

# Statutory Section 48 Inspection of Schools Report

<b>Emmanuel Community School</b>	
The Drive, Walthamstow, London, E17 3BN	
<b>Current Section 48 inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
Type of school and unique reference number	Free School (138258)
Foundation date	September 2012
Trust	The Emmanuel School Trust (Company Ltd by Guarantee - Registration 07640769) (TEST)
Diocese	Affiliated to the Diocese of Chelmsford
Local authority	Waltham Forest
Date of inspection	3 <sup>rd</sup> March 2017
Headteacher	Peter Lewis
Inspector's name and CE Education Office number	Pamela Draycott (161)

## **School context**

The school serves a diverse community. Over 20 languages are spoken, with a high percentage of pupils speaking English as an additional language. The percentage for whom extra funding is received due to social disadvantage is similarly high. The percentage of those with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) is slightly above the national average. Most come from Christian backgrounds, with Muslims, Buddhists and Hindus also represented. 9 percent of families claim no religious affiliation. Since opening it has expanded by a year group annually. This will continue for another two academic years. The oldest pupils are currently in Year 4.

### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Emmanuel Community School as a free school with a Christian foundation are outstanding**

- The school has a very strong and clear Christian foundation which directly and positively expresses its service to its diverse community. This allows pupils to flourish as 'children of God' with their various gifts and talents well recognised.
- There is a strong sense of belonging, with pupils, parents and staff being intensely proud of their school 'family'. This expresses the school's core Christian values very well and impacts constructively on the inclusive, caring and supportive relationships in evidence across the school.
- Pupils' behaviour is consistently very good and clearly conveys the school's Christian ethos in action. Pupils are polite and well-mannered. They engage positively with their learning.

### **Areas to improve**

- Enhance opportunities for further prayer and reflection by putting existing plans into action for setting up a quiet area in the school grounds as a sensory 'spiritual garden'.
- Increase the formal involvement of pupils in leading worship on a regular basis.

### **The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding at meeting the needs of all learners**

The school's core values and golden rules are expressly linked to Christian teaching whilst being inclusive of pupils of all faiths and none. Pupils are able to link these values to their own behaviour. As a Year 4 pupil reflected, 'We think about being loving and truthful and forgiving like Jesus was'. Based on its clear Christian foundation there is a strong sense of belonging amongst staff, pupils and parents. This leads to excellent and caring relationships, and to pupils' behaviour being very good in classrooms and around the school site. Pupils know that their varying needs and talents are recognised and catered for. This means that they are happy in school. Consequently, attendance and punctuality is now above the national average. Pupils' wellbeing has a high priority. On those few occasions where behaviour, attendance or family circumstances get in the way of learning, the school has strong and compassionate systems in place to bring about positive resolutions. This is a clear expression of its deeply embedded Christian ethos and mission to those whom it serves. Pupils are polite and well-mannered and take responsibility for themselves and others well. This demonstrates itself in a very positive climate for learning. Relevant displays celebrate pupils' work and express the school's Christian ethos very well. To date, pupils have typically entered with attainment below that found nationally. The school works effectively to ensure that pupils of all ability groups make very good progress from their various starting points. This is expressly based on their worth as 'children of God'. It supports the school's high aspirations which enables pupils to thrive both academically and personally.

Pupils respond excellently to opportunities which support their spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. This includes relevant opportunities being taken in worship, in religious education (RE) and in other curriculum areas. Visits out of and visitors into school extend provision well. Charitable giving is seen as a clear expression of Christian service. RE and worship make relevant contributions to the school's overall Christian ethos and values. Reflection spaces in classrooms are regularly used to support spiritual development by providing opportunities for prayer throughout the school day. Opportunities to celebrate, pray, and reflect using outside space is not currently in place. There are however plans 'in the pipeline' to develop a sensory 'spiritual garden'. The school works effectively to promote an understanding of British values clearly linked with its core Christian values and golden rules. It also makes good use of opportunities in RE and across the curriculum to celebrate difference which helps pupils recognise, respect and value themselves and others. This is enhanced, for example, through close links with a school in Kenya.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**

The worship programme plays a pivotal role in school life. It expressly celebrates the school's Christian foundation, and is presented sensitively, so that it is inclusive of the different faith and non-faith backgrounds represented. Pupils and staff rightly recognise its importance, and many celebrate its relevance to their own spiritual and religious life. 'Worship helps me feel close to God', as a Year 4 pupil reflected. Worship is very well planned so that it draws on and develops the school's firm Christian foundation in deep and meaningful ways. It does this through, for example, a focus on Christian festivals, the importance of the Bible as 'the word of God', and the significance of Jesus for Christians. The worship programme clearly supports a deepening appreciation of the Christian understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. As a Year 2 pupil said, 'God is our Father. Jesus is his Son and the Spirit helps us'. The worship programme in school is very well enhanced through opportunities to worship in the local parish church as well as Emmanuel Community Church. A variety of people from within school and the local Christian communities lead worship. This extends pupils understanding of different emphases in belief and worship practices. Pupils take part in worship respectfully. They enjoy singing and are actively engaged in prayer both in formal acts of worship and at other points in the school day. Pupils write or verbalise their own prayers on given themes very well. They know and have an age appropriate understanding of the Lord's Prayer and its importance to Christians. There is a monthly parents' and pupils' prayer group. All this reflects the fact that prayer is deeply embedded in school practice and in many individuals' lives. Pupils have a clear voice in the improvement of worship through, for example, regular questionnaires. Their formal role in leading worship is less well developed. The headteacher is the worship co-ordinator, a role that is diligently undertaken and contributes to a strong programme.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding**

The RE curriculum has a high profile across the school. The effective use of a resource called, 'Discovering RE' is providing relevant support for planning and teaching of this subject area. There is an appropriate balance between the majority of teaching which focuses on Christianity and that which addresses other world faiths such as Judaism and Islam. Visits to various Christian places of worship enhance provision with firm plans in place to also visit a mosque and a synagogue. From Reception to Year 4 RE is taught regularly as a discrete subject and is well linked to other curriculum areas when appropriate. Clear plans are in place to continue this approach as the school expands to include Years 5 and 6. RE displays in classrooms and around the school are relevant and enrich the learning environment very well. Discussion, questioning and debate is very well developed through RE. Pupils respond very positively and with interest and enthusiasm. As a result, attainment and progress in RE is at least good, and for the majority above national expectations. It is at least as high as in other core areas such as literacy. Changes to the school's assessment practice, brought about due to national changes, have not yet been fully incorporated into the RE curriculum. As a result, although teachers mark pupils' work regularly, pupils are not fully aware of how well they are attaining in RE or what they need to do in order to improve further. The subject leader is enthusiastic, challenging and

supportive. Her vision, linked with that of the school overall, is aspirational and is realising ambitious expectations and improvement across RE. Her leadership is supported by good monitoring and evaluation from other senior leaders and governors.

**The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is outstanding**

As a clear expression of the school's deeply rooted Christian ethos and values, senior leaders, governors and trustees ensure that structures are in place which correctly focus on pupils' attainment, progress and wellbeing. Since its inception, its Christian foundation has unambiguously and consistently driven developments as a free school. Governors and trustees ensure that both RE and the worship programme meet statutory requirements and are effective in supporting pupils' academic and personal development. The governing body and trustees are very closely engaged in school life providing affirmation and challenge appropriately. Links with Emmanuel Community Church are extremely strong. Parents are well engaged with the school. They are both supported by and supportive of the school's inclusive Christian foundation. The school is outward looking. A positive example of this is its affiliation to the Diocese of Chelmsford as well as its links with the local Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE). Governors and trustees are currently engaged in expansion plans to open another primary school and forming a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). Emmanuel school leaders are closely involved in this and share the vision of Christian service through education. Through detailed and thorough self-evaluation which leads to effective development planning the school knows itself well. Effective strategies are in place to provide consistent development as a Christian school serving its wider community. Staff are very well supported for working in this free school with a Christian foundation. Recruitment procedures, and ongoing training, supports professional development well.

Section 48 report [March 2017] Emmanuel Community School, Walthamstow, E17 3BN