

# Epsom Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124956
<b>Local Authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	315099
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jennifer Smith HMI

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 category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	409
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs K Sanders
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr P Barnes
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 November 2003
<b>School address</b>	Pound Lane Epsom KT19 8SD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01372 720608
<b>Fax number</b>	01372 739902

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

Epsom Primary School, celebrating its centenary this year, is a larger than average primary school, which includes a nursery. The proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is higher than average. The school has more than double the national average number of pupils from minority ethnic groups many of whom come from the Portuguese community. For the large majority of these pupils English is not their first language. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is significant but few of these have a statement of special educational need. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools and Basic Skills Awards and has reached the Investors in People standard.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Epsom Primary School is a good and very inclusive school, which has improved considerably over the last few years. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and this is typified by a comment from a parent who states that, 'we have been delighted with our children's progress. The multi-cultural and inclusive nature of Epsom Primary School is a real strength'.

The very effective leadership of the headteacher and his senior team provide clear direction and vision for the school and focuses on ensuring that all children work in a harmonious atmosphere, and strive to achieve their best. The school provides well for the significant proportion of its children who have limited English. These children are integrated quickly into the life of the school and they make good progress. Children with learning difficulties and /or disabilities are similarly well supported and make good progress from their starting points. Pupils enter the school in the Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are lower than that expected for their age. The standards reached by pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 have improved year on year and are now above the national average. Standards achieved by those pupils who remain in the school from Reception until the end of Year 6 are similarly above the national average. However, a significant number of pupils leave and others join the school during Key Stage 1 and 2. Many joining have limited English and the standards reached by these pupils are average. Generally, girls outperform boys in writing in Key Stage 1 and in English and science in Key Stage 2.

Pupils' personal development and well-being is outstanding. They are very well behaved both in the classroom and around school and are very polite at all times. Pupils show good respect for each other and their teachers, which contributes well to the positive learning environment. Attendance is around the national average but too many pupils are taken out of school for holidays in term time, which affects their progress.

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall; teachers are enthusiastic and provide well-structured and interesting lessons, explaining things carefully to pupils, which pupils enjoy. Teaching assistants also provide good support in lessons. Very effective assessment strategies have been put in place, which enables teachers to monitor closely the progress of individual pupils, acknowledging success and giving support where weaknesses are identified. Marking is particularly good, enabling children to see what they need to do to improve. Pupils are set challenging targets, which the older ones understand well; this contributes to their good achievement. The curriculum is good and enriched by range of extra-curricular activities and special events when the timetable is suspended for a whole day, such as the excellent Second World War experience where pupils were able to experience the life of an evacuee. Pupils benefit from a wide range of visits and school journeys. The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are good, children report that they feel safe in school. The school works hard to encourage parental participation and to support families, it also makes very good use of the support provided by external agencies. The school provides a clean, bright and welcoming environment.

The school's governance is excellent. Governors provide very good support and challenge and have a thorough understanding of the achievement of pupils, largely through their own effective monitoring procedures. Good progress has been made since the last inspection, this together with the progress made by the school over the last two years, indicates clearly that the school has good capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Overall, the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and children make satisfactory progress. It offers a well-resourced and safe environment. Portuguese speaking adults effectively support those children at an early stage of English. The Nursery provides a wide range of activities both inside and out to promote children's learning well. However, in the Reception classes too much time is spent by children sitting on the carpet listening to the teacher, which leads to opportunities for independent learning being missed. Children's progress is not tracked sufficiently well across the Foundation Stage and, as a result, teaching does not always fully meet the range of individual needs.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve day-to-day observation and assessment procedures across the Foundation Stage, so that planning and target setting are more closely matched to individual children's needs.
- Ensure that children in the Reception classes have greater planned opportunities for independent learning.
- Reduce the gender gap in standards in writing in Key Stage 1 and in English and science in Key Stage 2.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

The majority of pupils make good progress, from low starting points, towards meeting their early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development and satisfactory progress in other areas of in the Foundation Stage. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above the national average and are improving year-on-year. Boys writing at Key Stage 1 has shown considerable improvement, bringing it in line with national averages. However, girls generally still outperform boys. By the end of Year 6 standards in English, mathematics and science are around the national average. This, however, does not reflect a decline from Key Stage 1 but reflects the considerable mobility of pupils in and out of the school, particularly in Key Stage 2. Girls outperform boys in English and science. Given their starting points, the achievement of all groups of pupils, including those with English as an additional language is good.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. The school enables the pupils who join the school at different times in the year to settle in quickly. Pupils enjoy their lessons and they participate willingly in the very good school assemblies, sharing ideas and celebrating success. As one pupil reported, 'the school looks after us well and we all have friends from other countries as well as England.'

Pupils are friendly, polite and behave very well, they respond well to their teachers. They are given opportunities to demonstrate responsibility by being 'buddies', members of the school council and acting as library and equipment monitors. One parent specifically made the comment, 'that the school council system was wonderful'. The school is very effective in the way it listens to its pupils' voice, for example, pupils have been influential in the design of the new extension and they make a good contribution to the local community. Discussions with pupils show they

have good understanding of healthy lifestyles. They understand how to stay safe and, when any bullying occurs, it is quickly resolved. Pupils' very positive attitude, along with their developing values, prepares them well for secondary school and for their future economic well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Most teachers plan lessons in detail and are successful in matching activities to meet the wide range of needs in each class. Pupils understand what they are expected to learn and very good marking helps them know what they have to do to improve. In response to a teacher's written comment on a pupil's piece of work, 'Can you feel where the comma should go?' one pupil wrote in her book, 'Yes, I can!' and then corrected subsequent work. Pupils achieve well in English because they have very clear targets and older pupils know exactly what level they are working towards. Relationships between adults and pupils are excellent. Teaching assistants support pupils with learning difficulties and/ or disabilities well and those for whom English is not their first language. They give clear feedback to class teachers, which is then used to plan effectively to meet the needs of individual pupils. In the best lessons, pupils participate enthusiastically in activities, which are enjoyable and well planned to extend their learning. Good and increasing use is made of resources, including inter-active whiteboards. Where teaching is less effective, children are made to sit and listen for too long, this is particularly so in the Foundation Stage. For the youngest children, not enough use is made of the display of key words linked to pictures and objects in order to support the development of literacy skills.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. The personal, social and health education programme is a strength because it provides a particularly strong basis for personal development. The school's provision for the more vulnerable pupils is particularly noteworthy and contributes well to these pupils' progress. Good use is made of additional activities to strengthen and enhance topics being studied, including visits into the local town of Epsom and visitors to the school. In Years 5 and 6 pupils are able to go on a residential visit, which adds excitement and interest and further broadens the curriculum. There is a good range of lunchtime and after school activities and a breakfast club has recently been established, although it is not used by very many pupils at present. The resources are well matched to children's needs and good access to computers during lessons is made possible by laptops. The playground is very well equipped for active break and lunchtimes and is well supervised.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

There is good pastoral support for pupils and the developing academic guidance enables pupils to know their individual targets on a regular basis. Pupils have a very clear understanding of their National Curriculum levels in English and they are able to access instantly the detail of their mathematics levels in their exercise books.

The school makes very good use of the links that it has forged with parents, carers and external agencies to ensure that pupils' needs are met and parents are increasingly involved in their child's learning. For example, parents and carers have a photographic display on the internal school gate so they can see what work their children have been recently doing.

Teachers, specialist support staff and teaching assistants work very well in partnership to support pupils' personal needs well. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those with English as an additional language, is good. Pupils say they feel safe and confident to approach an adult if they have a problem. School records and logbooks show that incidents are followed up and effective action is taken.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school, identifying appropriate areas for improvement, including the Foundation Stage, and focusing on raising standards particularly for boys. He is ably supported by the senior leadership team who play a key role in ensuring the continuing improvement of the school, particularly with regard to pupil progress. Following a restructuring, the middle managers are now well placed to support improvement and, although newly in post, have a thorough understanding of their roles and the impact that they can have. Very good use is made of the performance management process to support staff development and raise standards. Staff are fully committed to the values of the school and work hard to ensure that pupils do their best and are well cared for. The school's evaluation processes are effective and challenging school targets are set, especially when considering the high levels of pupil mobility throughout the year groups.

The governing body fulfils its responsibilities very well. Resources are deployed efficiently and finances are well managed. Governors have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are prepared to ask challenging questions. As a result, they know the school and its pupils well. The school has worked hard to extend opportunities for parental involvement and this is appreciated by the large majority of parents.

Good progress has been made since the last inspection. Better use is now being made of assessment information to improve teaching and learning and as a result is raising standards in English and mathematics, particularly at Key Stage 1.

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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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	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

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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
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

<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.

## Annex A

**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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
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	1
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	1
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

19 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Epsom Primary School, Epsom, KT19 8SD

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you and joining you in your lessons and were very pleased to see how much you like school. This is what we found out.

Epsom Primary School is a good school. You are very polite, behave very well in lessons, and around the school and you are enthusiastic in class. We were particularly impressed with the way Year 6 joined in with the 'Second World War' evacuee experience. You are learning well because your teachers have high expectations of you. Teachers are good at explaining things and they prepare interesting activities for you. Most of you know your targets for English and mathematics and you know what you need to do next. Your teachers mark your work very well indeed and we were very pleased to see that some of you write back to your teachers, showing that you understand the comments they make. We hope that even more of you will do this in future; it will really help your learning.

The staff look after you very well and so you enjoy school and feel safe. The school helps those of you new to learning English settle in well and you all work together as a friendly community. Your school is well led by the Headteacher and senior teachers. He and all the other adults work very hard to help you do as well as you can.

We think that there are some things that would help your school become even better.

- Make sure that teachers record regularly the things that pupils in the Nursery and Reception classes learn, and that pupils spend a little less time on the carpet.
- Try to help the boys reach similar standards in English, mathematics and science as the girls.

We wish you all luck in the future,

Jennifer Smith

Her Majesty's Inspector of Education