

# Epsom Primary and Nursery School

Pound Lane, Epsom, Surrey KT19 8SD

**Inspection dates** 1–2 December 2015

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- This school has significantly improved since the last inspection and now provides a good education for its pupils.
- The headteacher provides outstanding leadership, supported by highly able leaders. Leaders have very high expectations of all staff and inspire all to give their best for the pupils. This has led to an improvement in the quality of teaching and good outcomes for pupils.
- Pupils thrive because they are exceptionally well looked after in a nurturing and encouraging environment that puts their needs first. As a result, behaviour is outstanding
- Governors are extremely well informed and visit the school often to check all aspects of the school's work. They challenge and support leaders because they are skilled in the areas that they are responsible for.
- All groups of pupils make good progress from their starting points, including those who are most able, disadvantaged, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Children make an outstanding start to their education because of the exceptional care, and opportunities pupils have to build skills across all areas of learning in the early years.
- Strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development that threads through the school's curriculum and ethos allows pupils to be very well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The school's work to engage parents and promote inclusivity is outstanding and as a result parents are overwhelming positive about all aspects of the school and feel part of their child's education.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not always have sufficient time to apply what they know in depth and use the strategies that are taught to them, especially in their writing.
- Despite improved rates of progress across the school and targeted support for older pupils, the legacy of underachievement in upper Key Stage 2 has not yet been eradicated.
- Not all adults use highly effective questioning and dialogue to deepen the knowledge and understanding of pupils.
- Teaching across all subjects is not as strong as in reading, writing and mathematics.

## Full report

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

- Leaders should continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning from good to outstanding, by:
  - making sure all teachers further develop their knowledge and understanding of subjects taught across all areas of the curriculum to ensure the needs of all pupils are met
  - ensuring that all adults use highly effective questioning and dialogue to deepen pupils' understanding across a range of subjects, to enable them to reach the highest levels of achievement
  - giving pupils sufficient opportunity to apply learning in depth and extend their writing to build upon the range of strategies provided to them
  - continuing to ensure that high quality teaching results in more pupils making greater than expected progress in upper Key Stage 2, to eradicate the gaps in knowledge that were created because of the legacy of underachievement in the school.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The dedicated headteacher, ably supported by all leaders, has galvanised staff, pupils and parents to aspire and be ambitious for each pupil who attends the school. The strong culture of improvement and drive has percolated throughout the school and the community which it serves. As a result, all adults and pupils believe in themselves as learners and strive to do well. This drive is recognised by parents, one of whom stated, 'It is 100% clear to me that all the staff are committed and tireless in their efforts to ensure that every single child at Epsom Primary and Nursery School receives the best possible education.'
- Parents feel involved and empowered to contribute to their child's learning and are unanimously positive about the support and welcome they have received from the school. Over 200 parents recently attended a maths workshop to learn about how maths is taught in the school. This powerful alliance between the school and parents has been forged because of determined and persistent strategies to engage parents in school life. One parent referred to this online, describing the 'fabulous leadership team and staff. Nothing is too much trouble and they build great relationships with parents by encouraging a completely cohesive approach'.
- Leaders have created a highly inclusive school and community where all pupils and parents are valued and come to school without fear of discrimination. Leaders check that all groups are making good progress and prepared well for the future.
- The school's leaders have brought about rapid change because they know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and use this information to precisely target areas for improvement. Plans are focused on what needs to be done with carefully planned timescales for actions so that improvements are measureable and rapidly implemented.
- All staff, including teaching assistants, are given opportunities to grow as leaders. They express how much they have been challenged, supported and nurtured by senior leaders to grasp and learn new skills. Senior leaders enable staff to achieve outcomes they never thought possible. One middle leader summed up this inclusivity by stating, 'Previously I lacked ambition. Leaders and managers saw potential and I was inspired to take on a leadership role.' Because of this approach and the impact of all leaders, the pace of change has been rapid.
- Assessment procedures are in place to track the new curriculum introduced in 2014. Leaders were quick to establish robust tracking systems and as a result this is already being used systematically by staff to bring about rapid improvements in outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.
- Leaders have improved the quality of teaching across the school because they have carefully planned training and support, which is often personalised to the needs of every adult in the school. Leaders use a wide range of information to validate their views about the quality of teaching in all phases and have a range of strategies to target areas for improvement including support provided by a teaching and learning coach. The school has rigorous and highly effective systems for managing the performance of teachers, including those who are new to teaching. Training and development are used very well to provide staff with the necessary skills to improve their practice.
- Additional government funding given to the school, including pupil premium and sports funding, is allocated well to support the needs of pupils. As a result, the progress that pupils make has improved and disadvantaged pupils' attainment is rising towards the achievement of all pupils nationally. Effective use of sports funding has had a positive impact on pupils' eagerness to participate in sport and is teaching them how to be competitive, and how to keep healthy.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced, inclusive and enriched, because of the extensive range of subjects and extended activities the school offers. The curriculum adds to the achievements and well-being of pupils. Pupils have the opportunity to visit care homes, learn the ukulele and complete a photography course, for example. There are rich streams of evidence of how the school develops pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Pupils are taught to value diversity and how to be responsible and prepared for the future in modern Britain. For example, during assembly, pupils watched a Christmas advertisement that helped them to reflect on some people being alone at Christmas. Pupils talked about how they could help people in their own community.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff are clear about their responsibilities, and safeguarding features strongly throughout the school. All statutory requirements are met, and in addition the school works hard to ensure that community cohesion and equality are strengthened.

- The local authority has supported the school since the last inspection and ensured that actions taken by leaders have had an impact on pupils. The school's leaders have welcomed this support and challenge, and acted upon advice given to them. The continual and relentless drive by leaders to improve the school has resulted in the reduction of support given to the school. The school now supports others, for example, by sharing expertise in early years and extended provision, and is part of the Epsom and Ewell Partnership of schools.

#### ■ The governance of the school

- Governors are extremely knowledgeable about all aspects of the school because the school's leaders are transparent in the information that they share. The governing body is well-structured which enables members to be actively involved in school improvement and observe the impact of leaders' actions first-hand. The governing body checks that systems to manage staff performance are implemented and that teachers' pay reflects how effective they are.
- Governors add to the capacity of the school to improve further because they challenge and support leaders, and lead areas of improvement themselves. They have a positive influence on the lives of pupils and discharge their statutory duties exceptionally well.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Adults share a culture of high expectations of all pupils. There is a clear and unwavering focus on learning and a consistent approach to how learning intentions are shared across the school. Classrooms are adorned with learning aides-memoire and pupils' work, so that pupils know they are valued and their achievements celebrated.
- Staff know the needs of pupils well and tasks are very well targeted to meet pupils' varying abilities. Pupils select tasks that challenge their thinking and have learnt to choose work that is generally not too easy or too hard. Strong relationships between adults and pupils, and between pupils, enable learning to take place in an atmosphere of trust where pupils feel able to take risks and seek support when they need it.
- Targeted support focused on specific areas of learning, known as interventions, rapidly close gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding across reading, writing and mathematics. Interventions are planned and delivered effectively, and evaluated to ensure that they are making a difference.
- The teaching of mathematics is good and pupils are taught important reasoning and evaluative skills. Pupils are able to draw on what they already know to tackle complex calculations and explain their thinking clearly to adults. Pupils enjoy being challenged in mathematics and are clear about the things they can do and the areas in which they need more help to understand how to complete the task. Staff support pupils sensitively and this means that pupils are confident to ask for help when they need it. As a result, achievement in mathematics is improving.
- All adults have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and are very skilful in ensuring that all pupils are engaged and understand how to become resilient learners. They show qualities of perseverance and debate in their lessons.
- Pupils enjoy reading and most are listened to by an adult at home. Early reading skills are taught well and consequently pupils can break down words to help them read, using phonics (the sounds that letters make) to help them spell words accurately across all age groups.
- Staff work closely with parents and as a result parents feel empowered to support their children with their school work. Consequently, homework is valued by parents and pupils who see this as an opportunity to really embed what they know or find out more. One parent observed, 'The teachers celebrate the smallest of achievements of my son, when they have so many other children to look after.'
- Assessment is used well by adults to plan effectively for all ability groups with a range of activities to engage pupils and challenge them. There is evidence that the school's marking policy is closely followed by all staff and that pupils receive valuable information about how to improve their learning and make progress. Sometimes, verbal feedback in lessons is not as timely as it could be to have a high impact on all pupils' progress within the lesson.
- Staff use questioning and dialogue throughout the school to draw out what pupils know and this helps most pupils to make good progress. However, adults do not always use highly effective questioning to deepen pupils' understanding across the range of subjects taught by the school, particularly for the most able, to help them reach the highest levels of achievement.

- Pupils are committed and resilient. They are learning how to improve their work. Aides-memoire and resources are available to pupils to help them work on their own. However, not all pupils are given sufficient time to write for longer periods which limits the opportunity they have to apply and practise what they know.
- Teachers' subject knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics is very strong and pupils make good progress from their starting points. Teachers' subject knowledge in other areas of the curriculum such as science and art is not as strong. This means that pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in these areas are not as strongly developed.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning in all lessons and want to do well because the ambitious culture of the school has made a strong impact on pupils' aspirations. This has been brought about partly because of the strong focus on respect, reasoning, resourcefulness, reflectiveness, resilience and risk, which is shown by pupils and modelled consistently by staff. This school encapsulates the meaning of mutual respect.
- Pupils are provided with opportunities to shine. This allows pupils to celebrate each other's achievements which encourages all pupils to take risks in an environment of trust. During this inspection, a special assembly to judge the pupils' cakes in the final of the 'Bake Off' took place. When the winners were announced, the expressions on the winners' faces were of pure delight and the response of all other pupils and adults in the room was rapturous.
- Pupils are given many opportunities to experience leadership roles and positions of responsibility. They value these opportunities and talk confidently about what they are expected to do. For example, peer mediators know that they are helping other children to think about how they can make things better for themselves. They know that this helps them to be better prepared for the future.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet, and believe that adults in the school work hard to keep them safe.
- High levels of supervision mean that staff can be very vigilant when pupils are on the playground. The school grounds are extremely secure and all visitors to the school are checked properly.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding because they are supported exceptionally well by staff, other pupils and their parents. Parents overwhelming support this view and value the impact that the outreach team (a group of staff who work closely with parents and the community) and all staff have had on the safety, well-being and happiness of their children.
- Routines and expectations are well established, focusing on the development of the whole child, and this results in a calm and safe environment. During this inspection no incidents of disruptive behaviour were observed, either in lessons or during breaktime and lunch.
- Leaders have ensured that structures are in place to support pupils who occasionally experience difficulty in managing their behaviour. This immediately enables pupils to reflect on their behaviour and be ready to learn.
- Pupils understand what bullying is and say that it is very rare. They trust adults to deal effectively with any incidents of bullying and poor behaviour.
- Attendance has improved over time and is now in line with the national average. The leadership has reduced persistent absence, and the vast majority of pupils arrive at school on time and are ready to learn. Leaders have been highly proactive in tackling poor attendance and this has meant that attendance for all groups has improved.

## Outcomes for pupils

are good

- A higher than average number of pupils start school at different times of the school year. As a result, class groups change constantly, especially in Key Stage 2. Because of this, published information about how well pupils achieve does not always give an accurate picture of the progress pupils make. In addition, an increasing number of pupils arrive at the school with little or no spoken English language and, hence, starting points in reading and writing are low.
- The school's tracking of pupils' achievement is rigorous. This allowed inspectors to gather information, which was supported by other evidence, to show that pupils make good progress during their time at the school. Some pupils make outstanding progress.
- The number of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the early years has nearly quadrupled over the past three years and is now above the national average.
- The teaching of phonics has improved and standards have risen. In 2015, the results of the national phonics check for pupils in Year 1 were slightly below the national average, but by the end of Year 2 nearly all pupils had achieved the standard expected of them. Pupils are using their phonics skills to break down words and help them read, including pupils who find reading more difficult. Pupils say they enjoy reading. The school has worked hard to create a reading culture and the library is enchanting. It is based on *The faraway tree* stories by Enid Blyton. This has created a magical space where pupils love to spend time.
- Standards by the end of Year 2 have improved, and now pupils reach the same levels as pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils reaching the highest levels of achievement is higher than the national average in all areas. However, in 2015, the results of the national tests taken at the end of Year 6 show that attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was below the national average and the progress pupils made in these subjects was also well below other pupils nationally. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils making more than expected progress was higher than non-disadvantaged pupils, but overall insufficient numbers of pupils made greater than expected progress to completely eradicate the legacy of underachievement at the school. Consequently, by the end of Year 6, a low proportion of pupils reached the highest levels of achievement. However, good quality teaching and support for pupils over the last three years have improved standards in 2015 so that they were better prepared for the next phase in their education.
- Current information about the progress that pupils make over time and the work in their books show that pupils make good progress in all year groups, including pupils in Key Stage 2. This is as a result of good teaching.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils in each cohort varies but is above the national average in all year groups. Almost all are making the same progress as their classmates in all year groups and are either working at the same level or closing gaps quickly. In 2015, the school's analysis of performance information revealed that the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in mathematics was the same as their classmates, and in reading and writing disadvantaged pupils achieved more highly. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are supported well by skilful staff who understand their needs very well. As a result, they make good progress from their starting points.
- The needs of pupils who join the school during the year, especially those whose first language is not, or believed not to be English, are very well met because leaders have prioritised language specialist support. Pupils quickly learn to speak English and are able to access all areas of the curriculum as a result.
- Leaders have targeted pupils who are at risk from falling behind extremely well and staff responsible for delivering this support are very well trained, and carefully track the impact of interventions on pupils' learning. Sometimes, adults do not always intervene immediately during lessons so that all groups of pupils can deepen their understanding and make maximum progress during lesson time.

## Early years provision

is outstanding

- The leadership of the early years is very effective and there is a strong emphasis on developing a caring, nurturing and challenging environment. Staff have established consistent routines which enhance all aspects of the children's experience at school. Links with parents are very strong and parents provide the school with information about the skills and knowledge their children demonstrate at home.
- The performance of staff is rigorously evaluated and focused professional development has resulted in high quality teaching, which has resulted in accelerated progress for all groups of pupils.

- The specialist provision for two-year-olds, known as First Steps, is a rich environment. It includes a stimulating outdoor area, which children can access continuously throughout the school day because outdoor playsuits and boots are provided. Adults are responsive to children and help them to develop early skills. During this inspection, an adult encouraged the children to join in nursery rhymes and songs, and to count while being imaginative in their role play. While adults' dialogue with children is generally strong, there is a slight variability in their confidence to develop children's language and help them to articulate words. Children are safe, content and free to roam. Children are encouraged to make choices such as which snack to choose and to be responsible by self-registering when they come into class.
- Children start in the Reception Year with skills and knowledge that are typically below those expected for their age, particularly in their proficiency in speech and language. They are given an excellent start to school and make rapid progress; this includes pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding. By the end of Reception Year the proportion of children reaching a good level of development is above the national average. Children are well prepared for transition to Year 1 academically, emotionally and socially.
- Children are well supported to make the transition between Nursery and Reception classes because early years leaders communicate well about the needs of each child. Home visits provide leaders with additional information before children start school, which helps all staff to plan effectively for the individual needs of the children. Parental engagement is strong.
- Teaching is outstanding. Children really enjoy coming to school and relish learning about new things. They are curious and explore their environment which enables them to be imaginative and use role play. During this inspection a group of excited children surrounded a dinosaur egg. They indicated to the inspector to 'shh' in case they woke the baby dinosaur!
- Children happily communicate with adults who challenge them to think and make connections to other areas of their learning. They are articulate and talk confidently about what they are doing. Very occasionally, adults miss the chance to deepen pupils' understanding when children are talking to them about their learning experience.
- Leaders in the early years use assessment information to precisely target support and provide opportunities that will help pupils to develop and strengthen their learning. Children's learning journals sharply focus on early learning goals, and adults make accurate judgements about how well children are doing and plan their next steps effectively.
- The early years classrooms are resourced very well and provide opportunities for all children to develop their skills across all areas of learning. Leaders have worked hard to develop challenging opportunities outdoors and as a result these areas are particularly inviting and children are motivated to learn. This adds to the enriched provision that the school provides.
- Pupils are safe and happy because their well-being is a priority and the environment is nurturing. They play appropriately and interact well with each other and as a result build positive relationships. All policies relating to early years are in place and safeguarding is effective.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	124956
<b>Local authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	10002316

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary and Nursery School
<b>School category</b>	Community maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	590
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Janet Wilcox
<b>Headteacher</b>	Emma Smith
<b>Telephone number</b>	01372 720608
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.epsomprimaryschool.co.uk">www.epsomprimaryschool.co.uk</a>
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<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	2–3 October 2013

## Information about this school

- Epsom Primary and Nursery School is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The number of pupils who attend the school is increasing.
- In 2014, the school met the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the additional government funding known as the pupil premium is much higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom English is not, or believed not to be, their first language is two times greater than the national average.
- Pupils who attend the school come from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. Nearly half the pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above the national average. The majority of pupils within this group have speech, language and communication difficulties.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are provided with specialist part-time funded nursery sessions. Parents and carers are able to pay for additional hours in the Nursery classes for three-year-olds and in the two-year-old provision, known as First Steps. There are currently three Reception classes.
- The number of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the usual times is higher than in most other schools.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club which are open to all children.
- The school belongs to an informal collaboration of schools known as the Epsom and Ewell Partnership.



## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons in all classes. The majority of lessons were jointly observed with a range of leaders.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, middle leaders, members of staff, four representatives of the governing body and two representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of documentation, including those related to school improvement, school self-evaluation, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance, reports on the quality of teaching, and assessment records.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally during the school day and observed them on the playground, at lunch and in lessons. They also met formally with a group of pupils to talk about their learning and behaviour and safety.
- Inspectors heard pupils from a range of age groups read.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in books.
- Inspectors observed two assemblies.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the start and end of the school day. In addition, a small group of parents met with inspectors. Inspectors took account of 228 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and an additional 34 comments made by parents, also online. Inspectors also took note of the 66 staff responses to the inspection questionnaire for school staff.

## Inspection team

Abigail Birch, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Ann Henderson	Her Majesty's Inspector
Anna Boshier	Ofsted Inspector

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