

Emmanuel Christian School

Independent School

Inspection report

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| DCSF Registration Number | 856/6018 |
| Unique Reference Number | 134595 |
| Inspection number | 319995 |
| Inspection dates | 6-7 February 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Jane Melbourne 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).

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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 Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Emmanuel Christian School, which opened in 2003, is distinctly Christian through its ethos, curriculum and practice. It uses the building of Braunstone Evangelical Free Church but serves a wide Leicester city and Leicestershire catchment. It is registered for a maximum of 24 pupils aged from 4 to 14. A number of pupils come from abroad for their education and there are therefore some for whom English is an additional language. Organised into three age groups for teaching purposes, pupils are sometimes taught outside of these groups or assemble into mixed-age fellowship groups. There are four part-time teaching staff who are complemented by a range of around 19 regular volunteers. The school aims to provide a Christian and God centred education for children from Christian families and families of other faiths or none who, nevertheless, support the school's aims and purposes. This is the school's first full inspection of all of the regulations.

Evaluation of the school

Emmanuel Christian School provides a satisfactory quality of education, and has some good and outstanding features, confirming the overwhelmingly positive views of parents. Teaching is satisfactory overall, although sometimes it is good; this is mirrored in pupils' progress, which is at least satisfactory and is also sometimes good. The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good and the school provides good care for its pupils, and promotes their good behaviour. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. All but two of the regulations are met.

Quality of education

The quality of education is satisfactory. The curriculum is mostly based on the National Curriculum but is taught from a Christian perspective. It incorporates all the essential elements, including basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology.

The curriculum is satisfactory and has many positive elements, including particular strengths in the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Visiting teachers, for example for biblical studies, geography and French, enrich the curriculum and add significant curriculum breadth to this small school. Committed

volunteers also provide specialist knowledge, for example in mathematics and physics. Many pupils learn to play an instrument and the school makes good use of local facilities such as sports surfaces and a swimming pool to aid pupils' physical development. The curriculum policies and schemes of work do not yet guide planning for teaching and learning effectively, for example in English and mathematics, and there is too little coordination and monitoring of the curriculum to ensure the continuity and progression of pupils' learning throughout the school. As staff know pupils well, they plan work informally to meet the needs of the range of pupils in each class, but this is not consistently successful because written plans do not always incorporate clear learning objectives appropriate to all abilities. Consequently, some pupils are not well enough challenged, including some more able pupils. The school makes good use of its adequate resources, which it shares with other schools in the Christian Schools Trust.

The quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory and many lessons are good. In the best lessons, teachers are confident and enthusiastic, have well focused lesson objectives, move the lesson on at a good pace and provide stimulating activities appropriate to the full range of pupils in the class. Consequently pupils do not listen for too long and are actively engaged; they solve problems and think things through for themselves. They enjoy lessons more when practical work is set, and in these lessons they make good gains in their learning. However, pupils' independent writing skills are not always extended effectively, particularly in Key Stages 1 and 2. In some lessons, there is too much whole class teaching. Sometimes the lesson objectives are not shared with pupils, nor are they achieved. Pupils are not consistently given learning targets or advice through marking on how they could improve their work. There are no effective systems in place to check on the quality of teaching and learning. Consequently, staff lack guidance on how to improve their teaching.

Formal assessment of pupils' progress is insufficiently consistent to enable staff to plan effectively or establish pupils' progress accurately over time. Overall, pupils' progress in their learning is at least satisfactory, and it is often good, including for those who speak English as an additional language. Pupils benefit from the small class sizes and the high level of the individual support provided. Pupils are achieving satisfactorily overall, and their work in lessons and in their work books provides evidence of this. Year 9 pupils take part in national tests at the end of Key Stage 3, although as the cohort size is so small, it is difficult to ascertain trends. The school prepares its pupils appropriately for their future Key Stage 4 education and the transition to their next school.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils, their families and school staff, all from a variety of different cultures, mix happily and support each other well. The school is committed to including all pupils fully in the life of the school. Pupils' spirituality is a particularly strong feature of the school as

their spiritual awareness is advanced for their age. The curriculum allows for much 'awe and wonder' in both planned and spontaneous ways. Even the youngest pupils display confidence in leading prayers; sometimes on behalf of their mixed-age fellowship groups or in front of the whole school during assembly. Pupils show a great deal of respect towards adults and each other. In line with their own faith and the school's ethos, pupils learn to be tolerant of faiths other than their own. Pupils generally attend well and the school takes positive steps to monitor attendance and support those families that occasionally have difficulties with this. Therefore pupils develop positive attitudes to their learning. They take responsibility for their own behaviour and regularly reflect on their actions whether they be positive or negative.

Pupils have a good sense of right and wrong, which is exemplified in their good behaviour. They speak confidently to visitors and get on well with each other and with adults in the school. The younger pupils cope well with a variety of teachers because they are well cared for and given a great deal of individual support. Volunteers offer consistent and regular input and therefore know pupils well. There are strong links within the community and pupils enjoy the contribution they make. This is exemplified in a quote from a pupil: *'It was a special day when we went to the elderly peoples' home. We felt happy to be there and we are looking forward to going again.'* The curriculum, including visits into the community, supporting various charities, and Christian mathematics, helps to prepare pupils for their future lives and economic wellbeing.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is good. All relevant regulations are met. The pupils have a good understanding of how to eat sensibly and live a healthy lifestyle, and they value the fortnightly opportunities to go swimming and the weekly visits to a local sports centre. The site provides opportunities for physical exercise indoors and outdoors. Staff supervise pupils well. There are regular fire drills and staff regularly assess the site for potential risks. Safeguarding procedures are satisfactory. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good and senior pupils take the lead in modelling the expected behaviour. The very effective use of a senior pupil contract demonstrates how the school values pupils' views and harnesses their contribution. The success of the school's positive behaviour strategies has resulted in no entries in the discipline book in the past year. The school fulfils its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The proprietor has satisfactory recruitment procedures to ensure that all staff and volunteers have undergone the necessary checks before commencing work at the school. A central staff register has been implemented in line with the latest statutory requirements. All staff have had the required enhanced checks with the Criminal Records Bureau.

School's premises and accommodation

The premises provide a safe and effective learning environment. The school has three designated teaching areas. The smallest classroom houses two teaching groups and space is limited. The school is however making sensible use of the hall so that only one group uses the classroom whenever possible. Lessons with the younger pupils are more successful when they have access to a larger teaching area. The school meets all the regulations except adequate provision for pupils who are ill. Facilities in the 'Getting Better Room' provide a quiet space to look after a sick pupil, with a bed and reasonably close proximity to toilet facilities. However, there is no fixed wash basin. Overall, the premises are maintained satisfactorily and are regularly cleaned. The toilet facilities have a good level of cleanliness. Pupils have access to a good-sized outdoor play area and use local sports facilities and coaches for their physical education.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The prospectus contains useful information for parents. Parents' pre-inspection questionnaires indicate that they are very happy with the school and the information it provides. The school is aware that parents would welcome more regular information about their children's progress and therefore it has recently increased the number of parents' evenings. All the policy documents are available for parents to view and are listed in the prospectus. At the end of the school year, the parents receive a comprehensive end-of-year review indicating their children's achievements in all subjects.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has satisfactory procedures for handling complaints. Its policy has been updated to comply with the latest regulations. No complaints have been received in the past year.

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 the curriculum (standard 1) and must:

- establish a framework to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information gained to plan teaching more effectively (paragraph 1(3)(g)).

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

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

What the school could do to improve further

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

- develop a more co-ordinated approach to curriculum planning, ensuring that there is greater consistency and clear progression in pupils' learning in all year groups and throughout the school.

School details

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| Name of school | Emmanuel Christian School |
| DCSF number | 856/6018 |
| Unique reference number | 134595 |
| Type of school | Co-educational day school |
| Status | Independent |
| Date school opened | August 2003 |
| Age range of pupils | 4-14 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll (full-time pupils) | Boys: 12 Girls: 8 Total: 20 |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | 10% of family income to a maximum of £3,600 |
| Address of school | c/o Braunstone Evangelical Free Church Didsbury Street Braunstone Leicester LE3 1QP |
| Telephone number | 0116 2220792 |
| Email address | leicesterchristianschool@yahoo.co.uk |
| Proprietor | Miss Patricia Wells |
| Reporting inspector | Jane Melbourne HMI |
| Dates of inspection | 6-7 February 2008 |