



Emmanuel School, Derby

Inspection report

This inspection was carried out under section 162 (A) of the Education Act 2002 as amended. Bridge Schools Inspectorate (BSI) has been approved by the Secretary of State in the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) to undertake inspections in designated independent schools within membership of the Christian Schools Trust (CST) or the Association of Muslim Schools UK (AMSUK).

DCSF number: 831/6000
Association: CST
Date of inspection: 5th-8th October 2009
Lead Inspector: Mrs M A Buckingham
Team inspectors: Mrs R Slack
Mrs H Aslam

Age range of pupils: 3 - 14 years
Number on roll: 67
Full-time: 32 boys 24 girls
Part-time: 8 boys 3 girls
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need: none

Proprietor: East Midlands Christian Fellowships
Head teacher: Mr Andrew Townsend
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The purpose and scope of the inspection

The main purpose of the inspection is twofold. It is to advise the DCSF whether the school continues to meet the requirements for registration, and to determine whether the school's religious ethos continues to meet the expectations of its association. Ofsted monitors the work of independent inspectorates, including a sample of inspections, and you can find the latest evaluation of the work of The Bridge Schools Inspectorate (BSI) on the Ofsted and BSI websites.

Information about the school

Emmanuel School was established in 1988 under the auspices of the East Midland Christian Fellowships (EMCF) and they are now the proprietors of the school. Elders of EMCF are represented on the school's governing body. The school's mission aims to '*... serve parents, and our community through our commitment to educate children. We pay due attention to the child's 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 within a loving and disciplined environment where each child is valued and encouraged in achieving their God-given potential...*'. At the end of the summer term the age range was extended to include secondary age pupils at Key Stage 3 from September 2009, four weeks before this inspection. The autumn term began with six boys aged 12 to 14 years old, only two of whom had previously attended the school. The school was last inspected by Ofsted in 2006.

Evaluation of the school

Emmanuel is successful in meeting its aims. The Christian faith underpins all that the school does and is explicit in its daily life, in the excellent relationships and the genuine care and concern adults have for individual pupils. The Christian ethos runs through the curriculum and is seen naturally in the teaching and learning. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive and have great confidence in the school. Pupils enjoy school and respond positively to the good and, on occasion outstanding teaching, making commensurate progress in these lessons. Overall the curriculum is satisfactory with good aspects. The Early Years Foundation Stage is exemplary. While the school is thinking about its curriculum, the rapid introduction of Key Stage 3 is proving particularly challenging and suitable plans for progression through this key stage and into the next are not yet fully in place. The head teacher's unstinting work and steadfast leadership contributes significantly to the shared commitment amongst all staff and to the school's many strengths. The good intention to introduce a leadership team with designated areas of responsibility, including within the governing body, has not yet been realised. This would help with a more methodical and strategic approach to future development and assist in more systematic monitoring of the school's work, for example, through a whole school development plan. In a few areas, the school and proprietors have not monitored policies and procedures closely enough to make sure that they are consistently followed and that note is taken of the changes to some independent schools regulations. As a consequence, some regulations are not met.

Quality of education

Emmanuel School maintains its strength in providing a Christian curriculum to educate “the whole child” within a Christ-centred education. It continues to do this well and the positive ethos is palpable in all areas of the school. The school enjoys a strong partnership with parents to create a secure, loving and stimulating environment where pupils clearly enjoy learning. An overarching vision imbues the curriculum with the well established Christian heart concepts (to provide a Christ-centred education), which encourages pupils to become effective members of the family of God.

The quality of the curriculum overall remains satisfactory with some good provision. The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum is excellent, providing a wealth of hugely enjoyable experience which gets pupils off to a flying start. All the required areas of learning are represented and planning is based on the National Curriculum, core and foundation subjects. After the last inspection the school evaluated its infant and junior curriculum and identified areas where improvements were required but planning to effect those changes has stalled, and so, despite positive aspects, there have been too few improvements to move the curriculum forward significantly.

Most pupils in the infant department achieve above what is expected for their age at the end of Key Stage 1. Most pupils make good progress in lessons and this is reflected in the school’s own assessments and tests and by test results at the end of Key Stage 2. Some pupils make satisfactory but not obviously good progress over time, and the school has not analysed assessments and test results to see if this is due to individual pupils’ circumstances or whether there are patterns in different years or subjects. This is important because all classes are taught in mixed-age groups. The school does not currently employ a special needs co-ordinator but class teachers identify those pupils who need additional support and will, for example, draw up individual education plans to focus attention on helping those pupils make progress. The curriculum has benefited from the recent addition of a common assessment system and the introduction of some setting across year groups to better meet pupils’ learning needs.

From September 2009, the school has offered places to six pupils at Key Stage 3 spanning Years 7, 8 and 9 and they are taught as one group for some subjects such as history, geography, science, French and Bible studies. However, for literacy and numeracy they join the Year 5 and 6 setted groups according to their ability and are together for physical education (PE). While the Key Stage 3 timetable covers the required areas of the curriculum, it is still in very early days of development. The needs of pupils at this stage of education in the different years have not yet been plotted in detail for the school to be able to know how well or what the new pupils have achieved so far. Progression routes for pupils at Key Stage 3 are not yet worked out and there is only very little coverage of work-related study. Careers education has not yet been put in place.

Teachers offer a broad range of 12 after-school sporting activities; over half of the pupils from Years 4 to 9 take part, and in some very popular activities such as cross country running, three-quarters of the pupils join in.

The coverage of personal, social and health education is across the curriculum and has strengths in the way the school's ethos encourages personal responsibility, but this has not yet been systematically audited to check what is intended is covered and how topics might be improved. Good mathematics teaching together with the confidence gained in their social development gives pupils skills to deal with future economic responsibility.

The planning and management of the mathematics and numeracy curriculum is good and a model worthy of dissemination across the school. For example, teachers assess and record pupils' achievements systematically and provide materials at the right level of difficulty for different classes and abilities in mixed-age groups. This thoughtful approach combined with the right resources support what is at times outstanding teaching of numerical concepts. However, planning in other subjects has developed more slowly. Medium term plans in most subjects do not yet identify resources and levels of work expected of different groups in mixed-age classes. The information and communication technology (ICT) curriculum has been improved this term with schemes of work and assessment systems. Also, there are now some opportunities for pupils to access ICT based resources to support their learning in other subjects, but this is not yet consistent across the school. The school has developed a sound basis from which to move the curriculum forward.

Overall the quality of teaching is good across the school and, on occasion it is outstanding creating a positive environment for learning, and pupils make commensurate progress in these lessons. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work; they enjoy their lessons and readily participate. Relationships in lessons are excellent often with much humour and there is a good balance between diligence and fun. The Christian ethos is naturally interwoven into lessons in planned and unplanned ways. Pupils are engaged and interested in their work and apply themselves well to the tasks they are given. In group activities they work well together and readily contribute in question times. In the majority of lessons teachers effectively use their knowledge of pupils' abilities and previous assessment to plan groupings and activities to match individual pupils' need and aptitudes. However, setting targets for pupils over time is at an earlier stage of development. Collectively, the staff have a good range of subject knowledge and volunteers, often parents, make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. Teachers often devise simple and effective materials to complement the good quality texts and other resources available to aid pupils' learning. The newly installed interactive white board is well used and proving a good support to pupils' learning. Pupils benefit greatly from the small class sizes.

All teachers assess pupils' work and record what they have achieved. This term the school has introduced a system of recording against National Curriculum levels. In mathematics and numeracy this system is well developed. Pupils in different years within numeracy lessons are taught to the level of attainment appropriate for their age as a minimum. Teachers assess pupils against specific criteria regularly and provide extension work to extend their skills, knowledge and understanding or consolidation work if some concepts prove difficult. Careful analysis of pupils' progress and current abilities in mathematics led to the school setting pupils in Years

5 and 6, and includes pupils in the new Key Stage 3 group. Groups are given work appropriate to their current level of understanding.

The head teacher receives medium term plans from staff each half term and he monitors how and where teachers include the school values and aims as expressed in the Christian heart concepts. Pupils' progress in developing both their character and their Christian approach is carefully monitored by the school and is reported to parents.

Although the cohort of pupils was very small the national test results for 2009 show that almost all pupils in Key Stage 2 had made good progress in English, mathematics and science from their Key Stage 1 levels of attainment. All had reached levels at or better than those expected nationally for their age at Key Stage 1. However, while most do achieve well, a few, although achieving appropriately for their age, do not. Teachers are able to discuss the circumstances of individual pupils, but the school as a whole does not have a view of patterns of achievement which it can use to refine curriculum planning or intervention needs. Parents also receive reports on pupils' academic achievements in working at National Curriculum levels, although not on the progress they have made. At the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils achieve standards at or above the national average with some pupils taking extension papers and achieving very high levels for their age. The school has introduced a common framework to evaluate pupils' performance and it is employed effectively in mathematics and numeracy. This whole-school approach has, however, only recently been introduced, so the ability to set targets for pupils over time and across subjects is still at an early stage.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The spiritual, moral and social development of pupils is outstanding; their cultural development is good. The shared understanding of Christian aims and values amongst the staff underpin the foundation of the school. This is reflected in all areas, including teaching, curriculum, behaviour and discipline. Behaviour is excellent, reflecting the strong moral ethos of the school and pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and develop good teamwork. They are respectful of each other showing mutual care, concern and support, and are well-mannered and courteous to their teachers, and to visitors. Pupils' excellent social development is enhanced by the mentoring system whereby older pupils take on the role of mentor and learn how to look after and look out for younger pupils. They do this willingly, for example, during a playtime a Year 5 pupil calmly and maturely comforted a younger one who had grazed her knee. Pupils have opportunities to take on responsibility in school and this is enhanced by the 'cell' system where pupils across the year groups come together as a team, fostering a sense of family and care for one another.

The Christian ethos of the school is emphasised in the importance given to the Christian heart concepts which permeate the planning process. These concepts summarise the vision the school shares with parents about its aim to provide a Christ-centred education and they give a focus for all subject areas and the way they are taught. For example, in some mathematics lessons, each learning objective is

accompanied by relevant aspects, such as “Do our lives count for God?” and “Shapes and patterns in God’s world”. In geography, while learning about the locality, pupils are encouraged to think about being good stewards of their environment, picking up litter and being polite to local people in the wider community. Pupils are taught that creative arts provide a means of touching the emotions and the spirit, as well as the mind, and of communicating truth about God and the world in which they live.

Teachers are good role models helping to ensure very respectful and warm relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults. A strong moral code underpins the school’s teaching. In drama, pupils considered some complex aspects of right and wrong and referred to stories in the Bible as examples from which to draw lessons in their own lives.

Pupils learn about public services and institutions in Britain. There are some opportunities provided for pupils to be aware of the world outside school. For example, in Key Stage 1, geography topics about the local environment include an understanding of council offices and their functions in relation to safety on the roads. Pupils visit shops, amenities, the park and the local church. The history curriculum often examines the struggles around the institutions of power and expects pupils to have a view of the public world from a Christian perspective. In Key Stage 3 citizenship lessons pupils look at public institutions and emphasises individuals’ responsibilities to society, as well as their rights.

As well as receiving a good grounding in their own faith, the pupils have some opportunities to learn about the diversity of cultures and faiths in Britain and abroad and to develop respectful and considerate attitudes. Years 5 and 6 study a module on other faiths; parents and visitors from around the world come into the school to share their experiences. In addition, pupils in the school come from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and, very recently from other faiths, providing opportunities to explore the diverse heritage that now makes up British culture. The school is seeking to extend this aspect, for example, with the recent use in Key Stage 3 geography of the Northstar UK on-line distance learning package linking electronically with schools and families abroad.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The happy, loving Christian atmosphere supports pupils in building very strong relationships with all in the school community. This is reflected in good attendance and pupils readily comment that they enjoy coming to school. Pupils say they feel safe and would be able to talk in confidence to various adults if they felt unhappy ‘...teachers are friendly and help us...’. Similarly, the introduction of a ‘help box’, ‘cell’ groups (mixed age pastoral groups) and peer mentors contributes to a climate where bullying incidences are rare. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions as part of the school’s Christian ethos and in the positive way minor incidences are dealt with. In the Year 1 and 2 class, a minor incident at break was calmly picked up at the start of the lesson, naturally relating it to caring for one another and effectively reinforcing the school’s good behaviour policy.

All teachers are first aid trained and maintain a safe working environment. The school has a child protection and safer recruitment policy and the designated person and all staff have undertaken appropriate training within the required timescales. However, monitoring is not thorough enough to ensure that the stated procedures are followed in every respect and the proprietors have not reviewed the safeguarding policy and procedures on an annual basis, as required. Supervision of pupils in and around the building is good due to the effective deployment of staff and the use of volunteers. The school's admission and attendance registers meet requirements. As part of the school's inclusive ethos there is a suitable accessibility plan that covers a three year time span. While there is a written policy for educational visits, it is not consistently followed. The risk assessments do not record in sufficient detail potential hazards in relation to pupils' ages and aptitudes when planning off-site activities. The school does not always request parents' consent on all the occasions that it should do so.

Pupils are encouraged to eat healthily and they enjoy regular exercise through play, in PE lessons and the good take-up of after school sport. Visitors from the community support the teaching of topics such as fire safety and road safety helping pupils to adopt safe practices.

The Christian ethos is reflected in the written welfare policies and underpins the strong care and concern shown for pupils in the daily life of the school. However, two of the regulations mentioned above are not met because all aspects of the welfare, health and safety policies for safeguarding and educational visits have not been monitored carefully enough to ensure that they are consistently implemented and up-to-date. Similarly, these policies are not always shared with all staff and volunteers.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The commitment of the staff is integral to the school's Christian ethos and staff are very well known to each other. The school has a single central record with the required information kept carefully by the school's secretary. However, the proprietors have not ensured that they have carried out the stated intention in the school safeguarding policy in respect of some additional requirements. Personnel files, including those of more recently employed staff do not contain evidence that appropriate checks have been carried out to confirm medical fitness and that character references have been taken up on all staff. During the inspection the school began to prepare procedures to remedy the situation.

School's premises and accommodation

The large Victorian building provides an interesting learning environment. The pleasant and colourful manner in which the school has been decorated and maintained both enhances and helps to clearly define 'zones' for the various age groups. Displays around the school deepen the pupils' love for God and celebrate their achievements in lively and imaginative ways. Pupils benefit from the good use made of the local park and leisure centre for PE lessons. With the secondary aged

pupils starting this term the accommodation, including toilets, is just adequate for the current numbers on roll. The school is mindful of the need to extend its provision and is actively looking for alternative accommodation.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The quality of information given to parents, for example, in the prospectus is good. The aims and the driving force behind the school's existence are clearly stated; the collective prayer, envisioning, notice board and prayer box sustain these and enables parents to be involved fully as partners in their children's education. Parents clearly expressed their overwhelming pleasure with the school in the questionnaires completed before the inspection and at the parents' meeting held during the inspection. Parents receive reports on their children's academic achievements referenced to National Curriculum levels; however, there are no details of the progress they have made over time. The school reports also include how well their children are developing their individual character and Christian approach, in line with the school's and parents' view of this as a priority. The school has not yet published the safeguarding information on its website.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school's procedures for handling complaints meet the requirements and are underpinned by Biblical teaching. There have been no formal complaints registered in the preceding school year.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall provision for the 19 pupils in the Nursery and Reception classes is outstanding. These standards of excellence, underpinned throughout by a strong Christian moral foundation, have been further developed by a gifted and experienced leadership team so that pupils enjoy their learning, make excellent progress, take part in activities confidently, behave well and build strong relationships. One parent commented "...the school has been amazing...staff are open, welcoming and supportive...our daughter is happy every day to attend..."

Through clear and specific planning, a well organised and stimulating environment and a good balance of child-led and teacher-led activities, pupils make very good progress in all the six areas of the curriculum. Effective dialogue with parents is a priority; newsletters and notes on classroom matters go home regularly and parents are invited to monitor and contribute to pupils' assessment folders. The school's Christian heart concepts are integrated naturally into formal and informal learning situations, wall displays and in discussions on rules and routines. Outdoor space is used imaginatively; for example, a role play activity involved pupils repairing cars in a garage, diagnosing the problem, fixing it and working out the bill. Digital equipment is used very successfully; for example, frequent and competent use is made by pupils and staff alike of the camera and the interactive whiteboard; the latter was

purchased with a grant given by Derby City Council for excellence in the inclusion of pupils with specific learning needs.

The unit puts a high priority on ensuring that pupils are valued, cared for and respected. Welfare requirements have been carefully considered and largely implemented; however, though all staff have basic first aid training, no one has yet been on a paediatric first aid course. The school is aware of this and staff are already booked on a course taking place in January 2010. The teaching team lead the unit well and manage the competent and experienced parent helpers very effectively. They are fully briefed and well deployed. Good links have been established with external agencies and training providers.

The Early Year Unit is managed in an exemplary manner and the team have a strong commitment to high quality of care and education through on-going self-evaluation and improvement.

Compliance with the regulations

The school meets most of the regulations for registration.

The school must take action to meet the outstanding regulations as listed below. An action plan should be prepared detailing the action to be taken.

In order to meet fully the regulations in **standard 1**, the quality of the education provided, the school must:

- provide appropriate careers guidance for the secondary age pupils (Regulation 1(2)(g))

In order to meet fully the regulations in **standard 3**, the welfare, health and safety of the pupils, the school must:

- ensure that the school's safer recruitment policy and the stated procedures are implemented in full and that the proprietors, who are responsible for these, review them annually (Regulation 3(2)(b))
- carry out more careful and detailed risk assessments for potential hazards for all activities outside school and ensure there is written parental consent as required (Regulation 3(2)(c)).

In order to meet fully the regulations in **standard 4**, the suitability of the proprietor and staff, the proprietors must:

- prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff (including volunteers), carry out checks to confirm their medical fitness and take up character references (Regulation 4(2)(a)).

In order to meet fully the regulations in **standard 6**, the provision of information for parents, carers and others, the school must:

- publish its safeguarding policy on the school's website (Regulation 6(4)).

The school meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

In order to comply with the welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the school must:

- ensure that there is always at least one person who has a current paediatric first aid certificate on the premises and on outings at all times when Early Years Foundation Stage pupils are present.

Meeting the expectations of CST

The school's religious ethos continues to meet the expectations of CST.