



# Epsom Downs Primary School and Children's Centre

Inspection Report

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Better  
education  
and care

**Unique Reference Number** 125127  
**Local Authority** Surrey  
**Inspection number** 293203  
**Inspection dates** 13–14 March 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Christopher Gray

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	St Leonard's Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Epsom Downs
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	0–11		KT18 5RJ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01737 354313
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	293	<b>Fax number</b>	01737 370853
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr Timothy Snuggs
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Sally Leach
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 September 2002		

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is similar in size to most primaries. It serves an area of deprivation. The proportions of pupils with statements of educational need and with learning difficulties is above average. Few pupils are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. Children begin the Nursery with well below average skills.

The school is part of wider provision for children aged from birth to 11, all of which is managed by the governing body. However, the Children's Centre did not form part of this inspection.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school which gives its pupils a good, all-round education and outstanding care, guidance and support. The school is successful in its aim to give pupils 'a secure, nurturing environment in which the children are ready to learn'. Parents are very supportive of the school's work. One summed up her feelings: 'The enrichment programme ... is fantastic and helps all children, whatever their ability, to be happy in school'.

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and children progress well from their well below average starting points. Many reach the goals expected of them, though few exceed them, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Pupils achieve well throughout the school and reach average standards by the end of Year 6. Standards throughout the school are rising as a result of good teaching and the effective use of self-evaluation to improve pupils' learning.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They behave well and clearly enjoy school. They are quick to see the moral of a story and apply it to their own lives. After hearing a folk-tale in assembly, one pupil summed it up: 'Don't judge people until you've got your facts right'. They learn about different cultures and beliefs and understand that this variety makes the world so rich; as one pupil said, 'It would be boring if everyone were the same'. An older pupil observed, 'You are your own person and make your own decisions'.

Pupils make good progress because teachers are very effective at helping them to improve. Marking of pupils' work is of a very high quality and pupils are clear as to how to reach higher levels. The curriculum is good and offers many opportunities for pupils to widen their learning, through visits or clubs such as the steel band, which frequently performs out of school. Pupils use their information and communication technology (ICT) skills in a range of subjects, but the tasks are not always designed to enable pupils to reach higher levels in ICT.

The school's success is based on good leadership and management. The headteacher gives an outstanding lead and this inspires all staff to work together well. Assessment is used very well in English and mathematics to direct help wherever it is needed. The school has experienced considerable staff turnover in recent years and is successful in supporting newly qualified teachers, so that they build up good classroom skills. These young staff are also being trained to take on management roles. They have not yet had the chance to develop the use of assessment to gain an overview of standards in subjects other than English, mathematics, science and ICT.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Give pupils more opportunities to develop their ICT skills throughout the curriculum.
- Enable leaders for subjects other than English, mathematics, science and ICT to develop more formal systems of assessment in order to give them a clearer view of standards in their subjects.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils achieve well and standards are rising across the school. In past years, those by the end of Year 2 were below average. Pupils now make more consistent, good progress from Nursery to Year 2, so that results for the 2007 teachers' assessments are expected to be at least average. Pupils make good progress in Years 3 to 6, as can be seen from their written work. This aspect of pupils' work was the weakest in past years and has been the focus of much work by staff and pupils. In an outstanding English lesson for Year 6, pupils were working together to choose the best language to describe an evil character. 'The minute you walk into her lair ...' and 'Ever so slowly, you walk towards her' are examples of first drafts. Standards by Year 6 are average; those for 2007 are expected to be a considerable improvement on those of 2006. Boys' achievement in English is being raised by lessons such as that described above. No groups of pupils underachieve.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Through the Eco Committee, they have many opportunities to save energy and get involved in recycling. Pupils have a voice in the school through the school council and they are well prepared for active citizenship.

Pupils enjoy their lessons and remark, 'We like coming to school because we learn lots of things and teachers are kind'. Pupils know how to keep safe and say that they can talk to adults if they have any personal concerns. Their behaviour in lessons is good. Attendance is a little below the national average despite the huge efforts made by the school; a small minority of families do not always do their best to ensure the maximum possible attendance of their children. Pupils are knowledgeable about healthy eating and understand the importance of exercise, as is shown by the Healthy Schools' Award. Pupils' progress in literacy, numeracy, and ICT prepares them well for their future education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. All teachers have a consistent, thorough approach to evaluating pupils' learning, which they use to sharpen the focus of future lessons. They do this through annotating their plans and by the detailed marking of pupils' written work. Pupils said how much this helps them to improve. Adults have very good relationships with their pupils and they manage their behaviour effectively, even when it is challenging.

Teachers use interactive whiteboards well to stimulate pupils' ideas. In an outstanding mathematics lesson for Year 4 pupils, the teacher moved squares around the screen to enable pupils to see how many right-angles there are in a full turn. Teachers give pupils plenty of opportunities to use their ICT skills in a range of subjects, but the tasks are not always designed to enable pupils to reach the higher levels in their ICT skills.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good, with outstanding extra-curricular provision. Literacy and numeracy receive good focus and ICT is used in many subjects. The mixed-age classes are taught well in ability year groups for numeracy and literacy. This enables teachers to set appropriately challenging work and meet pupils' needs. The school has adapted the National Curriculum and now uses a topic approach to plan learning across subjects. This is a new initiative which the school is still working on.

Pupils have excellent opportunities to participate in and enjoy a wide range of out-of-school activities. Many visits to museums, theatres and galleries bring the curriculum to life. Book weeks, dance, music, story tellers and the multi-cultural fortnight make learning exciting and stimulating. Pupils enjoy a wide range of lunch time and after school clubs which enhance their personal development.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The school takes outstanding care of all its pupils through very clear health, safety and welfare procedures. Adults work closely with parents and outside agencies to ensure that all pupils progress well. Excellent integration with the Children's Centre provides outstanding support for parents and pupils. Vulnerable pupils, pupils for whom English is an additional language and those with learning difficulties are identified at an early stage and are guided very well. Child protection arrangements are good and understood by all staff. Risk assessments are carried out regularly and thoroughly. This caring ethos promotes the involvement of all pupils and enables them to feel safe and happy in school.

Very good academic guidance is given in core subjects, which is raising standards throughout the school. Pupils know their targets and make good use of teachers' high quality marking.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management including governance are good. The headteacher's leadership is outstanding. She and the deputy form a strong partnership and, along with the senior leadership team, ably monitor and evaluate provision and standards. Thorough self-evaluation indicates that senior managers know well the strengths and

areas for further development. This, combined with successful actions to raise standards, demonstrates good capacity for further improvement. The senior management team and subject leaders effectively monitor and strengthen the quality of teaching and learning. Those new to management roles are well supported, but have not yet had the chance to develop effective systems of assessment to gain an overview of standards in their subjects.

There is a very strong commitment to valuing pupils and their families. This is shown in the seamless way in which the school and children's centre are run. The governors' role of critical friend is well developed. They monitor and evaluate the work of the school effectively. Individual governors are linked to subject areas, and visit the school regularly in order to gain first-hand experience of the school's work.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	2
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**

We enjoyed meeting so many of you during the two days we spent in your school and thank you for the very friendly way in which you welcomed us and helped us by sharing your views.

You and your parents clearly think that Epsom Downs Primary is a good school and the inspectors agree with you. All the adults work very hard to make sure you have a safe and happy school to learn in. They teach you many interesting things and make sure your lessons are fun. You repay their efforts by good behaviour and by concentrating hard in class. This enables you to make good progress in your work so that, by Year 6, your test results are similar to those of most other children in the country.

You know about healthy eating and take lots of exercise. There are plenty of clubs to help you do this. You care about others less fortunate than you, as in your work with a school in Africa. Some of you told an inspector about the special things you would remember about your school when you grow up, such as taking a leading part in the class play.

Your headteacher does an excellent job in running the school and children's centre. She receives very good support from all the adults on her staff team. They are all good at knowing what needs to be done to make the school even better. We have agreed with the school the two main areas for development at the moment. One is helping you to reach higher standards in your ICT skills. The other is about how teachers keep a check on your progress in the subjects apart from English, mathematics, science and ICT.

I hope you go on having a good time at Epsom Downs.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Gray

Lead Inspector