

Emmbrook Junior School

Emmbrook Road, Wokingham, Berkshire, RG41 1JR

Inspection dates 25–26 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher has worked very successfully to help the school improve. Very good training and astute new appointments have improved senior and subject leadership considerably.
- Governors have improved their effectiveness exceptionally well. They are very well informed about teaching quality and pupils' achievement. Governors' first-hand monitoring helps ensure the governors challenge and support the school well.
- Very regular, thorough and accurate checking of pupils' progress and attainment by leaders and governors ensures weaknesses are speedily identified and addressed. Current weaknesses, including in writing, are already being tackled. The school is well placed to improve further.
- Checks on, and support for, teaching quality by both leaders and governors are very good. Inadequate teaching has been eradicated. It is now consistently good, with the proportion of outstanding teaching rising.
- The individual specialist support for hearing impaired pupils, those with special educational needs and vulnerable pupils is excellent.
- Pupils achieve well. Their progress since the previous inspection has been good and continues to improve. Outstanding progress was observed in some lessons during the inspection.
- Attainment is rising. Most pupils reach at least the levels expected for their age. The proportion exceeding these is increasing, especially in reading and mathematics.
- The curriculum has been exceptionally well designed to meet pupils' needs and interests. Procedures for assessing and supporting pupils' progress are excellent. Both are used very effectively to help improve progress, although the full effect has yet to be seen.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils enjoy learning and get on well together. Attendance levels are high.
- Safeguarding procedures are rigorous. Pupils are well looked after and feel safe in school. They are very knowledgeable about how to keep safe.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding. In a small minority of lessons the level of challenge for pupils, especially the most able, could be raised further.
- Previously, the school was slow to tackle declining attainment in writing. As a result, pupils' attainment in this subject is not as good as in reading and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons or parts of lessons, of which three were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, the inspection team made a number of other short visits to group or individual activities designed to help pupils who have fallen behind to catch up. They observed the work of the special unit for hearing impaired pupils. They heard a sample of pupils read and scrutinised a sample of pupils' written work.
- Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body, staff including senior and middle managers, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 75 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and a small number of parents bringing their children to school were also spoken to.
- Responses from the 30 staff questionnaires were analysed.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised a number of documents including the school's records on current pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance. Documents relating to planning and monitoring and safeguarding were also looked at.

Inspection team

Diane Wilkinson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kanwaljit Singh

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Emmbrook is a junior school, with two classes in each year group.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is in line with the national average.
- Together with the adjacent infant school, Emmbrook Junior has a local authority unit for hearing impaired pupils which is overseen by the school's governors.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below the national average. A below average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the additional funding, known as the pupil premium, for disadvantaged pupils is well below average. This funding is to provide extra support for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and to children who are looked after.
- The school meets the government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school is in a partnership with a local university to support teacher training.
- The headteacher was appointed September 2011. The large majority of other staff, including senior and middle leaders, have joined the school since its previous inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching so that the majority is outstanding by ensuring that, as pupils' progress speeds up, the expectation of what pupils can achieve is increased.
- Increase pupils' progress, especially in writing, by:
 - having higher expectations of what the most able pupils can do
 - ensuring pupils develop good spelling skills and use these to spell accurately in all their written work.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- A key to the school's success is the driving force of its headteacher who is determined that the school will continually improve. She has shown excellent determination in tackling weak teaching, despite the many staff changes seen. Leaders ensure that behaviour is good. Very astute appointments have been made, especially at senior leadership level; consequently, there is a very strong senior leadership team now in place.
- The effectiveness of middle leadership has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Leaders for important subjects such as English and mathematics support school improvement well.
- The school also benefits from strong leadership of the governing body which, like the school, has transformed its effectiveness since the previous inspection. Governors support school improvement effectively and hold leaders to account well for the school's performance.
- Procedures for checking the quality of teaching and pupils' progress are carried out continuously. Six-weekly evaluations and reporting of the impact of teaching on pupils' achievement are used to very good effect to intervene when needed. The success of this work is demonstrated in the speeding up of pupils' progress and the very effective strategies to improve the progress of any under-performing pupil. This demonstrates the school's strong commitment to providing equality of opportunity.
- Effective support mechanisms exist and training is put in place to improve teaching where needed. Teachers new to the school or profession quickly adapt or improve their practice to meet the school's high expectations.
- The school is well aware that it still has to make up for weaker progress made in previous years and is working hard to address this issue, currently with an appropriate focus on writing. Plans are already in place to address the weaker aspects identified during the inspection.
- Formal performance management procedures fully meet requirements. The targets set are challenging, having high expectations that the rate of pupils' progress must be at least good, and exceed national levels. Leaders are held to account well for improving pupils' achievement in the aspects for which they are responsible. Governors are very effectively involved in this process.
- The curriculum and assessment procedures have been exceptionally well adapted to meet the new government requirements. They provide excellent advice for teachers on which to base their planning. This makes a major contribution to the quality of the learning activities.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. The school strongly discourages discrimination in any form and fosters good relationships exceptionally well. Governors fulfil their duty to promote British values such as democracy and the rule of law especially well. Pupils have met the area's Member of Parliament and a local police officer to discuss these aspects in action. They carry out their own elections for the school council.
- Very astute decisions by leaders regarding the allocation of the additional funding, mainly to enhance teaching quality, have had a marked effect on the achievement of vulnerable pupils. The excellent individual teaching these pupils receive ensures their attainment at least matches that of their classmates, and exceeded it last year.
- Very good use is made of the sport fund grant to provide expert teaching, including in the after-school clubs, and in support for staff to improve their skills. Pupils' participation in sport has risen considerably, supporting their well-being especially well. Sporting success has also been achieved in football and athletics.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures are given high priority and fully meet requirements. Both staff and governors are well trained in this aspect, including in child protection. Behaviour and attendance are monitored very well, especially where there is a concern.
- Both staff and governors work hard to engage parents in supporting their children's achievement. Parents are provided with reports on their children's progress more regularly than in most schools and receive good information on the curriculum. Parents have been concerned about previous weaknesses in pupils' progress and the many staff changes. However, the large majority of parents who spoke to the inspectors acknowledge the improvements and are appreciative of staff's efforts. A small minority would like to see the communication with staff improve.
- The local authority has a very good picture of how well the school is doing and has supported it well during the period when teaching and learning was not good. It held leaders to account very well regarding the progress they were making in improving the school. The advice and training for subject leaders have improved their effectiveness well. The local authority rightly deems the school to now only need low level support.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors act effectively on all reports they receive from staff, including on teaching quality and pupils' progress. In addition, they enhance their knowledge very effectively through first-hand checks. Governors' commitment to training is excellent. Consequently, there are governor 'experts' in all important areas. For example, governors produce their own analysis of the school's performance in national assessments. This helps ensure that they can ask exactly the right questions of why the school might be underperforming. There is excellent teamwork between governors and school leaders seen, for example in joint checks of pupils' learning. Working effectively with leaders, governors set challenging targets for teachers' performance and are very well informed about the progress towards these. They act swiftly to deal with inadequate teaching and only agree salary increases for good performance. There is good oversight of the local authority unit for hearing impaired pupils by the school's governors.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Very good relationships between staff and pupils mean the latter want to work hard and strive to do what their teachers ask of them. Pupils are keen for staff to set them even more challenging work.
- Behaviour in lessons is good. Pupils listen well to staff and each other and concentrate on their tasks. Low-level disruption is rare, but the noise level is too high in a few lessons. Around the school, at play times and in assemblies, behaviour is very good.
- Pupils are mature and thoughtful young people who very much enjoy taking on responsibilities. They are very proud of their school and carry out their duties well.
- Pupils have a very well developed sense of their rights and responsibilities. Their relationships with other pupils are very good. They clearly exhibit the British values of tolerance and respect.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Both pupils and their parents rightly agree that the former are very well cared for in school. Pupils feel safe and want to come to school. Attendance levels are high and there is little poor attendance.
- Bullying is rare and always dealt with speedily and successfully. Some pupils do get concerned when others do not behave well, but very good support for those pupils who find good behaviour difficult means their behaviour improves well over time. There are few exclusions.
- Pupils are very well informed about how to keep safe, both in and out of school. They are fully aware of how to deal with different types of bullying and how to avoid hazards when using the internet and social media.

The quality of teaching is good

- Very good checks on, and support for, teaching ensure the school has successfully improved its quality. Teaching is uniformly good and the amount of outstanding teaching is increasing. During the inspection, outstanding learning took place in a third of the activities observed.
- Underpinning the school's success are the 'non-negotiables' for teachers that are in place. For example, these include planning appropriate activities which help pupils to make good progress, and regularly checking how well pupils are progressing during lessons. These were observed being consistently applied in all class and group activities.
- Literacy and numeracy are well taught, because teachers' and teaching assistants' expertise in these subjects are uniformly very good. This helps them, for example, to explain and demonstrate new things clearly. Misconceptions are very effectively and sensitively corrected. The most able pupils are constantly pressed to develop deep understanding of the areas they work on, but could be pressed harder to improve further in writing. The quality of discussions between adults and pupils is very good. Consequently, pupils have an excellent understanding of what is expected of them.
- In outstanding lessons the level of challenge set for pupils is high. For example, in Year 6, the most able pupils are required to carry out detailed and complex mathematical investigations. However, this only happens in a minority of occasions and more could be expected of all pupils, especially as the proportion of those capable of exceeding the levels expected for their age rises.
- The advice given to pupils during lessons on how to improve is excellent. The quality of marking is

outstanding and it significantly supports learning. Pupils are always required to respond to the guidance offered in teachers' comments.

- The improvement targets set for pupils have been very well adapted to meet the new curriculum. Both staff and pupils use these very effectively to check and support progress.
- Some pupils currently in the school have not been taught as well in the past. Although partly because of staff changes, it is also because teaching was not supporting good progress. Teaching is much improved and pupils' achievement over time is now good, but the legacy of slower progress still limits their attainment, especially in writing.
- Teaching of the hearing impaired pupils, for example in one-to-one activities, and for disabled pupils and those with significant educational needs is excellent.
- The specialist teachers employed to support pupils with special educational needs and vulnerable pupils have a very positive impact on their progress. Very well trained staff, including teaching assistants, ensure the learning, for example, in the catch-up literacy and numeracy groups is excellent.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Inspection evidence taken from a range of sources shows that pupils have made good progress since the previous inspection. Their achievement in reading, writing and mathematics is good.
- Attainment in the national Year 6 assessments rose well last year. It is above average, significantly so in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils continue to make good progress and the rate is speeding up. Attainment is well placed to rise further, as is clear from the work that pupils currently produce. Most pupils reach the levels expected for their age and increasingly exceed them. In their first term in Year 6, about half of the pupils are already at or close to exceeding the level expected by the end of the year in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils themselves are keen to do as well as they can and report that staff help them to do their best. There are a few occasions, however, when pupils feel they could be challenged to do even better. Inspection evidence indicates that this is the case.
- In reading, Year 6 pupils' comprehension skills are very good. During the inspection, the most able pupils engaged in a very productive discussion as to which clues in the text showed what might happen next.
- Pupils use their comprehension skills equally well to quickly identify the exact information they need from non-fiction texts. This supports their learning well in subjects such as history and geography.
- Pupils' writing skills are not quite as good as in reading, and improving them is a priority for the school. It has started to do so successfully. For example, the most able Year 4 pupils confidently use adverbial clauses to enhance their work.
- Year 5 pupils' diary writing is very effective and, by Year 6, pupils write effectively in a range of genres. However, until recently, too few pupils exceeded the levels expected for their age in writing. Although catching up swiftly, there is still some way to go, especially in improving the accuracy of spellings.
- Mathematics, a weakness at the time of the previous inspection, is now transformed. The proportion of pupils exceeding the expected level in national tests is better than in most schools. A few pupils now reach the very high Level 6, and the proportion likely to achieve this is rising.
- Pupils' calculation skills are very strong. By Year 6 they apply them well in a wide range of tasks, for example when using data or measures. They are exceptionally good at using them in 'real life' problem solving, for example in calculating the supply of confectionery to different supermarkets or in comparing house prices or football transfer fees. Activities such as these prepare pupils very well for the future.
- The school fulfils its responsibility for pupils who might be at risk of underachieving especially well. This is most notable in the good achievement of pupils who attend the hearing impairment unit. Virtually all reach the levels expected for their age, and occasionally exceed them. Other pupils with special educational needs also achieve well because of the very good attention to their specific needs.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress. Very nearly all reach the levels expected by the end of Year 6, increasingly exceeding them in mathematics.
- Hearing impaired pupils achieve well due to the very effective support they receive
- In the past the achievement of the most able pupils was not good. However, this has not been the case since the previous inspection. Their progress has speeded up especially well over the last year and their achievement is good. All exceed the levels expected for their age by the time they leave.
- The proportion of vulnerable pupils in receipt of additional funding is low and in most year groups too small to draw a conclusion as to how well they are closing the attainment gap on their peers. Their good

progress, however, is evident in the fact that their attainment point scores in reading, writing and mathematics were better than that of their classmates in the Year 6 national assessments last year. When compared with national attainment scores they were much better.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	109863
Local authority	Wokingham
Inspection number	448979

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Smith
Headteacher	Louisa Gurney
Date of previous school inspection	29–30 November 2012
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