

Edwalton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	122601
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	380498
Inspection dates	17–18 January 2012
Lead inspector	Terry McDermott

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	356
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Graham Beck
Headteacher	Brian Owens
Date of previous school inspection	26 June 2007
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Terry McDermott	Additional inspector
Joanne Sanchez-Thompson	Additional inspector
Thelma McIntosh-Clark	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 28 lessons taught by 14 teachers for a total of approximately 14 hours. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at its methods for tracking pupils' progress, and at a range of school documents, including its policies, minutes of governing body meetings, monitoring records, samples of pupils' work, and reports from the school's professional partner. Responses from 150 parents and carers to the Ofsted questionnaire were considered, along with questionnaires completed by staff and pupils.

Information about the school

This primary school is larger than average. Pupils in Years 3 and 4, and in Years 5 and 6 are taught in mixed-age classes. Pupils in Reception and in Years 1 and 2 are taught in single-age classes. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. An average proportion of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. A few of these pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportions of pupils with a disability and of pupils with special educational needs are above average, but the percentage with a statement of special educational needs is lower than average. The school holds several awards including Eco School Green Flag and International School. The school meets the current government floor standard.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. Its outstanding provision for both sustainability and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has a marked impact on pupils' attitudes to learning. This leads directly to pupils' excellent behaviour, their high rates of attendance and their deep understanding of the world in which they live.
- Pupils' achievement is good throughout the school because of the good quality teaching which successfully develops their personal and numeracy skills. Pupils' broadly-average progress in English is not as good as their progress in mathematics. No group of pupils underachieves.
- Teaching is good. It is characterised by consistently excellent relationships between adults and pupils. Examples of outstanding teaching were seen. The pace of learning slowed in some lessons when teachers gave extended instructions. In these lessons, pupils were not given enough opportunities to actively work things out for themselves. The development of early reading skills lacks consistency.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They take very good care of each other and their environment. They say that bullying is rare and dealt with very quickly. They can be trusted to work independently, and they readily take on personal responsibilities. Pupils of different cultures, ethnic groups, ages or genders are regarded simply as classmates.
- The school has a remarkably strong spirit of community. Pupils, staff, members of the governing body, and a very wide range of active external partners have a common team spirit. Morale is high, staff are totally committed to building on their successes in developing pupils' personal attributes, and extending these into accelerating progress in English.
- School self-evaluation is accurate. The school's leaders are objective in identifying the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They have already taken well-founded actions to address weaknesses. These have not had time to show their full impact on pupils' progress in English.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the progress made by pupils, and raise attainment further,

particularly in English, by ensuring that teachers consistently:

- get lessons off to a rapid start, with pupils spending less time listening and more time actively involved in learning activities
- give many opportunities for pupils to work independently and find things out for themselves
- use short, sharp and accurate techniques to build early reading skills
- demand that pupils correct spelling mistakes.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils join the school with skills and understanding which are typical for their age nationally, though there can be variations from year to year. Staff in the Reception classes make the most of the good resources both indoors and outside, and get children off to a very good start in school. Children quickly learn to cooperate and work and play together very well. This gives a good foundation for the excellent relationships between pupils and staff thereafter throughout the school.

Pupils' make good progress throughout the school. Learning seen in lessons throughout the school was good. Progress is best when pupils, of whatever age, are swiftly given opportunities to work independently, solving challenging problems, or researching and investigating. On occasions, pupils had 'Eureka moments', exclaiming, 'I've got it!' and excitedly sharing their new understandings with classmates.

Pupils' attainment in reading, though a little above average at the end of Key Stage 1, is not as high as their attainment in mathematics. This is because basic reading skills are not taught systematically enough. However, pupils are used to reading aloud to different adults as their reading records show. Attainment in reading at the end of Year 6 is a little above average for all pupils, including those for whom English is an additional language.

Attainment at the end of Year 6 is above average overall. Pupils make better progress than is found nationally, irrespective of their starting points. This is clearly apparent in their books which are consistently well presented and looked after. No group of pupils underachieves. Disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are given good support to ensure that their achievement is good. More than 90% of parents and carers who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire felt that their children made good progress.

Quality of teaching

Good teaching is found in all parts of the school. Classrooms, both inside and the many outdoors in the school's own woodland, are well resourced and inspire pupils' curiosity about the world around them. Respect for the environment and for each other pervades all of the school's work. Pupils consistently rise to the challenges they are set, particularly when the work is practically based. The best lessons are well planned, and teachers make clear to pupils what they are going to learn about. Most lessons move forward smartly, with teachers and other adults moving around the

different groups in the class making sure that pupils are on the right track. Questioning usually begins with 'What do you think..?', challenging pupils to think for themselves. Some, but not all, lessons have a buzz of contained excitement and sustained concentration about them as pupils carry out their own research or investigations. These are often about living things in the pupils' onsite allotments, on the school farm or in the school's three-acre woodland. The use of these facilities brings life to learning, and ensures that pupils make good progress. This was shown to excellent effect in a Year 3 and 4 mathematics lesson, when pupils were relating place value to their own experiences, and successfully consolidating their understanding. This is one reason why progress in mathematics is as good as it is. Occasionally, the pace of learning slows when all pupils receive the same explanation or task to do. The more-able pupils finish quickly; they then wait patiently for the next task but it means their progress is not as good as it might be. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively and play a vital role in supporting different groups of pupils. This ensures that most pupils make the same good progress over time, particularly pupils with disabilities, those with special educational needs, and those whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. Scrutiny of pupils' books shows that marking is regular and usually gives clear advice on what to do next to improve, though corrections to spellings were not always demanded or completed.

The school's curriculum, with its overt focus on sustainability and care for the environment, has a marked impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The regularity with which teachers use the outdoor spaces in lessons underlines this.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour is consistently excellent in lessons, around the building and in the play areas. Their very good manners and politeness, their willingness to provide a helping hand (even on Christmas day with the animals on the school farm) and their wonderfully sunny demeanours give the school a very distinctive atmosphere. Pupils move around showing a strong sense of responsibility for each other, for their school and for the environment. They come into school quietly and in an orderly self-disciplined manner. Pupils are quite certain that they are safe, and can confidently explain why this is so. Their understanding of the natural world is remarkable, and enhanced by growing and eating their own vegetables, harvesting and marketing honey from the school's beehives and caring for the farm animals. Parents and carers confirm this view. Attendance is consistently above average because, as pupils say, 'This is such a nice place to be'. The school's records show, and the pupils own views underline, that incidents of poor or unsafe behaviour are rare. Pupils confirm with certainty that there is no inappropriate behaviour in lessons to interrupt their learning. The school has all the necessary arrangements in place for ensuring the safeguarding of pupils. Pupils are proud to be members of Edwalton School, which they leave as thoughtful, caring and very considerate young citizens, well prepared for the next stage of their lives. Parents, carers and other friends of the school wholeheartedly expressed the same view.

Leadership and management

The headteacher is a significant influence on the life of the pupils. His farsighted views and relentless commitment to developing the whole school as a sustainable entity underpin the school's outstanding provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The impact on pupils' personal attributes of tolerance, respect, integrity and reliability is remarkable. The school is the Eco-hub for 32 other schools locally, in Africa and in New Zealand. These links give pupils a true understanding of the word 'community'.

Leaders' well-communicated vision and ambition for the school ensure that staff are well motivated, highly committed, and feel part of a good team. Subject leaders, though relatively new to their posts, are enthusiastic, thoughtful and well informed. They form part of a strong leadership group that has good capacity to sustain improvements. The high expectations of senior leaders and the governing body, and high quality continuing professional development are becoming increasingly effective in improving the quality of teaching of English across the school, though more still remains to be done.

The curriculum is good overall. Despite having some outstanding strengths in building pupils' personal development and in mathematics, it has not had the same impact on developing pupils' communication, language and literacy skills. The school has itself identified this as an area for improvement, and has already begun to modify its practices by appointing new staff. The full effect of these changes remains to be seen. The school's accurate system for tracking the progress pupils make is instrumental in ensuring that no particular individual or group of pupils underachieves.

There is no evidence of any sort of discrimination in this inclusive and very happy place. Safeguarding procedures are implemented well. They are regularly updated and rigorously applied. Consequently, the safety and safeguarding of pupils pervades the school's life. This is reflected in the very positive views of pupils about their school and in the almost unanimously positive responses expressed by a large number of parents and carers.

Governance is good. Members are active, knowledgeable and hard working. They hold the school to account for its performance with rigour. Members are fully committed to carrying out their responsibilities for ensuring general safety and the safeguarding of pupils. They give very good attention to the welfare of pupils and staff.

Excellent partnerships with its community, other local schools, community groups and a wide range of external professionals, support all pupils' learning well. These effective partnerships ensure that every individual pupil, including those whose medical and other needs make them potentially vulnerable, is able to access and benefit from all that the school has to offer. They lead directly to pupils' excellent behaviour, the excellent relationships they have with each other, and their consistently above-average attendance.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



19 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Edwalton Primary School, Nottingham, NG12 4AS

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful to us when we inspected your school recently. We were really impressed with your excellent behaviour, your good manners, and the confident and polite way you speak with each other and with the adults in school. We liked the way you all get on so well together, with your obvious respect for each other, the school and your environment, and your above-average attendance.

We found that Edwalton is a good school. It is helping all of you to make good progress, and some of you to make outstanding progress, particularly in mathematics. It makes excellent provision to help you develop personally as young people. Some of the teaching we saw was outstanding, but some was also satisfactory. In the best lessons, the work kept you busy all the time, and often involved you working things out for yourselves using practical examples. However, this was not always the case and sometimes you had to wait too long for the teacher to finish explaining the work you were going to do.

Therefore, we have asked the staff to make sure that the work set in lessons, particularly in English and when getting you started as readers and writers, makes you think more. We have also asked that they set you off finding things out for yourselves as often and as quickly as possible. This will help you all to learn at a consistently good or even better pace.

We enjoyed meeting you and would like to wish you all good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Terry McDermott
Lead inspector

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