily approachable to pupils and provides a role model of respect and care for pupils of all ages. Regular risk assessments are undertaken including those for educational visits. Fire safety arrangements have recently been updated and are thorough. Appliances and evacuation procedures are tested regularly. Areas for improvement identified at the time of the previous inspection have been satisfactorily addressed.

The headteacher is also the appointed person for First Aid and several other staff have a First Aid qualification. Accident records are properly kept. Teachers are mindful of potential risks in lessons and take appropriate steps to minimize these. Supervision of pupils in the building and around the extensive school grounds is good. Accurate records are maintained for admissions and attendance. A calm and happy atmosphere prevails at meal times. Though there is not a school kitchen on site, pupils clearly enjoy the experience of dining together when older pupils help their younger friends to develop good manners. The school has an up-to-date plan to improve accessibility and this meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school has appropriate procedures for checking the identity, medical fitness, qualifications and employment history of all staff. The school ensures that adults with regular contact with the pupils are checked through the Criminal Records Bureau.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes

5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation

The school occupies a converted large three-story detached late-Victorian house close to the city centre of Derby. The school has a hall which can accommodate all pupils for lunches and whole school assemblies. It also provides opportunities for social activities and pupil performances. The remainder of the ground floor has been adapted to provide a bright and stimulating environment to deliver the Foundation Stage curriculum to three and four year olds. This area includes a dedicated reception classroom and a large open-plan nursery area which opens directly on to an enclosed outdoor area. The garden provides ample space for pupils of all ages to enjoy a range of play activities at break times on both grassed and hard surfaces. There is a dedicated ICT suite, a recently upgraded library and quiet areas where pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities or a particular gift or talent can receive additional support. The school makes the most of the space and facilities it has available, using these effectively to provide an environment conducive to learning, though it is hoped to relocate to new premises in the near future. The corridors and classrooms are mostly attractively decorated with examples of pupils' work. The premises are maintained in a clean and tidy condition.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

6. The quality of information for parents and other partners

The school meets most but not all of the regulations pertaining to the provision of information for parents. The school provides parents with a range of useful information through its prospectus and additional information sheets given when a child starts school. Recent supplementary sheets to the prospectus make clear to parents that further information about the school's procedures are available on request.

Annual reports give brief general comments about pupils and their experiences in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. There is however, insufficient detail of the pupils' academic performance.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

The school meets all but one of the requirements

What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

In order to comply fully with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- *provide annual written reports of the progress and attainment of each registered child in the main subject areas taught to parents (paragraph 6(5)).*

7. The effectiveness of the school's procedures for handling complaints

The school has a written complaints procedure. It meets the requirements in that it sets out clear timescales and procedures the school will follow in the management of a complaint. The school gives a copy of the policy to all prospective parents.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school:	Emmanuel School		
DfES Number:	831/6000		
Type of school:	Christian		
Status:	Independent		
Age range of pupils:	3 -11 years		
Gender of pupils:	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys: 25	Girls: 20	Total: 45
Number on roll (part-time pupils):	Boys: 2	Girls:3	Total: 5
Annual fees (day pupils):	£1,512 - £2,436		
Address of school:	Juniper Lodge 43 Kedleston Road Derby DE22 1FP		
Telephone number:	01332 340505		
Fax number:	01332 299168		
Email address:	emmanuelsschool@emcf.net		
Headteacher:	Andy Townsend		
Proprietor:	Mark Mumford		
Reporting Inspector:	John Coleman HMI		
Date of inspection:	13 - 16 November 2006		

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