

# Epping Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	135328
<b>Local Authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	341634
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 March 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Graham Preston

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	334
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Tim Dolan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Lee Regan (Acting)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	St John's Road Epping CM16 5DN
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<b>Email address</b>	admin@eppingprimary.essex.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The majority of inspection time was spent looking at learning which included observing fifteen class teachers in 26 lessons. Meetings were held with governors, groups of pupils and staff. Different aspects of the school's work were observed and documentation scrutinised, including that relating to safeguarding practices, the school's self-evaluation and development planning, as well as 107 returned parental questionnaires.

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

- the extent to which pupils are making sufficient progress especially those from the original junior school
- how far current teaching provision is enabling pupils to learn effectively
- the extent to which aspects of curriculum and care and support are contributing to the school's positive ethos
- the impact of temporary arrangements for the leadership and management of the new school over the last eighteen months.

## Information about the school

Epping Primary is a new school set up in September 2008 and is the result of the amalgamation of the former infant and junior schools. It is a larger than average school with an increasing intake. The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage with very few at an early stage of English acquisition. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. The extended absence of the headteacher has been covered by acting headteachers. The current acting headteacher is in post until the end of 2010. The school is housed in the old junior school and adjoining buildings but immediately after the inspection it moved to a very modern, newly built site nearby.

**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

This is a satisfactory and improving school. The governors together with senior and middle managers have worked effectively to establish the new school. Nonetheless, all recognise that the pace of improvement has suffered because of a lack of continuous leadership. The current acting headteacher and senior staff have made a significant impact and are firmly committed to helping the school improve further as it moves into its brand new building.

The school has established rigorous systems for assessing and tracking pupils' attainment and progress. These show that pupils enter the school with skills and abilities that are typical of those expected and despite mixed experiences in the former schools are making at least satisfactory progress. Learning in lessons is mostly satisfactory and in some classes is good reflecting considerable variation in the quality of teaching. Current Year 6 pupils are making sufficient progress to reach their targets in writing though have some ground to make up in mathematics.

Despite the mix of temporary and older accommodation the teachers and other staff have been effective in establishing a welcoming, safe and surprisingly attractive environment. Pupils feel safe and are keen to come to school. This is reflected in an improving attendance rate. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school although a few pupils are easily distracted when the pace of learning slows. The school council is strongly supported by pupils and has its own officers that run its affairs.

Teaching is satisfactory overall with lessons demonstrating secure subject knowledge, effective use of resources including electronic whiteboards, and good relationships which create a positive learning environment. The senior staff provide much of the good teaching which actively engages and motivates pupils and has good pace and challenge. Less effective practice does not provide sufficient breadth in targets and learning to challenge all pupils. At times there is too much whole class work which limits the use of learning support staff. However, support work with pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective in helping them make progress. While there is some good practice, general classroom support is uneven because of varying levels of staff competence or insufficient joint planning with the teacher. Marking is positive but does not consistently provide sufficient guidance or opportunity for pupils to improve their work. Much of the curriculum is good in that it contributes effectively to pupils' overall development through the range of extracurricular activities, contribution to healthy lifestyles, and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils also enjoy most of their lessons. However, some of the taught curriculum, including aspects of literacy and numeracy, can be rather dull.

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Care, guidance and support is an area of strength and reflects the school's positive and inclusive ethos. Efforts to improve attendance are succeeding particularly with persistent absentees. Vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported and there are established links with secondary schools.

The current acting headteacher, appointed on a year's contract, works very closely with governors with a brief to actively improve the school rather than provide a holding operation until the headteacher returns. Some parents have already perceived a marked improvement and greater visibility in the leadership. There are strengths in terms of engagement with parents, partnerships and safeguarding practice. Much of this has been helped by a well informed and very active governing body that has necessarily taken a more 'hands on' approach with close and regular links between governors and each class and subject area. Given current outcomes and provision, overall effectiveness is satisfactory as is value of money. While recent developments and the move to a new school campus are positive, the capacity for further improvement is also satisfactory.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve teaching and learning by:
  - better matching targets and learning activities to pupils' abilities
  - ensuring that marking and assessment provides sufficient guidance and opportunities for pupils to improve their work.
- Improve the curriculum by:
  - identifying and sharing the best literacy and numeracy learning programmes
  - having effective strategies to develop literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.
- make the best use of general classroom learning support by:
  - providing an appropriate balance of whole class and individual/group learning using support staff
  - ensuring all support staff are sufficiently well trained and proficient to contribute effectively in the classroom.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

Current pupil progress across all years is broadly satisfactory and reflects pupils' learning which is mostly sound as the school works to improve the overall quality of teaching. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from the effective care and support enabling them to grow in confidence and achieve appropriately.

Pupils have a positive attitude to school reflected in the questionnaires and interviews. Attendance has improved considerably and is now at least in line with that of other

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primary schools. Pupils are lively and eager to participate and the great majority are able to combine this enthusiasm with behaving well in lessons and in the play areas. The school council is active and demonstrates pupils' readiness to take on responsibilities and be involved in school improvement. This is reflected in the promotion of healthy lifestyles in which most pupils demonstrate commitment through their participation in sports and in sensible eating.

Pupils are ecologically aware and involved in recycling and other activities that reflect the school's efforts in gaining Eco School award status. During the inspection Year 5 pupils were being trained as anti-bullying mentors while many others take responsibility as play leaders, prefects and reading buddies for younger pupils. Pupils respond well to and participate in reflective activities including assemblies and the recent week devoted to multi-cultural society. Most have some involvement with the local community events and the school has strong local links with churches as well as links with Australia and Swaziland. These have helped pupils develop their spiritual and cultural awareness. All of this reflects pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

## How effective is the provision?

<sup>1</sup> 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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Considerable efforts have been made to prepare and train teaching and learning support staff for the new school. Much has been done, for example in establishing a common framework for lesson planning. However, current teaching is predominantly satisfactory rather than good. Lessons are mostly purposeful and teachers relate well to the pupils. There has been some absence which has meant using supply teachers but these are internal and known to the pupils. Most lessons have clear purpose but only the best lessons sufficiently vary the learning tasks to fully match the abilities of the different pupils. The learning activities are mostly engaging though some lessons lack pace and sometimes the teacher has the pupils on the mat for too long which limits the use of the learning support assistants. Pupils work is marked regularly but there are only limited comments about what a pupil should do next to improve. The curriculum enriches pupils' learning and experiences in and out of lessons. However, the school is still in the process of refining some of its learning programmes, particularly those that relate to literacy and numeracy. The school recognises that there is not enough emphasis on the importance of writing and number work across the whole curriculum. The needs and progress of all pupils are carefully tracked and the effective inclusion strategies of the school have considerably helped those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This forms part of the good care and support provision in the school.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The school has found it challenging to provide strategic leadership for school improvement with acting headteachers. Nonetheless, the current acting headteacher, and senior colleagues have established means of appraising teaching and learning and are actively involving middle managers in the process of monitoring and evaluation. The senior leadership team have also worked closely with the governors to produce an accurate self-evaluation of the current school outcomes and provision. Links with parents are good with governors again playing an active part through their own newsletters and consultation arrangements. Partnerships clearly underpin the good care and support system and links with other schools are being used effectively to enhance the curriculum. For example, one specialist language school is providing modern languages support while another sports college is helping with coaching and giving access to its specialist facilities. The school's effective inclusion practice and rigorous tracking ensure that all pupils are well supported, able to be involved and make

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appropriate progress. Safeguarding is also good despite the temporary premises and the school has a sound strategy to develop community cohesion. This includes an audit of current local, national and international links and plans to expand them with the move to the new school.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

### Early Years Foundation Stage

Children in Early Years Foundation Stage are cared for well because staff help them settle in and gain confidence so that they feel secure. They start with attainment in line with that expected for their age and make satisfactory progress in most of the skill areas that make up the Foundation Stage profile. Children develop appropriately in terms of their attitudes and social skills as well as physically and in their knowledge of the world. They similarly develop their reading and number recognition, though writing and calculation is a little below average.

Despite the current accommodation and outside areas being temporary, the learning environment provides a sufficiently different range of learning experiences. These include a suitable balance of adult led and child initiated activities. The teaching is satisfactory as teachers adjust to the different demands of teaching at Foundation level. Teachers and support staff know the children well and are making good use of palmtop computers to assess and record pupil progress. However, teachers are not consistent in identifying how they can help each child make further progress. Nonetheless, the teachers and support staff are conscientious in their planning and organisation. Day to day management is satisfactory in that it ensures children learn and develop



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appropriately and the experienced assistant headteacher is providing well-informed training and support to further improve provision.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

## Views of parents and carers

The great majority are positive about most aspects of the school though a number express concerns about staff absence and the need to use cover teachers while others feel behaviour could be better in some instances. Inspectors found behaviour to be good in lessons and around the school. Pupils with particular personal and behavioural concerns are handled well by the school's good care and support systems. A few parents are also disappointed by the lack of a permanent headteacher over much of the first eighteen months of the new school, but inspectors agree with others who recognise improvements under the current leadership.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Epping 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 107 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 334 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	71	66	32	30	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	72	67	35	33	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	47	44	51	48	6	6	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	59	55	40	37	4	4	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	58	54	42	39	4	4	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	51	48	49	46	5	5	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	59	55	46	43	1	1	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)	37	35	47	44	6	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	47	44	53	50	5	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	42	39	50	47	11	10	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	35	58	54	5	5	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	37	35	61	57	6	6	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	61	57	42	39	4	4	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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



18 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Epping Primary School, Epping, CM16 5DN

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. Yours is a satisfactory school with some good features. Most of you do as well as expected by the time you leave in Year 6. Your school is a happy, friendly place to be and I am sure you are all looking forward to going into your new school. It is especially good to see how you like to be actively involved in the various aspects of the school such as the school council, eco school events and in sport and arts activities. We noticed too that many of you get involved in local charities and events.

Many of your parents told us how much many of you like school. It is certainly true that most of you get on with your teachers and want to do well. To help you do so we have asked the school to make sure that teachers' marking includes information about how you could improve your work. We have asked them to make the work you do in class more varied and to make sure targets are right for you. Because English and mathematics are so important we have also asked the school to look at ways of improving teaching in those subjects.

Thank you again for being so friendly and helpful on our visit and good luck in your new school.

Yours sincerely

Graham Preston

Lead Inspector

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