

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Roman Catholic Schools Report

Emmaus Church of England and Catholic Primary School

Fir Tree Drive South
Croxteth Park, Liverpool
L12 0JE

Diocese: Liverpool Archdiocese: Liverpool

Local authority: Liverpool

Dates of inspection: 11 March 2014

Date of last inspection: June 2008

School's unique reference number: 131105

Headteacher: Mr A. Williams

Inspectors' names and number: David Thorpe 461 (Diocese),
Denise Hegarty and Maria Eves (Archdiocese)

School context

Emmaus was the first joint Church of England and Catholic Primary School in the country. It is a popular, oversubscribed and much larger than average primary school and serves the Croxteth Park estate of Liverpool. Approximately 50% of the pupils are from Roman Catholic families whilst 35% are from Anglican families. The number of children eligible for free school meals is below average. The school has worked closely with the Fermanagh Trust from Northern Ireland to aid community cohesion in the province.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Emmaus as a joint Anglican and Roman Catholic school are outstanding

- The leadership and management as a Christian school demonstrate a deep-rooted commitment to the traditions of both churches. It is grounded in gospel values and these shared Christian values permeate throughout the whole life of the school.
- The residential visits enable children to develop mutual respect and time to reflect on their own beliefs whilst exploring the beliefs of others.
- The behaviour of the children is exemplary. The children demonstrate a high degree of respect for each other and this helps to highlight the school's distinctive Christian character.
- The school environment is outstanding at celebrating school life and its achievements. The photographs around school of what Christian values look like in action enable all to clearly recognise Emmaus as a Christian school.

Areas to improve

- All staff and children to become more involved in the planning of collective worship in order to deepen children's spiritual development and create an even wider variety of worship styles.

- To introduce a more cohesive and systematic approach to the assessment of RE so that planning is better informed and as a result the high standards rise further. This will help Governors and senior leaders to effectively monitor standards more robustly.

The school is outstanding at developing its distinctive Christian Life

All pupils and staff feel valued and they enjoy their work. There are high levels of hope, aspiration, and well-being. One example was a Year 2 child who spoke confidently about how all the children are well looked after by both “grown-ups and other children.” As a result of the work carried out on Christian values throughout the school the self-esteem of the pupils is very high. One Year 6 child commented, “Our school is founded on Christian values, it doesn’t matter if we have different faiths, we are all allowed to be ourselves.” Christian values motivate the children and are the basis for all decisions made within the school. The importance of the school’s Christian foundation is explicitly stated on all school literature and can be seen on entering the school with a striking display of the cross made out of stained glass which is also the central focal point in the school hall. The school’s motto ‘Travelling together with Jesus’ succinctly states the core purpose of the school and is at the centre of all decisions taken. It underpins all relationships in the school and is clearly visible in the way that all members of the school community talk to and treat each other. Cultural awareness is outstanding. The head teacher is nationally recognised as a leader in Holocaust education and this has led to some innovative work with Year 6 who study the effects of the Holocaust on society, in turn this increases the pupils’ sense of empathy. Another unique piece of work has been work carried out with the Fermanagh Trust looking at community cohesion. This led to some of the pupils visiting Northern Ireland where they experienced the hurt that division can cause. Through this example, the pupils have an excellent understanding of their personal identity. In addition to this, as a result of carefully planned curriculum work all pupils have a high regard for diversity and difference and understand what true forgiveness looks like. The attainment and progress of the pupils in core subjects is outstanding and the pupils are clearly motivated through the Christian value of never settling for less than their best. The excellent work undertaken studying the Holocaust is an outstanding example of how well the school prepares its pupils for the diverse world in which they live.

The effectiveness of collective worship is outstanding

Collective Worship is valued throughout the whole of the school and as a result is central to, and is reflected in, all areas of school life. This can clearly be seen in the way that both children and adults are inspired when worshipping together. During the Collective Worship experienced during the inspection all present participated in a very positive way, the singing of the children was outstanding. The lighting of three candles acted as a reminder to all present that we worship God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Collective Worship is very well planned by the coordinator but there are few opportunities for the children to plan worship themselves. The worship group, set up and led by a governor, meets weekly and provides an opportunity that further enriches the children’s experience and understanding of true spiritual worship. Staff have received Diocesan and Archdiocesan training on collective worship leading to raised confidence. Importance is placed on the preparation of the environment for worship and this helps to enhance the worship experience. A particular example was the Key Stage 1 worship on the day of the inspection. Great care was taken to ensure that a visually stimulating focal point engaged the children in addition to a carefully selected

piece of music played as the children entered the hall. The welcome and sign of the cross were spoken in French and all present participated. This was an excellent use of another curriculum area. Opportunities for children to share with the person sitting next to them was planned into the worship and the children did so in a way that enhanced the worshipful atmosphere. The children demonstrate high levels of engagement during worship times and they speak with a high level of enthusiasm for it. They talk openly and passionately about their enjoyment of worship and what it means to them. One child in Year 2 commented that during worship she has an opportunity to “feel closer to Jesus”. Clergy involvement in worship is well planned and both the vicar and priest are actively involved. They are also available when any pastoral needs arise as happened recently with the death of a member of staff. A recently introduced local leavers’ service for Year 6, alternating between the two churches, has been well received. Governors are active in the worshipping life of the school, leading to a feeling of togetherness in the school and local community. Collective Worship is recognisably Christian and through the excellent planning it successfully covers both Anglican and Catholic traditions.

The effectiveness of Religious Education is outstanding

RE is, rightly, viewed as a core subject. The school has worked tremendously hard to ensure both the Anglican syllabus and Catholic programme are equally covered and as a result this ensures that there is extremely clear continuity and progression. All year groups receive the required teaching time. The long term RE is well planned resulting in clear progression from year group to year group. Assessment procedures in the medium term are not as effective as they could be. A more systematic approach to assessment and tracking will enable senior leaders to monitor standards in the subject more efficiently. Continuity and progression within lessons is very clear and this enables pupils to make at least good progress. Both attainment targets are well balanced. Pupils are very positive towards the subject and this has been brought about by high quality RE teaching. All lessons observed were at least good, the majority were outstanding. Pupils have a clear understanding of the impact of religion on their personal life, a good example was one Year 2 pupil who when talking about the subject stated that “we should share love and forgiveness.” This is a result of spiritual development being skilfully planned into the curriculum. The high profile of RE has resulted in positive attitudes from the pupils in relation to diversity and difference. All school leaders, including governors, are committed to the centrality of RE in the life of Emmaus school. This is demonstrated in the fact that the subject leader is a member of the senior leadership team. Professional development is regularly provided, is linked to the school development plan, and is matched to the needs of both the school and to individual members of staff. This has resulted in high levels of confidence in teaching RE with high expectations from staff especially in the use of religious vocabulary. An example being in a Year 4 lesson when the children were using phrases such as ‘truly remorseful’ and ‘overwhelming sorrow’ when describing how Peter may have felt after he had denied knowing Jesus. An example of high level thinking skills developed through RE was observed in a Year 6 lesson when one child commented that ‘Jesus is the peacemaker and through His death He would show that there is no point in fighting’.

The leadership and management of the Christian life of the school is outstanding

All leaders and governors share, and can confidently speak about, their very clear Christian vision for the school. There is clear ownership, from all parts of the school

community, of the distinctly Christian vision. This is seen in the school's mission, 'Travelling together with Jesus.' Staff receive excellent support from senior leaders, in addition clergy provide very good pastoral support to the whole school community. Governors play an active role in the life of the school. Governors from both Christian traditions are represented on the governing body and work closely with the school to support its Christian foundation. One example has been the establishing of the governors' Spiritual Dimensions Group which examines all areas of the spiritual life of the school, its distinctiveness as a Christian school and how both church traditions are represented in the daily life of the school. This strong partnership is at the heart of the success of the school. All of this has contributed to the school being recognised as a 'beacon for community cohesion.' The relationships with both churches are good and they provide excellent support to the school. The interaction between the school and the wider community is outstanding as is seen in the links with the Fermanagh Trust and work undertaken with the Anne Frank organisation. An issue from the previous inspection was to establish a clear process for evaluating the school's distinctly Christian nature. This is now central to the ongoing school improvement processes that have been established. The robust evaluation carried out by senior leaders, including governors has resulted in improvements in provision and outcomes for the pupils. All aspects of the school's life are monitored, evaluated and viewed as part of the school's Christian responsibility and as a result supports the whole child and every child. The other issue from the last inspection was to secure continuity and progression in RE. Through the outstanding work of the coordinator this issue has been skilfully addressed.

Section 48 report March 2014 Emmaus, Liverpool, L12 0JE