

Epping Primary School

Coronation Hill, Epping, CM16 5DU

Inspection dates 29–30 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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher, leaders, staff and governors work well together. They have successfully improved teaching, with the result that pupils achieve well in most subjects.
- From low starting points, pupils make good progress.
- Teaching is mostly good and some is outstanding. Teachers make clear to pupils what is expected of them. They question pupils well and provide them with good information on how they can improve.
- The determination of the headteacher has accelerated the pace of improvement. The school has a clear sense of direction securely based on raising achievement.
- This is a happy, friendly school where behaviour is exemplary. All pupils achieve well in their learning and in their personal development. Pupils are proud of their school, feel safe and well cared for.
- Robust systems are used to check on the quality of teaching. Pupils' progress is systematically checked and senior staff are using this information to identify pupils at risk of falling behind.
- Governors have made good checks on the school, and all who lead have a very clear understanding of the strengths and areas that need to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always make sure that work is challenging enough for pupils by altering their lessons in response to pupils' faster rates of learning.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to work independently and, in a small proportion of lessons, teachers talk for too long.
- Not all subject leaders check the quality of learning rigorously enough and, consequently, the actions they take to bring about improvement are not as effective as they need to be.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 24 lessons and observed every teacher. Three observations were undertaken jointly with senior leaders. In addition, the inspection team made a number of short visits to lessons to observe behaviour, the teaching of phonics (the linking of letters and sounds) and coaching in physical education.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to them about how much reading they do. They also looked at the work pupils record in their books.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, senior and middle leaders and classroom teachers. A telephone call was made to a representative of the local authority.
- Documents were examined, including those relating to safeguarding and the school's improvement plans. Inspectors considered the school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its performance, as well as the information about how well pupils learn.
- Inspectors took account of 89 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), as well as the views of several parents who spoke to inspectors directly.
- The 38 responses from the staff questionnaire were also considered.

Inspection team

Susan Thomas-Pounce, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Fatiha Maitland	Additional Inspector
David Thomas Hatchett	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school and is increasing in size.
- It was set up in 2008 as a new school following the amalgamation of an infant and junior school.
- The school moved into purpose-built accommodation in March 2010.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and very few pupils are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and for whom the school receives pupil premium funding, is below the national average.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which determine the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good and increase the amount of outstanding teaching to enable more pupils to exceed expected progress by:
 - adapting teaching to take account of pupils' responses in lessons
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to learn by themselves
 - making sure that teachers do not slow the pace of learning by talking for too long.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - developing the skills of subject leaders in checking the quality of pupils' learning
 - developing subject leaders' and other staff's understanding of how to use data to check pupils' progress and to increase the percentage of pupils making accelerated progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Standards in English and mathematics are improving strongly. From typically low starting points, pupils reach average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The proportion of pupils who make and exceed the progress they should make is similar to national figures. In the past, pupils made better progress in reading and writing than in mathematics. The school's own data, and work in books indicate that the gap is closing. Pupils who are in Year 6 are on track to make or exceed the progress that is expected of them.
- The needs of the small proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are identified early and met effectively. The extra support they receive from skilled teaching assistants has meant that achievement for these pupils has improved and is closer to that of all pupils.
- Children settle into school well and quickly learn how to play and work with each other. They get off to a good start in this key stage because they are taught well. Their teachers plan a wide range of exciting activities so that the children find great enjoyment in learning. For example, while exploring the work that dentists do, children were thoroughly enjoying creating pictures using toothpaste and brushes.
- Although the children make good progress in the Reception classes, by the time they begin Year 1 their attainment is generally still below average, but in the last school year many more reached the levels expected for their age than in previous years.
- Reading skills are taught effectively, allowing pupils to make good progress throughout the school. Most pupils are keen readers and read regularly at home. They thoroughly enjoy using the library, which holds a central place in the design of the school. During the inspection, pupils in the library were eagerly sharing books which they had enjoyed reading and were recommending new titles they thought others might enjoy.
- Phonics (letters and the sounds they make) are taught well, particularly at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils' ability to use phonics is now above national levels by the end of Year 1.
- Additional funding (the pupil premium) has been used effectively to support targeted groups. Funds have been used to help pupils to improve their reading and provide extra support staff to work with small groups to improve writing and mathematical skills. It has also been used to help pupils buy school uniform, provide support for individuals to access counselling, enable the development of musical and sporting skills, and provide funding for educational visits.
- The school's systems for checking on pupils' progress are improving rapidly. Teachers are beginning to use this information with greater assurance to target support for different groups so that they sustain good progress.
- Improvements in the quality of teaching and learning since the previous inspection help pupils to achieve well throughout their time at the school. The school's own records of pupils' progress and what inspectors saw in lessons and when looking at pupils' work in their books present the same picture of good and improving progress. There is a clear picture of rising attainment.
- Pupils' good progress and positive attitudes to learning prepare them well for the next stage of

their education.

The quality of teaching is good

- The teaching in many lessons is good; in some it is outstanding. Pupils are confident that their teachers care about how well they are progressing and give them excellent support.
- Teachers often use questions well in lessons, and pupils are expected to explain answers and to justify what they have said. This helps them gain a good understanding of their work as well as to improve their speaking and listening skills.
- In the best lessons, teachers provide detailed oral and written feedback and give pupils clear targets for improvement. Teachers' marking in books lets pupils know what they have done well and what can be improved. Staff and pupils respect each other, so that pupils are confident to ask for help when they need it.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and ably help pupils to build on their previous knowledge. For example, in a lesson where pupils in Year 1 were learning to create a recipe, skilful questioning by the teacher enabled pupils to recall the words they had used the day before to order the different instructions they thought were needed to help someone make a fruit drink. They remembered why and how to use 'bossy verbs' and the correct meaning of the words 'ingredients' and 'method'.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to work in groups or enjoy practical work often enough because they are not given enough opportunities to develop their skills by working independently. Too often, they are under the direct control of the teacher. In some lessons, teachers talk for too long. This reduces the amount of time for pupils to work without the teacher's help and slows their progress.
- Teachers generally plan lessons well and increasingly check on pupils' learning during lessons. However, teachers do not use what they have found out to change their plans if pupils are progressing faster or slower than expected.
- Assemblies and discussions in lessons provide many good opportunities to foster pupils' spiritual development. Pupils work well in groups and they develop good social awareness through the wide variety of activities the school provides, such as music, drama and multi-skills coaching. This also effectively supports their cultural development.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, adults have a good understanding of the needs of children of this age and provide them with interesting and practical activities. There is a good balance between activities led by adults and those chosen by children. The outdoor area is used well to promote learning, such as when children were using a water tray to look at crystals that were growing in front of their eyes. They rushed with great excitement to get a magnifying glass to better observe the change in shape, colour and texture.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour and attitudes of pupils to learning are exemplary. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school is calm, considerate and courteous.
- Excellent relationships exist between staff and pupils who are very polite, helpful and friendly to

all staff and visitors to school. Pupils play well together during social times.

- Pupils take pride in their work and in their school; they say they feel safe in school, and all parents who responded to the online questionnaire agree.
- Pupils report that bullying rarely occurs and, if it does, is dealt with swiftly and effectively. Pupils are helped by the school to be fully aware of the different types of bullying. For example, they understand the dangers that can occur through misuse of mobile phones and the internet.
- Staff have high expectations of pupils and they apply the agreed systems for behaviour management consistently. There have been no exclusions since the school was amalgamated.
- Attendance levels are above average and pupils arrive in school on time. This reflects the very positive attitudes inspectors heard from pupils, parents and carers during the inspection.
- The school successfully develops pupils' personal skills as well as their academic learning. Consequently, pupils are increasingly confident. Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities and are given a range of opportunities to do so by being a member of the school council, raising money for charities and helping the younger ones at playtime.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides perceptive leadership and has high expectations of staff and pupils. Since her return two years ago, her strong leadership has successfully raised the performance of the school, putting the improvement of teaching and achievement at the centre of the school's work.
- Staff and governors are strongly supportive of the headteacher. There is a very clear purpose and ambition, which is shared by all, with a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas which need further improvements.
- Much has been done by school leaders to bring about the continual improvement of teaching. Training is relevant and geared to the needs of the whole school as well as individual members of staff. Teachers feel well supported and they can get additional help to improve their teaching when required.
- Subject leaders are not fully involved in checking the quality of learning throughout the school and in taking action to bring about improvement. Although senior leaders have a good understanding of the use of data, subject leaders and other staff do not use data widely to ensure all pupils make rapid progress.
- School leaders, including governors, use the school's finances well. Pupil premium funding has been spent wisely on additional staff, support for groups of pupils, and on paying for their after-school activities. The gap between the achievement of these pupils and that of others is being successfully narrowed.
- The curriculum is well-organised, it meets the needs of the pupils effectively and provides many opportunities to interest pupils. A wide range of experiences take place outside the classroom. These opportunities help to develop pupils' cultural awareness, to support their social development effectively and improve their self-confidence.

■ The school promotes pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development well and ensures that there is no discrimination. The arrangements for safeguarding pupils and ensuring their safety meet all current requirements.

■ The local authority provides good support when it is requested by the school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

– The governing body is well informed about school performance through meetings, visits and regular reports from the headteacher. Good committee structures are in place to check how well the school is doing. Members of the governing body have a secure knowledge of the strengths of the school and recognise where improvements need to be made. Consequently, governors know how well the targets are being met. The governors, along with the headteacher, oversee the performance management of all staff and monitor how well staff perform in relation to their salary scales. Governors have developed a good understanding of the learning experiences of the pupils through their visits to lessons. Governors also check closely whether the school budget, including additional funding, is used efficiently and is helping all pupils to make the progress they should. Governors check to make sure that the arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet all current requirements.

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	135328
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	402687

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	417
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julie Taylor
Headteacher	Tracy O'Donnell
Date of previous school inspection	16 March 2010
Telephone number	01992 572408
Fax number	01992 573134
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