



Emmanuel Christian School

Independent School

Inspection report

DfES Registration Number	931/6102
Unique Reference Number	123317
Inspection number	296806
Inspection dates	30-31 January 2007
Reporting inspector	Mr Daniel Towl HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

Age group 3-11	Published 20 February 2007	Reference no. 296806
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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, 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 Christian School (ECS), located in Littlemore on the edge of Oxford, is a non-denominational, evangelical school founded in 1988 by parents and teachers wishing to provide education in a Christian environment. There are 55 pupils on roll of whom 20 are funded under the Nursery Scheme. There are no pupils with statements of special educational need. Nearly half the pupils use English as an additional language. While many of these pupils are fluent, some are at an early stage in their use of English. The Nursery was last inspected in February 2005.

Evaluation of the school

The school provides a good all round education for its pupils. Pupils' personal development is good and they become confident young people. Pupils make good progress in numeracy and literacy; the latter has a strong emphasis in the curriculum. The school successfully meets its aims to encourage the achievements of pupils and to create an environment '.... where pupils and staff treat each other with respect, consideration, acceptance and love'. Teaching is satisfactory. Day to day supervision of pupils is good but the school must attend to a number of matters in order to ensure the welfare, health and safety of its pupils. Provision in these areas is currently unsatisfactory because its procedures and policies are inadequate. Parents are very positive about what the school provides.

Quality of education

The overall curriculum is good. It is broad and closely matches the requirements of the National Curriculum. There is a clear curriculum policy and planning is such that the Biblical world view permeates many lessons. This helps the school to be successful in meeting its Christian aims. The curriculum is planned well and takes into account national guidance and use of commercial materials, which ensure that the content of lessons is appropriate for the age of pupils.

There is a significant emphasis on English and mathematics and hence pupils make the best progress in these areas. In the 2006 national end-of-key-stage tests, pupils achieved well and attained high levels. Pupils make a good start in

the Nursery and Reception and make good progress towards achieving the Early Learning Goals. This good progress is maintained in Key Stage 1. The older pupils in Key Stage 2 make satisfactory progress overall but have strengths in mathematics, reading and speaking. Pupils' practical skills in art and technology are less well developed, reflecting the balance of the timetable. Science tasks in Year 2 and Year 3 help pupils develop good skills of investigation and recording, for example in making simple electrical circuits and testing friction by sending cars down ramps.

Christian themes are prevalent in many lessons and pupils are encouraged to consider Biblical and scientific explanations in their work.

The curriculum is appropriately enhanced by visits to local places of interest, such as museums in Oxford. Older pupils have a chance to attend an extended visit in Mid-Wales. Visiting speakers talk to pupils about class topics and assemblies, for example they have recently listened to accounts of the work undertaken to support the under-privileged in Thailand.

The school provides a good range of clubs, which pupils enjoy and parents appreciate. They are well attended. The netball and football clubs not only provide regular exercise but also give opportunities for this small school to participate in games against other local schools. This adds an important social dimension to pupils' personal development. The chess club is popular and pupils compete against local schools.

Older pupils have had an opportunity to learn Latin in connection with a study of ancient Romans. Currently they are studying French where they are making good progress. There is no defined curriculum for personal, social and health education but aspects are included in other areas of study and activities. The weakest area of curriculum is health education. Pupils have a broad understanding about keeping healthy through diet and exercise but the school does not provide specific lessons to help pupils consider issues such as substance abuse. The school is aware of this and is reviewing its provision.

Subject coordinators keep an overview of the curriculum, especially in English, mathematics and science. They are well supported by the members of the curriculum and learning group, who help in review and development.

Teaching is satisfactory. There is good teaching in the Nursery and in some other lessons throughout the school. There are a number of common strengths in all lessons. Teachers and adult helpers, who may be parents, have very good and respectful relationships with their pupils. Pupils respond by working hard and persevering with their tasks. Teachers prepare lessons well and plan carefully, taking into account learning in previous lessons and making any necessary adjustments. Classes are small and good use is made of this to involve all pupils in learning. A common characteristic of the best lessons is the

good questioning, which takes into consideration the wide range of attainment and age in each class. This was used successfully in French, for example to allow pupils to develop their pronunciation and knowledge of vocabulary. Teachers have high expectations and manage pupils' behaviour well. Consequently there are few interruptions to learning. Good use is made of paired work, for example to discuss vocabulary for a poem and develop a theory about why shapes tessellate. This helps to develop pupils' relationships and social skills.

In the less effective lessons the activities are not always sufficiently demanding for pupils of all attainments and the pace of learning is slow. There is too much reliance on worksheets in some subjects, for example in science and history especially for the older pupils. This means that pupils are not developing their writing skills across the curriculum. The presentation of work by older pupils is often untidy and this sometimes includes careless errors. This serves to limit their progress overall, despite their understanding and knowledge.

Teachers mark work regularly and often make comments for next steps in pupils' learning. Pupils say this is helpful. Teachers regularly assess pupils' work and make use of nationally standardised materials and levels. This is providing important information about pupils' progress and providing a benchmark for measuring their attainment but the information is not used systematically to develop more specific and challenging targets for pupils.

There are adequate resources for teaching and learning. There are very limited resources to support more adventurous play for the Nursery and Reception pupils.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. The strong emphasis on Christian morals is evident in all aspects of the school and is recognised and understood by pupils. Pupils have opportunities to reflect and pray in assemblies. Lessons, too, provide a spiritual context, for example as an introduction to tessellation pupils studied a picture of a honeycomb and discussed how bees would know how to make this. Pupils get on well together and enjoy being at the school and in their lessons. They have a good understanding of right and wrong and are aware of the school rules, sanctions and rewards.

Pupils make a positive contribution, not only to their school community but also to the wider community. They are encouraged to consider those who are less well-off. Pupils have raised funds for schools in Kenya and central Asia, provided presents for children in Belorussia and collected funds for Bible

translations. Some pupils have been to a local home for the elderly where they entertained the residents with their singing. Their good behaviour and general consideration for each other makes the school a harmonious and happy place. Pupils mostly work well in pairs and small groups, sharing resources and ideas, but there are some occasions when they have to be reminded to share or take turns. Pupils' economic well being is adequately developed not only through their community projects but also in their development of basic skills for speaking, reading and arithmetic.

Pupils learn about public institutions and the wider community in assemblies, geography and history and have staged a mock election in the past. However, this aspect of provision is not systematically planned. The school values its wide cultural diversity among the pupils who get on well together. Other faiths are studied as part of geography and religious education.

Older pupils can become prefects and take on additional duties helping staff and younger pupils. In most classes there are daily jobs to be done. Pupils take part in productions, open evenings and assemblies where they have responsibility for issuing notices for the day.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

While the day to day supervision of pupils is good there are inadequacies in important aspects of the school's procedures and policies that require immediate attention.

There is an anti-bullying policy and pupils say that there is no bullying in school. Pupils are clear about what they would do if they had any concerns. They are confident that teachers deal quickly with any issues. This and their general good behaviour around the school help them to feel safe. There are good procedures for escorting pupils to and from a nearby school for physical education (PE) lessons.

The school has a wide range of information about child protection but there is no clear and succinct policy or procedure that relates specifically to the school. It is unclear whether all relevant staff and helpers have had appropriate training. The designated member of staff for child protection has not yet undertaken the required training. There is a satisfactory level of fire safety and fire risk assessments have been carried out. Fire drills take place each term and outcomes are recorded in a satisfactory manner.

The policies for health and safety and first aid are inadequate and do not consider the latest guidance from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). There are no risk assessments completed for the school's general

activities or use of buildings and first aid provision is not organised appropriately. However, there is sufficient qualified first aid staff.

The governors have not yet completed their action plan to comply with the access arrangements required by the Disability and Discrimination Act (2002).

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school has ensured that satisfactory procedures are in place and correct checks are made on staff prior to their appointment. All staff and helpers have been checked with the Criminal Records Bureau.

School's premises and accommodation

The school buildings are generally sound although there are parts in need of redecoration. The premises are suitable for the number of pupils currently on roll and planned future changes to the internal arrangements of rooms will provide better teaching spaces and a dedicated information and communication technology room. The school has limited capacity to store resources and this leads to a cluttered environment in some parts, especially in the Nursery and the Reception/Year 1 class. There are sufficient washrooms for pupils but there is inadequate provision for pupils who may become unwell.

There is an external area, which includes hard and grass surfaces that is used for break times, lunchtime sports clubs and PE. The school takes full advantage of a nearby school for PE, where there is access to a large hall suitable for team games and other activities. This makes a considerable contribution to pupils' learning and well-being, as does the use of a local sports centre for swimming. The outside environment is limited in its capacity to offer more adventurous play for the youngest pupils.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

There is a good range of information about the school available in its prospectus and on an attractive web-site. It makes very clear the aims and purposes of the school. There are omissions, however, in that the school does not make it clear to parents and others there are policies available about anti-bullying, child protection, health and safety and sanctions.

Procedures for handling complaints

The procedure for handling complaints is satisfactory

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- prepare and implement appropriate child protection policies and establish procedures in line with the DfES guidance *Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education (2007)* (paragraph 3(2)(b))
- prepare and implement a health and safety policy that pays due regard to the DfES guidance *Health and safety: responsibilities and powers (DfES 0803/2001)* and complete the necessary risk assessments to cover all aspects of the school (paragraph 3(4))
- implement a more detailed first aid policy and develop procedures using DfES *Guidance on first aid for schools* (paragraph 3(6)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- provide facilities for pupils who are ill in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(l)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- ensure that parents are aware they can request information about the policies relating to anti-bullying, child protection, health and safety and sanctions (paragraph 6(2)(h)).

In order to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002 the school should devise a three-year accessibility plan.

What the school could do to improve further

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

- make better use of test results and assessment to create more challenging targets for pupils.

School details

Name of school	Emmanuel Christian School		
DfES number	931/6102		
Unique reference number	123317		
Type of school	Primary		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	September 1988		
Age range of pupils	3 -11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 22	Girls: 19	Total: 41
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 9	Girls: 5	Total: 14
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 3540		
Address of school	Emmanuel Christian School Sandford Road Littlemore Oxford Oxfordshire OX4 4PU		
Telephone number	01865 395236		
Fax number	01865 395236		
Email address	admin@ecschoo.org		
Headteacher	Miss Jean Dandy		
Proprietor	Mr Carl Savage		
Reporting inspector	Mr Daniel Towl HMI		
Dates of inspection	30-31 January 2007		