

Emmanuel Christian School

Independent school inspection report

DCSF registration number	931/6102
Unique reference number	123317
Inspection number	341944
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Reporting inspector	Michael Best

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended.

Age group: 3-11

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002¹, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005², the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

This was a light-touch inspection which focused principally on the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

Information about the school

Founded in 1988, Emmanuel Christian School is a non-denominational, evangelical school located in Littlemore on the edge of Oxford. The number of pupils has risen since the last inspection in January 2007. There are currently 73 pupils aged between 3 and 11 years on roll of whom 14 are funded under the government's nursery education scheme. Children attend the Nursery on a part time basis and become full time when they join the Reception class. A fifth of pupils speak English as an additional language and all are fluent in their use of English. The school's mission statement is 'to support parents in their task of preparing their children for a place in society by providing good quality education through a broad curriculum and to promote an understanding of the natural world and society from a Biblical perspective, within a loving ethos which is nurturing of Christian discipleship.'

Evaluation of the school

The school provides a good quality of education for its pupils and they make good progress in a very caring and supportive community. The school has made good progress since the last inspection, not only in addressing all those regulations that were not met at that time but also in improving the quality of provision. All but one of the regulations are now met in full. Under the committed leadership of the headteacher and with the good support of staff and governors, teaching and assessment have improved from satisfactory to good and the premises have benefited from well-targeted investment. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are rigorous and meet all requirements. The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The new staff team in the Nursery and Reception classes have a clear vision for developing the provision and are working closely with the school's headteacher and the governors to realise this.

¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162

² www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8

Quality of education

The overall quality of education and that of the curriculum is good overall but satisfactory in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school's aims are well reflected in its broad and balanced curriculum which is effectively matched to pupils' individual interests and needs, enabling them to make good all-round progress. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are well catered for and they quickly acquire the necessary skills and confidence to make good progress. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported in all aspects of the curriculum. More able pupils benefit from the challenges afforded by staff through individual and small group work.

Pupils develop a good grounding in the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. Pupils use computers and the interactive whiteboards confidently to support and extend their learning across the curriculum.

Throughout the school, the curriculum is guided by a series of whole-school biblical worldview themes that are developed into class topics. For older pupils, there is a good balance of subject-specific study where particular skills and knowledge can be developed in greater depth. Increasingly, these themes are guiding the focus of work in literacy, as seen in the study of poetry and the choice of subjects for debate in the upper junior class. Pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship is guided by a comprehensive policy and developed through collective worship, class discussions and specific lessons. The arts and physical education are suitably developed both in timetabled lessons and through a good range of well supported and much enjoyed extra-curricular activities. Good opportunities for enrichment are provided through a range of visits and visitors supporting the curriculum.

There are good opportunities for pupils to contribute to and take on responsibilities in their classes, the school and the wider community. Older pupils are appointed prefects and support younger pupils in daily routines. Pupils take an active part in sporting events and concerts and visit a nearby residential home. In the Early Years Foundation Stage staff plan a suitable range of activities but the provision for indoor activities is more consistent than that for outdoors. Some outdoor resources are too small for the Reception children.

Teaching and assessment are good. Overall, pupils make good progress because teaching is effective and they have positive attitudes to learning. The overall trend in results shows improvement over time with older pupils in the upper juniors achieving standards that are similar to and above the national averages. The school has established and implemented effective plans for planning the development of pupils' skills and knowledge. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they employ a range of different teaching styles and a good range of learning resources. Pupils are attentive and join in learning activities well. Their behaviour is managed effectively and they work well on their own and in small groups independently of adult help and

direction. Those with additional learning needs are systematically identified and supported with work that is mostly well matched to pupils' individual needs. Teaching assistants are well deployed and parent volunteers make a valuable contribution in supporting learning.

In the best lessons pupils of different abilities are well challenged and pupils say they enjoy being stretched. This is because the pace of learning is brisk and time is well used. Such practice is not, however, consistent across the school with lessons occasionally over-running their allocated time and sometimes activities are not matched well enough to pupils' capabilities. The teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The children make satisfactory progress and are on track to achieve average, and some above average standards, by the end of the Reception year. They enjoy the range of activities that are provided for them.

The school has effective systems in place for checking pupils' attainment and progress. Nationally available tests are supplemented by teachers' assessments. The school has made good progress since the last inspection in using the information gained from these assessments. At a whole-school level, analysis of pupils' test results and their progress over time has led to an increased emphasis on writing in English and other subjects in Year 1 and the lower junior class. For individual pupils, assessment information is used effectively to plan their next steps in learning and set targets for improvement. There are examples of good marking which provide constructive guidance, particularly for older pupils, but across the school pupils are not sufficiently involved in setting their targets or checking their own progress towards these. In the Early Years Foundation Stage staff are developing suitable systems for checking and recording children's progress.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. They have positive attitudes to school, are keen to learn and respond well to their teachers' expectations. Pupils enjoy school and are successfully acquiring the necessary academic and personal skills to prepare them for the next stage of their education and their future role in society. Attendance is high and punctuality good.

Pupils' spiritual and moral development reflects the deeply Christian ethos of the school very well. The quality of their relationships and respect for the opinions and beliefs of others are strengths of the school. Pupils welcome the forthcoming establishment of a school council as an opportunity to have a greater voice and to take on additional responsibilities in the school.

Pupils' social development is good. Older pupils look after younger ones, and help run clubs such as chess and 'bookworms' for them. Pupils make a good contribution to the local community; support a number of national charities and have regular links with a school in central Asia. Behaviour is good. Nearly all pupils have a well-developed understanding of right and wrong and conduct themselves in an exemplary fashion. However, a small minority of younger pupils require regular reminders from staff to meet the school's expectations.

Pupils' cultural development is good. The school provides a good programme of visits and visitors, with regular visits to museums. Through their good use of the locality, pupils develop a good understanding of public services and institutions. They learn about other cultures through topics in the curriculum and as a result of their links with the neighbouring Muslim school.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety are good. All safeguarding requirements are met in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Good progress has been made since the last inspection in addressing identified shortcomings. Suitable policies and procedures are in place which comply fully with current legislation and guidance. These are consistently implemented and appropriately monitored. The required training for staff and governors is up to date. In their responses to the inspection questionnaire, parents express their confidence in the school's care and support for their children.

Risk assessments are comprehensive. Suitable arrangements are made for pupils who need additional support. Pupils are supervised well and staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities in promoting health and safety.

Pupils are confident to turn to adults if they have concerns. Pupils appreciate the importance of following a healthy lifestyle and have a good understanding of keeping safe. They say that instances of bullying and other forms of harassment are rare, and that the school deals with any that do occur swiftly and effectively. The school's arrangements to promote good behaviour are effective. There have been no exclusions since the last inspection. However, the school does not meet the requirement to make its policy on exclusions available to parents or prospective parents.

The school works well with parents and other agencies to ensure that pupils feel safe and valued. It has implemented a well-thought-out rolling three-year access plan for those with disabilities.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Outcomes are satisfactory. Most children are on track to meet or exceed the early learning goals by the end of the Reception Year. When they start in the Nursery, children's skills and experiences are similar to those expected for their age. They settle well into daily routines and make good progress in their communication and social skills. In the Reception class, children show increasing confidence in making choices and working independently. Most are willing to share but a small minority need regular reminders about taking turns when speaking and using equipment.

The quality of provision is satisfactory. Staff work well as a team and plan a suitable range of activities that children enjoy. They are developing suitable systems for checking and recording children's progress, but while these are satisfactory, staff rightly identify that further refinement is required. The provision for children's learning in the outside areas is also satisfactory. The input provided by staff is more consistent in the indoor than the outdoor classroom. There are satisfactory outdoor resources, including a splendid new climbing frame, but some of the other equipment is too small for Reception children.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Links with parents are good and there is a profitable partnership developing with the local authority whose regular advice and support is highly valued by the school. Staff have a high regard for the welfare and safety of children and all safeguarding requirements are met.

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 provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- ensure that parents are aware they can request particulars of the school's policy on and arrangements for exclusions (paragraph 6(3)(a)).

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:

- Improve the pace and use of time in lessons in order to raise the quality of all teaching to good or better.
- Increase the involvement of pupils in setting their personal targets and checking their progress towards these.

Early Years Foundation Stage

- Embed and further develop systems for collecting and using information about what children know and can do in planning their learning activities.
- Develop the use of the outside areas for both adult-led and child-chosen activities.

Inspection judgement recording form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		✓		
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The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

How good are the outcomes for children in the EYFS?			✓	
What is the quality of provision in the EYFS?			✓	
How effectively is the EYFS led and managed?			✓	
Overall effectiveness: how well does the school meet the needs of children in the EYFS?			✓	

The quality of boarding provision *(leave blank if not applicable)*

Evaluation of boarding provision				
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School details

Name of school	Emmanuel Christian School		
DCSF number	931/6102		
Unique reference number	123317		
Type of school	Christian 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: 26	Girls: 33	Total: 59
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 5	Girls: 9	Total: 14
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4,296		
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.uk		
Headteacher	Miss Jean Dandy		
Proprietor	Emmanuel Christian School Association Limited		
Reporting inspector	Michael Best		
Dates of inspection	2 December 2009		