

Emmbrook Junior School

Emmbrook Road, Wokingham, Berkshire RG41 1JR

Inspection dates

20–21 June 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have not focused sharply enough in their planning to address the areas identified in the previous inspection report as needing improvement.
- Leaders have not secured consistently good teaching. As a result, pupils’ outcomes, particularly in reading and writing, are too variable.
- Leaders and governors do not have a sharp enough understanding of the assessment information the school holds, particularly in evaluating the progress being made by individuals and groups across the school.
- Leaders and managers of subject areas do not fully understand their roles and so cannot sufficiently support the improvements needed in the school.
- Some teachers do not have high enough expectations. Pupils, particularly the most able, are not consistently set tasks that stretch them. Consequently, they do not attain the highest standards in reading, writing and mathematics that they are capable of reaching.
- Teachers’ use of assessment information is inconsistent. They do not understand clearly the next steps pupils need to make in their learning to achieve success.
- Although improving, the progress of disadvantaged pupils is not as strong as it should be.
- Communication with parents is not fully effective. Some parents are concerned about the level of challenge provided for their children and are not convinced that the actions taken by leaders are leading to improvements.

The school has the following strengths

- Relationships are positive throughout the school. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, and are well cared for by staff.
- Pupils’ conduct in classrooms and when playing on the playground is good. Instances of poor behaviour are rare. When behaviour is challenging, pupils say that their teachers and other adults usually manage it well.
- Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively and reflects the school’s ethos.
- Pupils appreciate the improving variety of extra-curricular clubs, trips and visits that the school offers. This is particularly the case for the sports provision.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, by:
 - ensuring that teachers have consistently high expectations of all pupils, especially the most able, so they can achieve the standards they are capable of in reading, writing and mathematics
 - improving consistency in the use of assessment information to ensure that activities help pupils make necessary progress in their learning.
- Improve leadership and management, by:
 - developing leaders' understanding of the assessment information the school holds, and how it is used, to enable them to ensure that pupils who are not progressing well are identified quickly and catch up
 - refining the school's improvement plan, ensuring that clear and measurable targets allow governors to challenge leaders when targets are not met
 - monitoring more closely the effectiveness of the pupil premium funding in quickening the progress of disadvantaged pupils
 - setting out clearly the expectations of subject leaders and the improvements expected in their subject areas
 - developing closer links with parents, in particular responding promptly to concerns and keeping them better informed about the school's higher expectations.
- Strengthen the role of governors so that they:
 - fulfil their statutory responsibilities and hold the school to account with the necessary rigour
 - set out their expectations for reports and measurable plans clearly
 - improve their understanding of pupils' performance data and challenge outcomes where targets are not achieved.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because senior leaders' actions have not yet secured consistency in the quality of teaching and learning across the school, particularly in reading and writing.
- There have been significant changes to senior and middle leadership since September 2017. A new assistant headteacher, and a special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), working closely with the deputy headteacher, have added much-needed capacity to the leadership team. However, it is too soon to see the impact of some of the initiatives designed to bring about improvements in the school.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate. Together with the school improvement plan it sets out appropriate priorities for improvement. However, the targets in the plan do not have clear outcomes to enable senior leaders to judge how well the targets have been met.
- Leaders have introduced a system to track pupils' progress. However, leaders do not focus sharply enough on an understanding of pupils' progress. This means that assessment information is not able to identify where teaching is less effective, and inconsistencies in some year groups result.
- An external review of pupil premium funding provided useful pointers for how these pupils could do better, but actions have not yet had a positive impact on the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- Links between the school and some parents are not positive. Almost a third of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, stated they were worried about the teaching and the school's expectations of their children. They feel that leaders need to do more to make Emmbrook a school to be proud of.
- Teachers appreciate the support they receive from senior leaders. They value the opportunities to learn from their good practice. However, development targets linked to performance management are not clearly measurable, and so decisions, for example about pay, are not fully understood by governors.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities has been reorganised. The new SENCo is clear about how the school now identifies pupils' needs more promptly and provides appropriate support. As a result, outcomes for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities have risen, and many are working comfortably alongside their peers. Pupils in the resource base for hearing-impaired pupils are also benefiting from this focus.
- The school makes effective use of the physical education and sports premium. Many pupils now participate in sports events, and they are positive about the range of sporting activities available at the school.
- Leaders ensure that pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. During the inspection, pupils were keen to tell inspectors about the topics they have enjoyed.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strengthened by a focus by leaders on this aspect. The values and ethos of the school, 'Roots to

Grow; Wings to Fly', underpin assembly themes and school life. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to listen to and support each other, at breaktimes and lunchtimes. This is reflected in the caring attitudes shown by most pupils.

- Senior leaders receive effective support from the local authority school improvement adviser. Links with local good schools are resulting in a clearer dialogue about what needs to improve. However, it is too soon to measure the full impact.

Governance of the school

- Governors are highly committed and are ambitious for the pupils and families that make up the Emmbrook community. However, they do not have a precise understanding of the information that they are given to enable them to evaluate the school's effectiveness. This means that they are unable to challenge leaders and hold them to account or determine if pupils' progress is good enough.
- Governors have identified the correct priorities for the school's improvement plan. They monitor this regularly through visits and at meetings. However, their ability to evaluate the success of initiatives is limited because the targets in the plan are not easily measurable. As a result, governors are not clear if leaders have achieved these targets.
- Governors do not hold other leaders across the school to account for the monitoring and evaluation of their individual subjects. For example, governors have not looked into why reading and writing outcomes were so low in 2017, and subject leaders are not clear about how they are expected to keep governors fully informed.
- Governors work effectively with senior leaders to ensure that pupils are kept safe. They look at the single central record to ensure that appropriate checks are made on the adults who work in the school. Governors have completed an appropriate level of safeguarding training.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Checks on the suitability of staff to work at the school are in line with statutory guidance. Staff training is up to date and staff receive regular safeguarding updates. Leaders and staff are vigilant about child protection matters and understand their responsibilities to keep children safe.
- Leaders work effectively with other professionals and agencies for the safety and welfare of pupils. They follow up concerns in a timely manner if they are not satisfied with the response. Staff also work closely with parents to keep children safe. Parents who completed the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, confirmed this.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe, including when online.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not consistently good enough to ensure that all pupils make

good progress from their starting points. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are sometimes too low, and work is not consistently well matched to pupils' abilities. Too many pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable, especially the most able.

- The use of assessment is variable. Some teachers do not use assessment information effectively to ensure that pupils are challenged and make good progress. This is particularly the case in planning to improve pupils' reading and writing. Consequently, pupils sometimes fall behind, or find the work too easy.
- The quality of writing is inconsistent. Not all teachers have high enough expectations of pupils to ensure they attain the highest outcomes. This is seen in pupils' books, where it is evident that pupils tackle work appropriate for their age, but the challenge or modelling, which would show them how to work at higher levels, is not provided.
- Teachers are trying out different approaches which are helping to improve pupils' writing. In a Year 6 class, when writing a suspenseful drama, pupils used short sentences and effective repetition of initial words. This increased the suspense and drama, as when one wrote: 'It was something different. Something terrifying. Something that would torment me for the rest of my life!'
- Pupils' mechanical reading skills are sound. However, until recently there has not been sufficient emphasis on developing pupils' specific comprehension skills. There are now regular guided-reading sessions in almost every class to help pupils improve these specific word skills and to help them to infer and reason how stories and text work. As a result, pupils' confidence in reading is improving. Pupils' reading records indicate that they are encouraged to read widely and often, both in school and at home.
- A few pupils are not challenged to think deeply in mathematics. They are sufficiently fluent in calculation and this means they are successful in the work seen in their books. However, they are not given sufficient opportunities to apply these skills, and do not learn the steps and strategies needed to solve problems. As a result, pupils do not use their mathematical fluency to apply this knowledge to real-life issues. This limits pupils' ability to attain the highest standards.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support for pupils, particularly for those who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Opportunities to build on previous learning across a wide range of subjects are variable. Assessment systems to check pupils' progress in subjects other than English and mathematics are not sufficiently well developed. Therefore, leaders are not always able to check how well pupils are achieving in the wider curriculum.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are friendly, kind and courteous. They engage well with adults, visitors and each other.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe and know about unsafe situations. For

example, pupils know how to be safe around roads, and know about fire safety through fire drills.

- Most pupils know and understand the dangers associated with cyber bullying and disclosing personal information online. This was seen during an assembly where pupils were skilfully supported to reflect how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. They responded well, and enthusiastically participated in answering questions.
- Most pupils, including those in the resource base, have good attitudes to their learning. Some said that very occasionally they lose concentration and their progress slows, especially when the work is not challenging enough.
- Pupils are taught and understand the difference between right and wrong and learn how to be a good citizen. They show an appreciation for diversity and are respectful of people from other backgrounds and with different beliefs.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils from all backgrounds get on well with each other and they conduct themselves well. Most pupils interact and work well together in lessons.
- Pupils who met inspectors said that behaviour is usually good. They said that there are very few incidents of bullying, confirming that they always feel safe in the school. They agreed that bullying, racism or homophobia are not issues in the school. Pupils said that staff address their concerns and any issues in relation to poor behaviour quickly and effectively.
- Attendance is above the national average, and the attendance of key groups of pupils, such as disadvantaged pupils or those who have SEN and/or disabilities, is similarly strong. The school has a robust approach to absence, and consequently pupils are rarely persistently absent.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' outcomes require improvement because their progress is inconsistent and their attainment in reading and writing remains too low.
- In 2017, Year 6 pupils' attainment in reading and writing was particularly weak. This represented much less progress from their starting points than should have been expected. While pupils attained higher standards in mathematics they still did not make enough progress because, overall, they started from above-average prior attainment. Outcomes for the pupils who left in 2016 were not much stronger.
- The proportion of pupils who achieved at a greater depth of understanding is smaller than the national average. This is because the most able pupils are not consistently challenged to help them make the progress of which they are capable, and to attain highly.
- In 2016 and 2017, disadvantaged pupils' progress was also below national averages for reading, writing and mathematics. This group's achievement is still inconsistent,

and some do not progress as well as other pupils with the same starting points.

- Leaders are aware that progress is inconsistent across the school. Variations in the quality of teaching mean that pupils make slower progress in some classes and subjects. Leaders have begun to take action, but the initiatives they have put in place to bring about improvement have yet to demonstrate impact in every year group.
- Recent improvements in the leadership of SEN means pupils who need support are making accelerated progress, and many are now attaining age-related outcomes in key areas of learning. Pupils in the resource base benefit from this focus and achieve similarly to their peers.
- Work scrutiny shows that pupils in most year groups are now making adequate progress.
- Pupils currently in Year 6 are now making more effective progress from their starting points in English and mathematics because of focused and effective teaching. As a result, pupils interact and contribute well to lessons and show determination to achieve their best. The standard of their work has improved, overall, although current outcomes for the most able are still comparatively low.

School details

Unique reference number	109863
Local authority	Wokingham
Inspection number	10046085

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Smith
Headteacher	Rob Fenton
Telephone number	01189 784940
Website	www.emmbrookjuniorschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@emmbrook-jun.wokingham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	25–26 November 2014

Information about this school

- The school has a resource base for up to eight pupils with hearing impairment. This base supports children from Emmbrook Infant School (early years and key stage 1) and Emmbrook Junior School (key stage 2).
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is well above the national average, as is the proportion with education, health and care plans.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding is below the national average.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those pupils who speak English as an additional language are well below the national average.
- There has been a significant number of changes in staffing since the school was last inspected. There is a new leadership team, and most subject leaders are also new to their posts.
- In 2017, the school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the

minimum expectations for pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning across the school in all classes. Almost all these visits were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' books, spoke to pupils about their learning, and heard some pupils read in classrooms. They also chose groups of pupils from Year 4 and Year 6 to discuss their learning and hear their views about the school.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons, at breaktime and at lunchtime.
- The inspectors met a range of staff, including the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders for English and mathematics, the SENCo, and the leader for pupil premium. The inspectors met with six members of the governing body, including the co-chairs.
- A meeting was held with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors checked the single central register of pre-employment checks on staff and looked at pupils' attendance and behaviour records. They examined a range of documents, including school improvement plans, and policies in relation to safeguarding and child protection, and discussed safety issues with staff and pupils.
- Inspectors considered the 118 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, 37 free-text responses from parents, and a letter sent to the inspectors. The inspectors spoke with some parents as they dropped off their children at the start of the school day. There were no responses to the staff questionnaire, but inspectors considered the 234 responses to the Ofsted online pupil survey.

Inspection team

David Cousins, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ross Macdonald

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