

Emmbrook Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109863
Local Authority	Wokingham Borough Council
Inspection number	310124
Inspection date	15 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Alan Jarvis

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 on roll	
School	226
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Alexis Smith
Headteacher	Mr Paul Rowe
Date of previous school inspection	26 January 2004
School address	Emmbrook Road Wokingham RG41 1JR
Telephone number	0118 9784940
Fax number	0118 9795006

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- The reasons why different group of pupils make the progress they do.
- How well the curriculum is enriched.
- The impact of leaders and managers at all levels.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is an average size school. Nearly all pupils are from a White British background with a very small minority having other ethnic backgrounds. The school has a specialist unit for a small number of pupils with hearing impairment. These pupils often have other additional needs. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is above average. The majority of these have moderate learning or behavioural difficulties or need support for their dyslexia or autism. Each year group has two classes. The turnover of staff has been higher than normal in recent years. The headteacher took up his post in September last year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Emmbrook Junior is a satisfactory school. Most pupils make sound academic progress because of satisfactory teaching. However, the rich creative curriculum and strong pastoral care do result in the pupils' good personal development. The school is popular with parents and pupils who find the headteacher very approachable. Parents typically say, 'Our children really enjoy school and new headteacher is making lots of changes for the better'.

National tests results show that standards last year were average at the end of Year 6. These have shown a slight decline in the past three years. Overall, most pupils made satisfactory progress although some pupils did not do as well as they should have done. The current Year 6 pupils are again on course to reach average standards in English, mathematics and science enabling them to make a sound start to their secondary education. Although they have made good progress in Year 6, most groups of pupils have made satisfactory progress from their various starting points at the start of Year 3. Fewer pupils are underachieving. This reflects the satisfactory teaching they have had for most of their time in school. Pupils make satisfactory gains in learning in most classes. This is because similar work is often set for the whole class. This means that, whilst tasks in lessons are reasonably challenging for the average attaining pupils, they are often too easy for the more able and too hard for others. More regular monitoring of lessons is helping to address this but there is still some way to go. A few parents accurately reflect this when they say, as one commented, 'Our only concern is that the brighter pupils are not stretched'. However, this is not the case in all classes. For example, most pupils in the Year 6 classes are making good progress especially those who started Emmbrook this year. The difference here is that teachers carefully use the information they have on pupils to tailor work so that it strongly challenges all groups. This they do by sharing three different goals and success criteria for different groups of pupils in each lesson. This methodology was also used to very good effect in a Year 5 lesson where the added bonus of targeted quick fire questions ensured rapid gains in learning. A further reason why progress is not consistently good is that teachers' marking does not sufficiently identify the next steps pupils need to take in their learning. Pupils with moderate learning or behavioural difficulties make satisfactory progress. The main reason again why it is not better is that their learning is not sharp enough. However, more timely and effective support has resulted in fewer underachieving this year. The one group of pupils that consistently do very well are those with hearing impairment. The good numbers who reach average standards by the end of Year 6 reflects their rapid academic and personal progress and detailed attention given to meeting their complex learning needs.

Although the curriculum in English, mathematics and science is satisfactory, the real strength in the curriculum lies in the creative subjects. For example, much high quality artwork permeates the school. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is much better than the last inspection and pupils really enjoy computer work. In a Year 4 lesson pupils used ICT well in geography to make a Power Point presentation about Rainforest environments. During the inspection, a good assembly was observed where pupils demonstrated splendid presentations about 'Saving Leatherback Turtles'. Other pupils used role play very well as they played the part of young estate agents who were trying to sell houses they had designed in design technology. These are good evidence for the way the school helps pupils to become confident speakers and develop good awareness of the environment. Year 5 pupils have worked closely with a local community group called the Friends of the Emm brook. Their impressive research about the wildlife and ecology of the area has been included in a print and an information

board that the Friends are providing next to the local brook to inform the public. Pupils sing well. The beams on the faces of the Year 3 pupils when they sang the 'Rainbow Song' accompanied with sign language show how well the school includes all pupils and how pupils themselves thoroughly enjoy what they do. For a school of this size the range of extra-curricular clubs is first class. These have increased this year and there is something for everyone.

The school's strong focus on pastoral care has ensured pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development remains good. Attendance is also above average and improved because, compared with recent years, fewer parents are taking their children on holiday during term time. Pupils say, 'We are really fit and eat well' and shows they respond well to the good opportunities for physical exercise and the promotion of healthy eating. However, the headteacher rightly recognises the key challenge the school faces is to quicken pupils' progress. The downturn in results has highlighted shortcomings in how well leaders and managers at all levels evaluate the impact of teaching and learning on pupils' progress. In addition, the targets that are set for each class are not high enough and the checks made to ensure that all groups of pupils are doing as well as they can lack rigour. To help address this the roles and responsibilities of the senior leadership team are being reviewed and the relatively inexperienced subject co-ordinators are being given the necessary training to carry out their roles more efficiently. Whilst some actions such as better deployment of teachers and better co-ordination of the science curriculum are starting to improve pupils' progress there is still some way to go. Given the improvements made this year, and the actions taken, the school has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and accelerate pupils' progress by ensuring that teaching is consistently challenging for all groups of pupils.
- Use assessment information more incisively to ensure pupils know their next steps in learning and reach consistently challenging targets.
- Develop the role of leaders and managers at all levels so that better checks are made of pupils' and teachers' performance and there is a consistent focus on raising achievement still further.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before the next section 5 inspection.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

29 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Emmbrook Junior School, Wokingham, RG41 1JR

As you know, I visited your school recently I particularly enjoyed speaking to the school council and your afternoon assembly in which you showed me some of your achievements. My report says that yours is a satisfactory school. This means that some things are good but there are some aspects that could be better.

I can see why you get on well with your headteacher and like your teachers a lot. They are very friendly and want the best for you. You rightly told me behaviour in your school is good, bullying is very rare and that you particularly liked the many clubs on offer. By the time you leave school you reach the standards expected for your age in English, mathematics and science which enables you to make a sound start to secondary school. However, the work you do in other subjects is often better. For example, the good opportunities you have to undertake research, work in groups on exciting projects, sing in the choir really do pay off in helping you develop good personal skills. I was particularly impressed by the work done by Year 5 in raising awareness about Leatherback Turtles and working with Friends of Emmbrook to develop an information board to inform visitors about the nearby brook. Let us hope it does not flood again. I could see how you all cared for each other very well. As you know some pupils in your school have to have help because of their hearing. You will be pleased to know that these pupils do really well at your school both because of what your teachers do and because of the kindness you show them. Well done!

Your headteacher knows your personal development is good but wants to improve the quality of teaching and learning so that you make faster progress and reach higher standards. You can help by working hard on your learning objectives. In addition, I have asked your teachers to make sure that you are all very clear about your next steps in learning and to try and help you all to reach and exceed your targets. Your teachers and governors are also very keen to develop their work by making better checks to see if what they do really does lead to you making faster progress. I have asked them to continue doing this right across the school.

I am sure you will play your part in helping your teachers improve Emmbrook Junior further and become a good school. I wish you the best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Alan Jarvis

Lead Inspector