



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

Emmaus School

June 2023

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School's Details

School	Emmaus School			
DfE number	865/6032			
Address	Emmaus School School Lane Staverton Trowbridge Wiltshire BA14 6NZ			
Telephone number	01225 782684			
Email address	info@emmaus-school.org.uk			
Headmistress	Mrs Miriam Wiltshire			
Chair of governors	Mr Kevin Wiltshire			
Proprietor	Emmaus School Ltd			
Age range	4 to 16			
Number of pupils on roll	57			
	EYFS	6	Juniors	23
	Seniors	28		
Inspection dates	20 to 22 June 2023			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Emmaus School is a co-educational, independent Christian day school. The school was opened in 1997 by the headteacher and founding governors. It is a charitable limited company and the headteacher's spouse is the chair of governors. The school occupies the site of the old village school and has been extended to provide additional accommodation. It has a playground and the use of playing fields nearby. The village hall is used for some lessons. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is an integral part of the school.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, the school has appointed two joint operations managers.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to provide a caring Christian environment that encourages pupils to develop creativity, diligence, joyfulness and forgiveness. It seeks to inspire pupils to emerge as young adults who are independent thinkers and who view education as a lifelong process.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils live within a 30-mile radius of the school and come from a wide range of family backgrounds. The school's own assessment data and standardised tests indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average in relation to those taking similar tests nationally. The school has identified three pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), such as dyslexia and other conditions, all of whom receive additional specialist help. There is one pupil with an education, health and care plan (EHCP). English is an additional language (EAL) for two pupils, neither of whom receive additional support for their English. The school identifies the most able pupils in its population and modifies the curriculum to meet their needs.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Inspections of schools with early years settings not requiring registration also report whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, inspections report on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

ISI inspections are also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY. The FOCUSED COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key standards have been inspected in detail. These are the standards on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety; arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the standards and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014, Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

Key findings

- 2.1 The school does not meet all of the required standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, relevant requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and associated requirements, and should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.**

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 In the junior school, the school's own framework for assessment confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 Pupils take GCSE examinations in their final year at the school. The small numbers involved prevent reliable comparison with national averages, but inspection evidence confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.4 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.5 Pupils receive relationships education in the junior school and relationships and sex education in the senior school, except in so far as they are lawfully excused. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.6 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.7 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.
- 2.8 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.9 Good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.10 Arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils do not always pay due regard to current statutory guidance. In particular, due consideration has not been given to carrying out online searches when appointing staff.
- 2.11 Health and safety requirements are met in some areas, but systems for the overall oversight for health and safety matters are ineffective. The school has not ensured that required records are kept regularly, nor that the training needs of staff are met.
- 2.12 Systems for oversight of fire safety matters are ineffective. The school has undertaken a fire risk assessment, but sufficient action has not been taken to mitigate identified risks. In particular, some smoke alarms are non-compliant, emergency lighting is not fitted throughout the school and alarms are not tested sufficiently regularly. Records are not kept as required and the training needs of some staff are not met.
- 2.13 The approach to risk assessment is not strategic. Suitable risk assessments are in place and updated in some, but not all, areas of risk. The school does not ensure that the training needs of staff are met and recorded consistently.

- 2.14** The standards relating to welfare, health and safety in paragraphs 9, 10, 13, 14 and 15, the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 (accessibility plan), and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met, but those in paragraphs 7 [safeguarding], 11 [health and safety], 12 [fire] and 16 [risk assessment] are not met.

Action point 1

The school must ensure that it gives due consideration to carrying out online searches as a part of its due diligence when appointing staff [paragraph 7(a) and (b); EYFS 3.7 and 3.9].

Action point 2

The school must ensure that the written health and safety policy is effectively implemented in relation to keeping the required records [paragraph 11; EYFS 3.55].

Action point 3

The school must ensure that the health and safety training needs of staff are met [paragraph 11; EYFS 3.55].

Action point 4

The school must ensure that it meets the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 with regard to the effective implementation of a suitable fire risk assessment, and that action is taken to mitigate any identified risks, including fitting and regularly testing compliant alarms and emergency lighting. Records of checks must be kept as required [paragraph 12; EYFS 3.56].

Action point 5

The school must ensure that the fire safety training needs of staff are met [paragraph 12; EYFS 3.56].

Action point 6

The school must ensure that suitable risk assessments are in place [paragraph 16; EYFS 3.65 and 3.66].

Action point 7

The school must ensure that the risk assessment training needs of staff are met [paragraph 16; EYFS 3.65 and 3.66].

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.15** The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors reported under Part 4, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.16** The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.17** Suitable toilet and changing facilities and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.

- 2.18 Showering facilities where required by the standard are not appropriate, as the only showers available are at too great a distance from the school.
- 2.19 **The standards relating to the premises and accommodation in paragraphs 24 to 29 are met, but that in paragraph 23 [showering facilities] is not met.**

Action point 8

The school must ensure that suitable showering facilities are available for pupils aged 11 or over at the start of the school year [paragraph 23(1)(c)].

PART 6 – Provision of information

- 2.20 A range of information is published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. It also includes particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.
- 2.21 **The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.**

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

- 2.22 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.
- 2.23 **The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.**

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of school

- 2.24 The proprietor does not ensure that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the wellbeing of the pupils.
- 2.25 **The standard relating to leadership and management of the school in paragraph 34 is not met.**

Action point 9

The school must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities demonstrate good skills and knowledge to fulfil their roles effectively so that independent school standards are met consistently, and the school actively promotes the wellbeing of pupils [paragraph 34(1)(a), (b), and (c)].

3. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

The **EDUCATIONAL QUALITY** inspection reports on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

The headline judgements apply one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school.

Key findings

3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is good.

- Pupils develop excellent reading and writing skills.
- Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning.
- Pupils engage actively in collaborative tasks and take leadership in their learning when they are given the opportunity to do so.
- Pupils become competent users of information and communication technology (ICT); however, younger pupils have limited opportunities to develop their ICT skills.
- Pupils achieve success in the co-curricular activities and competitions available to them.

3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.

- Pupils have a very well-developed sense of the school's Christian beliefs and values.
- Pupils have a decidedly strong sense of community and are very supportive of each other.
- Pupils are able to distinguish right from wrong and are willing to accept responsibility for the decisions that they make.
- Pupils display extremely high levels of self-discipline.

Recommendations

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

- Ensure that younger pupils experience greater opportunities to develop their ICT skills.
- Ensure that pupils have further opportunities to extend their learning beyond the classroom.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is good.

3.5 Pupils, including those with SEND and EAL, make strong progress over time, as evidenced by comprehensive assessment data. Pupils' progress in lessons is facilitated by focused teaching alongside a culture where pupils are determined to make the best use of their time. Children in the EYFS make excellent progress with reading and spelling. In 2021 and 2022, a large majority of pupils in Years 1 to 9 achieved above age-related expectations in reading tests. In spelling tests a majority of pupils in Years 1 to 6 and a large majority of pupils in Years 7 to 9 achieved above age-related

expectations. In 2022 the GCSE results of the small number of pupils in Year 11 were all achieved at grades 6 to 9. In 2020 and 2021 centre- and teacher-assessed results were of a similarly good standard. In discussion, pupils were keen to point to the individualised support and encouragement they receive from teachers as key contributory factors to their academic progress.

- 3.6 During their time at the school pupils develop excellent reading and writing skills. This is as a result of the high priority given by leaders and governors to learning to read. Children in the EYFS showed a good ability to write in sentences as they described bible stories. Higher ability pupils in Year 6 demonstrated excellent use of emotive techniques and imagery in pieces of writing persuading parents to allow their children to be evacuated in World War II. Year 3 and Year 4 pupils displayed excellent speaking skills as they confidently answered the register in French. In English, Year 7 and Year 8 pupils communicated with fluency and insight about the meaning of motivation. Inspectors observed that pupils listen and focus extremely well in lessons, including those where there is more than one teaching group in the room.
- 3.7 Pupils' acquisition and development of numeracy skills is strong. This is due to the focus on the development of number skills from the earliest years. Year 1 pupils showed a good concept of number when they noticed that a triceratops had only two horns when it should have had three. Pupils apply their strong mathematical knowledge effectively to other areas of learning. Pupils in Years 3 and Year 4 displayed good mathematical skills as they measured the leaves of the vegetable plants that they had been growing. In geography, Year 9 pupils displayed competent mathematical skills when finding grid references.
- 3.8 Pupils make strong progress in developing knowledge, skills and understanding as a result of the care teachers take in addressing their individual needs, and of their own determination. Children in the EYFS displayed strong physical skills, developing coordination as they skipped and ran around the playground. In personal, social and health education (PSHE), pupils in Years 3 and 4 showed excellent knowledge and understanding when discussing the signs and symptoms of asthma. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 displayed good creativity when making felt animals using sewing skills. Higher ability pupils in Year 7 displayed excellent understanding when constructing algebraic expressions from sentences. In history, Year 10 pupils used their strong prior knowledge to prepare a mind map for revision of the topic of surgery.
- 3.9 As they progress through the school pupils become competent users of ICT. They apply their skills well to support and enhance their learning. Pupils use ICT effectively to research and to revise using online software. In the scrutiny of work, Year 9 pupils used spreadsheets effectively to calculate mortgage payments. Older pupils with SEND make good use of ICT to enable them to make progress in line with their peers. However, there are limited opportunities for younger pupils to develop their ICT skills in areas where it would enhance their learning.
- 3.10 Pupils' success in co-curricular activities is good. Some pupils gain strong success in the UK Maths Challenge, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, CREST Awards and music examinations. In a national competition for young writers in 2022, nine pupils had their stories published in *Twisted Tales*. Strong creativity is evident in the pupils' artwork and through their acting in preparation for drama productions. This meets the aim of the school to encourage pupils to develop creativity. Governors have been instrumental in encouraging the school to develop extra-curricular activities. In discussions, pupils spoke of how they enjoy extending their learning beyond the classroom and how they would welcome further opportunities to do so.
- 3.11 Pupils display excellent attitudes to their learning, demonstrating an intrinsic desire to do well. In lessons and activities where pupils are given the opportunity to collaborate with their peers, they benefit by sharing ideas to enhance their understanding. Children in the EYFS cooperated well as they joined in singing games. In geography, Year 7 and Year 8 pupils displayed strong collaborative skills as they created online crosswords to test their knowledge of river features and greenfield and brownfield sites. In discussions, Year 5 pupils were animated when describing how they had worked together to

create constellations from marshmallows and skewers. Pupils are excellent independent learners. In geography, Year 4 pupils displayed markedly strong independence when researching the geographical features of France. In year 5 mathematics and Year 6 English, pupils remained well-focused on all tasks and were able to work independently when the teacher was working with the other group.

- 3.12 Where pupils are encouraged to extend their learning through challenging tasks, they show a strong ability to develop higher-order thinking skills. In chemistry, Year 8 pupils showed good analytical skills as they extracted information from additional resources which they synthesised within their written answers. In the scrutiny of work, Year 10 pupils displayed a strong ability to analyse when writing about the relationships between the families in *Romeo and Juliet*. In ICT, pupils use strong thinking skills when writing code for computer games such as *Fizz Buzz*. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a very large majority of parents agreed that the school equips their child with the research skills they need in later life. This meets the aim of the school to inspire pupils to emerge as young adults who are independent thinkers.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 The pupils' spiritual understanding is excellent. The school's Christian ethos is immediately apparent, is respected by pupils and permeates all areas of school life. Pupils demonstrate an innate and willing interest in spiritual matters. In discussions, pupils of all ages spoke of how learning from a Christian perspective enriches their spiritual awareness. Pupils felt that assemblies encourage them to think broadly and openly, as there is always a focus on spiritual development. Pupils in Year 9 said that they are encouraged to delve more deeply into their spiritual understanding through analysing bible stories with the freedom to develop their own ideas. Pupils show a considerable appreciation of their natural surroundings because leaders seek to foster a love of nature during their earliest years. Pupils in the youngest years said how peaceful it was to say prayers in the woods. Year 5 pupils spoke of the joy they experience through friendships, gardening and relaxing amongst nature.
- 3.15 Pupils demonstrate an extremely strong sense of community and identity as a school. They are kind and display an excellent level of respect for one another, regardless of any perceived difference. Pupils show great sensitivity and respect for those from different backgrounds and with different learning needs to themselves. They are extremely accepting and value the right of everyone to be themselves, which satisfies the core Christian value of showing kindness to all people. In an assembly, Year 3 and Year 4 pupils displayed an excellent understanding of how people are different as they recognised discrimination in the story, *The Wemmicks*. Pupils have a strong interest in different cultures and were intrigued by the customs and traditions described in the book *If the World Were A Village*. In the questionnaire, a very large majority of parents agreed that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of other people.
- 3.16 Pupils are extremely good at supporting others in the school. In discussions with inspectors, they spoke warmly of a culture of mutual respect where pupils and staff will go out of their way to help each other. For example, pupils who were more proficient in Spanish willingly helped those who had only been learning the language for one year. Younger pupils appreciate the support that they receive from older pupils during lessons. Pupils willingly support and encourage pupils who are neurodiverse and those with physical disabilities. Pupils make a markedly positive contribution to the local community and to wider society through charity and outreach work. They demonstrate considerable sensitivity to those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils are instrumental in choosing the charities they want to support and of thinking of ways in which to help others. For example, pupils decided to raise funds for the Ukrainian crisis, contribute to the local foodbank and fill shoeboxes with useful items to send to children around the world.
- 3.17 Pupils become excellent self-regulators as they are supported by staff and parents in discussing any mistakes that they make and in looking for solutions together. Pupils themselves believe they have a

good grasp of what is right and what is wrong and the prevailing impression of a well-ordered and cohesive community presented to the inspectors during their visit corroborates this. In the scrutiny of work, there was excellent understanding shown by Year 4 pupils on their respect for the laws of the country, and by older pupils who were able to express with maturity their opinions on sex before marriage. In the scrutiny of work, Year 9 pupils displayed an excellent understanding of morality when debating whether the presence of zoos in the 21st century is immoral.

- 3.18 Pupils demonstrate excellent social awareness. Pupils of all ages work together naturally in activities, and the supportive environment enables new pupils to settle in quickly. In PSHE, pupils engage in lively debate when discussing British values and mutual tolerance. Pupils show concern for each other and seek help for other pupils if they see that they are worried. Pupils relish the opportunity to put forward views through activities such as the school council. They understand that their ideas will be considered and acted upon, such as improving some of the physical conditions of the school. Pupils work extremely effectively together such as when organising and completing their Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme expeditions.
- 3.19 Pupils have a very clear understanding of how the decisions that they make now will influence their own future successes. From an early age, pupils gain pleasure from working hard and trying to do their best. They reflect on the feedback given by their teachers and take action to further improve their work. This meets one of the aims of the school to encourage pupils to develop diligence and joyfulness. In PSHE pupils are keen to discuss the impact of the decisions that they will make regarding future relationships. In response to the questionnaire, a very large majority of pupils agreed that the school teaches them how to build positive relationships and friendships. Year 11 pupils make informed decisions about their sixth form studies and future careers. This is as a result of the personalised advice and support they receive from teachers and leaders.
- 3.20 Throughout their time at the school pupils develop extremely high levels of self-discipline and self-knowledge. Pupils are comfortable in themselves and try to achieve their own potential, rather than comparing themselves to others. This is because leaders and teachers encourage them to strive for self-acceptance, so that they understand how their strengths and weaknesses make them unique individuals with a purpose in life. Pupils build resilience from a young age. In mathematics, Year 5 pupils displayed decidedly strong perseverance when revising ratio problems. Pupils show excellent levels of self-awareness and self-understanding in their work. They know what is required of them and they are disciplined when it comes to completing work in class. As they leave the school pupils are well-prepared to tackle the next stage of their education.
- 3.21 Pupils have an excellent understanding of staying safe, both in terms of their digital lives as well as with regards to their physical and mental health. They take regular exercise, can talk knowledgeably about healthy food options and are encouraged to bring nutritious food for their lunch. Children in the EYFS have a good understanding of the importance of keeping themselves clean and of why they should drink plenty of water. Year 5 pupils showed an excellent ability to recognise situations which could cause accidents in the home. In discussions, pupils of all ages were able to discuss consent in an age-appropriate way. This is as a result of a well-structured PSHE programme. In discussions, pupils described how walking by the canal and listening to the birds is beneficial to their mental health.

4. Inspection Evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, had discussions with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with a group of governors and attended assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with educational resource areas. Inspectors considered the responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires. The inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Sue Clarke	Reporting inspector
Mr James Kazi	Compliance team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school)
Mrs Angela Clancy	Team inspector (Former senior leader, HMC school)