

E P Collier Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109780
Local Authority	Reading
Inspection number	337373
Inspection dates	17–18 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Joy Considine

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Phil Cooke
Headteacher	Mrs Justine McMinn
Date of previous school inspection	0 January 2007
School address	Ross Road Reading Berkshire RG1 8DZ
Telephone number	0118 901 5470
Fax number	0118 901 5472
Email address	epco8dz2@reading.gov.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons, and held meetings with governors, pupils, staff and the school improvement partner. They looked at pupils' work, tracking data showing pupils' progress, improvement planning and other relevant documentation. The outcomes from 39 parent questionnaires and questionnaires from pupils in Key Stage 2 were also evaluated.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- standards and progress in writing and mathematics for all groups of pupils
- the quality of teaching and learning, and the extent to which lessons meet the needs of all pupils and how well the school uses assessment information to plan lessons
- the systems and processes that leaders use to monitor and improve the quality of teaching to raise achievement for all pupils.

Information about the school

E P Collier is an average-sized primary school situated in the centre of Reading. About two thirds of pupils live within the catchment area and the school serves a mixed socio-economic community. There is a Nursery with 39 places for children and the school has a unit for children with speech and language difficulties. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. Their needs mainly relate to speech and language difficulties. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs is above average owing to the specialist unit on site. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average and just over one third of pupils speak English as an additional language. The school has received a number of awards including Pride of Reading Award and Sportsmark.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils, and offers a safe, friendly and welcoming environment. 'Pupils from all over the world are welcomed here' is how one pupil described the school and this reflects the opinions of pupils and parents. The spacious buildings are well cared for and classrooms are bright and attractive with some stimulating displays of pupils' work. There is a calm atmosphere in which pupils behave well at all times. They are friendly, polite and helpful towards each other and to all members of the school community. They take pride in their school and enjoy being part of a multicultural community in which all pupils, regardless of background, are valued for the unique contribution they bring to the school. The school is justifiably proud of its reputation for being an inclusive school.

Standards have risen steadily. Attainment is broadly average in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 and pupils make satisfactory progress from Year 1 to Year 6. Teaching is satisfactory overall but some teachers do not make enough use of assessment information when planning lessons and in some lessons pupils do not make consistently good progress. Pupils study the curriculum through a topic-based approach designed to make learning interesting, but specific skills and knowledge do not always build on previous learning and this slows progression and continuity in learning. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to write at length across subjects, and this limits their progress in writing. The Early Years Foundation Stage provides a wide range of good learning experiences for children both in the classroom and outside. As a result children now make good progress and most are on track to reach expected levels at the beginning of Year 1.

Staff work hard to ensure that pupils are well cared for and this is appreciated by pupils and parents alike. One pupil said: 'My school is kind and caring and there is always someone to help me in any way I need.' All adults have a good understanding of the personal and emotional needs of pupils and they strive to make sure that pupils are safe and secure at all times. Robust procedures for ensuring their safety and well-being are in place with the result that pupils arrive at school ready to learn.

Leaders and managers have a generally secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement as a result of accurate self-evaluation. Under the guidance of the dedicated headteacher they have put into place appropriate actions to raise standards and achievement. Senior and subject leaders monitor the work of the school. However, they do not make enough use of the wide range of data available to make an accurate assessment of the effectiveness of teaching and learning in each subject to identify where improvements are most needed. Staff share a common purpose to secure the best possible outcomes for each pupil, but they recognise that there is more to be

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done. The school effectively harnesses support from partnerships, including local authority advisers, to meet the needs of pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable and who are at risk of failing to thrive. The reorganisation of the governing body has provided opportunities for them to evaluate their practice and to take a more strategic lead in monitoring, supporting and challenging the school. This, together with a track record of steady improvement in standards and the learning environment, supports the school's own view that they have satisfactory capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards and achievement in English, mathematics and science by ensuring that teachers make better use of assessment information so that work is well matched to the learning needs of all pupils.
- Revise curriculum plans to ensure that there is continuous progression in the development of knowledge, understanding and skills in all subjects and particularly in writing.
- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that leaders and managers at all levels make best use of all available data to monitor and develop teachers' work more robustly.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in their positive attitudes and good behaviour in classrooms and the playground. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills broadly in line with those expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress and reach standards broadly in line with national expectations in reading and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1. Standards in writing by the end of Key Stage 1 are below average and the school has put into place actions to improve this. However, too many pupils across the school do not make enough progress in writing in lessons because they are not given enough opportunities to write at length in English and other subjects. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or speak English as an additional language make good progress because of the good support they receive. Attainment in 2009 national tests for Year 6 pupils was broadly average in English, mathematics and science. Most pupils are currently on track to reach average standards overall by the end of Year 6.

Pupils are confident in class and keen to contribute by asking and responding to questions, but they are not always given enough opportunities to develop their ideas by working independently. When challenged, pupils enjoy working hard and gain a sense of achievement when tackling difficult problems. This was seen in one lesson in which pupils had to devise strategies for solving complex problems relating to coordinates of shapes. Pupils enjoy their lessons because teachers make good use of resources such as information, communication technology to capture pupils' interest.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe and they feel safe in school. They enjoy the wide range of physical activities provided by the school to help them to be

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healthy and they are learning to make healthy choices at lunchtimes. Pupils have a good understanding of the local community because they take part in local events. For example they support local charities at Harvest Festival time and they participate in dance festivals. Students from the university and local college gain valuable work experience at the school and links with a local secondary school have enhanced the curriculum. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good with significant strengths in their cultural development. Pupils are very proud of their school and they take delight in being able to work and play alongside those from different backgrounds. Racial harmony is a strength of the school. The school works hard with parents to improve attendance, which is now broadly average.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers plan an interesting range of activities for pupils but do not always provide enough opportunities for pupils to record their work independently. In many lessons pupils complete pre-prepared work sheets and this restricts their opportunity to practise their literacy and numeracy skills. Teaching assistants are used well to support individual

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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pupils but could take a stronger role in helping pupils to understand when the teacher is introducing the lesson. Some teachers are not making enough use of assessment information to plan work to consistently meet the learning needs of all pupils and this is limiting the progress they are able to make.

The curriculum is adequately matched to pupils needs and it provides sufficient preparation for the next stage of education. Subjects such as history, geography and science are taught through topics, but scrutiny of pupils' work shows that there is a lack of progression and continuity between skills, knowledge and understanding in these subjects. The school offers a good range of clubs, visits and visitors to enhance the curriculum. Pupils in Year 5 enjoy their residential journey.

Links with agencies and partners to support vulnerable pupils are good. There are good procedures in place to identify and cater for the learning needs of pupils with special needs and/or disabilities so they achieve well. Individual education plans are helpful and effective with targets that are well focused and reviewed regularly.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher sets high expectations for pupils and, together with her senior leaders, has developed a team committed to raising standards and achievement for all pupils. There is a clear sense of direction and a common purpose which is shared by governors and staff. They have put into place plans outlining clear actions they are going to take to ensure that all pupils achieve their best and this is beginning to show in the standards and attainment of pupils. The headteacher has encouraged other leaders to develop their skills in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school, but they do not always make the best use of all available data to bring about improvement. The school works closely with parents who appreciate the availability of staff at the beginning and the end of the school day. Good use is made of partnerships with outside agencies to support vulnerable pupils and this means that these pupils have access to a full range of resources to support their needs. Pupils in the speech and language unit integrate very effectively with the school in activities such as assembly, playtimes and extra-curricular activities. They also join the main school for afternoon lessons and integrate well with their classmates. The school prides itself on its inclusive ethos which permeates all aspects of school life, and effectively challenges discrimination. The governors have recently restructured their committees to enable them to take a more strategic role.

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They are committed to the school's success and have a good balance of skills which they increasingly use to challenge and support the headteacher. Safeguarding procedures are robust. Checks on the suitability of adults to work with children are thorough and child protection arrangements are secure and updated regularly. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. Pupils learn about life in different communities because the school actively celebrates the rich diversity of its population. However, the school recognises that a greater effort is needed if pupils' understanding of other communities within Britain and the wider world beyond are to be maximised.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter school with skills broadly expected for their age. End of Early Years Foundation Stage assessments in 2009 showed that attainment had improved on previous years and was above average. Currently, children are also on track to attain above-average standards. They enjoy learning and they make good progress in all aspects of their development. They work with concentration and they relate well to one another and to adults. They are able to cooperate and share equipment and they understand the importance of taking turns. Most children play safely and show consideration towards others.

All adults support children well through perceptive questioning and observing their learning. The environment is calm but offers exciting opportunities for children to develop their knowledge and skills. Key workers have a good understanding of children's individual needs and they are able to provide learning experiences that are well matched

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to their needs. This is because they observe children and make accurate assessments of their needs. Children are able to move freely between indoors and outdoors and there is a good balance of activities that are led by teachers and those that children select for themselves.

Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good because staff understand the developmental needs of young children and they are able to provide well for all children, including those who speak English as an additional language and those who are vulnerable. Comprehensive tracking systems are now in place so that staff can monitor the progress of all children. These are not yet fully embedded to guide teaching to offer children more challenging activities, so that they can make even better progress. Safeguarding and welfare arrangements are good and all statutory requirements are in place.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Thirty-nine questionnaires were received and they show that most parents are supportive of the school and think it is doing a good job. Parents particularly value the care given to pupils and they appreciate the fact that teachers are available to meet whenever the need arises. While some negative comments were received, they related to individual concerns and there was no pattern.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at EP Collier Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 39 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 207 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	62	15	38	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	21	54	17	44	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	15	39	20	51	4	10	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	33	25	64	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	17	44	21	54	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	49	17	44	2	5	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	41	20	51	1	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	12	31	21	54	1	3	1	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	44	18	46	3	8	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	39	20	51	1	3	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	39	21	54	3	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	16	41	22	56	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	54	18	46	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



20 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of E P Collier Primary School, Reading, RG1 8DZ

Thank you for making my colleagues and me feel so welcome when we inspected your school. We really enjoyed meeting you and hearing what you had to say about your school. We know that your teachers work hard to make your school so welcoming.

Overall we found your school to be satisfactory. You reach average standards and make satisfactory progress. Lessons are satisfactory, although we have identified ways in which your learning in lessons could be better, especially in getting you to work more independently. We were impressed by your attitudes and behaviour and know that you enjoy school. We also know that the adults who work with you care very much for you and want you to do your best.

There are some important things your school needs to do to become even better. We want staff to:

- help you to do even better by using assessment of your work to plan tasks more carefully so that they are better matched to your ability
- plan the curriculum to make sure that you build on and develop the skills, knowledge and understanding in subjects such as history and science, so that you can make more progress in these subjects
- use all the information available on your progress to help your school's leaders to take the right actions to make your learning even better.

I know that you will all work hard to help your teachers to put these changes into place as quickly as possible and I would like to wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Joy Considine

Lead Inspector

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