

# Epsom Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124956
<b>Local Authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	359805
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 October 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jane Chesterfield

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 of pupils on the school roll</b>	427
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jan Wilcox
<b>Headteacher</b>	Paul Barnes
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 October 2010
<b>School address</b>	Pound Lane Epsom KT19 8SD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01372 720608
<b>Fax number</b>	01372 739902
<b>Email address</b>	head@epsom.surrey.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They visited 22 lessons taught by 16 teachers. They held meetings with pupils, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at school policies and documentation, safeguarding records, pupils' work, assessment data, monitoring records, strategic planning and the minutes of governing body meetings. Questionnaires completed by staff, pupils and 111 parents and carers were analysed.

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

- The current picture of attainment and progress across the school, particularly in science, girls' mathematics and boys' writing.
- How well teachers meet the different needs of the pupils in their classes, especially in their use of questioning and challenge.
- How well leaders and managers at all levels are supporting teaching and learning, in view of changes in staffing.
- How well the Early Years Foundation Stage has addressed the issues of the last inspection.

## Information about the school

Epsom Primary is a larger-than-average primary school serving a culturally diverse residential area close to the centre of the town. Just over half of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups and nearly half speak English as an additional language. These figures are high compared with the national picture. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is just above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. These needs relate mainly to specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is above average. Mobility at the school is high compared with the national picture. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is offered in the school's Nursery and Reception classes. There is a Surestart children's centre on the school site. The school has gained a number of awards and has Healthy School status. There have been several changes in staffing this term, owing to maternity leaves and the departure of other key staff at the end of the summer term.

**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?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Epsom Primary is a good school where pupils get a good start to their education. Pupils make good progress and achieve well throughout the school. Parents and carers are very happy with what it offers their children. One parent commented, 'The school is inclusive and supportive, and is always aiming to improve the learning opportunities for the children.' Another stated simply, 'I couldn't wish for a better school.' Pupils too are very happy at the school, and talk excitedly about how they like being with their teachers and their friends. The school is a focal point for the local community and has forged excellent partnerships with parents and others.

Thanks to the outstanding pastoral care, pupils feel exceptionally safe at school, and are confident about turning to adults if they have a problem. They have a keen sense of right and wrong and are eager to take on responsibility around the school. They get on well with one another, and respect others from different backgrounds.

There has been a rising picture of attainment since the last inspection. Improvements in standards are now apparent in Key Stage 2, where pupils reached broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 this summer. This represents good progress and achievement from their starting points in Year 3. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are making good progress from their below average starting points. Most reach the levels expected for the age group by the start of Year 1 and some exceed them. The good progress in Years 1 and 2, identified at the time of the last inspection, has been extended successfully into Key Stage 2. As a result, attainment is rising and is working through to the end of the key stage.

The school has been successful in improving girls' achievement in mathematics since the last inspection, so that they now do as well as boys across the school. The school is now working to reduce the gender gap between boys and girls in writing. It has been successful in increasing boys' interest in writing and giving them ideas for writing. However, boys often still lack confidence in their abilities as writers, together with the language skills to enable them to write well. The school has identified that both boys and girls could do better in science, and has set about ensuring that all pupils have the right knowledge, understanding and skills to improve their attainment. Those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who are learning English as an additional language, make good progress from their different starting points. The school works very hard at personalising the support provided for each child identified.

Changes in staffing this term have meant that the school has had to focus on establishing consistency and continuity in its approach to teaching. It has been largely successful in this, and teaching in the school is good. The headteacher and senior staff have maintained and built on the school's considerable strengths since the last inspection. The quality of provision has been maintained despite changes in staffing, and a new curriculum has been

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introduced which enthuses staff and pupils alike. Senior staff and the governing body have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, self-evaluation is accurate, and school development planning identifies the most important priorities for the future. As a result, the school has a good capacity for further continuous improvement.

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

- Raise attainment and progress for boys in writing across the school by building on work already underway to:
  - improve boys' knowledge of vocabulary, grammar and sentence structure
  - increase boys' confidence in themselves as writers.
- Raise attainment and progress in science across the school by building on work already underway to:
  - ensure that pupils have a good balance of subject knowledge and investigative skills
  - increase pupils' scientific vocabulary so that they can express their ideas clearly.

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

**2**

The work seen in lessons and in pupils' books confirms that attainment is broadly average by the end of Key Stage 2, and that pupils are making good progress from their starting points. Pupils have positive attitudes and are ready and willing to learn. In a Year 6 English lesson, for example, pupils worked thoughtfully and co-operatively in pairs on presentations about famous people, and were eager to read their work to the rest of the class. The success of the school's initiative to improve girls' performance in mathematics was evident in a Year 6 lesson, where girls proved to be equally confident about putting forward their ideas, and were not deterred if sometimes their answers were not correct. Younger pupils are readily developing the capacity for independent work. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson, for example, pupils were happy to work on a range of different activities without constant adult supervision. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress, thanks to the quality of the support that they receive.

Pupils enjoy school very much, and this is evident in their improved attendance, which is now above average. They are very courteous and well mannered, and behave well in the playground and in class. There are occasions, however, when some pupils lack the self-discipline to remain focused on their work if lessons do not hold their attention. Their behaviour around the school and in assemblies is excellent. Pupils are happy to take on responsibility, and the school council makes a good contribution to improving the school environment and raising money for charity. Pupils show an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe, and of how to live a healthy lifestyle, and this is reflected in the Healthy School award. They are well prepared for moving on to secondary school.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</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>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<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

## How effective is the provision?

Teachers adopt a consistent approach to ensuring good learning across the school. Lessons are well planned and offer pupils plenty of challenge. Pupils appreciate this. 'If lessons were too easy, we wouldn't learn anything,' said one. Teachers keep a good pace going in lessons and use interesting resources which motivate pupils. The interactive whiteboard is well used to explain and illustrate what is being taught, and additional adults are well deployed to offer support to pupils of all abilities. Teachers use questioning skilfully to check and build on pupils' understanding. They have clear targets for their pupils, and use assessment information well to plan for the next steps in pupils' learning. The pupils have a good insight into what they need to do to improve, thanks to the good quality of the teachers' marking, particularly in English and mathematics. Marking in science lacks consistency and so is not always so helpful. Senior staff are working hard to help new staff settle into the school's routines and adopt the same approach in class as that of more experienced teachers.

Pupils enjoy a well-balanced curriculum which rightly focuses on literacy and numeracy, but still covers the full range of subjects. Pupils are consulted by teachers about what they want to learn, and their ideas are taken into account in lesson planning. There are some excellent additional opportunities available to pupils, such as the chance to learn Spanish. The school has introduced a new commercial curriculum package this term, which teaches pupils skills through exciting activities and which is proving very popular with both pupils

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and teachers. It is too early to say what impact this is having on pupils' learning, though it is certainly increasing their interest and motivation. The quality of care, support and guidance for pupils is outstanding. Pupils are kept very safe, and a number of parents and carers commented on this. One said, 'I never have to worry when my children are at school.' The school makes the most of its excellent links with the children's centre on site to access support services for pupils and their families, particularly the most vulnerable. The role of the parent partner is crucial in this area, and has made a significant contribution to the marked improvement in attendance over the last three years. The many pupils who join the school at different times are given individual support to help them settle, and this is appreciated by parents and carers. One commented, 'The school listened to and discussed my concerns with me and made a great effort to aid my children's integration into school.'

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher and senior staff are committed to giving pupils the best possible start to their education, and have worked hard to maintain the quality of provision and to raise standards despite changes in staffing in the classroom and in the leadership team. The headteacher and deputy give the school excellent direction. They have been particularly successful in establishing very clear structures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school, so that new leaders know what is expected of them and can fit easily into their roles. Subject leaders are keen and knowledgeable, and those who are experienced have a good track record of improvement. The governing body is kept well informed and knows what the school needs to do to improve. It is well organised and provides the school with the right balance of challenge and support. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are exemplary. Required checks on adults who come into contact with pupils are carried out, and risk assessments are thorough. Procedures for child protection are stringent, and staff training is up to date.

The school works hard to promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination, and is intent on reducing the gender gap between boys and girls still further. It tracks the performance of different groups of pupils carefully to ensure that any dips in progress can be swiftly addressed. The school works very closely with parents and carers to help pupils overcome barriers to their learning, and encourages parents and carers to become partners in their children's education. Partnerships are used outstandingly well to give pupils opportunities they may not otherwise experience, and to provide specialist support not available in the school. The school makes an excellent contribution to community

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cohesion. It draws together very successfully the different cultures which make up the school and the local community and helps them to get to know one another. It also has excellent links with schools elsewhere in the country and abroad, helping pupils to understand the different circumstances in which other children live and learn. Pupils were fascinated to realise, for example, that children in the depths of the English countryside and children in the heart of Africa are just as eager to use computers as they are.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<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>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</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>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff work hard to promote their personal, social and emotional development, and relationships between adults and children are very supportive. Adults create a warm and welcoming atmosphere for the children, and consequently they feel safe and secure. This means that they are eager to explore their surroundings and curious about what they find. The school has addressed the issues from the previous inspection well. There is now a good balance between child-initiated and adult-led learning, and staff work skilfully to help children reach the next steps in their learning. There is a strong focus on communication, language and literacy skills, which is very helpful to all children, but particularly to those who are new to learning English. The Nursery and Reception classes are word-rich environments, where children have plenty of opportunities to use language and to try to write for a purpose. Staff provide a wide range of activities covering all the areas of learning indoors and outside. However, the size of the current Reception cohort means that the current Nursery children are housed in a different classroom from usual. As a result they do not have ready access to the well-equipped Early Years Foundation Stage outdoor area, although the temporary area created for them is satisfactorily resourced and used well.

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The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led. Assessment procedures have improved since the last inspection, and information from staff observations is used well to inform teachers' planning for future sessions. Good attention is given to children's welfare and well-being. There are very close links with parents and carers from the start, with a well-planned programme of home visits to establish positive working relationships. Parents and carers are very happy with the way their children have settled into Nursery and Reception, and with the way in which staff have sought to involve and inform them. The leadership has a good understanding of the strengths of the provision, and knows what it needs to do to improve further.

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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

Most parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were happy with the school and what it offers their children. In particular, almost all felt that their children enjoyed school, that the school kept their children safe, and that the school was led and managed effectively. A few felt that the school did not take sufficient account of their suggestions. Inspectors investigated this concern, but did not endorse it. The school consults regularly with parents and carers and has good channels for communication with them. Senior staff are readily available to talk to parents and carers every day.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Epsom 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 111 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 427 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	64	58	44	40	2	2	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	65	59	41	37	2	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	56	50	48	43	4	4	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	48	43	54	49	6	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	61	55	44	40	3	3	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	58	52	45	41	7	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	51	46	53	48	6	6	1	1
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)	44	40	51	46	1	1	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	56	50	46	41	5	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	58	52	46	41	6	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	45	41	55	40	7	6	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	54	49	55	50	1	1	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	52	47	54	49	3	3	1	1

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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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 pupils' 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.**



11 October 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Epsom Primary School, Epsom KT19 8SD**

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently, and for helping us with the inspection. We really enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and sharing your lessons.

We found that Epsom Primary is doing well and giving you a good start to your education. These are just some of the things we liked about your school.

- You enjoy coming to school and your attendance has really improved over the last year.
- You are making good progress in your lessons, because you are well taught.
- You behave well and you are happy to take on responsibility.
- You have good relationships with one another and your teachers, and you are respectful of one another's different backgrounds.
- You feel very safe at school, and you are exceptionally well cared for.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle
- The senior leaders are doing a good job, and know how to make the school even better.

To help the school improve further, this is what we have asked the staff to do:

- make sure that you all do as well as you can in science
- help the boys to do as well as the girls in writing.

You can help by always asking if there is anything you don't understand in lessons or when your work is marked.

Yours sincerely

Jane Chesterfield

Lead inspector

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