

# The Emmbrook School

Emmbrook Road, Wokingham, Berkshire, RG41 1JP

**Inspection dates** 6–7 March 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- The drive and effective leadership of the governing body and the headteacher have ensured that the school has made good progress since the previous inspection.
- Good teaching now supports students' good achievement across a wide range of subjects.
- Most students make at least good progress from their starting points and achieve well, particularly in mathematics, the school's specialist subject.
- The sixth form is good. Students achieve well and play a significant role in the life of the school.
- Students behave well both in classrooms and around the school. The positive and warm ethos of the school ensures that students feel safe and that any bullying is rare and dealt with swiftly.
- The school's promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school.
- Governance is particularly strong. Governors are experienced and skilled. They understand their role. They challenge and support effectively.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Achievement is not yet outstanding and students who are supported by the additional funds provided through the pupil premium need to make faster progress.
- There is not enough outstanding teaching in the school.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 45 lessons, six of which were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- They made shorter visits to lessons to look at students’ writing, to see whether there are varied opportunities to write at length and how well teachers mark students’ work. The headteacher joined this activity.
- Inspectors held discussions with senior leaders, staff, a local authority representative and three governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body.
- They considered the views of parents (70 views from the on-line questionnaire Parent View, one letter and one e-mail) and also the views of staff through a staff questionnaire: 32 responses were analysed.
- Inspectors talked to students in lessons, around the school and through more formal meetings with students of all ages.
- They looked at key documents including the school development plan, the school’s own self-evaluation, assessment data used to monitor students’ standards, attendance and behaviour records, safeguarding documents and minutes of governors’ meetings.
- Information about teachers’ professional development was also examined.

## Inspection team

Wendy Boulter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Marcia Headon

Additional Inspector

David Wolfson

Additional Inspector

David Smith

Additional Inspector

Avtar Sherri

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The Emmbrook School is a larger-than-average mixed 11–18 school.
- Nearly one-in-five students are supported by school action, which is above the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is just under one-in-ten, which is above the national average.
- The majority of students are of White British heritage and speak English as their home language.
- Just over one-in-ten of the students is eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, for students known to be eligible for free school meals and students whose parents serve in the armed forces. The vast majority of students fall into the eligibility for free school meal category. The total percentage is below the national average.
- The school meets the government floor standards, which set the minimum levels expected for students' attainment and progress.
- A small number of Key Stage 4 students study part time at a local college.
- The school is a specialist mathematics and computing college.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that the majority of lessons are typically outstanding by:
  - ensuring that all lessons are fast paced, challenging and more tightly planned for the needs of individual students
  - providing more opportunities for students to work actively and independently in lessons.
- Raise achievement by:
  - increasing the proportion of students who make faster progress than students nationally, particularly ensuring that the students for whom the pupil premium funding is intended make similar progress to other students in their year group.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Students make good progress. They enter the school with levels that are broadly average. As a result of good teaching they leave the school with results which are above the national average. Standards are rising and accurate school predictions are for that rising trend to continue.
- In 2012 the GCSE results at grades A\* to C in English and mathematics were significantly above the national average.
- Since the previous inspection the progress that students make between Years 7 and 11 in English and mathematics has improved and is generally better than the progress which similar students make nationally. The strongest progress is made in mathematics.
- However, students are capable of making even better progress than they do currently.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs, including those with a statement of special educational needs, make good progress from their starting points because their progress is carefully monitored, the curriculum is adapted to meet their needs and interventions are appropriate and timely.
- The school carefully reviews students on entry and ensures that any students who need additional support to catch up with their peers are identified and supported. Intensive literacy and numeracy skills for the very weakest students are taught in a consistent way through Key Stage 3. These students are checked carefully and make good progress.
- In 2011 and 2012 the average point score in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 4 for those students for whom the school receives additional funding through the pupil premium was not as good as similar students nationally or their year group in school. The school is rigorously addressing the issue and current students for whom the pupil premium is intended are progressing faster but more needs to be done to ensure consistently rapid progress for these students.
- The school is ensuring that students develop good reading, writing and literacy skills by providing varied opportunities in different subjects to practise these skills.
- Some students are entered for GCSE subjects early. Careful monitoring of this process by the school ensures that students, including the more able students, can still achieve the highest grades.
- The small number of students who attend a local college as part of their curriculum also make good progress because they are checked carefully and supported well to ensure that they are both safe and attend regularly.
- Results in AS and A-level examinations are improving because the teaching is at least good.
- Students are keen to learn and respond enthusiastically to good and better teaching.
- The vast majority of parents and carers are pleased with the progress made by their children.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and most teaching now is typically good and sometimes outstanding, including in the sixth form. This improvement has been well supported by the work of the staff 'learning and teaching' group which is improving teaching across the school through sharing of good practice from both within and outside the school.
- Very positive relationships between teachers and students ensure that there is a purposeful working atmosphere in most lessons and students are interested and engaged in their work.
- The needs of those students who are disabled or who have special educational needs are met through careful curriculum planning and small-group or individual support by teaching assistants. This ensures that they make similar progress to their year group.
- Teachers are developing effective and more consistent ways of helping students understand

their strengths and weaknesses through a systematic approach to marking and feedback. This includes lots of praise, pointing out to students 'what went well' but also identifying 'even better if' to ensure that students understand their next steps in learning.

- Students are increasingly encouraged to mark their own and other students' work, well supported by the teacher, so they understand the standards expected.
- Teachers use good questioning skills to extend students' understanding and to help them think more deeply. For example, in an outstanding English lesson the teacher constantly challenged the students, questions were open, pace was lively and all students, including those with additional needs, made exceptional progress.
- In examination classes at Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 teachers are focusing on learning for success by making sure that students understand how examination questions will be marked.
- The effective way that the school is now gathering information on students' progress more regularly is helping teachers plan more effectively for the needs of individuals and small groups of students.
- In the very best lessons the teacher supports learning through enabling the students to work independently and make choices about the type and pace of their learning. In an outstanding information and communication technology (ICT) lesson the teacher encouraged and challenged, but the students had to resolve the problems set themselves. This ensured a high degree of independence and success. This practice is not yet consistent enough across the school.
- In a small number of lessons the pace of learning is too slow and the teacher does not plan for enough variety of activities to ensure all students' needs are met and that there is a high level of challenge and engagement.
- The vast majority of parents and carers agree that their child is taught well at the school.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Behaviour around the school is good. Students know how to behave well and are polite and courteous. They are friendly to staff and visitors and proud of their school. Students who attend off-site provision behave equally well.
- Behaviour in lessons is typically good and at times outstanding when the lessons are challenging and the tasks interesting and exciting.
- There is a communal and supportive atmosphere. The vertical tutoring system actively promotes this, encouraging understanding and support between different year groups. Students are comfortable asking for help both from their teachers, but also from older students.
- School data show that behaviour is improving. The impact of the revised rewards and sanctions policy is clearly shown in the reduction of the numbers of exclusions and sanctions, which continue on a steep downward trend. Students report that the policy is applied consistently and they are keen to collect the positive reward points, which they value.
- Attendance is improving significantly over time. There are good and effective systems to monitor and improve attendance. The school has taken successful action to improve the attendance of a small group of students who are poor attenders.
- Punctuality to lessons is good.
- No students have been taken off roll in the last year as a result of factors related to behaviour, safety or attendance.
- The school helps students understand how to keep themselves safe and students report that they feel safe in school. Students say bullying is rare. The vast majority of parents and carers agree. In 2012 there were no internal exclusions for bullying or racism.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher and the senior leadership team have a clear vision for developing the school, which they are pursuing relentlessly. This has resulted in significant improvement since the

previous inspection.

- The school understands its strengths and areas for improvement very well. School development plans are clearly focused on speeding up the progress students make through improving teaching. They are regularly reviewed and evaluated and the school's internal records show that teaching is improving over time.
- Parents and carers, staff and governors have confidence in the leadership and agree that the school is improving. The school fosters positive relationships with parents and carers.
- Since the previous inspection, checks on learning have improved in the school. Extra help is arranged more quickly if students need it. Information on how well students are progressing is collected more regularly and reported to governors, with updates on the actions taken as a result. In the sixth form, 'Learning Plus' is effectively used to track students' progress. However, the impact of the pupil premium on ensuring accelerated progress for the students concerned needs further analysis.
- Leaders across the school are setting clear targets for staff development which focus on improving the quality of teaching and raising achievement. Staff training is helping teachers at all stages of their careers achieve their targets. Good practice is being identified in the school and shared through the teaching and learning group.
- The curriculum in the school supports all students in achieving their very best. There are a variety of options for students as they move through the school. The 'Golden Curriculum' for some students in Years 7 to 9 ensures that their key literacy and numeracy skills improve, which enables them to more easily succeed in all their lessons. In the sixth form the curriculum meets the needs and interests of most students. Good careers and options information available to students helps to ensure that they know what is available and make the right choices.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. The attendance and safety of students educated off site is monitored closely.
- The local authority has an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development and commissions a school improvement advisor who works with the school. The school has drawn on expertise in the local authority, which has given appropriate support in making improvements in attendance and exclusions.
- The headteacher works collaboratively with the local authority and other schools to ensure that the judgements he is making about the school are accurate. There are strong links with local colleges and firms, which support the curriculum.
- There are many good examples of the way that the social, spiritual, cultural and moral aspects of life are promoted within the school and consideration of these aspects is central to departmental planning. The regular 'College Time' programme offers a wide opportunity for exploring moral dilemmas and learning about life in modern Britain. The school offers many opportunities for trips, including a trip to China.
- The school works hard to ensure that all students have equal opportunities. There is no discrimination. Support is given to the very few students who enter speaking a language other than English to ensure they make good progress.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are very actively involved in ensuring the school improves. They monitor its work closely and hold the headteacher to account very tightly for results when compared to other schools nationally. They are very conscientious and determined that the school will get rapidly better. They have a clear strategy for the future of the school and have been relentless in pursuing this with the local authority over the future of the school buildings. The governors are very aware of the quality of teaching, the information on students' performance in the school and the link with pay progression for staff. They understand the information well and ask challenging questions. They are beginning to analyse the use of pupil premium money but recognise that there is more work to be done. They monitor the budget tightly and the school is financially stable. Governors ensure that statutory duties such as safeguarding are met. They attend training as required to keep well informed of developments affecting education.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	110060
<b>Local authority</b>	Wokingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	401099

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1183
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	218
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Whiting
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nigel Matthias
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 May 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	0118 9784406
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