

EP Collier Primary School

Ross Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 8DZ

Inspection dates 7–8 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children make an excellent start to the Early Years Foundation Stage and to Key Stage 1. By the end of Year 6, all pupils make good progress and achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Reading is a strength because of children's firm foundation in phonics (the sounds that letters make) from the early years. As a result, they are very confident readers, especially pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- As a result of high expectations and a new way of planning learning, teaching is now good.
- Excellent use of support strategies and strong adult help have resulted in pupils making good progress.
- Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is never less than good and often outstanding. They are keen to learn and proud of the work they create. Pupils feel safe and bullying is rare but whenever it happens, the school deals with it firmly.
- Strong leadership has improved the progress of all groups of pupils to good since the last inspection and the gap is closing between different groups. A robust system for tracking and monitoring teaching and learning has led to improvements in teaching.
- The governing body has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. It has set up a 'standards' committee with a specific role to monitor and raise achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils in Key Stage 2 are not always challenged enough in lessons.
- Pupils are not always clear about their targets and how to achieve them.
- Planning does not cater well enough for developing pupils' independent learning skills, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 12 lessons, of which three were joint observations with the deputy headteacher. In addition, inspectors made a number of shorter visits to other lessons. They also listened to pupils read and scrutinised their work.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, senior leaders and middle leaders, as well as a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at the documents relating to safeguarding, the performance management of staff, the tracking and assessment of pupils' attainment and progress, records on behaviour and safety, attendance data and the school's records on the monitoring of teaching and learning.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 26 parents and carers in the online Parent View survey and the outcome from the school's own survey of parental views. The views of parents and carers were also sought at the start of the school day. Inspectors scrutinised 18 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Zahid Aziz, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Christne Pollit

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- EP Collier Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding (additional funding provided by the government) is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- More pupils than average join or leave the school at different points in the school year.
- The school has a speech and language unit catering for eight pupils. The last of the pupils attending the school's behaviour assessment unit left during the academic year 2010/11.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement by increasing the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels by:
 - making sure all pupils know their targets for improvement and are aware of how to achieve them, especially at Key Stage 2.
- Strengthen the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - providing regular opportunities for pupils to check their own work and that of others
 - ensuring teachers involve pupils more in planning their work so that they become more responsible for their own learning, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 make rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics. However, it is not yet as rapid in Key Stage 2 because the more-able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently in lessons. The dip in the test results last year has been resolved through better quality teaching and support.
- Children start the Nursery with experiences that are well below expectations in their social, communication and number skills. They make rapid progress across all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1.
- At Key Stage 1, pupils have many opportunities to improve their writing skills. Pupils in Year 1 develop and improve their written communication skills through making simple sentences. In Year 2, pupils apply their reading strategies to sound out new and unfamiliar words. As a result, they sharpen their speaking, listening and communication skills extremely well.
- At Key Stage 2, pupils' progress and attainment are improving. In 2011, pupils in Year 6 made better progress in English than in mathematics. In 2012, they made better progress than is found nationally in both subjects. Pupils' work from last year, current work and lesson observations show that pupils in Years 3 and 4 are making faster progress than previously and that pupils in Year 6 are making good progress. Work is well presented and pupils pay close attention to accurate spelling.
- Reading and writing skills are developed well at Key Stage 2. For example, in a Year 6 geography lesson, pupils worked with a partner to apply their skills, such as mind mapping, to describe and write about shapes and the environment around mountains. As a result, pupils extended their knowledge effectively and enhanced other skills, such as team building and social skills, which prepare them well for the future.
- The high number of pupils leaving and joining the school at Key Stage 2 has a marked effect on the published test results at the end of Year 6. Those who remain in the school throughout their primary education do well. The needs of new arrivals are assessed quickly and they receive excellent guidance and support so that they settle swiftly and learn well.
- Pupils supported by additional funding through the pupil premium are tracked carefully and the impact of the various strategies used shows that these pupils make faster progress than those in other groups, especially in reading and mathematics. As a result, these pupils achieve well, meeting and in many instances exceeding their targets.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. They receive excellent support to help them with their work. For example, a pupil in Year 4, reading from his own book, was given support to help him focus on key words to understand the context of the book and how the words are made up. The gap in attainment between different groups of pupils is narrowing as a result of the effective deployment of support staff.
- The speech and language unit gives good support to pupils in mainstream classes. These pupils integrate well, and as a result, they make good and often better progress in their basic skills.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is improving, with most being good and some outstanding. However, teaching is not consistently good or outstanding because opportunities are missed for pupils to check their own work and that of others to improve their learning.
- Teachers have high expectations. Consequently, pupils' learning and progress have improved since the previous inspection. Most teachers manage lessons well to ensure pupils are focused and remain on task.
- Strong, and at times excellent, relationships exist between adults and pupils because of the

good guidance and support they receive. As a result, pupils make excellent progress in both the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1.

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers make learning exciting and enjoyable. Adults develop children's language and understanding of the world through focused questioning that incorporates the teaching of letters and sounds. As a result, children improve their speaking and listening skills well.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and a new planning method for structuring learning is having an impact in improving teaching. Teachers share the lesson's objectives with pupils and explain what is required for learning to be successful. However, day-to-day planning does not always involve pupils to ensure that they take more responsibility for their own learning, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Teachers use a range of strategies to improve pupils' mathematical skills, such as the focus in Year 6 at the start of the day on quick subtraction linked with increasing their literacy skills. As a result, pupils develop their skills of independence in creating their own mathematical questions.
- Assessment and marking are regular and extensive, especially in literacy. Pupils' progress is tracked and monitored well. Widespread support, for example through phonics teaching and 'springboard' for mathematics, is provided for pupils who fall behind or are new to the school. However, some pupils are not always clear about their targets for improvement or how to achieve them.
- Classrooms displays celebrate pupils' achievements as well as work on literacy, numeracy, art, geography and cultures from around the world. These help to reinforce learning and extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of multicultural Britain.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour in school is at least good and exemplary in some classes, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. This is because the school nurtures the children in its care. Almost all parents and carers feel that their children are happy and safe at school.
- The school is a harmonious community where there is no discrimination. It ensures all pupils have opportunity to participate in all areas of the curriculum. Pupils have positive relationships with each other and adults. They care and respect each other, regardless of their background.
- The school prides itself on taking on pupils with behaviour difficulties and with the help of external agencies, integrates them well into daily life. However, a few parents and carers and pupils feel the school is not managing this effectively and are not always clear about the benefit of this process.
- Pupils understand the different forms of bullying, such as racism and cyber-bullying. The school deals effectively with the few exclusions and bullying incidents that occur. Pupils feel safe because the site is secure and many adults are around them. They know who to speak to in case they have any worries or concerns. They have a good understanding of internet misuse.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those with speech and language difficulties are integrated well into the life of the school. This is because pupils and adults around them ensure they are equally treated. As a result, they are happy and enjoy school life.
- Attendance has improved steadily and is now above average. Punctuality and persistent absence have also improved as a result of the school's focused action.

The leadership and management are good

- The strong leadership team, led by the headteacher and ably supported by the deputy headteacher, provides a clear drive for improvement. Their high expectations and ambitions are shared by the governing body and supported by the local authority. As a result, achievement and teaching are now good, which is an improvement since the previous inspection.
- The school's single plan is based on stringent and effective self-evaluation and analysis of how well pupils are achieving, resulting in targets for improving achievement and teaching. The issues identified in the last inspection report have been implemented successfully.
- A thorough process of checking teaching through planning and pupils' books every week focuses on those pupils who need more support. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher observe lessons, and feedback is given to teachers to help them improve. This is linked well with annual targets for improving the rate of pupils' learning to achieve the goals set for them. Consequently, pay progression is linked with improvements in pupils' results and teaching through performance management.
- As a result of clear thought-out policies, strategies have been put in place so that rapid progress is made in various subjects. The impact can already be seen in fast progress made in reading and mathematics.
- The curriculum has a strong focus on reading, writing, mathematics and the use of information and communication technology. There are focused targets and marking across these subjects. Planning of activities is sometimes based on the knowledge and interests of the pupils, for example writing a report on the recent storm in America, but this approach is not always consistent.
- The school's inclusive aims promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils have clear understanding of right and wrong. They enjoy and improve their self-confidence and self-esteem through drama.
- The local authority has provided effective support to the school since the last inspection. However, there is now only light touch support as a result of recent improvements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have taken appropriate action to raise achievement and improve teaching through the formation of a 'standards' committee and through the appointment of new teachers. They have dealt effectively with the underperformance of teaching staff and as a result of further training and intense support, teaching is now good and sometimes outstanding. Staff are rewarded according to the targets set annually for improving teaching and pupils' achievement. The school targets the use of resources and staff to improve achievement, for example, towards those pupils eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium. Safeguarding procedures, including safer recruitment arrangements, are robust.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	109780
Local authority	Reading
Inspection number	401080
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	197
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Steve James
Headteacher	Mrs Justine McMinn
Date of previous school inspection	17–18 November 2009
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