



E P Collier Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 109780
Local Authority Reading
Inspection number 288494
Inspection date 10 January 2007
Reporting inspector Wiola Hola HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Ross Road
School category	Community		Reading
Age range of pupils	3–11		RG1 8DZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0118 9015470
Number on roll (school)	202	Fax number	0118 9015472
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Tess Hawken
		Headteacher	Mrs Jenny Gladwell
Date of previous school inspection	19 March 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is average in size. It is situated in the centre of Reading. Four out of ten pupils are from white British backgrounds; others are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds, mainly Asian. Many pupils have English as a second language and some of these are at an early stage of English language acquisition. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average as is the percentage with learning difficulties or disabilities. The number of pupils that arrive or leave the school other than at the normal time in the year is well above average. The school has a 26 place maintained nursery. It also has a 10 place resourced unit for pupils with speech and communication difficulties; these pupils are taught in the unit in the mornings and join mainstream classes for the afternoons. Attainment on entry is very varied. Some children are very able. Many have lower than average skills in speaking English.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It has some important strengths; most notably; the effectiveness with which the school includes pupils with a wide range of needs, the provision for pupils with speech or communication difficulties, and the way in which all pupils are helped to develop their speaking and listening skills. This school clearly sees each child or pupil as a unique individual and aims to provide each one with an appropriate range of learning experiences. Moreover, it works well to ensure that its pupils, from many different backgrounds and cultures, learn to work and play together happily, and understand each others' views. The school works in very effective partnership with the local community. It is rightly proud of this partnership work and of the fact the pupils and staff enjoy being at this school, work hard and want to succeed. Pupils are well behaved. They are friendly and courteous to each other, to staff and to visitors.

Children in the Foundation Stage are helped to settle in quickly; provision for them is satisfactory overall with some good work in developing their language skills. In other stages, standards fluctuate but they are broadly average. Achievement is satisfactory overall with some good features: pupils' progress in English in recent years has been better than that found nationally, although standards in writing across the school are relatively weaker than in other areas. The impact of recent initiatives to improve pupils' writing is visible and the school has plans to increase the impetus of this work. Pupils' written work includes writing in many styles and for various purposes but rarely includes work that is highly polished. Teaching and learning are generally satisfactory; they are good in those lessons where the pace of work is fast, where tasks or the teacher's questioning challenge all pupils, including those who are more able, and where pupils are required to make decisions or organise themselves as part of their learning. The school welcomes increasing numbers of pupils with English as a second language and is sharpening its skills in identifying these pupils' needs. However, more remains to be done to meet those needs swiftly. The curriculum is satisfactory and is currently under review by the school so as to increase opportunities for creativity and forge productive links between subjects. Arrangements for pupils in the speech and language unit are good with an effective balance of specialist teaching and integration into mainstream classes. Pupils are well cared for and supported. The school works effectively to ensure that they are safe and feel encouraged. Systems for keeping pupils' academic progress under review are good.

Leadership and management are good and apparent in the school's drive to raise the quality of educational provision and outcomes, in the positive climate for learning and in the improvements to the school building and resources. The headteacher is energetic and resourceful. She is supported well by governors, the senior staff and other colleagues. Staff and governors know what is working well and what needs to be improved. The school's self-evaluation, undertaken through effective teamwork, is very largely accurate. The school has good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing, both in English lessons and elsewhere; require pupils, on occasion and as appropriate, to produce their finest and polished pieces of writing.
- Raise the overall quality of teaching and learning by sharing the good practice that already exists; develop teachers' skills in posing well targeted questions; increase the extent to which pupils have to make choices and decisions for themselves.
- Further enrich the curriculum so as to raise pupils' excitement and enjoyment of learning, and to increase the depth to which some subjects are studied, making efficient links between them where appropriate.
- Develop further the school's capacity in identifying the specific needs of pupils with English as an additional language.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are broadly average, although the 2006 results in national tests dipped from those in previous years. Achievement is satisfactory overall, in the Foundation Stage and elsewhere in the school. Pupils' progress in developing their speaking skills is good. This is true both for pupils who speak English as a first language and for those speaking it as an additional language. It is also the case for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. This is because teachers in mainstream classes and in the speech and language base encourage pupils to speak fully, clearly, and to each other routinely as part of their learning. Achievement in mathematics and science is average. Progress in English has generally been faster than is found nationally although pupils' skills in writing lag behind other skills. Some, but too little, written work of a very high standard appears in pupils' books. The school has been effective in improving the overall standard of handwriting and presentation of work but a few pupils hold pens or pencils very awkwardly and this impedes their writing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils are happy and enjoy school. Attendance is satisfactory. The school functions as a very harmonious community. Pupils are courteous, caring and show good respect for each other. They are developing good spiritual, moral and cultural awareness. Some pupils are very articulate, others less so, but regardless of the extent to which pupils have a command of language, they are confident in working together and asking for help from staff or each other. Pupils are proud to serve on the School Council. They also make good contributions through fund raising for both national and international charities. Pupils develop well their understanding of how to lead safe and healthy lives. Skills important for their future success, such as co-operation with each other and working with concentration develop well; pupils generally have adequate skills in literacy and numeracy.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with some good features. Lessons are well planned and conducted smoothly, with clarity of purpose and with good relationships at all times. Pupils are well behaved and respectful. They enjoy their learning: instances of real excitement occur sometimes, but not routinely, in lessons. Where lessons are good, the level of challenge is appropriately high for each pupil, teachers are skilled in drawing out pupils' ideas, or pupils are given the opportunity to organise themselves or make decisions. In some lessons, the way in which tasks are adapted or designed to suit the needs of individual pupils lacks precision or a clear rationale. Most teachers take care to provide for the wide range of abilities in their groups. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution in all parts of the school. Marking generally identifies clearly how well pupils are doing but teachers' comments are not generally followed up or acted upon, particularly when work is incomplete.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum generally provides well for the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and adequately for other areas although some subjects are covered thinly. It has good features in helping pupils to develop their personal qualities and positive attitudes to themselves, each other and the community. This is achieved through assemblies, extra-curricular activities, special events, visits and visitors, school productions as well as in lessons. Provision for pupils with speech and communication difficulties is good. The school is rightly seeking to enrich the curriculum so as to enhance pupils' enjoyment, forge connections between subjects, and provide more opportunities for pupils to develop creativity and independence in learning as these are currently relatively few. The headteacher and her staff have worked effectively to develop the school building and resources to a good level. The school is pleasant and spacious in spite of its age although the playground is very small other than for children in the Foundation Stage for whom a special outdoor area has been created. Good partnerships with a local secondary school, for example, have enriched the curriculum in a number of ways.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care, guidance and support. Arrangements for safeguarding children are good. Staff are dedicated to ensuring pupils' well-being. A large proportion of pupils join the school at times other than the start of the year and the school provides a warm welcome and sensitive support for them and their families. Many parents speak highly of the school's friendly atmosphere and the care their children receive.

The school keeps a good track of how well pupils are doing academically. Senior staff are able to use their record keeping systems well to spot any pupils who might be underachieving and put into place special arrangements to make sure that all pupils keep up with their work. Staff work hard to identify the specific needs of pupils with English as a second language; the school recognises that processes for doing this, whilst adequate, are not yet fully developed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good. A determination to provide well for staff and pupils and get the best possible outcomes characterises the work of the school. The headteacher works with zeal to marshal funds and support from many sources. She recruits partners and sponsors to enrich teaching and the curriculum, and to contribute funds for the library and concerts, for example. The school takes good account of the views of parents as part of its self-evaluation processes. Staff are buoyant and seeking to be innovative; they know exactly what is effective and what needs to be improved; a right and proper focus is being placed on raising the overall quality of teaching and learning, and planning for a more exciting curriculum. The key stage coordinators play a good part in steering developments although the detail of exactly how to achieve some of the improvements, in relation to the curriculum, for example, has yet to be fully determined. Systems for checking the quality of lessons are satisfactory; they have to date placed a main emphasis on teaching rather than learning but are now beginning to place a greater spotlight on exactly what progress pupils are making in the lessons visited. Governance is good. Governors are effective in their support and also in their challenge to senior staff. Finances are carefully controlled. Administrative and other support staff provide a much valued contribution to the smooth running of the school. In view of the pupils' current standards and achievements, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

You may remember that I visited your school recently. I write to thank you for making me feel so welcome and for talking with me about your work. I was very pleased to speak with a group of pupils, some of whom are members of the School Council. I would like to tell you what I discovered about your school.

These are the best things about your school.

- You are well behaved. You work hard in lessons and try to do your best.
- You make good progress in English and learn to speak clearly and confidently.
- The pupils in the speech and language base are well provided for.
- The atmosphere in the school is very friendly and people get on well with one another.
- You are very well cared for so that you stay safe and happy.
- Teachers try to make sure that no-one gets left behind with their work.
- The headteacher is a good leader and is working well to make the school a pleasant place for you to learn in. She and the staff and governors know what can be done to make the school even better and help you learn even faster.

Here are the main things the school should do to improve further.

- It should help you to improve your writing more quickly.
- Some lessons are really good. There should be more of these where you have to work with good speed, answer some difficult questions and plan some things for yourselves.
- The school should organise some exciting activities in lessons that give you a chance to research, discover or create things more often than you do at the moment.
- It should find out more quickly what pupils who don't speak English very well yet can already do and what they are good at.

Many of your parents have written to say how pleased they are with the school. It is clear to me that you enjoy coming to this school and having such a valuable opportunity to work and play with children from so many different parts of the world.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours faithfully

Mrs Wiola HalaHer Majesty's Inspector