



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### The Nottingham Emmanuel School

Gresham Park Road  
West Bridgford  
NG2 7YF

**Previous SIAMS grade:** Outstanding

**Current inspection grade:** Outstanding

**Diocese:** Southwell and Nottingham

Local authority: N/A

Dates of inspection: 17 and 18 November 2015

Date of last inspection: November 2010

School's unique reference number: 139765

Headteacher: Derek Hobbs

Inspector's name and number: Jo Fageant 104

#### School context

This average sized secondary school opened in 2002 and through the gradual admission of different year groups opened a sixth form in 2007. It moved to new buildings in 2008 and converted to be an academy in 2013 welcoming a new principal in September 2015. The appointment of a chaplain is a requirement within the foundation arrangements of the school. The academy is involved in a number of different school networks. It serves a socially, economically and ethnically mixed community with students attending from the local area and further afield in Nottingham, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. It draws students from 40 primary schools. There are higher than the national average number of disadvantaged students, those with special educational needs (SEN), those from ethnic minorities and students with English as an additional language (EAL).

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Nottingham Emmanuel School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Deep theological understanding of and debate about the purpose of education permeates all aspects of school life ensuring the character of the school is distinctively Christian.
- A Christian commitment to the value of everyone means staff consistently 'go the extra mile' to support students.
- This commitment understands adults to be learners alongside students and has resulted in a sophisticated and personalised professional development programme for staff, thereby reflecting the words of the school motto.
- A profound and open exploration of faith as a journey enables everyone to feel at home with the idea of religious faith and its varied meanings for different people at different times.
- The rich worship life of the school, supported by the chaplaincy arrangements, engages and inspires.

#### Areas to improve

Develop greater consistency of practice within the school and an outward focus on service by:

- Improving the consistency and impact of marking, feedback and assessment practice across all key stages of religious studies (RS) to ensure that students typically make even better progress towards their challenging targets in every year group.
- Ensuring that the outstanding approaches to collective worship observed in large year and house teams fully permeate the creative tutor programmes across all year groups.
- Using the school's exemplary strategic vision and building further leadership capacity to ensure that its outstanding and innovative approach to Christian distinctiveness can have a positive impact on practice and outcomes in other secondary and primary schools, both locally and nationally.

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

Profound theological thinking about the purpose of education influences all aspects of the school and gives rise to an ethos in which Christian teachings and values are discussed and explored as a normal part of day to day life. Students say the biblical quotations on the walls make them think. The meaning of the school motto *Together to learn, to grow, to serve* is understood by all members of the school community. Learning and growing are understood by staff and students as means to empower people to make a difference, not just for themselves but others as well. Adults in the school are also understood to be learners who have the capacity and need to grow. The staff have a willingness to go the extra mile to support students, and where appropriate their families, pastorally and academically. This is understood by many to be an act of Christian service demonstrating concern for academic achievement, personal development and wellbeing. Leaders are clear that 'removing disadvantage' is an important aspect of the school's Christian service. This commitment is appreciated by students and, alongside focused efforts by the school, means attendance has improved year on year and the number of students who are persistently absent is very low. If and when exclusions are necessary they are managed with a concern for what is best for everyone; seeking ways to create second chances. Relationships and behaviour are excellent and this is widely attributed to everyone's understanding of and responses to the school's Christian values. Students say the ethos ensures 'people care about one another.' There is an atmosphere of positive and purposeful learning. Inconsistencies in teaching and learning outcomes across the school are being appropriately addressed giving rise to improving standards. Gaps in achievement between different groups of students are closing. Beyond the taught curriculum there is an extensive programme of enrichment, lunchtime and after school activities which students value. These include opportunities to engage with aspects of the Christian faith. The language of faith as a journey permeates much of school life offering an invitation to explore and develop faith, Christian and other, in an accepting, encouraging and supportive context. This has a very strong, positive impact on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of students. It is normal to talk about and question faith being respectful of different ideas and people's different places on the journey. The school captures the stories of the faith journeys of students and staff in its *One Story* books. One student is quoted as saying, 'I believe that being with such supportive students and teachers is what made me able to be more open about my faith.' This openness, the nature of the community and the understanding achieved in RS all develop a high degree of understanding of and respect for diversity and difference helping the harmonious inclusivity of the school. Students say they are provided with good advice about keeping themselves safe and healthy. These and aspects of relationships are successfully addressed in 'drop down' days. Good careers advice is also provided and through employability initiatives students also learn to think about ways in which different careers can help them make a positive difference to the world in which they live.

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

Great value is placed upon collective worship. It represents an important aspect of the school's focus on people's journeys of faith. Challenging ideas are shared and they influence positive relationships and attitudes to learning and growing. Worship is well planned to be inclusive and engaging and, as a consequence, inspires deep thinking and service through social and charitable action. Different contexts, leaders and styles ensure students understand how varied worship can be. On three days each week worship takes place in tutor group settings. Tutors are richly supported by members of the chaplaincy team and written resources. Despite this, some students comment that these times do not always include an element of worship. The place and practice of prayer has been given particularly careful thought by senior leaders who have provided wise guidance for all who lead worship in all its contexts and those who might meet with students for prayer at other times. Students understand the significance and value of prayer. This is clearly illustrated by the number, from different faith traditions and those of no faith, who go forward for a personal prayer during communion services. Attendance at communion services, two year groups at a time, is now a regular feature of worship for all students and they speak positively about the experience. Additional students attend on a voluntary basis. As a consequence, all are familiar with Anglican practice, biblical teachings and Christian festivals. The importance of Jesus in Christian worship and the language of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit are well understood. A relatively new initiative has been the establishment of a student chaplaincy team. This started with a specific project which resulted in the publication of a beautiful, pocket sized school prayer book. Those responsible for worship are responsive to the process of evaluation, always striving to make worship as

inclusive, relevant and meaningful as possible. The development of resources to support worship in tutor groups and the inclusion of small group interaction and dialogue opportunities are examples of changes made in response to evaluation.

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

Religious studies (RS) is one of the highest performing subjects in this school with standards of attainment improving year on year. Students make good progress from their starting points, study a full GCSE course and attain grades which are in line with national expectations. Good numbers go on to AS and A levels in the sixth form. Assessment arrangements and progress tracking strategies are well established so students understand their targets. They are well prepared for examinations though sometimes the keen focus on time deadlines is applied unhelpfully to the learning process rather than just the experience of answering questions. The department benefits from the whole school system of monitoring and evaluation that gives rise to well-designed professional development opportunities. The resulting initiatives to improve teaching and learning are reflected in the work of RS teachers. Where teaching is best it is based on excellent planning which scaffolds learning through a variety of engaging tasks which successfully meet the needs of students of all abilities. Excellent questioning probes and develops understanding. The best marking, although not used consistently across the department, helps students understand their progress. It provides clear advice on what has been done well and poses questions which require students to respond, extending their thinking. As a consequence, students develop a range of skills including enquiry, interpretation, evaluation and reflection. The subject explores different religions and the varied impact they have on the lives of believers. This both reflects and supports the school's strong focus on faith as a journey. In this ethos students become reflective learners and engage well with questions of meaning and purpose. They develop a secure understanding of Christianity and the other religions studied. The subject makes a strong contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The director of learning is well informed about local and national developments in the subject and this helps to guide the work of the department.

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

Leaders, including governors, have a strong and enthusiastic commitment to the Christian vision, ethos and values that have shaped the school since it opened. They are, however, not complacent about the demands of the continuing journey and are undertaking a review of the vision and values to sharpen the ways in which they are articulated and understood. This is underpinned by the deep and profound thinking of key leaders and the chaplain and their theological understanding of the purpose of education. This is applied to all aspects of school life and is clearly seen in a number of guidance documents. Examples are those on the use of prayer, appropriate responses to the duty to promote British values, and ways in which curriculum areas can reflect the school's Christian ethos. It is also seen in the widely shared interpretations of the school motto. As a consequence, there is a tangible sense of a positive and purposeful learning community. A warm welcome is extended to staff and students of all faiths and none. However, there is an expectation that all will engage with the notion that faith is a journey which is worth exploring from whatever a person's current position. For some this has been a transformational experience and moving stories of the faith journeys of staff and students are shared in a number of *One Story* books published by the school. Christian care for all ensures rigorous and effective self-evaluation of all aspects of the school is in place. This gives leaders an excellent understanding of strengths and areas for further improvement. It informs the strategies they put in place to remove disadvantage of all sorts that represent barriers to students' learning and growing. It also enables the creation of a sophisticated and personalised professional development programme for staff at all levels. Along with pastoral care, this supports staff in their efforts to be the best they can be including preparing some for leadership responsibilities in church school contexts. An example of the benefits of these strategies is the diminishing need to provide tutors with significant support for worship. Both collective worship and RE meet statutory requirements. They are supported as important aspects of the school and, with their characteristic commitment to continual improvement, leaders have addressed the development suggestions in relation to these areas set out in the last inspection report. The school is outward looking: the chaplain and chair of governors have shared the *One Story* initiative at a national conference about character development. Underpinned by a Christian sense of servant heartedness the school's involvement with parents and in a wide range of networks is mutually beneficial and enriching. This includes the church, the diocese and other schools locally and nationally,

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