

Emmer Green Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109794
Local Authority	Reading
Inspection number	310099
Inspection date	25 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Steven Hill

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	368
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Vanessa Hine
Headteacher	Mrs Andrea Grashoff
Date of previous school inspection	12 January 2004
School address	Grove Road Emmer Green Reading RG4 8LN
Telephone number	01189 015464
Fax number	01189 015593

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the progress that pupils make and their personal development, how the school's provision makes an impact on these and how the school evaluates this impact, and the curriculum. Evidence was gathered from observation of lessons, break-times and assemblies, discussions with staff, pupils and governors, the school's records of pupils' progress and other paperwork, and questionnaires returned by parents.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a large primary where children start in Reception in the term they are due to be five years old. This will change from September, when all will be able to start at the beginning of the school year. Over 80% of pupils are of White British origin, with the rest coming from a wide range of different heritages. The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language is low, and very few pupils are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) is below average, although the proportion with statements of special educational need is average. Pupils' needs include moderate learning difficulties, dyslexia, emotional and behavioural difficulties, and a number who are on the autistic spectrum. The school has won many awards, including Investors in People, Healthy Schools, Eco-Schools Silver, Activemark and Artsmark Gold.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Parents are very positive about this good school. They wrote about '...an enjoyable, safe and memorable educational experience for all...' '...efforts to make learning fun...' '...very helpful and professional staff...' and emphasised how happy their children are at school. The inspector found all these positive comments to be justified. Pupils achieve well because of good teaching. Their personal development is outstanding because of the excellent provision for their care, support and guidance and the exciting, wide-ranging curriculum. They are proud of the school and take a pride in their achievements.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school, Year 6 commenting on 'enjoyable lessons' and '...fun things, like the forensic science project.' After some thought, they agreed that the best thing about the school was that, 'Teachers are really good and willing to help you if you are stuck.' These positive relationships, teachers' clear and consistent expectations, together with interesting work, all contribute to pupils' excellent behaviour. Teachers make good use of information and communication technology (ICT). They use interactive whiteboards very well to illustrate their clear explanations, and to enliven lessons. All this supports pupils' enthusiasm for learning and their hard work in class.

Pupils have excellent relationships with each other. Boys, girls and pupils from different ethnic backgrounds all play and work together happily. Pupils have particularly good collaborative skills, because of the many opportunities they have to discuss their work together and to work in teams. Along with their good academic progress, their independence and their very good ICT skills, this means they are extremely well prepared for their future lives, in education and elsewhere. They have a very good understanding of healthy lifestyles enhanced, for example, by their regular opportunities to cook. A group of pupils in Year 6 showed that they know how to put their understanding to good use when preparing an excellent three-course meal. Pupils understand the importance of exercise, joining in enthusiastically with the wide range of sports available.

An excellent contribution to the community is exemplified by the Year 6 pupils' enjoyment of acting as buddies to Reception children and helping Year 2 pupils with their work. Pupils have a strong voice through the school council, and are confident that their views are valued.

Standards are consistently above average. Pupils make good progress right from their start in the Foundation Stage. Staff keep a careful track of pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics, and excellent use is made of the data to set very challenging targets for all. Pupils have a good understanding of these targets, which provide motivation. Effective marking supports this, showing pupils how they can improve. The school is quick to provide extra help for any pupils who need it. Teachers make good use of the skilled teaching assistants to ensure that pupils with a variety of learning difficulties are able to keep up in class. The school uses a range of intervention strategies, to help any who are in danger of falling behind, tailoring provision to individual needs, so these pupils make very good progress. This academic guidance is matched by excellent pastoral care, with very strong systems to help vulnerable pupils to feel safe and secure. Pupils' self-esteem is developed sensitively and consistently, supporting their learning and their enjoyment of school.

The excellent curriculum covers the basics well, and is enhanced by a wide range of enrichment activities. Visits locally and further afield, visitors to school and an extensive variety of clubs all support pupils' enjoyment and their learning. Theme Days, in particular, generate a lot of

enthusiasm from pupils. The teaching of a modern foreign language throughout Key Stage 2, and provision to learn a variety of musical instruments add to their opportunities. Information and communication technology, a weakness at the last inspection, is now a strength. Pupils have very good skills and are able to use them in a range of subjects when they use the computer suite. The school has correctly identified that a lack of equipment in classrooms prevents pupils making full use of their ICT skills to support their learning at other times. Plans are in hand to buy more equipment to rectify this.

Excellent self-evaluation means the school is very well placed to improve further. As well as carefully checking how much progress pupils make, the school has a carefully structured system to monitor provision, including lesson observations. The clear feedback given to teachers helps them to improve their practice, so the quality of teaching is improving, with an increasing number of outstanding lessons. The very small proportion of lessons that are only satisfactory is shrinking, as teachers respond positively to the support and advice from senior colleagues. Good leadership and management support the school's many strengths. Excellent leadership by the headteacher and her deputy supports the outstanding teamwork of staff, so that all work together to address issues that they identify. The relative weaknesses last year in the performance of higher attainers, in writing at Year 2 and mathematics at Year 6, have been tackled very well. Current pupils are on course to reach much better standards. Similarly, a relative weakness in boys' English skills has been reversed, and the Reading Champions show how enthusiastic boys now are about the subject. Governors understand the school well and give good support.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Pupils get off to a good start in the Reception class. They make good progress, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. They settle happily into school, helped by their very positive relationships with the adults, as well as support from older pupils and each other. This was apparent in a peaceful session of peer massage, when they showed great consideration and gentleness. An exciting programme of practical activities promotes both their learning and their enjoyment. The development of good ICT skills starts here, with children already using a variety of equipment with confidence. Staff work together well to provide a good balance of activities that are directed by adults and opportunities for children to choose things for themselves. Good use is made of the outside area, despite some limitations in accommodation and equipment. The school has identified the need to upgrade this area, especially in the light of the new admission arrangements, with much younger children involved. Carefully thought out plans are in place to do this.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve ICT provision in the classrooms so pupils can make full use of their very good skills to support learning in other subjects.
- Develop the outdoor provision for the Reception classes, in line with current plans.

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Annex A

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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

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

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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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

02 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Emmer Green Primary School, Reading, RG4 8LN

Thank you for all your help when I visited the school. I enjoyed talking to you and watching you work so hard in class. I particularly want to thank the pupils in Year 6 who came to talk to me, and congratulate those who cooked an excellent meal. You told me that you think Emmer Green is a good school, and I agree. These are the most important things that I found out.

- You make good progress in your work because the teachers are good at helping you to learn.
- You are growing up into kind, caring and sensible young people that your parents and your school can be proud of. Your behaviour is excellent and you all get on really well with each other and with the adults.
- You have a huge range of interesting things to do, and I know that you particularly enjoy Theme Days and all the different clubs you can go to.
- The adults are very good at looking after you and they make sure that anyone who needs extra help gets it.
- The headteacher, deputy, staff and governors are good at organising the school. They keep a very careful eye on what is happening, and are always trying to make things better.

I have agreed that the two most important things that the school should do next are:

- provide more computers to use in class, so that you have more chances to use your good ICT skills to help you learn in different subjects
- improve the outside area for Reception children, so they have even more interesting things to do.

I know that you will help them to keep improving the school by working hard, and giving them your suggestions through the school council. I hope that you carry on enjoying school.

Best wishes,

Steven Hill

Lead Inspector