

Epping Upland Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115097
Local Authority	ESSEX LA
Inspection number	311830
Inspection date	11 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Helen Ranger

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	135
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Colin Tankard
Headteacher	Mrs Sarah Hurwood
Date of previous school inspection	3 December 2001
School address	Carters Lane Epping Green Epping Essex CM16 6QJ
Telephone number	01992 572087
Fax number	01992 561128

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- how well pupils achieve, especially in English, mathematics and science;
- the standard of pupils' personal development and well-being;
- the quality of monitoring and development planning by staff and governors.

The inspector gathered evidence from records of pupils' progress, observations of lessons and breaktime activities, samples of pupils' work, discussions with pupils, staff and governors, and from questionnaires and letters from parents. The main documents used by the school in its monitoring and strategic development were examined. 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 smaller than average school which draws its pupils from the village of Epping Green and the surrounding area. Most pupils come from favourable economic circumstances. The proportion who have learning difficulties and disabilities is a little below the national average. About one in eight pupils is from a minority ethnic background but none is at an early stage of learning to speak English. When pupils start school their attainment varies widely but, overall, is below the levels expected nationally for four-year-olds.

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. Since its last inspection in 2001, the staff and governors have continued to help pupils achieve well in their work and to reach high standards in their personal development. There is a strong partnership with parents and their views are overwhelmingly positive. Typical are the parents who wrote, 'We are delighted with the school, the ethos it promotes and the encouragement and opportunities it gives to our children.'

Pupils achieve well academically. In Key Stage 1, by Year 2, they reach standards that are often significantly above average and sometimes exceptionally high. There are particular strengths in reading and writing. Mathematics standards are good but, overall, not as high as English. Pupils do well in Key Stage 2. By the time they leave at the age of 11, they are generally confident and independent learners. The school's results in the Year 6 national tests in English in recent years have often been well above average. In 2007, performance was exceptionally high in the subject. Results in the mathematics and science tests, while not quite as strong, have been above average. The school has recently focused on developing further its provision in mathematics and there are indications that achievement is improving as a result. Pupils' individual progress in both English and mathematics is assessed regularly and effectively so that any potential underachievement is picked up and acted on. There has not been as much attention to tracking achievement in science and the school rightly intends to focus on this subject next to raise standards. There is good provision for the pupils who need extra support with learning and for those who show particular gifts or talents. This is implemented well by the teachers and the team of teaching assistants, enabling these learners to make good progress.

Pupils' outstanding personal development reflects the determination of the staff to provide an all-round education. When combined with their good academic standards, pupils' personal skills ensure they have good foundations for their future lives. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is extremely good. There is an absence of bullying or racism in the school. Pupils enjoy school enormously. Their behaviour is often exemplary, so they are in the right frame of mind to take full advantage of their lessons. Most attend well and staff strive to eliminate any unnecessary absence. Pupils have an excellent appreciation of how to live safe and healthy lives, taking advantage of the many opportunities for physical and social activities. The oldest take a keen interest in the world around them, for instance in their regular discussions of current affairs and through links with a twinned town in Kenya. Pupils take on responsibilities in school and in a wide range of other activities, such as parish, village and charity events.

Teaching is good and is based on a full and interesting curriculum. In recent years, while maintaining its attention to pupils' basic skills, the school has forged more creative links between subjects and has offered additional activities outside school hours. Pupils particularly look forward to the after-school clubs and to Fridays when practical activities, such as film-making, enable them to apply their skills in interesting and relevant contexts. The attractive outdoor areas have been developed well to enhance learning. Pupils learn efficiently. Very good relationships between staff and pupils underpin activities. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together. The quality of pastoral care is high and much valued by pupils and their parents. Academic support and guidance are mostly good. Since the last inspection, the ways teachers use assessment information have developed significantly. They use this information to set targets for all individuals, groups and whole classes and to set up 'intervention' programmes for pupils who will benefit from extra help. More variable is how consistently marking and target-setting are used directly with pupils. There are examples of very good

practice. The oldest pupils in particular are aware of how well they are doing, what to aim for and what they need to improve. However, across the school as a whole, pupils are not so involved in reflecting on how well they have done in lessons or what are the next small steps they need to take in learning.

The school is successful because of its experienced staff team. The headteacher is well respected and promotes effective teamwork. This is enhanced by very productive links with agencies such as local sports organisations and the independent playgroup that is based in the school. The staff are supported well by the governors. Staff and governors monitor the school's work regularly. They have a clear view of its strengths and weaknesses and consult widely on its further development, including among parents and pupils. Their action plans are summarised in the main school development plan. This is a useful management document but the criteria it identifies for monitoring initiatives too rarely indicate how staff and governors intend to measure the impact of any planned changes on pupils' learning. In spite of this, the school continues to provide its community with a good quality of education and is well placed to make further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Reception children get a good start to their education. Parents are very happy with how quickly their children settle into routines. The adults who work with this age group do so as a close team. They encourage independence when appropriate but also give any extra support that is needed. The school's records show that children in Reception have made good progress in recent years. Their knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development are particularly good but they do not quite reach the local authority's average levels in several important skills, including aspects of their personal development, language and mathematical skills. Staff have started to develop the use of the outside area further so that closer links can be made between learning indoors and out. They have good plans for further developments, although the available outdoor accommodation has no canopy or covered area and this limits its use in bad weather.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the ways achievement is assessed and tracked in science to ensure that pupils do consistently well in the subject.
- Involve pupils more in assessing and improving their own learning.
- Ensure that the criteria for judging the success of initiatives include a sharper focus on how pupils will benefit from them.

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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	2

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	2
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	2

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?	2
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.

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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

12 March 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Epping Upland Church of England Primary School, Epping Green, Epping CM16 6QJ

I am writing to thank you for your help on my recent visit to your school. Many of you, and your parents too, told me that your school is really good and I agree. All the adults work as a big team to make sure that you learn well and become confident, independent young people. Your behaviour is usually excellent and I was pleased to hear that people in your school are very friendly. There are lots of ways that the adults make sure you lead safe and healthy lives. For example, it was exciting to see your new kitchen area and I hope your plans for healthy school meals work out well.

Your teachers plan interesting lessons that help you reach good standards in important skills such as literacy and numeracy. You do quite well in science too but I think there is still some room for improvement there. I have asked the teachers to make sure you do as well as you can in science. You can help them with this by trying really hard with your science work. I have also asked your teachers to give you enough time in lessons to think about how well you are doing with your work and what you need to learn next. Your teachers' marking and discussions with you should help with this. It was good to hear about all the clubs and visits that are provided for you. I wish I could have seen your Friday work - that sounds really interesting and several of you told me how much you like it.

Mrs Hurwood makes sure that all the staff and governors help your school to run smoothly. They have good plans to make it even better. I have asked them to make sure that any changes they make to the school help you to learn even faster.

Best wishes for the future

Helen Ranger

Lead inspector