

Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Emmbrook Infant School

Emmbrook Road, Wokingham, Berkshire RG41 1JR

Inspection dates:

7 and 8 January 2025

Outcome

Emmbrook Infant School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Grace Massarella. The school is part of The Circle Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Ginny Rhodes, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andrew Beckett.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's vision, 'Together everyone achieves more', is realised every day. This is a flourishing community where everyone is welcomed and included. Pupils appreciate each other's unique qualities. One pupil, reflecting the views of many, stated, 'We may not be the same, but inside we have the same heart.'

High ambition permeates the school. This is reflected in pupils' strong achievement, particularly in English and mathematics. The school's interesting curriculum and staff's skilful teaching inspire pupils to learn. This helps to foster a genuine love of learning. Pupils delight in celebrating their achievements, and those of their peers.

From their first days in school, staff's nurturing approach means that pupils feel happy, safe and well cared for. Values such as kindness and friendship are lived out in daily life. These shine through pupils' superb behaviour. Pupils relish leadership opportunities, for example by being a 'bistro buddy' or serving on the school council. This helps them to understand the notion of responsibility and what it means to be part of a community.

Rightly, parents and carers are full of praise for the education and care their children receive. One parent, typical of many, commented, 'The school creates a safe, supportive and nurturing environment for children to challenge themselves and thrive.'

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

The school has an unwavering determination to ensure that all pupils continue to receive a high-quality education, academically and personally. This is the foundation for all decision-making. The new 'spiral' curriculum helps to build pupils' knowledge logically from the early years through to Year 2. Well-considered adjustments have been made to reflect the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, the school now gives even greater priority to communication and language, particularly in the early years. Alongside highly effective teaching, this ensures that pupils are exceptionally well prepared for junior school.

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. As soon as children join the Reception Year, they get off to a great start in learning to read. Coupled with the school's strong focus on handwriting, this enables pupils to apply their reading knowledge when writing. When needed, swift support is put in place for any pupils who need additional help. Over time, pupils read and write with increasing accuracy and fluency, using vocabulary with greater precision. Achievement is equally strong in mathematics, where pupils secure important concepts and develop their understanding of number and calculation. These strong foundations enable pupils to apply their knowledge well in the wider curriculum.

Throughout the school, staff are adept at engaging pupils in discussion to check their understanding and to promote learning. They are quick to spot and address any gaps in pupils' knowledge to ensure that learning is secure and remembered. This practice is very effective in English and mathematics. In a few wider curriculum subjects, checks on how well pupils have remembered knowledge over time are not as fully embedded. Wisely, leaders are currently fine-tuning this aspect of the school's work, reflecting their laser-sharp focus on pupils' achievement.

The school champions inclusion and is committed to ensuring that all pupils, no matter their needs or barriers to learning, can thrive. Strong processes are in place to identify any pupils who may have additional needs. Specialist staff and teachers carefully tailor support and teaching approaches. This ensures that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can fully access the curriculum. Pupils in the specially resourced provision benefit from highly skilled specialist teaching.

The school's work to prepare pupils for life beyond the school is exemplary. Pupils learn about different faiths. This includes the commonalities that religions share, such as special festivals and moral values. The annual international week is a highlight of the school calendar. It enables diversity in its broadest sense to be celebrated by the whole community. Pupils learn the importance of being resilient. They hold lasting memories of the visit from a Paralympian, and their self-determination. Enhanced enrichment for disadvantaged pupils, including through the 'Wave Rangers' outdoor learning, helps to build pupils' confidence and widen their horizons.

The trust has ensured that it has the right people with the right skillset to ably fulfil their responsibilities. Oversight and accountability are robust. Trustees ensure that they have accurate information to inform their strategic decision-making. Leaders' engagement with

the dedicated staff team is a strength. Staff's professional development is enhanced through the trust's training and networking with their counterparts in other schools. Staff appreciate the support they have so they can focus their time and energy on teaching and learning. They love working at the school and are highly committed and proud to work here.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged outstanding for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school to be outstanding for overall effectiveness in January 2019.

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.

Further information

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	149722
Local authority	Wokingham
Inspection number	10341928
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	182
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andrew Beckett
CEO of the trust	Ginny Rhodes
Headteacher	Grace Massarella
Website	www.emmbrookinfantschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Emmbrook Infant School converted to become an academy school in July 2023. When its predecessor school, Emmbrook Infant School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding for overall effectiveness.
- The school is one of nine schools in The Circle Trust.
- The school has specially resourced provision for eight pupils with SEND. This provision is for pupils who are deaf and pupils who have hearing loss. All pupils who attend this provision have an education, health and care plan. The provision is run jointly with the junior school and is known as the Total Communication Base. Currently, three pupils from the infant school attend this provision.
- The headteacher took up post in September 2024.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other senior leaders, including the directors of education and safeguarding from the trust. They met with staff, including the teacher responsible for the specially resourced provision. The inspector held online discussions with members of the board of trustees, including the chair. The inspector also met with the CEO of the trust.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector visited the specially resourced provision.
- The inspector took account of parents' views through their responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They also spoke to some parents at the start of the second day of the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Sue Cox, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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