

Emberton School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110226
Local Authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	356706
Inspection dates	27–28 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Angela Kirk

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	19
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Flowers
Headteacher	Steve Dunning
Date of previous school inspection	15 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. Five lessons were observed, taught by two teachers, and meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors and staff. The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised pupils' books, monitoring and assessment information, the minutes of meetings, policies, teachers' planning and safeguarding documents. Questionnaires were analysed from staff as well as 14 from parents and carers.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at the following:

- Whether it is possible to identify gender differences in attainment and progress in the school over recent years, including any measures taken to address them.
- How well assessments of pupils' achievement of their targets are shared with them and with parents and carers in order to support improvements.
- How effective the extension of assessment and tracking systems to cover all subjects has been in gaining a full picture of pupils' achievements.
- Given the changes in leadership since the previous inspection and the uncertainty concerning the school's future leadership, how effective current monitoring and evaluation systems are, including the involvement of governors.

Information about the school

Emberton is a much smaller than average village infant school. Almost all of the pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. There are no pupils eligible for free school meals. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a separate Reception class. The school currently has had a temporary headteacher for the past 18 months who is also the headteacher at Olney Infant school.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Emberton is a good school. All the parents and carers are happy with their children's experience of school. One parent summed up the views of many, 'Emberton provides a warm and nurturing environment in which a child can develop'. Most pupils leave with above-average standards in English and mathematics. Pupils make good progress in all year groups as a result of an outstanding curriculum, good teaching and individual support. The innovative curriculum ensures pupils' excellent understanding and ready adoption of healthy lifestyles, with the effective promotion of sporting activities and good food choices. The breadth of interesting learning opportunities provided supports pupils' outstanding development of workplace skills. For example, Reception and Year 1 baked cakes and opened a 'Busy Bees Cafe', to which the village community was invited through invitations written by the pupils themselves.

Behaviour is good. Pupils undertake tasks around the school, such as returning the toy box after playtime. Opportunities are limited for pupils to take a greater role in simple decisions and responsibilities in order to develop further their good attitudes to learning and behaviour. The care of pupils is good. Staff know each pupil extremely well and ensure that all individual needs are met to enable learners to achieve well, academically and socially. Teaching is good and marking and feedback are effective in helping pupils understand their next steps in learning. However, although pupils have literacy and numeracy targets which are shared with them and with their parents and carers, these are not yet linked effectively to pupils' daily work.

The teamwork of all staff is excellent, so everyone shares in the school's ethos and ambition ? 'Small School, Big Achievements'. Staff are supported well by the governing body, which provides challenge and high expectation to the school, but governors' monitoring is not yet linked tightly enough to the school's priorities and their use of first-hand evidence is limited.

The school sustained a good track record of improvement since its last inspection, although the original plan to federate outlined in the previous inspection report was not implemented. Since the previous inspection, the school has maintained the good achievement of its pupils. Good links have been forged with a number of partner schools, including Olney Infant School, with whom Emberton share their headteacher. These links have benefited the staff in terms of professional training, and the pupils in terms of a wide range of good academic, cultural and social activities. School self-evaluation is largely accurate and as a result of leaders' and managers' clear understanding of the strengths and areas of development for the school, the capacity to improve is good. Parents and carers rightly praise the excellent relationships between the staff and themselves. The school listens effectively to their ideas and suggestions and many have been acted upon in order to improve the school.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that governors have a greater involvement in the monitoring and evaluation of key aspects of the school development plan through focused school visits and first-hand evidence.
- Develop pupils' involvement and contribution to the school and their learning by:
 - developing more responsibilities for every learner
 - involving pupils more fully with the expectations of excellent behaviour
 - linking feedback to pupils and their targets more closely together to involve them and their parents and carers more in the next steps for learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy their lessons and eagerly participate in the wide range of opportunities provided to make their learning interesting. For example, pupils during the inspection were excited because they were visiting the church to have the class teddy baptised. Children enter the school with skills that are in line with those expected for their age. By the time they leave, they reach above-average standards in their reading, writing and mathematics. Due to the very small cohorts, overall attainment can vary a little each year, but pupils consistently make good progress. Very few pupils in the past few years have had special educational needs and/or disabilities, but those few have made similarly good progress to that of their peers due to good teaching and effective individual support.

Pupils say that they feel safe at school but rightly consider that there are some pupils who should behave better at times, especially in the playground. Pupils contribute very well to the community. They invite a range of people to their performances, collect for charities and contribute by their good behaviour when they are 'out and about' in the village, which promotes a positive relationship with the school's local community. The pupils take part in and enjoy a range of cultural and religious activities and have had opportunities to mix with pupils from a range of other schools. They have a good understanding of right and wrong and show a respect for each other's values. For example, during the inspection, pupils brought in their valued possessions for the 'treasures' assembly, and the other pupils asked sensitive questions about the objects chosen.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Outdoor learning is incorporated well into the outstanding curriculum for all pupils. There are many opportunities to help pupils to understand what they are being taught through practical and enjoyable cross-curricular activities. Teaching is matched well to pupils' learning needs, by careful prior assessment and planning. Teachers can then ensure that the right level of work is given to each age and ability group. For example, in the Year 1/2 class, pupils in Year 1 used big speech bubbles and cut out characters to write down and role play the speech of characters from a much-enjoyed story. Pupils from Year 2, who had shared the same story, correctly punctuated the speech from each character in their writing, but also had the opportunity to role play using their work. Information and communication technology is used well across the full range of subjects. The school uses assessments of subjects, in addition to those in English, mathematics and science, to enable it to gain a better picture of pupils' achievements. Marking and feedback are not linked well enough to pupils' individual targets, although linked tightly to the lesson's learning objective. As a result, pupils' targets are used in isolation and opportunities are missed to link these to pupils' current learning to improve progress. Peer assessment is used very well in the classroom and Year 2 pupils checked their partners' measuring very carefully using a centimetre ruler and discussed any differences in accuracy.

The school supports pupils and parents and carers effectively through good-quality advice and guidance. Transition arrangements into Year 1 and out of Year 2 are robust and are

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evaluated in the Early Years Foundation Stage through parents' and carers' questionnaires to inform future decisions. Support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

As well as the headteacher, teachers play a lead role in the school. As a result of the good support from the headteacher, staff and governors are effective in identifying the right priorities for improvement. There are good monitoring systems in place to ensure that governors and staff check the performance of all individuals and groups of pupils in order to identify early any differences or underachievement. This system has ensured that, although from time to time there are differences in the attainment of girls and boys in the school, these are identified and rigorous action is taken to address them when necessary. This reflects the school's strong commitment to equal opportunities and staff work hard to ensure that every pupil is able to make the best progress possible. Observations of the quality of teaching enhance the school's good understanding of its effectiveness. Safeguarding is robust and meticulous attention is paid to child protection and health and safety. The school routinely integrates issues about safety into the curriculum, for example by using road safety role play with pupils on pretend roads in the playground. The governors have carried out a careful audit of the school's contribution to community cohesion, which is good. School partnership projects have helped to strengthen pupils' cultural development and have also given them the opportunity to mix with pupils from backgrounds different from their own. Leaders understand the need to develop links beyond the local area which would help to build a cohesive community that respects all faiths and customs in the United Kingdom and the wider world.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children join the Reception class with a wide range of skills and abilities, although overall, their skills are in line with those expected of four-year-olds. For most children, reading, writing and calculation skills tend to be weaker than their personal development on entry. All children make good progress, and attainment is usually above average by the time they start Year 1. The quality of care, guidance and support is very good and children are encouraged through praise and guidance to become independent early on. Excellent use is made of the outdoor area and field, which the children really enjoy. For example, during the inspection, children went to collect 'signs of autumn' from the school field and then decided how to sort and count their objects. There is a good balance of child-initiated activities and those that are adult-led. Challenge is carefully managed so that independent activities are often linked effectively to current or previous teaching. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Teaching shows good knowledge of each child's needs. There is excellent communication with parents and carers.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account: Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

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Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are especially happy with the school, including their child's enjoyment of it, how it keeps them safe, the quality of the teaching and how well individual pupils' needs are met. A small minority through written comments expressed concern about the future of the school, given the temporary headteachers that the school has had in recent years. The inspector recognised parents' and carers' concerns. However, the school has made good progress since its previous inspection and the governing body is working closely with the local authority and other schools to discuss options for securing the long-term future of the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Emberton to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 14 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 19 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	10	71	4	29	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	13	93	1	7	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	4	29	7	50	2	14	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	10	71	4	29	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	10	71	4	29	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	10	71	4	29	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	10	71	4	29	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	8	57	6	43	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	9	64	5	36	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	5	36	7	50	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	8	57	4	29	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	6	43	6	43	1	7	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	10	71	4	29	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



29 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Emberton School, Emberton, MK46 5BX

Thank you for making me so welcome during my recent visit to your school. I was very impressed with how well you are doing with your work. I was particularly pleased with how well you keep yourselves healthy through all your sport and healthy food choices. You know how to keep yourselves safe and you told me that you really enjoy school.

Emberton is a good school where you reach good standards in your reading, writing and mathematics. You make good progress because your teachers and other staff work very hard to make your lessons fun and interesting. They also look after you very well and make sure that you understand what you are learning.

Although all the staff work very hard, they want to make the school even better, so I have asked:

- the governors to learn more about the things the school is trying to improve by checking up through visits and by talking more to the staff and pupils
- the staff to give you more responsibility, especially those of you in Year 2, and to help you achieve your targets (the ones at the front of your writing and mathematics books). I also want all of you to be encouraged to behave your very best all the time.

You can help as well, by volunteering to help out around the school with jobs, by thinking of ways that you would like to improve your school and village and by showing everyone your excellent behaviour.

Yours sincerely

Angela Kirk

Lead Inspector

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