

Inspection of Emmbrook Junior School

Emmbrook Road, Wokingham, Berkshire RG41 1JR

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 April 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Emmbrook Junior School pupils speak with pride as they describe their school. They are appreciative of being here because they know they are part of something special. Pupils are warm, friendly and courteous. They show kindness to visitors, staff and each other. Pupils feel safe as everyone looks out for each other. They explained that bullying is almost unheard of but know exactly where to go for help when needed. Pupils, rightly, trust that adults will help them to address their concerns promptly and sensitively.

Pupils enjoy the chance to learn about, and celebrate, difference. As a specialist school for the deaf, every pupil learns British Sign Language and many use this confidently. Pupils are fascinated by different lifestyles and religions. They make new arrivals to the school feel particularly welcome.

Staff have raised the bar in recent years and now recognise how much pupils can achieve. They pull together to develop pupils' 'roots to grow and wings to fly'. These high expectations are met by pupils who behave and achieve well. This happy and ambitious school has impressed parents too. Many commented on the improvements seen in recent years.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders and governors prioritised the development of the curriculum after the previous inspection. Starting with English and mathematics, they supported curriculum leaders to improve their subject knowledge and to design a curriculum that is ambitious and organised. Staff receive clear training and direction. They understand what to teach, when to teach it and know the methods that work best. Staff have a detailed understanding of what knowledge pupils have been taught already and build on this well. They check that pupils have grasped the key concepts they need for future success and revisit the most important knowledge when this is needed.

Most other subjects such as physical education (PE) and science are equally well organised. Staff follow the agreed sequence of learning, helping pupils to build an impressive body of knowledge. On occasion, staff try to link different subjects together using a single 'topic' or 'theme'. Sometimes this approach works well. However, too often this confuses pupils as they try to make links between content that is not closely related.

Although most pupils read very well, leaders ensure that nobody slips through the net. Careful screening and close links with the infant school ensure that pupils who struggle to read are picked up quickly and supported well. Staff use assessment effectively to identify and address the precise gaps in pupils' knowledge. Skilled staff help pupils to embed any phonics knowledge they have not fully grasped and to get plenty of practice until their reading is fluent.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are quickly identified and supported. Staff have access to a comprehensive range of assessment tools which they use to precisely pinpoint pupils' needs. They use this information well, providing just the right amount of support for pupils to access the curriculum and learn well. By only providing the exact support that is needed, pupils with SEND develop both their independence and a strong work ethic.

Pupils enjoy extensive opportunities to explore their interests and passions. All disadvantaged pupils attend an after-school club and leaders now hope to increase the participation of other pupils as well. Pupils develop their character by learning to consider opposing opinions. They embrace challenge and debate. Pupils disagree well here and discuss their views in a respectful and friendly manner.

Pupils are taught to follow the rules and consider their actions carefully. They develop good habits which help them to make responsible decisions when faced with new situations. Staff 'sweat the small stuff' and regularly praise pupils doing the right thing, incentivising others to follow their lead. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, pupils have regained their strong attendance habits. They are seldom late and rarely miss a day of school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils learn to look after themselves and their friends. They have an appropriate understanding of the risks they may face and are prepared to make good decisions when presented with unfamiliar situations.

Staff are skilled at spotting the small signs that a pupil may need help. They record their observations diligently, sharing these with leaders without delay. Senior staff collate, analyse and consider this information carefully. They work with external agencies and charities to get families the right support at the right time. Leaders doggedly advocate for families if the help they need is not forthcoming.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, unrelated content is unnecessarily grouped and taught together. This confuses pupils as they try to make links between disconnected knowledge. Leaders should review the few remaining areas of the curriculum that commonly use this approach and ensure that appropriately linked knowledge is always taught in a logical sequence. It is clear that leaders are already taking appropriate action to address these weaknesses. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	109863
Local authority	Wokingham
Inspection number	10227340
Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	252
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Samantha Dowse
Headteacher	Jim Usher
Website	www.emmbrookjuniorschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 and 21 June 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher joined the school in April 2020.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders and eight members of the governing body including the chair of governors. Inspectors also met with two officers from the local authority.
- The inspectors did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science, geography and PE. They talked to subject leaders, staff and pupils, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work. They then considered a wider range of evidence to explore the quality of education.

- Inspectors reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding by scrutinising safeguarding records, interviewing staff and through discussions with pupils.
- The inspection team considered the views of parents shared through the Ofsted surveys. They gathered the views of pupils and staff through surveys, interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

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